



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

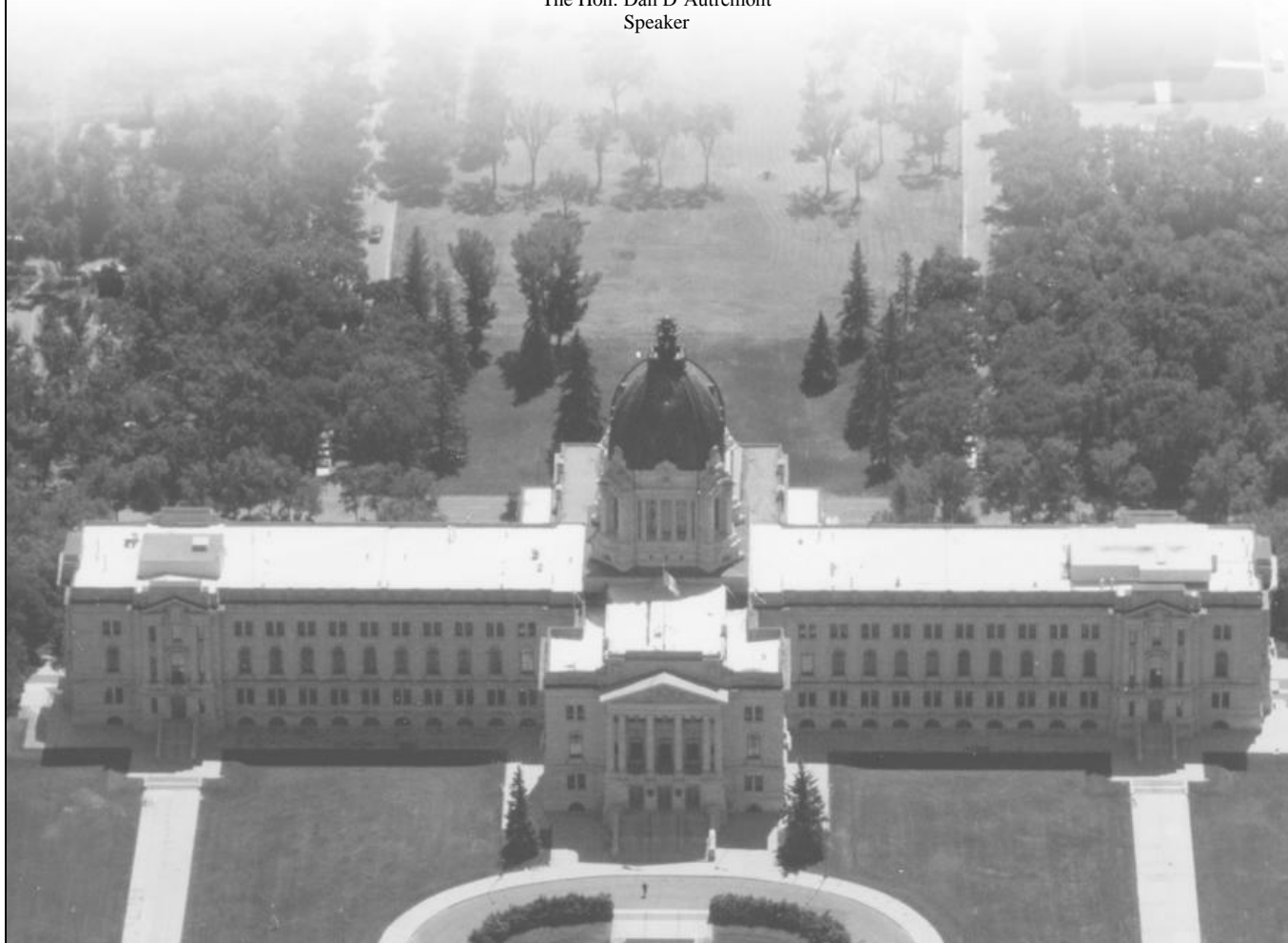
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D'Autremont

Premier — Hon. Brad Wall

Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Hon. Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to colleagues in the legislature, it's my pleasure today to introduce some of Saskatchewan's best authors who are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

A couple of Saturdays ago, we celebrated literature and publishing in our province with the Saskatchewan Book Awards hosted here in the city of Regina. I had the opportunity to represent the government and the people of Saskatchewan at those book awards, Mr. Speaker, in bringing greetings and also presenting an award from the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport. There were a number of awards given out that evening, Mr. Speaker, to both authors and publishers.

And we are joined here today in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, by Candace Savage, who was a multiple winner that particular evening. We're joined by Felix Hoehn, Blair Stonechild, amongst others, Mr. Speaker.

I know they did a reading in the Legislative Library over the noon hour. Unfortunately I couldn't attend as I was in a cabinet meeting, but I want to welcome all of them. Oh, I see Joanne Skidmore is there as well, the Chair of the Book Awards. It's our pleasure to welcome them here, Mr. Speaker, to their Legislative Assembly today. Thank you.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming the writers who read to assembled members from the Legislative Building but also from the community, from their award-winning books.

And it's always interesting to hear a new story or a new perspective on issues that are important to Saskatchewan. And I would have to say that the three readings we listened to today at lunch provided that perspective by looking at the constitutional issues around the treaties and the fact that we're on Treaty 4 territory, from Felix Hoehn. And Candace Savage looks at what it is to be part of the land, part of the prairie here, from a perspective developed down in Eastend of the Cypress Hills. And Blair Stonechild tells the story of one of our famous people, Buffy Sainte-Marie, and how where she's from affected her life.

So, Mr. Speaker, all three of those people need to be thanked, as well as all of the other speakers. And a special thanks to Melissa Bennett, our librarian, who has organized this for us. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Deputy Whip.

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a very important group of people in our province, is members of the Saskatchewan Roughriders coaching staff here today.

[Applause]

Mr. Makowsky: — We're not done yet. But I'd like to introduce them individually, if that's all right. Jeremy O'Day's the assistant general manager. If you could just give a wave when I say your name. The head coach, Corey Chamblin; quality control is Chad Hudson; Bob Dyce is the special teams coordinator; Richie Hall is the defensive coordinator; Richard Kent is the secondary coach; and Jason Tucker is receiver coach; Khari Jones, quarterback coach; Doug Malone, he coaches offensive line — most important position — and George Cortez is the offensive coordinator.

Mr. Speaker, it's less than a month away from Rider training camp in Saskatoon. It goes without saying I think all members wish them the best this season. We wish them wisdom in calling the right plays at the right times and motivating their players. So in order . . . that I think we'd all enjoy having them — of course the Grey Cup is here November 24th — if we could have them as well as all the players back a few days later when we celebrate a Grey Cup championship via the Roughriders, we'd love to all have them back. So all members please join me in welcoming them today.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the member from Regina Dewdney to welcome the coaching staff and Coach Chamblin of the Saskatchewan Roughriders here today. It's a true pleasure, an honour to have you in the Assembly. I knew there was a reason, Mr. Speaker, that the member for Regina Dewdney had his tie done up just properly here today, that his former coaching staff was going to be here keeping an eye on him here today.

It is that very special time of the year in Saskatchewan. You have spring seeding that's soon to start. You have the warmer weather that's coming around, and you have a time where football is on the minds of many.

And here in Saskatchewan, we take our football pretty seriously. And I know as training camp comes around in the next month, there will be all sorts, many thousands of Saskatchewan people that will be tracking spring camp, the new players that have come from all over North America to play, and many new Saskatchewan products that come out. And they'll be joining at training camp as well and tracking the plays. I think that the one job that might be tougher than Premier in this province is that of Coach Chamblin's in Saskatchewan because of the scrutiny and pride we take in that team.

I'd like to thank this coaching staff for the leadership they provide to our team, the leadership they provide to our province. I think of all those young players that are soon hitting

the fields in small-town Saskatchewan and urban Saskatchewan. Whether it's six-man football, nine-man football, or 12-man football, they're inspired by the role models before us and certainly the players that you put on the field. It's better to have Khari Jones on the coaching staff than playing against us, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to have him here today. I'd simply like to welcome our Saskatchewan Roughriders, wishing them well for the season, and sharing the Rider pride with all Saskatchewan people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Very briefly I'd like to introduce two very important people who make the Swift Current constituency office work very well, in the case of Nola Smith, the constituency assistant that is of great help to me and to the constituents, and to Hayley Chalk who will be joining us for some time over the summer, Mr. Speaker. We're all very appreciative of the work that constituency assistants do, and it's an honour for me to be able to welcome them here to their Legislative Assembly, and thank them very formally for all their work on behalf of Swift Current constituents.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, if I can join with the member for Dewdney and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in welcoming the Rider coaching staff. We had a brief chance to visit with them in the Premier's office. I told them that I call it the Premier's office. It's not mine. I said, I'm just the current tenant and every four years the landlords can evict me. Coach Chamblin made the point that, he said, really? You get four years?

Here's the good news: I think this coaching staff's going to get a lot more than four years, Mr. Speaker. Pretty exciting off-season, and again we thank them for their good work. And to Jason and Khari, you know the members are right: we really didn't cheer for you before, but we sure do now. Welcome to this Legislative Assembly, your Legislative Assembly. And thank you for what you're about to do this season.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Central Services.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome a group of public servants that are seated in your gallery. I'd like to begin by thanking them on behalf of the government for all that they do. I know that if you speak to any minister here, and to the Premier, we can't do our job without you doing yours. And you do it so very well, so thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the folks here are participating in the parliamentary program for the public service. There's a number of ministries that are represented here today: Economy, Education, Environment, Finance, Health, Highways, Justice, Provincial Capital Commission, and Social Services. They'll be spending time in the building doing a tour, I believe, meeting with you later today as well.

I wish them a very good day. I hope that it's educational and you get to see a little bit about what we do. And again, thank you and welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon

Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to join with the minister in welcoming the civil servants here today to your Legislative Assembly. As you know, Saskatchewan has a long, proud history of a professional civil service dating back to the 1940s, where we exported our processes and our civil servants to other parts of Canada. So a long and proud service of which you're a part of.

I look forward to the opportunity, I have the chance to sit down and chat with you for about 20 minutes later this afternoon and tell you a little bit about what it's like to be on the opposition and from our perspective here. So thank you for all that you do to ensure that things run smoothly, and welcome to your legislature today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce two special guests seated in your gallery. And I'll ask them to give us a wave when I say their names. Mr. Speaker, we're joined by Anne Chase and Marilyn Williams.

Mr. Speaker, these two guests are here on behalf of ovarian cancer support and survivor groups, representing both Regina and Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. But much more than that, they themselves are survivors of ovarian cancer and proudly represent all women who have battled this form of cancer in our province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, shortly from another member, we're going to hear a member's statement on ovarian cancer, and, Mr. Speaker, in the meantime I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming these representatives who are working very hard on a very, very difficult cancer. And we appreciate that the work that they've done, but we also remember many of their friends who are no longer with us who worked very hard on this issue as well. And so thank you very much for coming to the legislature and making sure this particular issue is on the agenda. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the Minister of Health and the member for Regina Lakeview in welcoming the guests, but I'd especially like to welcome Anne Chase. Anne Chase's daughter, Deb Clark, works for the Ministry of Finance within communications. And I know that Debbie is very, very proud of her mother.

But I also know that in the last number of years, Deb, her husband and children and other family members have participated in many Relays for Life. And I want to commend Anne for all of her hard work and also her family, and

especially Deb who works in the Ministry of Finance. I'd ask all members to welcome this fine individual to her legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too want to welcome the Saskatchewan Roughrider coaching staff. And it's a special welcome from northern Saskatchewan because I live seven and a half hours north of here, and Rider Pride is very much alive in the North.

I know that Ile-a-la-Crosse, which is my home community, have a lot of Roughrider fans and a lot of people are glued to their TV sets. So as you embark on your new season, rest assured that there's a lot of people in northern Saskatchewan — the non-Aboriginal, the First Nations, the Métis — it knows no bounds, that Roughrider Pride is alive and well and very strong in northern Saskatchewan. And we're even, we're even starting to like Geroy Simon. For a while there, there was a lot of folks that didn't like Mr. Simon when he played with BC [British Columbia]. But now that he's joined the winning team, I think we're starting to like him.

So congratulations on your good start this year in terms of preparation, and good luck for your season. And Rider Pride from the northern part of Saskatchewan is alive and well, and we wish you the very best in the upcoming season. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my honour today to introduce a constituent of mine, Louise Schweitzer who's from Archerwill. She's also the executive director of the North East Outreach and Support Services in Melfort. I want to publicly thank Louise for her leading voice on advocating for the transition house in Melfort. And I know that members have . . . her voice was heard through her MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and to the cabinet ministers and the caucus here because we have the very first transition home opening since 1989. So thank you for that.

I also want to tell you that she's here today to talk about another one of her passions, and that's ending violence against women. And some of you may have seen some of my male colleagues walking around this morning in red shoes. So I want to thank Louise for all of her work and welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to join with the minister in welcoming Louise to her Legislative Assembly here this afternoon. I had the pleasure of meeting with Louise a couple of years ago, actually almost three summers ago, and learned about the work that she was doing to try to get a shelter in Melfort. And I want to commend her for her work and her diligence, and the government on seeing that this was the right thing to do. So I welcome Louise to your legislature, and your hard work sure pays off. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for

Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members in the Assembly today, 13 grade 8 and 9 students from the MacDonald School in Stockholm, Saskatchewan. If they could give us a wave. Mr. Speaker, they're accompanied today by Laurie Johanson, Nicole Therrien, and chaperone, Patty Chern.

And I'll have the opportunity to meet with them shortly after question period, and I look forward to that. So I ask all members to welcome them to their legislature today.

[13:45]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to welcome one of my constituents to the Assembly today, Candace Savage. I can't see you, Candace, behind the clock, but I know you're there.

And I just wanted to say, Candace is an incredible writer and author, but she's much more than that. She's an ardent supporter of the grasslands in Saskatchewan and also is starting a brand new festival in Saskatoon at the end of May. So she's hard at work organizing in Saskatoon a nature festival.

She's also a great accordion player and one of the members of the Saskatoon Fiddle Orchestra. And we really missed her last week when we had our concert because she was at the Book Awards, so she couldn't be at our concert this year. So we missed you, Candace. But I would like to especially welcome you to your Legislative Assembly. So welcome.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to this Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce in the west gallery eight students from the Swanson Christian School. Give us a wave, if you would please. And they're accompanied by their teacher, Myra Hiebert, and chaperones, Merle Hiebert and Darc Loewen. And I look forward to an opportunity to chat with them a little bit after question period. I'd ask all members to please give them a warm welcome to their Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Parent: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce 51 grade 5 and 6 students in the west gallery from St. Anne School. They're here with their teachers, Patrick Brennan and Deb Johnson. They're also accompanied by their chaperones, Heather Langlois, Ione Langlois, and Patti McCullough.

Mr. Speaker, St. Anne School opened its doors in 1976. The school was named St. Anne who was the mother of Virgin Mary. She is often considered the patron saint for mothers and grandmothers.

Mr. Speaker, all of my daughters attended and completed elementary school at St. Anne's. Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to welcome these students to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I would be remiss if I didn't introduce a young lady that just snuck in the west gallery, my CA [constituency assistant] Heather Howell-Shiplack. She does a fantastic job for us up in Walsh Acres, and she does a lot of work for us when all the MLAs are in session. I think all of us agree that they do a great job in keeping us on task, and some of those have a bigger task than others. And I thank her very much for the hard work she does.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, a young man named Kris Cherewyk is seated beside her. He's a fantastic supporter of ours and he's walked a lot of miles for us on the doorsteps. I just want to say hi to him, and welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand today to present a petition on cellphone coverage for northwestern Saskatchewan. And the prayers reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

To undertake, as soon as possible, to ensure SaskTel delivers cell service to the Canoe Lake First Nations, along with the adjoining communities of Cole Bay and Jans Bay; Buffalo River First Nation, also known as Dillon, and the neighbouring communities of Michel Village and St. George's Hill; English River First Nations, also known as Patuanak, and the hamlet of Patuanak; and Birch Narrows First Nations along with their neighbouring community of Turnor Lake.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are all the neighbouring communities in these particular areas and have signed the petition from all throughout Saskatchewan — a great show of support. And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this particular petition are from Canoe Narrows. And I so present.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition calling for better care for our seniors here in Saskatchewan:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to immediately undertake meaningful steps to improve the quality of seniors' care in our province, including creating more spaces and more choices for seniors; ensuring higher standards of care in public

facilities, private facilities, and for home care; ensuring appropriate staffing levels in senior care facilities; and providing more support to help seniors remain independent in their own homes for as long as they desire.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly from a number of Saskatchewan citizens. Northern Saskatchewan is being targeted by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization to become a storage site for millions of used irradiated nuclear fuel bundles. These radioactive nuclear bundles would be shipped on provincial highways. Some provinces have already banned the storage or transport of used nuclear bundles. I'd like to read the petition:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly pass legislation to permanently ban nuclear waste storage and transportation of nuclear waste into, out of, and through Saskatchewan.

And this is signed by many citizens from Saskatoon, Birch Hills, Prince Albert, and Prud'homme, Saskatchewan. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition asking for the repaving, repair, and maintenance of the north road, Highway 102 from La Ronge to Sucker River. This road is a major highway used by buses transporting our students to schools, tourists for camping and fishing, and by the mining and forest industry. Mr. Speaker, people are very concerned for their safety. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize that the repairs and maintenance on the La Ronge road, Highway 102, is important to northern residents and must be undertaken immediately.

And in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by many good people in La Ronge and area. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Batoche.

Saskatchewan Agriculture Student Scholarship Recipient

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday I had the privilege and pleasure of speaking on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture at Sheldon Moellenbeck's graduation at Lake Lenore High School.

Mr. Speaker, Sheldon Moellenbeck was a recipient of the Saskatchewan Agriculture Student scholarship, which will help

pay for his studies at the University of Saskatchewan this fall. He was selected as one of 10 students from across Saskatchewan to receive the \$1,000 scholarship. As part of his application, Sheldon submitted an essay on why agriculture, now more than ever, is a vibrant, diverse industry.

Mr. Speaker, I have read his exceptional submission, and I believe he can expect a bright future in agriculture. Agriculture is not only farming and ranching but is a modern, diverse, technologically advanced industry. This growing province is Canada's top agrifood exporter. For the second year in a row, we're leading the way in innovations for bioscience. That is why I know Sheldon will have a promising future in agriculture in this great province.

I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating Sheldon and wishing him all the best at the University of Saskatchewan this fall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Exceptional Attendance at Community School

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to stand in the House today to speak about the success of the grade 3/4 class at St. Catherine Community School, taught by Mr. Markus Rubrecht. This class has achieved 76 full houses this year. A full house is a day where every student has made it to school. If that wasn't enough to celebrate, they've had an additional 53 days with only one student absent.

Mr. Speaker, these are the successes that we love to celebrate as educators, as parents. We often romanticize the experience of childhood and forget about the real challenges many children face. In these situations, schools can be a sanctuary and a great equalizer.

Mr. Rubrecht shared with me by email, I quote:

I wanted to share this with you because this is the kind of success that can never be acknowledged on a standardized test. Our students live complicated and difficult lives and the fact that they all made it in on 76 occasions shows their resilience and character.

I couldn't agree more. Mr. Rubrecht's approach and care demonstrates the best of education. Mr. Rubrecht, the parents, and the community, and students must be commended. Their demonstrated qualities of care, determination, and courage are essential to real learning and to building bright, strong futures for these students and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join with me in commending Mr. Rubrecht's grade 3 and 4 class. Their success is touching, inspiring, and reflective of what is truly successful about our education system — the ability to encourage all to fulfill their full potential.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Celebrating Armoury Building's 100th Anniversary

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, this week the community of Moose Jaw is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the D.V. Currie Armoury building. The celebration started last Saturday with an open house to the public. I, along with the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, toured this historic building.

It was named in honour of David Vivian Currie, a Saskatchewan soldier who was awarded the Victoria Cross following the Second World War. The armoury has been home to a variety of military units and was also used as a temporary morgue following the 1954 plane collision over Moose Jaw. It has been used as a headquarters for past floods and also used as a temporary hospital during an influenza outbreak.

The armoury is home to the Saskatchewan Dragoons, a primary reserve armed regiment of the Canadian Forces.

This Saturday afternoon the Saskatchewan Dragoons will exercise the freedom of the city by marching from the armouries, down Main Street, to city hall. The unit will retrace the route taken by the 46th Battalion as they marched to the train station to begin their journey to the World War I battlefield. The centennial celebration will conclude with the Lieutenant Governor being the special guest at a black-tie gala dinner full of military tradition and the music of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles band.

Mr. Speaker, I ask members to recognize the armoury's 100th anniversary and the important role it played in the community, as well as serving as a training depot for hundreds of soldiers who served our country over the past 100 years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Youth Hockey Championships

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, as many members know, there are limited activities in the North for youth. This is a factor in many of the social problems that our youth are faced with. Hockey provides healthy, meaningful activity during the winter months. Many of our communities are blessed with having community rinks and regular, organized team games and tournaments.

The Jonas Roberts Memorial Community Centre from Lac La Ronge Indian Band acted as the host for the recent FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] Youth Hockey Championships that took place in Saskatoon. This event was attended by 85 teams from across the province.

This type of event is so successful because of the volunteer activities of coaches, chaperones, bus drivers, mentors, and the financial support of local band councils and corporate sponsors. This year the Jonas Roberts Memorial Community Centre sent teams to compete in all divisions of the championship and made a clean sweep, winning in all the male divisions — novice, atoms, peewees, bantams, and midgets. The single female division was won by a team from Meadow Lake Tribal Council. All of the JRMCC [Jonas Roberts Memorial Community

Centre] division teams are known as the La Ronge '89ers.

Mr. Speaker, I want to especially congratulate the young Lac La Ronge Indian Band area athletes for their incredible accomplishment. And they make us so proud. I also want to acknowledge and thank Kevin Roberts, Rory Irving, and the staff of JRMCC for hosting, organizing, and coordinating this year's FSIN youth hockey tournament.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Estevan Rotary Club's 90th Anniversary

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, along with the Lieutenant Governor, I was happy to attend the 90th anniversary celebration of the Rotary Club of Estevan. Mr. Speaker, March 4th, 1923, the Rotary Club of Estevan was officially organized, and today it is a mainstay of our community.

Over the past 90 years, the Rotary Club has contributed to so many causes in our community, I couldn't possibly list them all today. Nevertheless I would like to mention the more recent contributions, including \$20,000 for the helipad to be used by STARS, \$100,000 to the new Estevan regional nursing home committee, \$50,000 to Spectra Place, and \$40,000 to Frehlick Hall, and that is just naming a very few.

Many exchange students, both incoming and outgoing, have also benefitted from the exchange program that is held every year by this local club. As we can see, Mr. Speaker, the Rotary Club's commitment to Estevan is deep and unwavering. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in recognizing the Rotary Club of Estevan's 90th anniversary and all of the fabulous work they have done for the community of Estevan over the past 90 years. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

International Men's March

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak of a unique fundraising and awareness project by the North East Outreach And Support Services. This project will be held tomorrow evening on Main Street in Melfort. And there will be some 140 participants in a walk, the majority of whom will be male. The kick is, Mr. Speaker, that the males walking in this project will be wearing 4-inch heels. This project is part of the International Men's March to stop rape, sexual assault, and gender violence. The horrific news story of the three Ohio women held against their will is a chilling reminder of the distance we have to go in the fight against violence.

The fundraising from this project will go to the new transition house announced in this year's budget. And I am very pleased and proud to say that I will be walking in 4-inch heels and will be joined by the Ministers of Justice, Social Services, Crown Investments, as well as the member from Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have Louise Schweitzer, executive director of the North East Outreach, with us this afternoon. Louise and her crew have done a tremendous amount

of good work on the transition house project and on the walk a mile project.

As I said, I am proud to be a part of this with so many of my colleagues, and yes, Mr. Speaker, like the rest, I am more than a little nervous to be walking in 4-inch heels. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

World Ovarian Cancer Day

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May 8th has been proclaimed World Ovarian Cancer Day. Cancer is a terrible disease in all of its forms. There is at this time no reliable early detection test for ovarian cancer. It is often described as the disease that whispers because its symptoms are not obvious and they can easily be missed by the women they affect.

When ovarian cancer is diagnosed early, there is a 90 per cent five-year survival rate. I was also encouraged to learn that the five-year survival rates are on the rise. To build on this positive trend and to prevent more of our mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and daughters from dying of ovarian cancer, it's so important to make people more aware of the symptoms and the factors that increase a woman's risk.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to learn more about ovarian cancer. Know the risk factors. Know the warning signs. Talk to a doctor. Access some of the comprehensive and readily available resources from advocacy groups like the Canadian Cancer Society, Ovarian Cancer Canada, and Ovarian Cancer Awareness & Treatment in Saskatchewan, also known as OCATS. If ovarian cancer is the disease that whispers, let's arm ourselves with the knowledge that will allow us to hear it coming and stop it in its tracks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Support for People with Disabilities

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party government has taken some good steps in terms of programs and services for people with disabilities. We recognize that and we support that. But we also know, Mr. Speaker, despite a whole lot of Sask Party fanfare and spin, there are still many people with disabilities whose needs are not being met.

Trina Mackie has chronic muscular dystrophy. She lives in a Saskatoon Housing Authority building in an upper-floor apartment. Trina has to drag herself up and down the stairs. Her apartment is not accessible for people with mobility issues. As a result, Mr. Speaker, she has broken bones and she has suffered several concussions. The stairs in the building, Mr. Speaker, mean that in order for Trina to safely exit her building, her mother must come to the building in order to help her get out.

To the Premier: does he think it's acceptable that a woman with

muscular dystrophy who desperately needs accessible housing is stuck in an apartment with stairs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. The Leader of the Opposition noted in his preamble that we have been working hard as a government to deal with a great backlog that was there not very many years ago in terms of people who wanted the dignity of a home, and a home that was appropriate in the event that they were facing the challenges of certain disabilities, Mr. Speaker.

And the short answer to the question of the hon. member is, no we would not want that circumstance happening for this individual. And so, Mr. Speaker, I will undertake to look, together with the Minister of Social Services, to look into the case that's been raised today in the House.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This case has been brought to the attention of the minister. It was last month that the member from Saskatoon Riversdale wrote to the Minister of Social Services about Trina's situation. And the response from the Minister of Social Services in a letter dated April 24th did not provide a solution for Trina.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, the letter proudly proclaimed that the government had provided a ramp to make Trina's home accessible. But in fact, Mr. Speaker, that information is not accurate. The truth is that Trina and her family paid out of pocket in order for a carpenter to build a ramp to make the building a little bit more accessible for Trina.

My question to the Premier: does he think it's acceptable for his Minister of Social Services to try to take credit for building a ramp, when in fact she had nothing to do with it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, our office will also look into the details that have just been raised by the Leader of the Opposition. I think the Minister of Social Services will do the same, may well answer subsequent questions that come up.

We wouldn't want Trina or anyone else having to undertake these kinds of improvements facing the problems of access that someone with a disability would have, as is obviously the case here, Mr. Speaker, given the facts that have been presented by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker.

I hope there is some, I hope there is some positive in the fact that the government has placed a priority on these issues. We know there is work to be done. Even with respect to the wait-list that's been eliminated, we know that others are on it, others who have not perhaps intellectual disabilities but physical disabilities. We want to take these matters very, very seriously and we'll look into the details of the case that the Leader of the Opposition has raised.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Trina's doctors and physiotherapists have written letters urging the government to help Trina move into a safe home immediately. Trina's MLA, the member for Riversdale, has been a strong advocate. But the Sask Party government has been stubbornly dismissive of the concerns that were brought forward in Trina's case. Instead of recognizing the urgent need for accessible housing, Mr. Speaker, the minister took credit for building a ramp when in fact she didn't have anything to do with it. Trina needs action from the government, Mr. Speaker, not self-congratulatory news releases.

Even though Trina is on the priority wait-list for accessible housing, Trina was told that the wait would be at least a year. That's not acceptable, Mr. Speaker, because any wait risks injury to Trina, a single mother with muscular dystrophy in Saskatoon.

My question to the Premier: when our economy is doing so well, why is it that even the priority wait-list for accessible housing is so long?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite and to everyone in the Assembly, I think the members know that whenever we have somebody with a disability and there is an issue, I would like to look into it and so would all of my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, there's more work to do in this area and I will look into this case right away and make sure that we can find out what is happening. I understand that there is a wait-list for priority cases and I also know that there are people that come forward and need help right away, and there's others that are saying, okay this can wait a little time.

Mr. Speaker, there's always more work to be done. We understand that when we became government, that there was a list of individuals that needed support. We continue to look at that list. We continue to move people forward that require more immediate help. And I assure you I'll be looking into this case right now.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, looking into the case is a good thing to do but I wish, Mr. Speaker, the minister had looked into the case when the member from Riversdale wrote a letter on April 18th and then the minister replied to the member on April 24th, not addressing the urgent need and the risks posed to Trina by staying in a second floor building with stairs when she has muscular dystrophy and cannot get up and down the stairs. Because of the situation, Mr. Speaker, Trina has broken bones. She has suffered several concussions because she is unable to safely exit the building.

People can't understand, Mr. Speaker, when the economy is doing well, why people like Trina are placed in this situation. They also can't understand when someone — Trina's on the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program — when someone like Trina has to pay for her own modifications to her Sask Housing unit in order to be safe, things like raising

a toilet seat, installing grab bars, putting a pole beside the bed so she can safely get in and out of bed, building a ramp which the minister took credit for, Mr. Speaker.

Why is it, when the economy is doing well, that someone on SAID who is in a building that is not suitable for them is forced to pay for these expenses out of her own pocket when she is in such great need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I am aware that there are individuals that require more help all the time. And I was aware of that when we became government when there was 440 people that at that time the members opposite didn't seem to think were a priority at all. I also know that there are 215 more people who are receiving services that were not receiving services five years ago because it wasn't a priority.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent money on programs like SAID. We've spent \$62 million on programs for people with disabilities because the members opposite didn't think it was important. We've spent money on the rental housing disabilities supplement. We've spent money on wait-lists. We've spent money on approved private service homes. I'm ensuring that there's more money for recruitment and retention of staff. We've spent money through Advanced Education on making sure that there's workforce development programs. Mr. Speaker, the strategy that was announced on Monday by our government to ensure that we'd be doing . . . taking more steps is something that we're all committed to.

Mr. Speaker, we have work to do; I will admit it. But I'm not going to take very many lessons from the people opposite who were willing to put 440 people on a list and ignore them.

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

Funding for Post-Secondary Education

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government has got money to spend when it comes to boastful billboards and spin and PR [public relations], but when it comes to funding post-secondary institutions, it's a different story.

With this year's budget, the Sask Party handed off tough decisions to be made throughout the post-secondary education sector. At the University of Saskatchewan, the budget shortfall to date has meant tuition increases, layoffs, the closure of Kenderdine Campus, and they even have to hock their flock of sheep.

We received word yesterday afternoon that the University of Regina will need to raise tuition 4.4 per cent for undergraduate students and 10 per cent for most graduate students. Mr. Speaker, the universities are struggling to balance their books, but the hard truth is that many of the costs are being put on to the shoulders of students and their families.

How can the Sask Party government put up boastful billboards about advanced education funding when the reality is that programs are being ended, layoffs are ongoing, and tuition is

going up yet again?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite specifically raised the issue of closure of Kenderdine Campus. In November of last year, the university announced that they were suspending services there effective until 2016 so that they could assess what can be done with this property that was built in the 1930s.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, in May 6th scrum, he said this: "We keep having these hard decisions being made by the university administration, be it the decision to eliminate and sell off the Kenderdine Campus, which has been a jewel in the University of Saskatchewan's holdings . . ."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you and I want to tell the public that there was no decision made to close the Kenderdine Campus permanently or sell it off. The member opposite is absolutely wrong and has taken something totally out of context and ought not do that.

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

Mr. McCall: — I welcome the clarification from the minister, and we'll be interested to see how this works out after the three-year temporary closure concludes, Mr. Speaker. But the fact is, as pointed out by Stats Canada back in the fall, students in Saskatchewan pay more for tuition than most Canadians. Province-wide, the average cost of tuition was over \$6,000. And that was last year, Mr. Speaker, before these increases. In 2007, students paid around \$4,500 a year in tuition at the University of Regina. Now, under the Sask Party, the average tuition at the U of R [University of Regina] is \$5,788, and rising a further 4.4 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, that's an increase of \$1,400 per year for a four-year degree. That's over \$5,000 more for an average four-year degree now than in 2007. I'm sure we'll hear more from the minister about what they're doing around student supports, but maybe he could also answer how it is that when the Sask Party government gives a student a grant on the one hand, why do they take it back with tuition increases on the other?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for recognizing the fact that we are doing something significant for students in our province. We've included the Saskatchewan advantage scholarship, which provides \$2,000 for high school graduates. Mr. Speaker, in the 2011 NDP [New Democratic Party] platform, they called for a tuition freeze that would have cost some \$60 million. Mr. Speaker, we are being realistic, we are being practical, and we are doing things properly in our province.

Between 1994 and 2007, tuition was increased very substantially under the NDP government. At the University of

Saskatchewan during that period of time, tuition increased 99.2 per cent; the University of Regina, 88.6 per cent; SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], a sad figure of 263 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, we'll work hard to ensure that education in our province stays affordable and practical and, Mr. Speaker, we're proud of the educational institutions in our province.

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

Mr. McCall: — Again, Mr. Speaker, no end of boast and blame over on the other side, but when the U of R [University of Regina] finds itself in this position mainly because the Sask Party government is shortchanging post-secondary education . . . The university itself says so in the budget documents. "A 2013-14 operating grant increase in the order of 2 per cent will significantly impair the U of R's ability to maintain the quality of programs and to promote growth and employment in Saskatchewan."

They go on to say further, Mr. Speaker, "Post-secondary education in Saskatchewan suffers from significant underfunding and an educational deficit." That's on page 22, Mr. Speaker. The university further points out that Saskatchewan is now eighth — eighth, Mr. Speaker — in the country when it comes to funding post-secondary education as a share of the budget.

So, Mr. Speaker, why do we see the Sask Party government bragging and boasting around advanced education funding when the reality is that programs are being ended, layoffs are ongoing, and tuition is going up yet again?

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the University of Regina has received an increase in funding in operating since '07-08 of some 36 per cent — \$105.3 million. Since that period of time, so since we formed government, \$59.6 million in additional capital. Fifty-nine per cent of University of Regina funding comes from the province, and it is roughly equivalent to every other province across Western Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, this year we have provided \$10 million for a student residence. The last time a student residence was built in the University of Regina, it was done entirely with borrowed money during when the members opposite were in government.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you how the members opposite treated the University of Regina. This is what they did: in '93-94, they reduced funding by 1.3 per cent; '94-95, minus 4 per cent; '95-96 was zero per cent; '97-98, minus point six . . . [inaudible] . . . That's their commitment, Mr. Speaker.

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

Appointments to Boards and Agencies

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over a year ago, the Premier tasked the member for Saskatoon Fairview with finding qualified women to appoint to various boards in the province. We didn't hear much about the results of this work until the Premier mentioned in passing during question period one day that the member from Fairview had provided him with names of women, and appointments had been made. Not much else was reported — no news release, no press conference, nothing.

But in answers to written questions, the government finally revealed the member for Fairview didn't actually come up with a report. Instead, after a year of work, she provided a list of 61 names of women that she believed were qualified, and that only eight of those women have since been appointed.

Mr. Speaker, there are more than 1 million people in Saskatchewan and at least half of them are women. Does the Premier really believe there are only 61 women who are qualified to serve on government boards and agencies?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. The truth is the member for Saskatoon Fairview did present a comprehensive list of great, qualified candidates, women to serve on boards and agencies of the government, Crown corporation boards, Mr. Speaker. And we have been, as vacancies come open, we have been moving to appoint more and more. In fact we did one this morning at cabinet with respect to SaskPower, Mr. Speaker.

We expect to continue to make significantly more progress in this regard because there is an imbalance. We see it even in this legislature. Political parties frankly need to do a much better job of ensuring that more and more women are running and serving here in this Legislative Assembly so that it is also more reflective of the province. Mr. Speaker, we take the matter seriously.

No the member for Fairview didn't prepare a report. We asked her to go out and do the work, and she did. She did a great job. She presented a list to the government, and we are working to implement that list to make those appointments, to the great benefit, frankly, of the agencies and boards of our province.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member for Fairview wasn't given a written mandate but instead was told to only look for lawyers, academics, women in business, or entrepreneurs. And events where the member from Fairview talked to women about their interests seemed limited to \$225 afternoon discussions and \$55-a-plate breakfasts.

The government didn't look at other sectors where we see strong women providing leadership, who many would argue are also more than capable of serving on boards — CBO [community-based organization] sector, the not-for-profit sector, labour unions, municipal governments, or First Nations.

If the Sask Party government was serious about appointing women to boards, they would have included all of the areas of our province where women are providing leadership.

Why did the Sask Party place such strict limitations on the kinds of women that made it on to the list of 61 qualified individuals? How can a woman find out if she's on the list? And if she's not, what does she need to do to get a fair chance by this government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if anyone is interested in serving on boards and agencies in the province, they should certainly come forward, talk to their MLA on either side of the aisle, and express that interest — both women and men.

Mr. Speaker, since we have been working on this particular initiative, it's important to point out that women on public sector boards in the province has increased from 30 to 35 per cent just over the last year. Mr. Speaker, women on CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] boards, on CIC boards — these are the Crown corporations of the province — have increased from 19 per cent to 30 per cent just in the last few months.

We do take the issue seriously. There is more work to be done, Mr. Speaker. I have just had a brief chat with the member for Saskatoon Fairview while listening to the preamble of the member opposite, and she confirms that the engagement, the contact with women interested in serving on boards, far surpassed the very limited scope that the member just presented in her preamble, Mr. Speaker. The task was taken very seriously, Mr. Speaker. Not only that, but the results of the task are being implemented today in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a broad range of women providing strong and capable leadership across the province and they should have the opportunity to add their skills and experience to the government's many boards and agencies. In fact that's what we thought would be the result of the work of the member for Fairview. Instead she produced a list with 61 names.

This government likes to talk about setting targets but when asked if the government has set a target to increase the number of women on boards and agencies, the minister simply answered no. Mr. Speaker, that answer's very telling because the top Crown and agencies still have a low level of women serving on their boards. Of 254 positions on major Crown and agency boards, only 27 per cent are filled by women.

Mr. Speaker, why has the Sask Party government set no targets for improving the gender balance of its boards and agencies? What concrete strategy is in place to diversify our province's ministry boards and Crown agencies?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, there are parts, Mr. Speaker,

there are parts of the preamble that are simply not true, Mr. Speaker. Since this initiative was implemented by the Government of Saskatchewan, we have seen an increase in the number of women serving on public sector boards from 30 to 35 per cent. Still not good enough, but we're making progress, Mr. Speaker. And again, women serving on CIC boards is up from 19 per cent to 30 per cent just in the last few months. Moreover the Status of Women office is providing funding to Equal Voice Saskatchewan and that goal, as the member knows there, is to increase the number of women running for public office, Mr. Speaker.

We made an important appointment just today in cabinet. We take the issue very, very seriously. Mr. Speaker, what I don't think is helpful is if that hon. member minimizes the work of the member for Fairview who took the task very seriously. And yes she presented the names of 61 individuals. Not everyone she contacted was willing to serve or had time to serve or an interest to serve.

Mr. Speaker, not only that. It's not a limited list. We invite anyone to step forward who wants to serve in this province, Mr. Speaker. We have great boards and agencies, great Crowns that could use the input of Saskatchewan people and specifically of Saskatchewan women.

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

Forest Fire Monitoring

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government is struggling to explain why they are eliminating the tower watchers who protect our province's forests in 42 towers, and replacing them with video cameras. They allege that there are occupational health and safety concerns, but they've not tabled any concrete documentation justifying the slashing of these 42 positions.

We know that the tower crews are fully trained and are outfitted with a climbing harness which is fastened to the tower, and the ladders they climb up are fully enclosed. And to lose these watchers means even more danger for the ground crews who rely on the towers for communications when they lose touch with the base.

Mr. Speaker, how can the minister suggest that the risks are so great that they justify eliminating 42 positions and put the firefighters on the ground at even greater risk?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much for the question. We've answered these questions on the floor of the House before. Just to remind hon. members on both sides of the House, occupational health and safety approached the Ministry of Environment and talked about concerns that they had for individuals that climb towers that are 80 to 90 feet high, and they did so on their own. Should something happen, of course there would be a concern.

It's something that jurisdictions across North America are looking at and are facing and are looking at trying to solve. The

idea of having two individuals go up is one that has been put forward, but the cost implications of that would be excessive.

What we are doing is employing technology, a technology that has been tried and tested in Oregon. It was a pilot that was done in Oregon. It was expanded throughout the whole state. We are doing so in a consultative way. I had a chance to talk to the mayors of 21 northern communities last Friday, along with the Minister of Government Relations. We had a good discussion about it. They understand where our goals are.

Yes there will be some challenges going forward and we'll be looking at re-employing those people wherever possible.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the minister has cited a program in Oregon but did not give the Assembly an accurate picture of that pilot project. He said that the technology has been operationally proven in North America. Mr. Speaker, we spoke with the Oregon forestry department. Dr. Dennis Lee, a protection unit forester, told us that Oregon continues to use tower observers for the majority of their forests.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, only in a small test area in the southwest coastal forest region does Oregon use the video cameras as a state pilot project. In fact, at only one unit is there a completely automated system. In the others, the cameras merely assist the human observation to provide the best forest fire prevention system. Instead of rushing the replacement, they have been planning this implementation for over six years.

Why would the Sask Party use video cameras to replace forest fire workers when there aren't jurisdictions in North America doing the same?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much for the question.

Mr. Speaker, this technology has been operationally proven across North America. Certainly I've cited Oregon as a place that has done some early work. As the member opposite herself states, that is something that has been ongoing for many, many years. Other jurisdictions in Canada are looking at it. Alberta, Ontario, and others are certainly looking at it.

It's a situation, when you're sitting in the chair of the Minister of Environment and occupational health and safety comes and expresses the concern, it's something that has to be taken very serious. As I mentioned earlier, we had a discussion with the mayors and council members of 21 northern communities last Friday and we had a good discussion back and forth. We talked about the towers. We talked about the physical fitness requirements as well are a concern.

But it's something we take very serious. We're looking across North America for best practices, and we're implementing those today in Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Acting Chair of the Economy Committee.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report that it has considered certain estimates . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order.

Mr. Hutchinson: — . . . and to present its third report. I move:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — Is the member for Athabasca wishing to enter into the debate? It hasn't started yet. And perhaps the Minister of Highways wants to have the same comments.

It has been moved by the Chair of the Economy Committee:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on the Economy 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.

[14:30]

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 50, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2012* without amendment.

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

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

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 50, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2012* and that it now be read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 50 — *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2012*

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 50, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2012* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 78, *The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2012* without amendment.

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Social Services has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 78, *The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2012* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 78 — *The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2012*

Hon. Ms. Draude: — I move that this bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Social Services that Bill No. 78, *The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2012* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the chairman of the Crown and Central Agencies Committee.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its third report. I move:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair of the Crown and Central Agencies Committee:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies 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 chairman of the Crown and Central Agencies Committee.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 69, *The Information Services Corporation Act* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be considered before Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

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

The Speaker: — The Minister of Highways and Infrastructure has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 69, *The Information Services Corporation Act* and that the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 69 — *The Information Services Corporation Act*

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure that Bill No. 69, *The Information Services Corporation Act* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the chairman of the Crown and Central Agencies Committee.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 45, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012* without amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of

the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read a third time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Highways and Infrastructure has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill No. 45, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012* and that the bill now be read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 45 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012*

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure that Bill No. 45, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012* 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

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Government Whip.

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 556 through 557.

The Speaker: — The Deputy Government Whip has tabled responses to questions 556 through 557 inclusive.

Committee of Finance. I do now leave the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Executive Council Vote 10

Subvote (EX01)

The Chair: — The business before the committee of estimates is the . . . I'll call the committee to order and we'll get started. The business before the committee is the estimates for

Executive Council. The first item of business is the main estimates for Executive Council, vote 10, found on page 65 of the Estimates book.

Before we start, I'll make a couple of comments. We are in Committee of Finance. The rules are somewhat different from the standing committees. One of the most notable differences that people watching and our members will notice is that the members participating in the estimates today and in the discussions stand at their desks. And one of the major differences in this committee versus the standing committees is that only members can participate in the discussions. And the officials . . . Certainly the Premier has officials here with him here to help him with the answers and so on, but it will be the Premier that will be asking. And all members of the legislature are members of this committee.

So with that, I would ask the Premier to introduce his officials, and after he has introduced his officials I will call the executive subvote 1 and then the Premier can make his opening statement. I recognize the Premier.

[14:45]

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure for me to be able to introduce the officials that have joined me today as we prepare for a few hours of estimates. On my immediate left is the deputy minister to the Premier, Doug Moen. The associate deputy minister of Intergovernmental Affairs is on his left, Wes Jickling. Bonita Cairns, also with Executive Council, to help us with some of the corporate services questions and finance questions that may arise. Beside her is Graham Stewart who handles House business and Executive Council. Also Reg Downs, one of my senior advisors. And I don't think I introduced James Saunders, and I will do that now. Notwithstanding his poor taste in football teams, he is the associate deputy minister of cabinet planning. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Thank you, Premier. The business before the committee, as I stated, is Executive Council vote 10, subvote (EX01), central management and services. I call upon the Premier to make an opening statement if he so wishes. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. We look forward to this afternoon and the exchange that's about to take place. We are, Mr. Chair, here to answer the questions from the Leader of the Opposition and, if he so decides, from other members of the opposition. We will undertake to provide those answers here today and may take a pause as a result of that to consult with officials to make sure the answers are accurate and fulsome. If we cannot provide an answer immediately, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, we will undertake to provide the information to the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite at the earliest possible opportunity.

By way of introduction, Mr. Chair, let me just say that I have had the honour of serving in the role that the current Leader of the Opposition has. I congratulate him again on his win of the NDP leadership campaign. Mr. Chairman, I think it's fair to say that there are really two roles when you are the Leader of the Opposition, or two parts to the role, should I say that perhaps?

The first is that you do hold the government accountable. And certainly the new Leader of the Opposition has been working at that, doing a good job of asking questions of the government on specific cases, on policy, holding the government accountable in question period. We know that will also happen today, this afternoon.

Mr. Chairman, there's another role for the Leader of the Opposition as I recall it, and that is also to propose. There is a . . . The opposition leader does oppose, but I think it's important too that the Leader of the Opposition, that the opposition party itself, indeed, Mr. Chairman, is proposing things as well.

It's interesting. I think the Leader of the Opposition agrees with that supposition by the way, Mr. Chair, because I've read the materials that he had put forward when he was campaigning for the leadership position. There are issues, by the way, that probably need clarification early on with respect to energy policy and some of the other NDP's election platform that's no longer on their website, as well as the questions that he has.

But, Mr. Chairman, I note that on his leadership campaign website, and I'm quoting now, it says: "Cam's vision includes more meaningful debate in the legislature." It goes on to say, "We can facilitate . . ." and this is about the Leader of the Opposition and about what's about to happen:

We can facilitate a richer debate by restructuring the rules of the Legislative Assembly including to allow questions to be asked of MLAs after they deliver each speech in the legislature, meaning [the quote continues] that they are held accountable for their words and called upon to expand on their thoughts and ideas.

I think that is a very wise statement for a leadership candidate to make. And it also I think, Mr. Chairman, should inform all of us, both sides — myself and the Leader of the Opposition — as we engage in this exchange that we look forward to this afternoon.

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

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Chair, for your explanation at the beginning of . . . your opening remarks about how the afternoon will flow, and the format and the structure and the role of members. Thank you also to the Premier for his opening remarks. And welcome to the officials as well who are joining us today that help facilitate this process, recognizing on both sides there are a lot of people involved in making this legislature work well and effectively in allowing political parties to work well. And, Mr. Speaker, it's important to recognize the contributions that staff people make on both sides of the House.

In listening to the Premier's opening remarks, I do think it is important to emphasize the importance of this type of format to democracy and what occurs here in the Assembly. For people that often watch, we know that the committee process in estimates is a hugely important time to ask questions, to shine a light on areas where there perhaps needs to be a bit more light shone where we need to ask important questions and figure out exactly what the government is thinking on certain items and

why they've taken certain positions and why they have taken certain actions.

And this format here, Mr. Speaker, is in fact one of the very important venues where this occurs, where the Leader of the Opposition — this is my first Premier's estimates as the Leader of the Opposition — where I can interact with the Premier in asking questions that build on things that we've been talking about through question period and things that we haven't had a chance to address at the same time.

The Premier's opening remarks, Mr. Speaker, about the idea of holding a government to account as well as putting forward good ideas, that's most certainly the role of opposition, Mr. Speaker. And I welcome that debate and that process that will unfold between now and the next election. Today, Mr. Speaker, is an opportunity to ask questions to the Premier and to understand why in fact they have taken a certain course of action.

I'd like to start off the discussion, Mr. Speaker, with something that we've been talking about in question periods and in committee as well, and that's the issue of seniors' care, something that's hugely important to Saskatchewan families, because it's not just about a system; it's about the level and the type and the quality of care that is provided to our loved ones. Depending on which generation we belong to, sometimes that's a partner, sometimes that's a parent, and sometimes that is a grandparent. And we know, Mr. Speaker, from a number of people who have come to the legislature through this session, we think of Carrie Klassen and we think of Lynne Seaborne who have come forward with situations based on the experiences they've had in their families where they've voiced some real concerns about the quality and the level of care provided to their loved ones.

Central to the issues that have been brought forward by the Saskatchewan people, it has to do with the issue of chronic understaffing in many facilities, Mr. Speaker, and how this is having an effect on the quality of care that's provided, having an effect on call buttons, whether they're answered in a prompt way, whether someone is left unattended on a toilet for too many hours, whether someone missed a regularly scheduled bath that they most certainly deserve for dignity, Mr. Speaker. These are the things that concern families, when we see individuals falling through cracks and the level of care not being provided. And when the economy's doing well, Mr. Speaker, people expect — and rightfully so — expect the right level of care provided to their loved ones.

So my first question to the Premier is, does he have any concerns about staffing levels in our province's care facilities?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. This has been the source of some debate in question period, as it should be. Cases have been brought forward, as they should be. And then it's up to the government to look into them and determine, Mr. Speaker, just the extent of the challenges that's being presented by the Leader of the Opposition and also the extent of the problem that exists.

The Leader of the Opposition, in his preamble, used the words chronic shortages or something to that effect. I'm not sure exactly the word. Mr. Chairman, we know that in certain circumstances there are issues around the staffing level. But again I think we risk sacrificing fact and then what follows from fact, improving the situation, we risk sacrificing that for hyperbole and we'll lose the chance to make progress if we're not, you know, if we're not true to the circumstances that exist in terms of how we depict them.

Because, Mr. Chairman, we know that in the province of Saskatchewan under the Saskatchewan Party government there has been a great increase in the number of health care professionals, both that are unionized, that are non-unionized. This is true, Mr. Chairman, of LPNs [licensed practical nurse]. It's true of RNs [registered nurse] — 1,000 more RNs practising. It's true of doctors, though the doctor shortage still exists in Saskatchewan. But there are 200-plus more doctors practising than when we took office.

Mr. Chair, we know that some of these health care professionals are working in long-term care. Just by definition, they're absolutely involved in providing long-term care. What the minister has highlighted as the plan for the government, as members of this committee will know, is to task the CEOs [chief executive officer] and the senior teams of the regions to get on to the floor of the long-term care facilities across the province to engage in the front-line staff, to review, for example, things like assessment. We are using an assessment tool to determine the kind of care, the level of care that ought to be accorded to seniors. We're using an assessment that dates back to the NDP administration of the 1990s. Times were different then. Facilities themselves have changed, Mr. Chairman. We don't see the same configurations now in terms of long-term care facilities. So we've also indicated it's time to review that assessment. It's time perhaps to modernize the assessment, not just for the fact that we have different complements of health care providers, but different configurations of long-term care facilities.

Mr. Chair, it is important to note that when we took office — and it's not that long ago; it might seem longer for some in the Assembly, but it is not that long ago — we took over a situation where there were huge deficits in terms of the number of health care workers in the province, huge deficits. The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses said very plainly to the then NDP government . . . And the member would know that. He was working with the Saskatchewan Medical Association. I think he was in health care research. I'm sure he would have followed closely to the debate. They said to the then government, we're 1,000 nurses short in the province. The doctors came forward. There was doctor shortages as well, Mr. Chairman.

And so with respect to the human resource deficit that existed in health care, we moved to act on it. We struck a partnership with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. It was an historic partnership. We have now hired . . . We now see over 1,000 nurses practising only five years later, more than were there when members opposite were the government. We do see more doctors practising. There are more LPNs. There are more people providing health care on the front lines in this province. Is there enough yet? Well no. There's examples brought forward by the Leader of the Opposition that might indicate we

need to focus on staff complements and are doing just that to improve the situation.

There was another deficit that existed as well, Mr. Chair, that I think it's important for . . . If the Leader of the Opposition is going to raise the issues, as he should, but if he was going to raise them and maximize their credibility, I think it would be a good chance for him to admit about that deficit that the NDP government left to the people of Saskatchewan when they left office, not just in terms of human resources but also in terms of beds. Because under the New Democratic Party — and he just needs to turn around and talk to his Health critic who was a Health minister — we saw the closure of long-term care beds, the closure of over 1,000 long-term care beds in the province of Saskatchewan. And moreover, Mr. Chair, we saw the government fail to build any more capacity into the system. Mr. Chairman, that catches up to you, year after year after year, exacerbated by the closure of 52 health care facilities.

So, Mr. Chairman, I just want to say that this is a very important issue. We want to make sure our seniors are well taken care of. We want to make sure our front-line staff feel that they actually have the resources to get the job done. The minister has laid out a plan to achieve that.

I understand, by the way, in a scrum recently, I think this week, the Leader of the Opposition has finally indicated that his position I think, and maybe he'll correct it if I'm wrong, is to have a ratio I think for staffing complement. The experts in the system tell us this is not a political decision, tell us that might not be the way to go because it doesn't recognize the different levels of care required by residents. It doesn't recognize the kinds of institutions we're talking about, facilities, in terms of their configuration.

So, Mr. Chairman, rather than a ratio, an arbitrary number — and I don't know if he said the number yet, just that we needed a ratio — we've said that we want our health region engaged, analyzing each facility for the right complement, and moreover, Mr. Chair, that we would look at the assessment tool to make sure that seniors are getting the care that they so richly deserve in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The individuals that have come to the legislature like Carrie and Lynne have told their stories and have said because of the understaffing in facilities, because the ratios are not adequate, they have seen too many instances of seniors falling through the cracks.

My question to the Premier: will his government support the establishment of ratios for specific levels of care in order to ensure that Saskatchewan people do not fall through the cracks?

[15:00]

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — No, Mr. Chairman, we don't believe the ratio will serve the health care needs of the province of Saskatchewan, will serve the needs of long-term care patients. And again this is not a decision that the government's come to

from a political standpoint. It's a decision we've come to inform by those who are on the front lines and those who are in the business of providing health care right across the province.

For example, Mr. Chairman, I invite the Hon. Leader of the Opposition to consider the kinds of facilities that exist around the province. They're very different as you go around Saskatchewan. They're different in urban Saskatchewan than they are in rural Saskatchewan. The mix of what used to be known . . . The member will know, nominally, the level of care was described as 1, 2, 3, and 4 for seniors. It's not really used now — level 3 and 4 to some extent — but really we've moved away from that kind of characterization. But, Mr. Speaker, on that spectrum for the sake of this debate, Mr. Chair, level 1 was obviously the lightest level of care required for a senior — 2, 3, 4 — and 4 is the most intensive. You can have a situation in rural Saskatchewan with relatively few beds but a very large number, a higher number of, proportionately, of level 4 patients, people who need maximum care. Mr. Chair, that kind of institution's going to need to have a much more flexible approach to the complement of staff than a ratio would provide.

One of the examples that was raised by the Leader of the Opposition was Sunset Extencare in one of the particular cases. Mr. Chair, I think it's interesting to note that the facility administrator, in conjunction with RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region], looked at this very issue with respect to the amount of staffing that was there. Staffing issues were a high priority at a meeting that happened earlier this year, and there's a target set to hire 30 additional continuing care assistants within eight months. Those targets were set in August. The target has been met. They've also hired 17 professional staff in that time as well.

So, Mr. Chairman, the point is we see continued progress on this issue, with more work needed to be done. But, Mr. Chairman, it's worth repeating: we are digging ourselves, in health care and especially in long-term care, out of a big hole that was left by a previous administration that closed long-term care beds, did not train the proper complement of health care workers because they also stopped funding seats at the medical school, to the extent we needed them, I should say, and especially in the nursing program. All of these decisions made . . . And members opposite may tire of hearing about what happened under their administration. The bottom line though, Mr. Chairman, is the seed for the deficits we're dealing with were sown then by decisions taken around training the proper complement of medical people in this province and closing long-term care beds instead of opening.

Dare I also say, Mr. Chairman, that the ideological approach of the government — that really if it couldn't be a government institution, it wasn't going to happen — also I think restricted the innovation, the creativity of Saskatchewan non-government agencies, some faith-based organizations, to participate in building and opening actually beds in the province, as we've seen with Amicus and as we may see in the future in other projects around the province.

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

Mr. Broten: — It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, in the day-to-day operations of a care facility caring for seniors in the province,

the Premier and the government are unwilling to establish levels of care ratio, ratios of staff to residents. But during essential services, Mr. Speaker, when essential services legislation would be in place, they're more than happy to set and determine what the standards are for appropriate levels of care. So the argument there doesn't quite hold water.

My question to the Premier is, does he think it's ever acceptable for seniors in care facilities to miss their baths for weeks at a time?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — No.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As referenced in the Premier's remarks earlier on in this question, something we've discussed in question period has been the Health minister's approach and the government's approach in dealing with issues of care for seniors in long-term care facilities. And the response that we've seen from members opposite is to dispatch CEOs, senior executives into facilities on a more frequent basis.

Mr. Speaker, I think visits by senior executives and CEOs are fine in themselves and should occur most certainly. But, Mr. Speaker, unless those CEOs are providing the additional care that seniors need and deserve in care facilities, it's not a real solution and it's not really addressing the problem. It's not addressing the concerns that people like Carrie and Lynne have brought forward.

So my question to the Premier: does he really think that more CEO tours of care facilities is the answer for better seniors' care in this province?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, I think it's important to point out that under the previous administration there were no ratios. If this was the ticket, this was the silver bullet to deal with this challenge, I would have assumed that the New Democratic Party would have implemented it when in office. The bottom line is they were very hesitant, and remain so today, very hesitant to set any targets at all. We've heard the member call for ratios but not indicating what those ratios might be or that he's prepared to look at it more carefully and weigh in on that particular subject.

But the fact that there are not any ratios of front-line staff to patients, he equates that with level of care, Mr. Chairman. I think that's particularly misguided. I don't think we want to use a ratio of front-line workers to patients, to long-term care patients as the sole determinant of the level of care they're going to receive.

We're going to rely on front-line staff. And when they say there is a shortage, and we've been hearing those concerns as well, we need to respond to that, Mr. Chairman. We do have the previous structure of level 1, 2, 3, 4 that in its current application helps us determine — and health care workers — helps them to determine the level of care that is needed.

You know, I note in the *Weyburn Review* when the Leader of the Opposition was there for the NDP spring banquet, he was very dismissive, as he is now, of CEOs. He said, "CEOs won't make a difference."

Mr. Chairman, I don't agree. I don't agree. We have some excellent health care managers in this province. We have very good CEOs in the regions. One of the former CEOs is now the deputy minister of Health, Mr. Chairman, widely regarded in this country as perhaps the finest deputy minister you'll find in the country with respect to health.

I would be very comfortable if CEOs of that calibre, and even the deputy minister of Health, is tasked by the Minister of Health to go to these long-term care facilities, meet with the staff, look at what possibly can be achieved in terms of more resources. Perhaps it's a reallocation of sources. Perhaps it's leaning out, even, configurations of facilities. We've actually seen that in health care facilities around the province where a new approach to design has literally saved the time of, frankly, just walking through a facility and provided more opportunity for health care workers to bring care to patients.

It's maybe a good question period clip or a media clip to say, well we need a ratio. But, Mr. Chairman, what is lost in that kind of analysis is all of the other elements that can go into improving care. Do I think CEOs visiting the regions, tasked by the ministers to do it immediately, to talk to the front-line workers, to see what's happening with patients first-hand . . . These are the CEOs by the way who allocate the budget. So to be dismissive of what good they can bring to this, I don't think it's fair, frankly, Mr. Chairman, and I also think it's a wrong-headed approach.

We absolutely want them in those facilities. We want the report back very, very quickly. And, Mr. Chairman, we want to look at the assessment, the intake assessment for patients, for residents of long-term care to see if that should be updated and improved and to see if that might help alleviate some of the issues that the Leader of the Opposition has raised.

Mr. Chairman, also important to this whole discussion is notwithstanding the fact that there are certainly issues and cases of seniors — and as the member references, grandmas and grandpas — that we want to be very serious about, there is also a great track record of health care workers and facilities in this province, government and non-government, who have responded very well to the lean initiative, responded very well, frankly, to some of the decisions that CEOs have made, that the deputy has made, that ministers have directed, that are seeing . . . that are getting great care in Saskatchewan. And of course that's very much due to those front-line health care workers that are doing that.

There is improvements that are possible, and we've laid out a plan to achieve them. We don't believe setting a ratio is going to do that, Mr. Chairman. We think we need to look very carefully, quickly at the issues at the long-term care facilities, some of the ones that the member has raised, and have those recommendations come back to the region and then to the minister about how we can move very quickly to improve care for seniors in the province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Premier's remarks when he talked about what needs to occur and he talked about listening to front-line health care workers, and most certainly that is a very big part of what needs to occur in order to ensure that the concerns that have been brought forward by Saskatchewan people like Carrie and Lynne are actually addressed in order to ensure that our grandparents actually have the level of care that they deserve.

In the Premier's earlier response when asked if it was acceptable for a senior to miss a weekly bath in a care facility, the Premier said, no. So my question to the Premier: if it is not acceptable — we know that situations like this occur, based on what front-line health care workers have told us and based on what some families have told us — if it is not acceptable, does he believe that the CEO tours is the fix for that solution? Especially given the fact that when we talk with health care front-line workers, Mr. Speaker, what they tell us is that they are very often, very often running short-staffed — that the number of people that should be on the shift in order to provide the right level of care to seniors, in order to ensure that people receive their meals, in order to ensure that seniors receive their baths, in order that seniors receive the attention when a call button is hit, Mr. Speaker — my question to the Premier: does he think more CEO tours is the solution to that problem?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well to say that when a case like that's raised either on the floor of the Assembly or maybe the government receives a letter from a constituent or an MLA raises a case like that — certainly MLAs on our side of the House do that — they don't wait for a CEO tour. Again it's a very simplistic sort of analysis or view of the exchange and meant, I think, to maximum some political benefit.

I would just say this to my honourable friend. When we hear of a case like this, we want to check into it as quickly as possible. Health ministry officials monitor question period for example. I think CEOs do as well, and they want to be able to be in contact with facilities if they're raised to see what's happened in terms of the case that's been raised.

You know sometimes, Mr. Chairman, there are other facts to a story around why baths are not provided. Sometimes it has to do with their medical care. Sometimes it has to do with proximity to surgery they've had, and so we want to be able to check into those things very, very quickly. When that member raises a case in the Legislative Assembly, or any member in this House, we want to take them seriously. We want to move. The CEOs tour is about finding the long-term solution for this, reporting back to the regions and the government about what might be possible.

I'll tell you what we will not do, Mr. Chairman. We'll not take the approach of the New Democratic Party when they were in office and we brought forward these cases, as the member quite rightly is doing now in this session. We will not say, as the current Health critic said — the then Health minister — when he was asked about these cases coming forward in this building,

some of them long-term care, his Health critic said, and I quote, "Clearly Mr. Wall hasn't been getting enough press time, and so practically he's coming back with the patient of the day." I can't imagine anything more dismissive than that. And while we need to be doing better on our side and while we will continue to earnestly look at the cases that are raised, Mr. Chairman, what we will not say, what we will not do is be as dismissive as members opposite, as his Health critic was when they sat on these benches.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, what's dismissive is when a Saskatchewan citizen comes forward with a concern about their family, such as the case that we had with respect to Jennifer and her brother Devon, Mr. Speaker, and to have the Minister of Crown Investments go out in the rotunda and blatantly try to discredit the citizen. I think that is the ultimate form of disrespect to someone bringing forward a concern.

The Provincial Auditor has also spoken, Mr. Speaker, about the serious concerns about the quality of care that seniors face in many facilities. There was a report issued — I believe it was in December, Mr. Speaker — where there were concerns about absence of hand soap, water that was too hot that could burn people, blocked fire exits. And this all had to do with, Mr. Speaker, what the auditor identified as the improper oversight by the Ministry of Health when it comes to processes to regulate personal care homes in accordance with *The Personal Care Homes Act*.

My question to the Premier: can he please report how the government has followed up on these concerns that were raised by the auditor?

[15:15]

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, in the member's preamble he referenced a case with respect to a case that he brought forward in the legislature and comments from the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation. She was a backup then to the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Chairman, it wasn't a case of trying to discredit anyone. It was a case of trying to present the facts because the case had been presented by that member — and we'll get into the Bayliss situation if he wants to — that were not quite the whole picture. I'll just leave it at that, that programs had been offered, not quite right, and we respect the parent's right to reject them. And they stay on the list, and we continue to work with them.

In the case of the family from Swift Current, what he had failed to do was find out all of the facts, which included this important fact: that the son of the Bayliss's was offered a permanent group home space last spring that they held for six months, they kept open for six months until Southwest Homes — which is a fantastic non-government agency that does great work — until they could wait no longer and had to fill the space.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to that particular issue, I can report to this Assembly that when we took over as government, I noted, as the MLA for Swift Current, that there were 25 people

waiting for a group home space in Swift Current. I can also report to the House, I can also report to the House that within about three years, the list was zero. Now some have moved to town. Others have put a request in for more space. And as the Minister of Social Services has said, we're going to deal with it on an ongoing basis. We'll not let them build up. So, Mr. Chairman, I think it's important to note what the Minister of Crown Investment Corporation and what I did earlier this week is to present the rest of the story, which I think is germane and important if we're going to have the kind of fulsome debate that I would hope the member wishes to have.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to the auditor's recommendations around some of the facilities, members of the House will know. They'll have read the auditor's report. They'll understand that in the cases of certain facilities, there are concerns around exits for example, around configuration and plans. And so we take those very seriously. In order for the government to provide a full disclosure for example at licensing, a full disclosure to the public about these issues — around exits, around the safety of the particular facilities that we're talking about, long-term care facilities — in order to provide that transparent report back to the people, we will need the legislative change. And I'm informed by the Minister of Health, they're working on that legislation now to respond very directly to the questions from the auditor.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've had concerns raised on the issue of home care that's provided here in the province as well, specifically in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, the situation of hundreds of people in the region being informed that their home care services were being eliminated and that they should turn to the yellow pages.

The case that we talked about in question period, Mr. Speaker, was the situation of Michael Lilley, who has COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease]. And the absence of home care often would put him into a state where he could require hospital attention, which would be more costly and most importantly could harm Michael's health.

To the Premier: will he admit that the scope of home care is declining under his watch?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. The answer is no, that's not the case. There are more people in the Regina Health Region, for example, receiving home care now than there was a year ago. It is true, Mr. Chairman, that the region is trying to assess the home care needs and focus home care, to the extent possible, on the medical side directly to the health care, knowing that sometimes the two are linked.

I would note, Mr. Chairman, that on this account, it seems that his Health critic in this last month agreed with the minister. In fact there's a quote from the *Leader-Post* that says, "Nilson and Duncan agreed there are better ways to use well-trained health-care professionals than doing laundry . . ." Mr. Chairman, I think that what's referenced here is the fact that there are actually more people getting home care now in this

particular region in Regina than there was before. That answers the member's question. And that, Mr. Chairman, also then I think leads us to a discussion of the focus of the home care itself which I think the region is looking at.

The particular case in question is being reviewed, by the way. There's an interesting extrapolation that the hon. member is making in all of these cases. He'll present an individual case or maybe even a few individual cases and make an extrapolation about the whole system. He's just tried to do that at home care. He's incorrect, Mr. Speaker, as we see home care expanding.

And also in the budget, we see a \$2 million new home care pilot here in this particular region. This will be focused very much on some emergent needs that occur from time to time for seniors who can still avoid a hospital stay if there's a very focused and acute home care provided at that particular moment. Notionally, that's what that pilot's going to be all about.

The bottom line is this: our government believes that we need more home care, not less. And more than just talking about it, we've acted. We're moving on the pilot, and there are more home care recipients now for example in the region he's referenced than there were previously.

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

Mr. Broten: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's good to hear that Mr. Lilley's situation is being reviewed. But this is the problem. In situations where people aren't receiving the care that they need, what we're finding increasingly, unless their issue is brought to the Assembly and the government is forced to look at it and not just dismiss the issue, Mr. Speaker, individuals fall through the cracks. And while this may work for Mr. Lilley that there may be some review of his situation and the services provided to him, one must wonder how many individuals who have not come forward in a public way, Mr. Speaker, are in a similar situation and whose result of being in that situation, Mr. Speaker, will have consequences for the health care system in terms of the down-the-road costs for those individuals but most importantly will have consequences for the health and quality of life that they are experiencing.

Another issue on the issue of seniors' care, Mr. Speaker, that inevitably faces all of us and faces all families here in Saskatchewan and something that doesn't receive nearly the amount of attention and discussion that it deserves is also the issue of end-of-life care. And while, Mr. Speaker, it can be a difficult topic to discuss, for families who go through the process of losing a loved one and wrestling with the care and coming to terms with that stage of life, it's so important to have the right types of end-of-life care in place for people in the province so that families can make the best of a very difficult situation.

My question to the Premier: one thing that could most certainly help with families going through the process of losing a loved one — and we see this example in many other jurisdictions — is the establishment of hospices, residential hospices where people can go to receive the dignity and the care they need in their final stages of life. And complementing that is the issue of palliative care and better palliative care here in the province.

My question to the Premier: does he support the establishment of residential hospices here in the province? And if so, Mr. Speaker, what is the plan to bring those into being, and what are the dollars that will be attached to those projects?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just to again get some clarification from the hon. member, I hope he's not suggesting that unless he raises a case in the Legislative Assembly, there's no chance for someone to have their situation addressed if they're not getting the care they need. Because I just want him to know that MLAs on this side of the House on a regular basis — and it's not just in health care; it's along the files of government — raise issues with ministers. And specifically in health care, that's the case. And then those issues are looked into and where possible they're addressed. So I think that's pretty important for my hon. friend to realize.

Mr. Chair, in terms of end-of-life care, of course we have palliative services that happen across the province today in facilities. In a very general way we hope that an increased complement of nurses, more LPNs, more registered nurses, more doctors, helps alleviate pressures right across the system, whether it's end-of-life care, acute care, or what have you, Mr. Chair.

With respect to the specific question, the Health minister reports that some communities are working on proposals now that the Health ministry's looking at, including one currently from Estevan for a hospice there.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly do recognize that there are many avenues that individuals who have problems can access when they have not received a government service in a way that they should be. Sometimes it's the Ombudsman. Sometimes it's through an MLA office. Sometimes it's through the minister's office. Sometimes it's through the opposition. Sometimes it's through the media. There are many different approaches that can occur, Mr. Speaker, and those are avenues that opposition members often facilitate and work along with. I think it was just a few days ago I was speaking to a ministerial assistant from the Minister of Immigration's office working on some casework to do with immigration for a constituent.

Most certainly these things can be done in that way, and those are the avenues that we pursue. We saw today in question period the member from Riversdale, who'd written to the Social Services minister about Trina's situation, had written a letter, had received a reply. But the reply did not address the very real concern that Trina had for her own safety in where she was living.

So I appreciate the Premier's remarks on avenues to help solve problems. And our approach as MLAs is to most certainly be constructive in that way. And sometimes, Mr. Speaker, that means raising an issue that matters to Saskatchewan families through question period in the Assembly.

Transitioning to another topic, Mr. Speaker, in the area of

education. And this is something that touches every family who has children, and whether that's our own kids or whether that's our grandkids. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that we need to ensure we're making the right investments when it comes to education so we're setting ourselves up well for the long run. When we look at the previous, the most recent budget on the area of education, Mr. Speaker, we've seen some real concerns. And these are concerns that it's not just the opposition bringing forward but from educators, from people in the community, from many people we hear concerns about how the budget really did miss the mark when it comes to providing the resources needed for children here in the province.

And we've all heard the stories, Mr. Speaker — and seen them and dealt with families — of classroom sizes that are far too large with too many students, of makeshift classrooms in some circumstances in a storage closet or on the stage of a gym, of some school divisions not having the heat on as much as they need to and telling students to wear jackets in order to save some resources, reduction of educational assistants system-wide, Mr. Speaker, which affects the ability of educators to do what they need to do.

My question to the Premier: would he consider supporting a cap on classroom sizes and if not, why not?

[15:30]

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're on to education. We appreciate that. We welcome it. Maybe we'll come back to health care. I hope so because I think a very important issue in health care for Saskatchewan people is the amount of time they're waiting for surgery. And we know that while that time's still too long, it's down significantly. We know that part of the reason it's down is because we've been able to deploy private clinics in a public system. And I think people tuning in to this debate will also want to hear . . . Again I go back to the member's own words. He never said in his leadership campaign, wait for three years until they campaign for me to tell you what I'll do. He said it's important for members to be accountable now, for them to present their ideas.

Now the Leader of the Opposition has been I believe on the record saying he opposes private clinics. So I assume if he was sitting on this side of the House, he would eliminate the private clinics operating in a public system that are helping to reduce wait times in the province. I think that's an important debate for estimates — his first chance as leader to get engaged in a very important debate about how we're going to continue to reduce surgical wait times in the province. If he no longer believes, if it's no longer his position to oppose private clinics within the public system, we need to hear that. If he does think we should not have any private clinics in the public system, we know that wait times will go up, unless he can find a money tree and build a bunch of new public clinics to take care of the challenge.

Mr. Chairman, he also moved off health care without any discussion or debate about health care efficiencies. He campaigned for the leadership of his party very clearly advocating for leadership or health care efficiencies, quoting no less than Tommy Douglas, who he said in his leadership

material, said that the second phase of medicare would “be the much more difficult one that was to alter our delivery system to reduce costs and put an emphasis on preventative medicine.” He’s quoting Tommy Douglas for leadership. By the way, his leadership website is completely down. You won’t find his tree book he wrote for Mr. Lingenfelter. It’s down. You won’t find their \$5 billion platform from the election. It’s down.

An Hon. Member: — What the heck’s a tree book?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well the tree booklet the member for Athabasca asked — and I appreciate the question — is the book that the Leader of the Opposition wrote for Mr. Lingenfelter. And other than copies we have in our files — there is one right there; the Minister of the Environment has one — you won’t see one online.

I’m not sure why, but I again invite the member, the Leader of the Opposition — we’ll deal with education — but come back to it. Let’s discuss private clinics within a public system. Let’s discuss wait times. I’d like to know, and I think the people of the province deserve to know, what he would do if he got his wish and was sitting over on these benches.

With respect to education and a cap, Mr. Chair, it’s our position that caps, student classroom caps, will not serve the system very well. What caps don’t accommodate is the composition issue in classrooms. Mr. Chairman, I haven’t made a lot of noise about it. We haven’t talked about it publicly, but for the last two months or so, we’ve been travelling the province and meeting with small groups of teachers. We’ve done five, I’ve done five of them now: one in Assiniboia, and Swift Current, and a good meeting in Prince Albert just this week, and in Regina and Saskatoon.

And we see growth right across the province. But especially in the Leader of the Opposition’s hometown in Saskatoon, and in Regina, we’re seeing massive changes in the composition of classrooms, as the member will know. We have many, many newcomers that we’re welcoming to the province. And a cap on the classroom size simply does not accommodate the new reality here in Saskatchewan.

We know the most recent provincial data says that there is about an average of 20 students per classroom and an average of 17.9 students in kindergarten classes. We know there are larger classes, to be sure. Mr. Chairman, there was one teacher from Saskatoon who shared with me that in his middle school math class, he’s got 34 kids. Eleven of them need EAL [English as an additional language] support. Eleven look back at him every morning and he’s hoping but not sure that they’re understanding everything. And he certainly made a very strong case, as did many other teachers, for increased EAL. By the way, that’s why you’ll find it in the budget, an overall increase of 14 per cent in EAL supports in this particular budget, with the recognition that there might need to be more.

So we want to focus on delivering the right kind of support services to classrooms whose compositions are changing. It appears that the Leader of the Opposition likes the sort of the simplistic solutions — caps in the classroom, ratios in long-term care. He should check with his counterparts across the country. Adrian Dix, who might well be the premier of

British Columbia just after Monday, was asked about this very issue. Adrian Dix, the leader of the BC NDP, had this to say about capping class size. He said, and I quote, “The key issue is composition. When I talk to teachers and parents, I hear composition more than class size.”

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Premier’s remarks there’s a divide between the questions and the answers, and I wish he would put as much attention to the answers as he would to providing the questions, Mr. Speaker. It would seem as though he’s almost pining for his opposition days in terms of that role.

Caps most certainly, Mr. Speaker, can have a constructive role in ensuring that the level of education and the quality of education that’s delivered by teachers is in fact there. I think of my own backyard in my constituency with Dundonald School and St. Peter School, hearing stories from families, and many other places in the province where caps do in fact, could have an important role in improving the situation in the classroom.

In the budget, Mr. Speaker, one thing that educators, parents, and people were not calling for was the issue of standardized testing and the preference that we see from the Sask Party government in having an increased focus on testing instead of teaching, especially, Mr. Speaker, when we see millions of dollars put into a computer system for standardized testing. The results of these tests, Mr. Speaker, which would inevitably say we ought to put better resources into the classroom so that our kids can receive the type of education that they need and that they deserve. My question to the Premier: what are the total implementation costs for standardized testing?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thank the Leader of the Opposition for the questions. You know, when he expresses some frustration that I’m asking questions, I’m only asking questions of him because he said that’s the kind of legislative debate we should have. I said it off the top of this estimates. I’m simply using his words. He ran for the leadership of the New Democratic Party and had on his leadership campaign, he says:

Cam’s vision includes more meaningful debate in the legislature. [He says] We can facilitate a richer debate by restructuring the rules of the Legislative Assembly including to allow questions to be asked of MLAs after they deliver each speech in the legislature, meaning that they are held accountable for their words and called upon to expand their thoughts and ideas.

These are not my words; this is what his aspirations are for this Assembly. Estimates is a perfect venue for him to actually not just talk about it when he’s campaigning for the leadership, like he apparently did on health care efficiencies and a number of issues we’ll get into, but actually do it.

So you know, I understand that he might be frustrated. Fact of the matter is he said this is the kind of . . . Well in addition to camera angles. He wanted more, I think he wanted some more camera angles. But he also said this. He said he wanted this

kind of debate. He wanted questions of those who've just gotten up and spoke, a more robust debate in the legislature. We're giving him a chance to do that. So will he do it on private clinics? Will he do it on health care efficiencies? I think these are just very reasonable questions of him and expectations, frankly, of the people that might be tuning in, or the people of the province.

He is applying for the job. It's a three-year application, but he's applying for this job, and I think it's incumbent on him to do what he said he would do in the leadership campaign and provide a few answers.

With respect to the student achievement initiative of the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman, we became aware . . . Well more than aware, Mr. Chairman. We were certainly supporting, as a government, a number of pilots around student achievement in the province of Saskatchewan that are bearing great results.

And I'm very aware of one in my own constituency called the balanced literacy program. Balanced literacy actually uses standard . . . Well we're calling them standards-based testing, standardized testing, to evaluate some young students with respect to their reading levels.

Four years ago when teachers, by the way, crafted this plan with the division, the division found their own resources in the case to support it. We found, Mr. Chairman, something quite hopeful. We found that while, four years ago, students who were involved in the balanced literacy were reading at about a 63 per cent of grade level, in four years the change has been fully 20 per cent with over 80 per cent of those kids reading at a grade level. That's standards-based testing.

Mr. Chairman, there's a number of other pilots around the province that have worked well. In Melfort, for example, they're seeing good results. At Albert School here in Regina, Mr. Chairman, they're using an early years evaluation program. It's a standards-based approach, and the results here again are very, very hopeful. They start very early. They start in grade 1. They focus on literacy. And for that first cohort who's now moved to, that first group of kids who've now moved into grade 2, they're reading at grade level. Mr. Chairman, if you talk to the teachers about it, and I have, they will say this is exactly what we need to be doing.

The Leader of the Opposition and his Education critic like to characterize this as something other than it is. This is not high-stakes standardized testing. This is not no child left behind. This is a process that will be informed by what's already happening in the province.

The Leader of the Opposition will know, I hope . . . Well I think the Education critic does know. He asked a lot of questions of the minister in estimates. And I even think at the end he was finding out some new facts and said, well you should better communicate it. He's probably right. I think we've done a bad job of communicating what this is and what it isn't. So I hope now that we're all getting the facts, we can understand what it is and that it will be good for students in Saskatchewan.

So the early years evaluation is being rolled out. It's actually not a pilot. It's part of this initiative. It requires resources. I think that's about a \$600,000 investment for that particular program — to the hon. member's question — for the early years evaluation. There is another initiative called Tell Them From Me, which is being rolled out as well around the province, about 70,000 students involved already. And I think the amount for that is very similar to the amount for the first investment. We're going to continue to make progress with this, roll them out in a staged way and watch the results. Mr. Chairman, so far the results are very encouraging.

And I hope the Leader of the Opposition . . . I know he'll have an ideological bent against any standardized testing, but he needs to understand we're not talking about the US [United States] approach. We're not talking about high-stakes standardized testing. We're not talking about an approach where the results of the test will somehow determine funding or somehow evaluate teachers. It's meant to be a tool for teachers to address literacy, numeracy, the issues that we all want for excellence in those areas that we want for our kids.

So again those are roughly the amounts for that rollout. I will say this. As a result of my meetings with teachers, I will say, Mr. Chairman, that we have thrown a lot of change at teachers in a fairly short order by a number of measures, some taken by the government. Some have happened because of growth. Some have happened because we have larger classes in the centres. Some have happened because composition changes have occurred. And, Mr. Chairman, while we want to proceed with the student achievement initiative as I have described it, and maybe not as the opposition will depict it, I do think we are going to have a broad discussion on the government side.

We welcome input from members opposite. We may formalize what I've been doing informally with teachers around the province for the last month and a half or so and engage with all of the stakeholders in education, engage to a greater extent with teachers who are facing a lot of change, on whom expectations have increased on the part of the system, on the part of a growing economy, engage with parents, engage, Mr. Chairman, with the school boards, with the trustees. I'll just say this very candidly, we certainly could have . . . I think we could have done a better job, and especially when it comes to teachers, on some of these issues. We intend to make those improvements.

We know that teachers, by the way, who have helped design and develop . . . for example balanced literacy in the Chinook School Division. As the director of the school division says, it would be very difficult for me to take that program away from those teachers because they see the results for kids. They see the results in terms of grade level improvements in reading.

That's what we want for this program. That's what we think we can achieve. And I think we're going to be working hard to engage not just teachers but all the stakeholders as we move forward on what I think is a very exciting initiative around student achievement aimed at the classroom, not aimed at some sort of an ideological approach to standardized testing that members may be thinking of in terms of the US experience.

[15:45]

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Premier's wide-ranging remarks there, he talked about a number of things. He started off the discussion about the way that we operate in this legislature and the way that things could be done better, the types of improvements that we could discuss, that we could look at.

Now I've been here, Mr. Speaker, since '07 and, you know, I've seen the legislature, Mr. Speaker, at its best. And I actually think both sides would agree, perhaps, Howard's law is one example where we were able to come together from a private member's bill, support something that's good for all people. That's something at its best.

Each of us probably can also think of situations where we've not been at our best as an Assembly and how we could do a better job. Now I think we could also . . . It was earlier today, Mr. Chair, that I received the photo from Mr. Speaker that I assume some other members in the Assembly received. And the photo, Mr. Speaker, was an aerial almost of . . . The photographer was standing up on the clock in the Speaker's gallery looking down on the Assembly. And anyone looking at the photo, this is a reality that we're aware of in the opposition, but there's a few more members on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker. That's not a surprise to anyone who comes to the Assembly.

But looking at that photo, Mr. Speaker, it struck me that we could do things better in this Assembly. You know, we could have a better role at times for some of the backbenchers there to have a meaningful role, to contribute to debate, to do something other than reading a member's statement prepared by caucus office or heckling during Premier's estimates, Mr. Speaker. There's better ways that we could operate. And that's a discussion that we should have, that both parties should have in a formal structure, talking about what possible changes should occur or could occur, Mr. Speaker. But it needs to be done in a holistic way. It needs to be done in a structured way, down on paper, so that it is thoughtful. It is building on changes that have been done in the past, Mr. Speaker, and it's not done in an ad hoc or a piecemeal manner.

When thinking of the issue of standardized testing, one conversation stands out in my mind. And that was a conversation I had with a young mom, and her child is in about grade 1 or 2. And this discussion actually was outside of standardized testing, though it morphed into that, and what she said to me was . . . She was actually giving a huge amount of praise to her son's teacher. And she said, you know, I'm so impressed by the work that this teacher is doing with my son, especially the report card or the reporting mechanism that I'm getting back from this teacher clearly stating where my son is doing really well and meeting or exceeding expectations, identifying some areas where we could do better, and then talking about ways that I could help my son to reach those goals.

Mr. Speaker, educators that are trained, that are working in the province, who have been called to the profession of education because they love kids, they want to see the best for children. They're in it for the right reasons, Mr. Speaker. And we ought

to respect that, and we ought to approach educators with that type of mindset respecting the contribution that they make.

So my question . . . The issue of standardized testing, we've talked about it quite a bit in question period. We've talked about it in estimates through our critic, and we'll continue to talk about it because it's important based on the feedback that we're receiving from teachers and from families and from school divisions as well. So the Premier ought to be able to give us a succinct definition or a succinct listing of what will be the total implementation costs for standardized testing, a clear number, and what will the annual cost be for standardized testing. Can you please provide those two figures?

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition opened up with a discussion about the legislature and how it could be used better. There's no change required in the legislature for him to highlight for the people of the province what his positions are or even things that he's still against. It's not just . . . We're not only asking him to say what you're for — I expect his answer to be, oh you'll find out at election time — he's not even telling the people of this province what he's still against.

Is he still against private clinics? That would've been a simple, simple thing to answer here, right here, and explain why. Is he still against private liquor stores? As a part owner, maybe he's not. He can simply . . . He doesn't have to propose everything he's going to do yet. I expect that'll happen at some point. He might want to do a little bit of that, but that's up to him. But he might want to be able to share with the Assembly about things he's still against.

Also you know, if we could . . . I think we're open to all manner of changes in the Assembly. I think our House Leader even met with his opponent, Mr. Meili, Dr. Ryan Meili. He suggested we all, we stop sitting sort of in the Westminster tradition, two sabre lengths apart — though we're farther than that in this House, but that's certainly the tradition — that we'd rather, should sit in a circle. And I think we're, you know, willing to look at that. I know that the House Leader chatted with Dr. Meili. Maybe that's a change. Maybe that's a change that the Leader of the Opposition is in.

Mr. Chairman, I think we're open to a number of . . . In fact I'm told by the House leadership team today that we were trying to encourage a debate on an issue tomorrow where both sides of the House would get a chance to debate a particular issue. We would propose a motion but as soon as the agreement for debate would happen, we would provide the motion to all members of the Assembly. And your party, sir — I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman — the Leader of the Opposition's party said, no, we don't want to have a debate.

You really can't have it both ways on these things. You can't be all earnest and say you want more debate and more chances for private members to speak, Mr. Chairman, and then when an opportunity avails itself, as of today, to have rejected it through your House leadership. I don't know if he knows that happened, but that's exactly the case. So it's an interesting, again, it's an interesting comment.

Mr. Chair, it's about \$5.9 million in the budget with respect to

standards-based initiatives. We've highlighted two in particular that are already rolling out, that are already bearing results, including the Albert School example I gave, that's about \$600,000 each.

We may see, Mr. Chairman, as a result of my comments earlier about meetings with teachers and what comes from that and an engagement I think we'd like to more formalize, we now may see a delay in the implementation or the other expenditures that are provided in the budget. That may well be possible because we are going to take very seriously the message. I'm going to take very seriously the message given by teachers. We're also going to be engaging with all the stakeholders. And so as of right now, \$1.2 million for these two initiatives, each touching about 70,000 students already in the province, bearing results as we understand it. We may not be moving aggressively on the rest of what's already approved in the budget.

Mr. Chairman, we all want to engage with all the stakeholders, not just on student achievement. But really perhaps the best way to put it would be a student-first approach to education. It bore results with health care. It was an excellent initiative in health care. And there might be some lessons to be learned there that we're going to look very carefully at in the weeks and months ahead. Thank you.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Premier's earlier remarks on a previous question with respect to engaging with teachers through the topic of standardized testing, the Premier remarked on some meetings he's having throughout the province with teachers. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it's very important to listen to educators and work with educators, to work with teachers because they have been called to the profession. They're in it for the right reasons. They're trained, and they do a good job in educating our children here in the province. It's important, Mr. Speaker, to respect the role that they've had in the profession.

And we've seen, under the Sask Party government, I think a very rocky relationship with teachers. We saw an approach in the previous round of bargaining that was trying to pit parents against teachers, as one example. And there are other examples where we've seen a lack of proper consultation and discussion when there's been changes to the very real things that affect teachers and affect the type of education that our kids receive.

So my question, in the decision to go down this path of standardized testing, what discussions occurred with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation? And these discussions that are ongoing that the Premier just alluded to throughout the province, is that through the formal structure of the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] or teachers' associations within cities? Or is this something different than that? How is it that individuals who are teachers are involved in these meetings that they're having with the Premier with respect to education? And I assume the topic of standardized testing would be part of that.

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank

the Leader of the Opposition for the question. And there was really no magic formula to the meetings. My understanding is we approached the divisions and said, we'd like a real cross-section in terms of teachers at different grade levels for example in the public system and in the separate system as well. We wanted to hear from rural teachers, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to hear from urban teachers as well as teachers in Prince Albert. You know, I contemplated actually continuing more meetings, but as of the meeting two days ago in Prince Albert, that was at five at least for this round.

I've referenced already that we need to better engage with teachers. A lot of what was in the hon. member's preamble, I will not disagree with. Some parts perhaps. But I think we are always better served if we are engaging with those who are on the front line — whether it's in health care or education — and with all the stakeholders. To the extent we have not done that as well as we could have, I'm recognizing that. That's why these meetings were held.

There was no special formula. We didn't say we want the following people. We simply said to the divisions, we'd like about six or seven teachers. And we've had . . . They were scheduled for an hour, and none of the meetings lasted an hour. They lasted longer than that, and that was fine.

But with respect to the amount of teacher involvement in the student achievement initiative — and I think that was also part of the Leader of the Opposition's question — we had a stakeholder engagement strategy that included the STF certainly, that included the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], that included Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials. There was a wide-ranging group.

The FSIN . . . By the way, the FSIN, I think the Leader of the Opposition might know, is very interested in the promise of standards-based assessment because we see what's happening at Whitecap. A great story there in terms of student achievement that's supported on a platform of standards-based testing. Chief Bear will tell you that.

There are a number of other examples of First Nations who are using standards-based approaches to innovate in education, and it's bearing results. And even as earlier as today, meeting with education officials, there again was the report that certainly there's strong support for moving in this direction from First Nations. And FSIN's interest in us moving forward . . . Again, we are not. It bears repeating because there's a lot of information out there. And again I think we on this side should have done a better job of communicating it frankly, Mr. Chair. This is not no child left behind. It's not high-stakes standardized testing.

This is building on successes we see today in the province of Saskatchewan when teachers are empowered and school divisions have the resources to do a standards measure. Yes there's a standardized test to identify a challenge in literacy, in numeracy, what have you, and move to address it. That's what the early years evaluation is. It's already bearing results, as I've said, in Albert School.

So we're going to continue to rely on teacher involvement. I think there's an ongoing panel that involves I think about 13

teachers. I may have to correct that number. I've also met at the start of these meetings with — informal meetings — with teachers. We met with the STF as well again on the particular issue, and we know that we're not done with that engagement. There needs to be more, especially as we want to roll this thing out in the way that it's intended and to avoid rolling it out in a way that it was never intended.

[16:00]

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

Mr. Broten: — I think it's good, Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Chair, for the Premier to be talking with teachers, obviously, because I think the track record that the government has with teachers is not a good one. I think it's one that has not been about consultation. It has not been about respect, Mr. Speaker, but it's been about forcing decisions without the proper consultation, without the proper thought put into them, Mr. Speaker. And that is having a negative effect in places here in the province.

The Premier talked about his desire to meet with a cross-section of teachers, rural and urban, in different types of settings. Well, Mr. Speaker, yes most certainly school divisions would have access to that information and would know whether or not a student is in or a teacher is in a rural or an urban setting. But I would imagine, Mr. Speaker, that the STF would also know which teachers are working in urban areas, which teachers are in rural areas, and the different environment. And I would encourage the Premier, Mr. Speaker, to engage the STF in a more meaningful way, in a way that warrants the role that the STF has played in the province, the role that teachers have played in the province, Mr. Speaker. And I think failing to do that is part of the problem, Mr. Speaker, why we see a standardized testing approach that is not well thought out, by the Premier's own admission, has not been explained well, and is frankly the wrong direction that we need when it comes to education here in the province.

Connected to education, Mr. Speaker, is something that . . . It's a question of the future of this province. It's a question of how well we will be as a province in working together and truly building a sustainable economy, a society that is cohesive in the years to come. And that is the issue, Mr. Speaker, of the Aboriginal education funding gap and the disparity that exists in many classrooms here across the province.

Back in January the Premier was interviewed regarding the underfunding of on-reserve schools. And a story on the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] website in January reported:

Wall, on Tuesday, said it was time for governments to stop passing the buck when it came to addressing the issue.

[And the Premier quoted] "The time is over for the federal government to say, 'Go see the province,' and the provincial government to say, 'Go see the feds,'" Wall said.

Wall noted the province is providing adult basic education on reserves and more programs could follow.

My question to the Premier: what did he mean by that statement?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm not sure what the Leader of the Opposition was intimating in his preamble that you have to . . . you can't consult with teachers unless you go through the STF. I don't think that's what he was saying, but he should because we've actually done this before. We had the current Minister of Education and the member for Regina Dewdney, also a teacher although he's more known for other things, went out on a consultation with teachers on the new math curriculum.

Again we were hearing from parents and teachers about a concern about the new math curriculum. And we wanted to go and engage with teachers, and we did that. We didn't go through the STF to do it. I think we certainly informed them of it. I can tell the Leader of the Opposition that at the outset of these meetings I've had with teachers for example we met with the STF. They didn't raise any concerns about us doing this in a direct way, neither that they weren't involved in a formal way. We are going to make sure that the STF is involved in education development matters, but certainly we reserve the right to talk to teachers, to go out in their communities and have the division perhaps host a meeting and suggest some teachers who represent a wide array of groups.

I think that's what the member is saying. And sometimes I think that perhaps our friends across the way, they get very focused on process. You know, we see that time and time again on the issues. And they sort of lose sight of the end result over the people involved or the objective. Yes, this is a good example. It's good that you're talking to teachers, but did you go through the STF is the question. And it's a . . . You know, we didn't and I don't think the STF has a particular problem. In fact I think they're encouraged that we were reaching out to them.

Mr. Chairman, we have been saying for some time that in certain areas we're going to move into areas that are federal jurisdiction, but not in a complete way. We simply, the province unfortunately, simply could not afford it. And so we've increased adult basic education, Mr. Chairman, and we do that on-reserve. It was a practice of the former government that we have continued and actually increased in terms of support.

We've also sympathized, empathized with First Nations who have gone to the federal government to see an increase in on-reserve education funding. And up until two years ago the answer was always the same. In every occasion — well I'd better be a bit careful — on most occasions that I meet with the Prime Minister of the country, I raise this issue. We certainly have talked about it. I'd like to think . . . By the way, other premiers do too, certainly. And I'd like to think it's part of the reason why, in the federal budget two years ago, there was a \$200 million increase for on-reserve First Nations education.

Now we were also aware of the relative speed or lack thereof with which this money was moving on to First Nations, and I don't have that many favourable reports of the manifestation of

those dollars. It's something we're monitoring. It's something we're also raising with the federal government.

Mr. Chairman, we've said pretty clearly that we take this issue of closing the gap between Aboriginal students and Aboriginal education and non-Aboriginal students and education very, very seriously. We've seen an additional 1.5 million in this budget committed to ABE, that's adult basic education, on the reserve; point five million added to support skills training; an additional 1.5 million for northern career quest, a great program; point six million to add 15 new pre-K [pre-kindergarten] spots; an additional 1 million provided for capital enhancements; \$500,000 to continue funding the literacy camps that members from the North have certainly raised effectively in this particular legislature; and the list goes on. There is the \$3.8 million in supports for the First Nations and Métis Education Achievement Fund. And then of course there's a joint task force and its other specific recommendations that we're going to be moving on.

We've been very clear — and we hope we have the Leader of the Opposition's support in this — that what we want to move away from in terms of engagement with First Nations and Métis and trying to close the gaps that exist, not just in education but in employment as well, and what we're going to move away from is funding meetings and funding processes and funding round tables. Mr. Chairman, we have had these things in an interminable way it would seem for as long as Canada's been around, and they've borne little fruit for First Nations. The same could be said for our economy obviously because our economy is, when that gap exists, is deprived of a great resource of First Nations and Métis youth and others that would love to play a bigger role in the economy.

What we are going to fund are initiatives that are focused on education. In the economic development we're going to move away from mileage and meetings and round tables, and we hope we have the Leader of the Opposition's support in that respect.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, we know this is an important issue. Economist Eric Howe talks about the missed opportunity and the consequences for the province by not solving this issue, a \$90 billion value that it has for the province, Mr. Speaker. This is not something that should be taken lightly, and this is not something that should be glossed over.

My question to the Premier: he commented on a number of topics there, but I feel he still hasn't explained what he meant in this quote that goes back to the CBC story:

“The time is over for the federal government to say, ‘Go see the province,’ and the provincial government to say, ‘Go see the feds,’” Wall said.

What did he mean by that quote?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chairman, what we mean by that quote is we want the federal government to do their part to fund education for on-reserve First Nations as we fund it at the same

level on a per-student basis. We hope that, well we think the Leader of the Opposition agrees with that although there's some, there's a bit . . . You know, we're a little bit unclear on what his position is because he did an interview on the 15th of March on MBC [Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation] News that . . . Basically the title of that particular interview was “Broten is also non-committal as to whether the province should fund on-reserve education.”

So you know, Mr. Chairman, I've answered the question. We're going to move in strategic areas like ABE. We're going to move in areas where we think we can engage First Nations into the economy. We're not going to accept responsibility, the funding responsibility for on-reserve primary or secondary education, Mr. Chairman. We're not going to do that. What's his position?

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I just read the quote from the Premier, “The time is over for the federal government to say, ‘Go see the province,’ and the provincial government to say, ‘Go see the feds,’” with respect to the gap that exists in educational funding. And then the Premier said, well I think the federal government should fund education better. I agree with that, Mr. Speaker, most certainly.

But the thing here, Mr. Speaker, the Premier here contradicts what he says in the earlier statement in terms of actually providing . . . having a discussion about what is needed in the province in order to not miss out on the \$90 billion opportunity for our economy and for our province.

The joint task force on First Nations and Métis education and employment outcomes recommended that the provincial government lobby the federal government to provide better support for First Nations on-reserve education here in the province, something that most certainly needs to occur. In the meantime the task force recommended that the provincial government provide interim funding to reduce the cost for First Nations that send children to off-reserve schools. So this is a recommendation coming forth from the task force, a task force that was started late in the game by the Sask Party but provided recommendations that should most certainly be listened to and discussed here in the province.

My question to the Premier: does he intend to follow that recommendation to provide interim funding?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Chairman, it's not an inconsistent position at all. We don't want First Nations to have to go from province to federal government. We want the federal government to step up and do their part. And in the meantime we're going to stop funding the processes, the round tables, the discussions. We're going to focus on initiatives that will bear some results.

So, Mr. Chairman, with respect to the question of what are we doing with the recommendation from the JTF [joint task force] on lobbying the federal government to do the right thing, my understanding is that later this month the Minister of Education

and the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations have a meeting scheduled in Ottawa with the appropriate ministers to raise the issue. I think it's on the 23rd and 24th of this month coming up, of May. With respect to the question, no.

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

Mr. Broten: — Sorry. To clarify, the no is in response to the question, does the Premier intend to provide interim funding to reduce the cost for First Nations that send children to off-reserve schools? Is the answer no to that part of the question? Sorry. The no is to the interim funding? Could the Premier please say yes or no?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we've moved quickly with respect to the joint task force. In fact within days of its release, we moved on the issue of driver training, which is very important in terms of engagement for First Nations youth in the economy. And Education with SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] now providing that on-reserve, it's another example of that.

But are we going to accept the recommendation of \$1,000 per student to on-reserve school? The answer is no. We're not going to be moving on it. What we have seen in successive Education budgets is a huge increase in operating over the last four or five years for education divisions.

I would also point out to the Leader of the Opposition that in the budget, we have specific dollars set aside for a number of other recommendations in the joint task force. I would also say this, that within the budget — the member will know this — within the budget there's specific allotments, millions of dollars allotted in Education to deal with enrolment pressures and growth pressures, some of which might be included by a greater number of First Nations students attending school on-reserve. But that's actually in the budget today, Mr. Chairman. So would there be a specific response, another \$1,000 per student? The candid answer to the Leader of the Opposition is no.

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

Mr. Broten: — Let me get this straight. For months, Mr. Speaker, for months when we raised the issue of the education achievement gap, and we raised the issue of funding shortfalls on issues, what is the response that we get from members opposite? Oh we've established the task force. The task force is going to come forward — quality people, great recommendations — and this is our path forward for solving this issue.

Now, Mr. Speaker, after all of that stalling, after putting all of the eggs in that basket of the task force — saying we trust these individuals, they have the expertise; we need to listen to their plan — what we hear from the Premier today is, well actually I don't like that recommendation and we're not doing that one. We'll do a couple of the easy ones that don't cost anything. We will take some steps that we're ready to roll out with, but on the real issues, on the issues that are central to the future of this province, what do we see in the budget, Mr. Speaker? Three million dollars devoted to the implementation of the

recommendations from the task force.

My question to the Premier: out of the recommendations, because I think the task force members would be interested to know whether or not their work is actually going to be beneficial to the people of the province, out of the recommendations that have been provided by the task force, how many are going to be adopted, and how many are going to be ignored, as the Premier just identified?

[16:15]

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's no need to get angry, you know, there really isn't. There's not been a report commissioned by any government, I think in the history of the province, where every recommendation's been implemented. I can think of the Boughen commission on property taxes. Actually I can think, I can think of a number of commissions that were done by the NDP, a number of reports they received. They chose to ignore most commissions' end reports that they had done.

Frankly I would stack our record, in terms of implementing ideas that come from third parties, up against our predecessors any day. And so the Leader of the Opposition ought not to get angry. We can have a debate about the recommendations in the report that we're moving on, Mr. Chairman, around the early childhood strategy, Mr. Chairman, around First Nations and Métis content, perspectives of their culture into curriculum.

Actually, as you know, our government has moved on that, but there's more work to be done there: the modular high school curricula, the one-stop gateway, Mr. Chairman, attendant to — by the way, I'm not sure the Leader of the Opposition is going to like this part of the answer — but attendant to the report of the JTF, by this great panel who did a lot of great work. And we'll be moving on many of the recommendations, but possibly not all of them. That's sort of what happens: possibly not all of them.

But attendant to that JTF report were some very specific examples of what's happening today in First Nations education. We've already talked about Whitecap. We've already talked about them using, here it comes again, standards-based assessment to see a great increase in outcomes for students on that particular First Nation. We also see the Saskatoon Catholic School Division making a great deal of progress around specific approaches they're taking in schools. We are looking carefully at those so that we can expand them.

And he laughs at the \$3 million, Mr. Chairman. First of all, in and of itself, it's a significant investment in one budget as we see the response to the JTF. But it also, Mr. Speaker, the supposition belies the fact that there's many other initiatives on the part of this government in terms of dealing with First Nations issues, the engagement in the economy and education including, I think, Mr. Chairman, another increase for SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies]. It's going to be focused on adult basic education, which is very much part of what the JTF's talking about.

Mr. Speaker, in the case of SIIT, the Saskatchewan Party government this side of the House has increased funding to that institution since we were elected by 48 per cent, Mr. Chairman. The reason we have done that is because the late Randell Morris, who was the president, and the board and faculty of that particular institution — and a finer technical school you will not find anywhere in this country — have come to the government with specific ideas.

They've said, we want to train aeronautic mechanics. And when we do, we'll find them a job. They've said, we want to train more apprentices in construction. And when you provide that funding, government, we'll connect them to a job. They've reached out to the business community in Saskatoon, to the construction association. They have a great track record. And we have said very clearly to that member and to First Nations and to institutions and to industry, bring us those ideas and we will fund them. That's what we'll do with the JTF. That's what we've done in this budget, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this is a \$90 billion missed opportunity, as economist Eric Howe points out, Mr. Speaker. So the Premier is saying, no it's not, that Eric Howe, economist Eric Howe, was incorrect in his analysis. Even if the Premier doesn't fully agree with the number, certainly he would agree it's in the billions and billions and billions of dollars for the impact here in the province.

So yes, we're going to be concerned, Mr. Speaker, about the response from the government when they hype the task force for so long, Mr. Speaker, come forward in a budget with only \$3 million. And then we learn in Premier's estimates, Mr. Speaker, that they're actually just picking and choosing what's convenient for them.

Mr. Speaker, another topic that we discussed on the floor of the Assembly in the previous weeks was the issue of gay-straight alliances. And after becoming leader, Mr. Speaker, one of the appointments I made was the MLA for Saskatoon Centre as our new critic for diversity, equality, and human rights issues. I did this, Mr. Speaker, because I think, under the Sask Party government, combatting discrimination and combatting homophobia, Mr. Speaker, are efforts that are lacking. And we haven't seen the type of leadership that we need from the Sask Party government on these issues that all Saskatchewan people need on these issues.

When we talked about this issue in question period, I brought forward a very constructive suggestion that why not on the ministry website provide some information about the benefits of gay-straight alliances, not forcing school divisions to do anything through legislation, but a constructive suggestion of quoting on the website the benefits of gay-straight alliances, how allies and gay students could set them up in their schools, and how teachers could work together to support those efforts. So some constructive common sense suggestions. The Premier rejected that position. There was an unwillingness to put that information on the website, something that would not cost money and something that could be done very quickly. And I was disappointed that he rejected that suggestion.

Days later when we had the debate in the House on cyberbullying, following that I believe it was, the Premier did a scrum. And in the scrum, as was reported in, I believe it was *The StarPhoenix* and I assume the *Leader-Post*, the Premier said they would be willing to put that information on the website. And I'm grateful for him making that decision and for adding that information and working on that suggestion. My question to the Premier: what changed his mind that it was the right approach to do after he had rejected that option here in the Assembly?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again the Leader of the Opposition's depiction is incorrect. I didn't change . . . there was no position change. What I said and asked was that we were going to not rule anything out. When he first raised the issue of gay-straight alliances and information on the government website, I indicated to the Leader of the Opposition that the member for Saskatoon Fairview was working on the issue. And we would preclude nothing. We would leave everything on the table, but thought it best to have her complete that work.

Mr. Chairman, what happened subsequent to that . . . I think everyone is aware of the story of the student, I think in the separate system here in Regina, who's having problems. And so we made a decision at that time under the leadership of the minister and I'm sure with the council, with the member for Fairview that we could provide an updated link for those who wanted to find information with respect to these kinds of clubs, around respecting differences, including the link that now has information on gay-straight alliances. That's currently on the website. And so that's that particular issue.

Mr. Chairman, the preamble to the member's question was finishing off the First Nations question. In this particular budget — it wasn't heralded a lot, I don't think, not a lot of attention — there was perhaps one of the most important First Nations and Métis economic development initiatives over and above the \$3 million. It's not quite convenient for the Leader of the Opposition to reference it because it doesn't fit his narrative, but it's true. When the government moves to increase access to international markets for our uranium, when we complement that, Mr. Chairman, with an initiative to lower royalties, uranium royalties in the province so that we're more competitive, this has huge potential for First Nations and Métis people who work in that industry.

Mr. Chairman, we know in Cameco we have a national champion. This is a company of course that was privatized by the Mulroney government and the Devine government. They brought together two respective Crowns, created Cameco. And ever since then, we have seen it develop and grow into the largest uranium mining company on earth headquartered in Saskatoon, Canada, Mr. Chairman.

And here's their track record: 40 to 44 per cent of their workforce in the uranium mining industry — high-paying, high-skilled jobs — are First Nations and Métis people, are northerners, Mr. Chairman. It's got perhaps as good a track record of employing First Nations and Métis people as any company that exists in the country today. It's something I think

we're all proud of.

We've been working hard as a government to have the federal government raise a nuclear co-operation agreement issue with India, a very robust civilian nuclear market, and with China — the two most robust civilian nuclear markets because right now we can't sell any uranium into those markets without an agreement.

The Prime Minister, to his credit, has taken this as a personal initiative. And we now have NCAs [nuclear co-operation agreement] with both countries, perhaps \$3 billion over 10 years in additional sales. That's probably on the low side. But our royalties were too high, so the companies would say, well now we have increased access but, you know, these other countries have lower royalties and it makes it difficult to invest here. So we're lowering them in the budget.

This is an important initiative and it goes right to First Nations issues, Mr. Chairman. And here again, in a scrum, in the media, the Leader of the Opposition was asked a very simple question on this particular part of the budget. When he was asked about uranium royalty changes, the new leader of the NDP said, we just heard that yesterday, and as a caucus we will be looking closely at the details. We haven't had all the fine print. We'll be discussing that, and I am sure we will be talking about it in the days ahead.

The reporter said, so you like it, you don't like it, or you're not sure yet?

Well, said the Leader of the Opposition, the development of our resources in a sustainable and responsible way with a triple bottom line is the way we as New Democrats have approached resources. So on this particular change, we have to look at the details just announced yesterday, and there will be more discussion.

Did it catch you off guard, the reporter asked.

We know the development of our resources is important, so that's something often in budget. So we want to look at the details, and we will be commenting more later.

So now, fair enough. Fair enough. Honestly, that was like the day after the budget. I think it's completely reasonable for the Leader of the Opposition to say, well we want to have a look at that, we can comment later. It's two months later.

This is a very important initiative in northern Saskatchewan for excellent high-paying jobs for First Nations and Métis to the tune of 40 to 44 per cent for Cameco. Yes or no, this is an initiative for First Nations and Métis. Yes or no, does he support, first of all, uranium mining; secondly, the lowering of royalties that were in the budget for the uranium mining industry?

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Chair, the Premier knows full well that we support uranium development and support its growth and expansion here in the province. That's been the long-standing NDP record, and that is my record.

It's interesting though, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. On a topic of gay-straight alliances — thinking back to question period, Mr. Speaker, when the Premier had a problem saying gay in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker — we see in a response to a question about why he changed his mind on posting information about gay-straight alliances, an unwillingness to talk about it. And when it was brought up, Mr. Speaker, when it was brought up in the House, the Premier's first initial reaction, Mr. Speaker, was to talk about a debate about religious freedom, something that the suggestion of putting some information on a website had nothing to do about, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Premier: does he regret, when we were talking about gay-straight alliances, automatically taking the discussion to one about religious freedom, as opposed to a discussion about doing what is best for all students in our school systems?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I invite the Leader of the Opposition to listen to the answers. The legislature is, happily, pretty quiet today. There's the odd heckle from both sides perhaps, but it's pretty quiet. I think he could hear the answer. I think I dealt fully with his question with respect to gay-straight alliances and anti-bullying and then moved on to the First Nations issue, which had been his previous question. Now that's point number one.

With respect to his direct question, I think it was about the fourth question in, that I referenced the fact that in this discussion, in this discussion across Canada, there are those that have raised the concerns about what the implication is for perhaps private schools. The next day after it was raised, we had a Muslim school here in Regina, here in the Legislative Building, and they have a voice in the discussion around what happens in their schools and around the issue of religious freedom. So it was well into question period on I think about the third or fourth question. The answer is no.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've also been having a discussion on the floor of the Assembly here with respect to intellectual disability wait-lists. And we've touched on a number of examples, Mr. Speaker, where the story presented by the Sask Party government doesn't actually match up with the realities that are being experienced by some families, Mr. Speaker.

We had a claim from the Sask Party government in the news release when they had the fanfare associated with the announcement, Mr. Speaker, that they had eliminated the wait-lists. Well since then, Mr. Speaker, we have been contacted by families who are in fact on the list and have not received services. We think of the situation of Jennifer Birns who was never offered an actual program spot for her brother. We had the minister go out in the rotunda and say that she wasn't telling the truth. And we had Jennifer say that is disgusting, the treatment that she experienced.

We have Craig Bayliss — and the Premier referenced this situation or this case earlier on — a man from Herbert caring

for his intellectually disabled son with mental health challenges as well. What Craig has told us, Mr. Speaker, is that he went to the Premier's office on four occasions in Swift Current and did not receive assistance. That is what he has told us. If the Premier says that's a different story, he needs to call Craig up and talk with him about that because that is the reality and the story that Craig is telling us.

[16:30]

And we've had different stories in question period, Mr. Speaker. We've had conflicting stories about whether or not there is a list. We've had one minister say there is no list. We have a news release saying there isn't a list. We have another minister saying there is an emergent list. And there is another list that some people may be on. The story is very cloudy coming from members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Premier: has he managed to get to the bottom of the contradictory explanations from his cabinet ministers on whether or not there is a new waiting list?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — There's no contradiction between ministers about lists, Mr. Chairman . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No I think it's important for the Leader of the Opposition. I mean from time to time he's going to make mistakes. I make them. I think it's important we admit them. I think he made a mistake with respect to a particular case in not verifying what had actually happened in the case of Mr. Bayliss. I think you can pick up the phone and find out. If you don't want to call my office, fair enough. You can call the Minister of Social Services. And had you done that, you would have found out the truth of what had been offered to the family, to the Bayliss family.

It's a serious situation. We're still working to provide care. In fact the day before you stood up and asked questions in the House, ministry officials were working to provide weekend respite care. Months after they had offered a full-time permanent space in a Swift Current home, they were still working with the group to provide care.

The point of that is, there will be people that'll come forward who will need the attention of the government. We're not going to let them accumulate on a giant list. That's the difference between us and you. You in government were happy to let them languish on a list of 440 people. We didn't make it up. Ministry officials brought that forward, I assume the same officials that were working when you were the government, when they were the government. The same list existed.

The minister of Social Services brought them forward and said — if you can believe it, Mr. Chairman, if you can believe it — 440 people waiting, probably a little bit more or a little bit less, who had intellectual disabilities waiting for the dignity of a home, waiting for programming services. So the minister of the day, who answered some of the questions in the day referenced by the Leader of the Opposition, brought forward a plan for about \$70 million of investment to deal with the list. I think it ended up costing around \$52 million. In addition to the 440, 215 others were helped.

Mr. Chairman, he's raising the question about whether everyone has been helped that needs help. The answer is no. But we are a far cry from the dark days of the NDP when it seemed that no one who needed help was getting help.

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

Mr. Broten: — Well as I said in question period today, Mr. Speaker, I recognize that some good steps have been made and we support the good steps that have been made. The issue here is the disconnect between the news release saying that the entire list has been addressed and then having the reality of families coming forward saying that they're still in need of services.

Mr. Speaker, Craig and Marilyn Bayliss dispute the Premier's assertion that they were offered a spot last year and that it was held for six months. We talk to them regularly. That is what they say. So if there is a different reality, I would encourage someone to contact Craig and Marilyn Bayliss and explain that they are wrong.

Mr. Chair, another issue that we've been talking about in the Assembly is two sets of books and the government's insistence on maintaining two sets of books instead of falling in step with what the rest of the country does. Now the auditor has commented on this and she said, "an incomplete and misleading picture."

And we know, Mr. Speaker, that this calls into question the ability to compare what's going on in the province here with other jurisdictions. In her special report, the Provincial Auditor says this:

Clear financial budgeting and reporting is very important in order to hold a government accountable for its financial management. By the Government's continued focus on budgets and financial statements prepared using outdated and discredited practices that differ from other governments in Canada, both the Legislative Assembly and the citizens of Saskatchewan are hindered in their ability to hold the Saskatchewan Government of the day accountable for its management of public finances.

Also, as steward of the Government's finances, the Government has a duty to present its citizens with a complete picture when presenting the Provincial Budget and actual results compared to its plans. To present incomplete and inaccurate picture to its citizens is confusing and poor practice.

So it was just a couple of days ago, Mr. Chair, that we had a ceremony, a recognition, down one level, recognizing the role of the Ombudsman, an independent officer of the legislature. And the Justice minister was there, and a number of members were there, talking about the importance of independent legislative officers that provide a non-partisan, independent opinion of what is in many circumstances the best way forward.

My question to the Premier: why is he so stubborn on this issue? And why does he dismiss the auditor's concerns?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. Well again the Leader of the Opposition touched briefly on the disability strategy for the province, and so I just want to wind things up a little bit. He said, he intimated that the press release was wrong. He's wrong. The 440 wait-list has been retired. That means there are still others in this province who need services. But those 440 that were identified on the list by the ministry have been provided services and a place to live.

In fact, Mr. Chairman, here's the rest of the record. Since 2007-08, funding has increased by 110 per cent for group homes for people with intellectual disabilities. Total group home spaces for people with intellectual disabilities in Saskatchewan has increased by 25 per cent. Funding has increased 81 per cent for day programs for people with intellectual disabilities. Funding for supported independent living for people with intellectual disabilities has increased 61 per cent — new, expanded, or enhanced services in 41 communities right across the province of Saskatchewan

And that's why on the 7th of May — I guess that's yesterday's date, I think — we received a letter from SARC [Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres]. The executive director, Amy McNeil . . . And I think she's been watching question period because she references some of the cases that the Leader of the Opposition has raised. And she doesn't want to comment on the specific cases, but she has a lot to offer in her letter. She says:

In October 2008, SARC was informed of the government's four-year plan to focus efforts on investments towards the unmet needs in the disability sector. Immediately following the announcement, SARC entered into advanced discussions with ministry staff regarding the goals set by government, including the 440 wait-list. Referring back to my notes dated October 27, SARC posed the question to ministerial staff as to how the 440 wait-list was determined. My notes reflect that the 440 persons was a snapshot at an exact time and in no way indicated that the initiative would meet every need of every person with an intellectual disability in our province.

She goes on to say, "There's always been an acknowledgment from ministry employees that participants' needs change, and that emerging needs will always exist."

Then she says, "Thanks to your government investment, there are now more effective mechanisms and increased capacities to meet the needs in a timely and respectful and efficient manner."

We're going to continue to work on this file, Mr. Chairman, and as we do and as the Leader of the Opposition raises questions, as he well should, we are going to remind him and the people of the province of this record — though it's imperfect and though we need to do more — and his and his party's record in terms of treating the most vulnerable people in the province of Saskatchewan, those who have intellectual disabilities.

And that was so good that I have forgotten the last part of the question. Ah yes, the two . . . well really the one set of books with the subset is how I think I would characterize it, Mr.

Chairman.

You know, there are a number of . . . He makes the case that this is outdated and nobody else does this. Well Manitoba displays and discusses the components of both the GRF [General Revenue Fund] bottom line and the summary bottom line. Quebec publishes both summary surplus and deficit, and a summary budget balance alternative calculation for the purposes of its balanced budget legislation. In Alberta, they're moving to three budgets. They do not have, provide an overall budget and comprehensive surplus, deficit, or a summary budget. So to say we're the only ones — and I've heard the deputy leader and the Finance critic say, well we're the only ones that are doing this — it's just not true. We see this happening in other jurisdictions.

More to the point, the members opposite and the Leader of the Opposition recklessly talk about how this doesn't provide the full story. Of course it does, because we report both on the GRF and the summary. We budget on both and the people of this province and anyone looking from outside our borders in on the finances of Saskatchewan will be able to see both the GRF budget situation and both the summary financial budget situation. And when they do that, Mr. Chairman, if they do that right now, they will see balanced on the GRF side, balanced on the summary side, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Broten: — Well that's a two-part answer so perhaps a two-part comment, or a comment first and then a question. The Premier still hasn't recognized the different opinions that are being given by ministers on his front bench with respect to the waiting list for those with intellectual disabilities.

On Human Services Committee, April 22nd, 2013, page 332, the member from Riversdale asked the Minister of Social Services, "But so is everybody then taken care of? Or do you have an additional number of people who are still waiting for services? Or a new list?" The minister responded, "No, there isn't a new list."

Shortly after, Mr. Speaker, on May 2nd, 2013, *Hansard*, 3431, when asked about this in question period, the minister standing in, the former minister of Social Services, on page 3431 said, "We do not deny that there has been a wait-list that has emerged beyond the 440 wait-list. We totally recognize that."

Mr. Speaker, the Premier's comments on the auditor, once again, it's dismissing the independent opinion that has been given by the auditor on the need to move from two sets of books to one in order to provide Saskatchewan people and Canadians an accurate picture of the finances. The dismissive approach to the auditor's reports, Mr. Speaker, is concerning enough. I think that's a concern for all Saskatchewan people. It certainly ought to be a concern for all legislators.

But the dismissive approach goes beyond the reports. It actually also goes to the behaviour and the treatment of the auditor by members of the Sask Party government caucus. And we saw this very clearly on display in the committee process when backbenchers, perhaps with too much time on their hands, Mr. Speaker, but also having direction I would imagine from the

centre, very much so, were obstructionist and were in no way approaching the auditor with the level of respect and professionalism that she is owed as an independent officer of the legislature. My question to the Premier: does he regret how his Sask Party MLAs treated the auditor in committee?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Chair. You know, there's a great focus by the Leader of the Opposition again around process and on how you define the list and when does the list stop and when did the list begin. I've answered the question. In fact I've read into the record a letter from SARC that we received yesterday where they understood entirely what the minister, by the way, has been saying, not just the Minister of Social Services today but the minister of Social Services previously who initiated the program. SARC understood it.

By the way, the non-government agencies who were here for that day when we celebrated the end of that 440 list — and it was ended — the non-government organizations that came here from across the province, they understand what the government's doing. They understand that we know there's more to be done, that the people will present themselves and we're going to deal with them.

Here's what they also understand though. I would say to the Leader of the Opposition that never again in the province, as long as we have the chance to sit on this side of the House, will there be a list like that again in Saskatchewan, will 440 people, the most vulnerable, wait for the dignity of a home or program services.

Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition stopped a little short of that quote he read from the Minister of Social Services in the Human Services Committee. If he would have read the whole quote or if we would have got the whole story — this is becoming a bit of a theme — the rest of the story, he would have noted that what the minister said at Human Services Committee is completely consistent with the government's position with respect to the 440 list.

But we're happy to talk about it. We're happy to talk about the initiative there. We're happy to have support from groups like SARC [Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres] and non-government agencies across this province who are quite truly heroes, who take care of our most vulnerable on a day-to-day basis. Mr. Chairman, they would tell the Leader of the Opposition — I think they would; well they have — things are way better today than they were before. That 440 list is gone. We're taking care of people as they emerge on that list. We've increased salaries for those who actually provide the care, for those in CBOs after they waited years and years for some sort of an increase, even indexation, and didn't get it from members opposite, Mr. Chairman. That's a big difference.

We've seen in estimates tonight a real difference in terms of the Saskatchewan Party government and the NDP under their new leader. They're still sort of the same old NDP. They're really focused on process. They're very much focused on processes and how things are organized and if things are on a list. We're kind of focused on trying our very, very best to get things done, knowing it's going to be imperfect, but knowing that our

priority is going to be the people, in this case, who are very vulnerable and need our help.

Mr. Chairman, we're not being disrespectful of the Provincial Auditor. We, like the NDP before us in government, have the opinion that when you provide a General Revenue Fund report and a summary financial report, you are disclosing the state of the finances in the province. Mr. Chairman, it's not like we are saying that here's the GRF and we're projecting that as some sort of summary financial statement. We're not. We're saying, here's the GRF, the operating account of government, and here's the summary financial statements for all of the government, including all the Crowns, including all the central agencies. So to say that we're being disrespectful, I just don't agree with the Leader of the Opposition. We are providing both.

[16:45]

Mr. Chairman, here's the other important part. Again he's interested in the process. The two sets of books is the principle of his question and what the auditor says. You know, I think most Saskatchewan people, I would submit to the new leader of the NDP, I think they were more interested in the results of the budget itself. They're interested in the bottom line, in the investments we make with the budget, and is the budget balanced. I think they're interested in that. Is the summary financial budget balanced? I think they're interested in that. How are we doing compared to other provinces? I think they're interested in that.

And frankly, in the last election, an election that he campaigned on, he had a great hand in writing the NDP platform, he wrote that tree book that formed Mr. Lingenfelter's platform, it turned out to be a \$5 billion platform that would have ensured that whether you're budgeting on the general revenue or on the summary, it would have ensured that we would today, if they would have won, had massive deficits and increased debt.

That's the interest people have when they compare and contrast parties. I think they want to make sure the information's disclosed, and we would argue it is on both counts. Then they want to make sure that there's fiscal responsibility. And I think if I can say respectfully, Mr. Chairman, that that's what we're endeavouring to provide — quite different from what the NDP would have provided if they would have won the election with \$5 billion worth of promises that they couldn't support with any sort of compensating revenue.

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

Mr. Broten: — The question, Mr. Speaker, was whether . . . Mr. Chair, the question was whether or not the Premier was proud and supportive of the actions of his Sask Party caucus members in relation to how they treated the auditor in committee. And on that, Mr. Speaker, we did not hear a comment from the Premier. And that is concerning. There are times when process matters, and I would say how legislative officers in committee are treated is one process that really does matter, and one that was disappointing to see the treatment that she received.

The issue of debt, the issue of budgets, the issue of

accountability and transparency, Mr. Speaker, one concerning element was the fact that we saw the Sask Party government off-load nearly \$100 million of debt onto the University of Saskatchewan. This is something that has caused major problems on the university's campus.

The critic and the member from Elphinstone talked about the situation on universities' campuses today, how there's a disconnect between what Sask Party billboards say and what the reality is being felt with respect to program cuts, with respect to layoffs, with respect to tuition going up, Mr. Speaker. And this ties into the issue of \$100 million of debt being passed on to the university's books.

My question to the Premier: will he admit that the government decided to send nearly \$100 million of debt on to the university's books in order to make their own financial picture look better?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — No, Mr. Chair.

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

Mr. Broten: — The Premier said no, Mr. Speaker. And having talked on this section, I will now ask and turn the mike over to the Deputy Leader for a few questions.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is my pleasure to enter into some of this discussion here this afternoon. I have a question for the Premier, a pretty straightforward question. Simply when was he first notified of the allegations and issues involving IPAC [International Performance Assessment Centre for geologic storage of CO₂] and CVI [Climate Ventures Inc.]?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair, I don't remember the exact date. And when he says . . . I think he said IPAC affair or words to that effect . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, he didn't. Well maybe he can be a little bit more specific in terms of the question with respect to what . . . He wants to know the date on which I learned something? And the something is pretty important, so I'd ask the member perhaps to be more specific.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So to just repeat the question. The direct question, straightforward question is, when did the Premier first learn of the allegations and concerns as it related to IPAC and CVI?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the allegations that the Deputy Leader of the NDP is talking about, it would have been earlier this year. And of course we can get into the details of what happened two years ago when ministers were informed of what was happening there.

But actually, Mr. Chairman, we found out today that, especially with respect to CVI, it goes a lot further back than two years ago. That member of the NDP has been standing on a regular basis talking about CVI as a Sask Party created company. Because the Sask Party funded the business plan, this is a Sask Party created initiative. In and around him, he will have members who served on the previous cabinet benches, the previous NDP government cabinet benches who would have known while he was saying those things that there might be, again, the rest of the story.

And so here, Mr. Chairman, is a memo dated October the 1st, 2007, before the election was called, just before the election was called. It's an internal memo of government officials that highlights approved initiatives. It says, "To the best of my knowledge, the following is the list of CO₂-related funding proposals from the U of R this year. Approved initiatives: SpringBoard, \$3.385 million; Climate Ventures, commercial opportunities related to CO₂, \$100,000." Approved by the NDP government in October of 2007.

He's been standing, he's been standing in the legislature, he's been talking about how this was an initiative of the Sask Party government, how it was only the Sask Party government that created it. And now we know . . . And the Leader of the Opposition has just turned in his chair to ask the veteran, the former leader of the opposition, what's going on. Because, Mr. Chairman, I think that's pretty important information in this debate. I think it highlights the fact that governments were doing what the minister has said.

Governments would fund University of Regina proposals. The University of Regina was trying to commercialize technology. It's not then therefore a government entity, but support for a U of R initiative. And I know that the deputy leader, the IPAC critic, does not necessarily agree with that. Except if he doesn't agree that that's what this government was doing, then what was his government doing in October of 2007?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Chair, it's sort of interesting that no answers come from this government for month after month after month and month after month after month. And then finally when the Premier thinks he's got some sort of information to turn the table, he jumps up and goes on the attack when he's deflected and dismissed every opportunity to be responsible.

At the end of the day, Mr. Chair, the funding for CVI, whatever arrangement in history there is to it, let's open that up. Let's place that into the hands of the Provincial Auditor. But what I know for certain, what we all know for certain is that the funding flowed over by way of an order in council in cabinet on March 6, 2008 and that money flowed when this government was in power. From that point forward, what we know is that there were significant allegations of waste, conflicts of interest that were identified all under the management of this government. And that government has a responsibility for the stewardship of public dollars.

So my question going back to the Premier: instead of trying to

cherry-pick a piece and play political games, will he finally support the call? Will he finally support the call that we've been making, that we open up this whole affair, put all the information on the table and provide the Provincial Auditor the mandate to do a full review of the IPAC affair, CVI, all related entities in question?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Oh, Mr. Chairman, I admire the pluck of the deputy leader, the Finance critic for the NDP because he's, when confronted with the fact that it was his government that actually started this process with Climate Ventures, that took, as he would say in question period, \$100,000 of taxpayers' money, quite rightly, and invested it in CVI, Climate Ventures, I like, Mr. Chairman, I admire the fact that he's basically saying, let's not quibble about who actually started this.

But the issue is serious because there are taxpayers' dollars at stake. And so I want to point again for the record of the Assembly when government ministers became aware of some of the concerns. And I know we have two different files going here, IPAC and CVI, two different issues that the member's been raising. But, Mr. Chairman, I think it's important to note that a couple of years ago, when information came forward to ministers that there was some concerns around sole-sourced contracts, there was just general concerns around the deployment of taxpayers' resources, what then did the government do, Mr. Chairman?

At that time, at the time of the concerns, who was administering, who was spending the money? It was the University of Regina. It was the University of Regina, on their own, involved in the process. When ministers find out about this particular initiative, there is a new board in place. My understanding, it is government-designated members of the new board to administer the organization that started to identify concerns. And so as I understand it, funding was stopped at that point from the Government of Saskatchewan because these concerns were identified by the government members, said we're going to stop the funding and we're going to engage in an investigation. The Provincial Auditor has been part of that review, of the file. To your question about a separate audit, the Provincial Auditor is the auditor for the University of Regina. Certainly plays a role there.

Moreover, we've had a number of different reports including this forensic investigation by Meyers Norris Penny, a very reputable firm. That concludes, by the way, that nobody personally benefited, that what we have here is a sole source contract. That's of a concern, but what we also have is perhaps some overpayment for what was finally delivered.

But, Mr. Chairman, to try to paint this picture that somehow the government didn't respond in a serious fashion to the news that taxpayers' money may not have been expended appropriately, it's just not true. Ministers did precisely the opposite. Ministers engaged on the file. A new board was put in place. Government-designated members on the board said, we've got an issue here. Let's stop the funding, said the government, said the ministers involved, and we got to the bottom of it, Mr. Chairman. And that's the nature of the story.

But again I want to say to the deputy leader who earnestly raises these issues, as he should, in question period, he might also want to review the history of CVI and understand that it was his NDP government that actually started us down this particular road, at least as it relates to CVI.

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

[17:00]

Mr. Witherspoon: — Mr. Chair, I think what we would all expect on this file is a full spotlight and transparency on what's occurred and the role for the Provincial Auditor to be involved.

What the Premier puts forward says that the MNP [Meyers Norris Penny] report says that no one personally gained. Well it doesn't say that, Mr. Chair. In fact, it makes very clear in that report, the MNP report, that they didn't have access to CVI, the very company in question created with taxpayers' dollars. They didn't have access to that information. When you go and take a look at the IT [information technology] audit, that makes it very clear that they didn't have access to all of the information to be able to provide a value-for-money analysis. None of those answers have been provided, and despite the fact that significant allegations of waste and conflicts of interest were raised with the board, there was no actions around addressing those individuals that were identified with conflicts of interest. And the dollars continued to flow.

And so, awfully interesting, Mr. Speaker. It certainly does account for millions of dollars. I have a question of how much waste and who's benefited are the questions we need to get to the heart of. But the allegations are significant.

My question back to the Premier: he can't pretend that the auditor right now has the support of this Assembly to go out and do a broad mandate. He hasn't provided that. She's out there working on her own independently and in partnership with the university. We have a responsibility to the people of Saskatchewan on this file. We should be calling on the Provincial Auditor by way of this Assembly and providing, or executive government, to provide a full mandate from the very start-up of these dollars to all the way through its creation, the expenditure of those dollars for a full analysis, a full investigation as it relates to IPAC, CVI, all related entities and individuals in conflict. And we should also be fully engaging the authorities, that being the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], Mr. Chair.

So I look to the Premier once again. What we should be doing in this is opening it up to the Provincial Auditor, providing a mandate from his office or our Assembly, and we should also be turning all information over to authorities.

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks, thanks very much, Mr. Chair. A couple points here. First of all, in terms of the member's question about what happens to the individuals involved, they work for the University of Regina. He's asking about accountability for those two folks. Well he didn't say two, but there's two in particular involved in most of the report. They

work for the University of Regina, and it's really up to the University of Regina to take these measures. Well he's shaking his head, so perhaps we'll find out more about it in subsequent questions.

I also want to ask the member this question. If he . . . Meyers Norris Penny did a forensic investigation of this whole situation, wherein they found no evidence of anyone gaining, and wherein they must not have found any evidence of any criminal wrongdoing. Conflict of interest of course is not a criminal wrongdoing. And so why does the hon. member think that a firm, a very prestigious national firm would not, in a forensic investigation, if they found some evidence of any kind of criminal wrongdoing or questions, does he not think MNP would immediately refer that to the authorities? Of course they would, Mr. Chairman. Of course they would.

We've looked at this file through different ministries. And again, we support the conclusions of Meyers Norris and Penny when they say, look, there's . . . no one gained. Here's some problems with this particular thing — sole source, maybe a conflict of interest, but nobody gained. There's no evidence of anything. And yet he keeps raising it again because I think it fits a bit of a political narrative that doesn't actually have facts to support it. And really it's not the first time we've seen this from the Deputy Leader of the NDP, especially on this issue.

Remember, Mr. Chairman, at the start of this discussion of CVI and IPAC, I read from a memo under the NDP, October the 1st, 2007, where Climate Ventures began to receive money for their commercial . . . [inaudible] . . . business plan to the . . . related to CO₂, 100,000 taxpayers' dollars. Here's some quotes from that member of the minister on this particular issue.

To the minister:

This is from *Hansard* on 24 April, 2013.

To the minister: why did the Sask Party create CVI with taxpayers' money and then do nothing to clean up the mess that they created?

The NDP started it. He's still nodding his head. I'm going to table this memo, Mr. Chairman, so we can show it to the critic so he understands, he understands that frankly it was the NDP government that initiated this.

Here's another quote. Here's another quote:

Strangely that was exactly what the Sask Party intended to do with CVI back in 2008, that CVI would be a private IT [information technology] contractor.

Mr. Speaker, why was the Sask Party's pet project, CVI using . . .

And he goes on to talk about IPAC. That's also from 24 April.

Twenty-third of April:

Mr. Speaker, why . . .

This is again the words of the member asking the question:

. . . why did the minister and the government that created CVI in the first place with taxpayers' money not ensure full access to its records?

Mr. Chairman, wrong, wrong, wrong again. The NDP took \$100,000 taxpayers' dollars in October of 2007. There's a former minister. Right behind you is another minister. There is one right over there. Don't they remember? They started CVI. And now will that member change . . . will he alter his line of questionings? He could still ask questions about it. It's a serious issue. But will he change the line of questioning so that they actually resemble the facts of the matter, started in 2007 by the New Democratic Party government?

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, no comment there about the Provincial Auditor quoting from the MNP report. MNP asked if Mr. Jaffe, if he would allow a review of his books and records to verify his assertion, and Mr. Jaffe refused, Mr. Speaker.

You know, it's concerning. Through the question periods, when we've been talking about this issue, we see a totally dismissive attitude that the various ministers have taken, that the front bench has certainly taken, Mr. Speaker. Today we see almost the Sask Party government making light of the situation by the laughs and the smiles, Mr. Speaker, that we see on this issue, Mr. Speaker. This deserves a much better scrutiny than what we are getting under the Sask Party government.

A topic that we've been discussing at length here in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, is the issue of Bill 85. And since my time in the Assembly, we've talked about a number of pieces of labour legislation. Through the discussion on Bill 85 that has occurred, Mr. Speaker, through question periods, through committee work, through different motions and debates that we've had, it's clear that Bill 85 needs much more work. We've made it clear, Mr. Speaker, that we want to work with the Sask Party government to make improvements to the legislation.

So my question to the Premier: will the Premier put Bill 85 on hold and work with stakeholders on a better set of labour laws that will benefit everyone?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to the Leader of the Opposition for the questions. You know, again I guess there's some problems with the preamble or the context for the questions that he's asked. And I'm sure he's got problems with my preamble for my answers. And I guess that's fair. That's what's going to happen in estimates.

But, Mr. Chairman, if we take a look at the history, if we canvass the history of labour legislative changes that have been made by the Government of Saskatchewan — the government elected post-2007 — you will see the NDP basically prognosticating very similarly about Bills 5 and 6 that it would be apocalyptic in terms of the labour relations environment in the province.

You heard the same things during Bill 80, during the legislation we introduced to modernize the labour legislative environment

around the construction industry. We heard the NDP saying, this will be the end of a harmonious construction labour environment. I think the former leader of the opposition, not Mr. Lingenfelter necessarily but the former interim leader of the opposition said those things, stood in his place and said, Bill 80, if it happens, is going to undo what we have as construction labour peace in the province.

I put it to members in the House on both sides and to the Leader of the Opposition: how many strikes has there been in the construction industry in the province since Bill 80 passed? How many concerns? How many issues have been raised? Has there been a deleterious impact on that legislation of that Bill 80 that they predicted dire consequences for? Has there been some sort of deleterious impact on the labour relations environment in the province? The answer is no.

What about Bill 5? No. Bill 6? No. Mr. Chairman, with respect to Bill 85, we fully expect that to be the case. Ideas that formed the basis of Bill 85 were introduced fully, announced publicly fully a year ago, more than a year ago in the province. We indicated we would take the period of consultation. We have done that. We said we would introduce legislation in the fall. We did that. Then there would be more time for debate and comment. There has been. And now there's been the chance for debate in this session.

I note by the way that the Leader of the Opposition has not raised a single question about Bill 85 in question period. I note that they only went six hours on debate when they could have gone 20. That would have been a . . . You know, if this is the burning issue for the New Democrats in terms of their concern for this impact on the labour relations environment, truly we haven't sort of seen it in terms of any sense of urgency on their part in the House and how they've dealt with it in committee. You know, Mr. Chairman, they talk about hoisting the bill but never have, which is a tool, at least an attempted tool. So opposition has a number of tools on the debate.

I want to say, I guess we'll get into the debate of 85. And I'm mindful of the time so I'll take my seat, but there are just, very quickly, on hours of work — which has been a concern we've heard from working families in this province and from the NDP — hundreds of agreements exist already for four 10-hour shifts. Five provinces allow four 10-hour workdays in a week without a permit: Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and PEI [Prince Edward Island]. The NDP used to allow these same kinds of workweeks by permit. Our records show that they never really rejected a permit.

Mr. Chairman, this is done as an employer and employee sit down about their shift. Many employees prefer these shifts. This is modernizing the legislation. It's consistent with two Atlantic provinces — sorry, three — Ontario, and Alberta. That part of the legislation we can talk about some more, and other parts as well I'm sure the member will want to raise.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 85 is important to us, and for that reason we've been asking questions. We've been presenting petitions. We've been spending a lot of time in committee, Mr. Speaker. We have been touring the province

listening to people because it is important legislation because it affects so many people here in the province. And I would imagine government members would agree with that opinion as well.

What we've heard from people, what the public is saying, what labour leaders are saying, what is reported by some people who watch politics in the province, Mr. Speaker, is that there needs to be more discussion on what the consequences of 85 can be. There needs to be more communication with the Saskatchewan public and the government with respect to what Bill 85 will mean for the workplace. And we have to remember, workplaces are about families that work in them. They're about individuals who are balancing in busy times everything that they want to accomplish by getting ahead in life, doing well but also having the quality of life that they need.

The issues of Bill 85 are significant. It is a very broad piece of legislation touching on many areas of the workplace. And it's important, Mr. Speaker, when that type of legislation comes into place, that it's done well, that if there are problems, if there are questions remaining, that they ought to be addressed, Mr. Speaker.

And for this reason, Mr. Chair, we have taken a constructive approach in this. We've recognized that there may be deficiencies in the bill. There are outstanding questions that many people in the province have, and for that reason, you know, we're engaging in a process where we want to be constructive, where we want to ensure that the legislation is well known by the Saskatchewan public. I mean in that vein, Mr. Speaker, our Labour critic has constructively engaged with the Minister of Labour to talk about some possible approaches that we could have in order to ensure that the legislation does not have unintended consequences with respect to working people here in the province.

One constructive suggestion we have had, Mr. Speaker, is to hit pause on the legislation in this spring sitting and to resume in the fall, giving the opportunity and the time in order to fully understand what the consequences of the bill will be, to work on some flawed parts of the legislation, Mr. Speaker, so it can be done in a constructive way and so that there can be . . . that it is in fact the best legislation for Saskatchewan people. We've put that olive branch to work constructively and to not take it to a ramped-up partisan level but to do what is in the best interest of workers and Saskatchewan people.

My question to the Premier: will they consider delaying the passage of the bill and not doing it this spring sitting but resuming in the fall in order to allow the important work to occur? And the opposition is willing to be constructive in that process.

The Chair: — Members, the Chair would ask your leave to introduce two special guests in the west gallery. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Chair: — Thank you, members. The member seated . . .

Did they leave? Oh okay. Sorry. They were seated in the west gallery was two very special guests, Mrs. Wendy Bonk and her daughter Caralee. And the reason why they're so special is that Mrs. Bonk is the mother of one of our Pages, Sarah Cheshire. And too bad we didn't get this invitation in quickly before they left, but hopefully they'll come back. But anyway in their absence, I'd ask to recognize their attendance here today. Thank you.

[17:15]

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Executive Council Vote 10

Subvote (EX01)

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier. Thank you for granting leave.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Chairman, just back to the point of, you know, what we've heard in the past from the NDP in advance of labour legislation passing, they have, they truly have predicted terrible things for the labour environment and the economy. And then when the labour legislation is introduced and passed and it doesn't happen . . .

To the credit of the former interim leader of the opposition, he did acknowledge it on the 23rd of October. At the start of this session, the then leader of the NDP said, "Our economy has been moving along quite well with relative labour peace for many, many years." Which kind of proves the point, Mr. Chairman, that we're sensitive to the fact that when labour legislation changes are required, we think to modernize or to make sure that our economy is competitive while both sides are treated fairly. We're always mindful of the labour legislative environment, that we would want it to continue to be constructive and peaceful here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chairman, the question from the NDP leader is, well will you delay this? Will you delay it till fall? Mr. Chairman, the discussion paper that led to the debate we're having today was released over a year ago. Four thousand submissions have been received as a result.

A lot of items in the discussion paper, the government has heard loud and clear not just from business, sometimes from labour, that they didn't support it. They've been withdrawn. They're not in the bill. We've actually . . . It's not just been a consultation process for the sake of saying we consulted. We have earnestly looked at the input from labour and from business, and we've withdrawn elements of the discussion paper so that they do not appear in the bill currently before the House.

There is a ministerial advisory committee made up of labour, made up of the other side of the equation, of the employers as well. They've met we think between eight and nine times. Mr. Hubich is on that. Mr. Bymoan, business people are on that. They meet about six hours at a time. They've done it nine occasions. Again there's been 4,000 submissions.

We then introduced the bill in the fall. More debate, more discussion, more time for comment from people until they get to the spring, Mr. Chairman. We're dealing with some concerns around the workweek, around some other issues that group said needed clarification. We've heard that consultation. We're actually dealing with it in committee with amendments, friendly amendments that the government has brought in. Mr. Chairman, I don't know of a piece of legislation in the young history of our government that has been vetted as much as this from a consultative process or just time in the legislature.

So the answer to my honourable friend's question is no. We're not going to delay. We have done the consultation. We've withdrawn parts of the bill. We're amending other parts that have been raised by opposition members, by the critic, and by others. We're dealing with those as well, Mr. Chairman.

And now it's time to move forward with legislation, I might add, that will now index the minimum wage for the first time in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. Now it's time to move forward with an initiative that will provide unpaid leave for people to attend citizenship ceremonies or unpaid leave to donate an organ or standardization and reduction of qualifying periods for parental, maternity, and adoption leave. Mr. Chairman, it's time to move forward with a very progressive piece of legislation that deals I think even-handedly with both sides but works to ensure that this economy remains competitive, that the workplace is fair, and that the economy remains competitive.

Consultation's happened. Input's been received. Changes have been made, and now the bill will pass.

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

Mr. Broten: — Well, Mr. Chair, it's disappointing that an offer to work together in order to improve legislation and address some of the deficiencies in the legislature, Mr. Speaker, is not being accepted by the Sask Party government.

In December, the CBC asked the Premier about his privatization agenda, and the Premier indicated that this would in fact be an election issue. So I think it's important to be clear with Saskatchewan people when it comes to the Crowns that all Saskatchewan people own. Will the Premier propose the privatization of any Crown corporations in the next election?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Yes. I'll make the Leader of the Opposition a deal. If he wants to start talking about some things he might actually do in advance of or during the next election, I guess we can get into fighting the next election at that point. We've given him ample time to do it, even on things as simple as, do you still support private clinics or do you oppose private clinics? And he hasn't been able to do it. So you know, we'll have plenty of time to get into all of those debates. And honestly if he's going to ask that question about what's in the platform next time around, I think he should probably want to offer some glimpses of what might be in his particular platform or even ideas that he still holds today.

Mr. Chairman, I think it's also interesting to note with respect

to Bill 85 as we wrap that discussion up — or perhaps there's more questions — the NDP provided a submission to the government just in advance of the bill. Since then, Mr. Chairman, there's been no submission. Four thousand others have come from all over the province. Labour's been involved. Business has been involved. You know, the Leader of the Opposition stands and says earnestly, it's too bad that we won't accept his offer to co-operate. Mr. Chairman, they haven't made an effort to provide information, to provide basic elements of the submission that I know this minister would take seriously because this minister's taken seriously the advice and recommendations from labour about certain pieces. It's why, Mr. Chairman, it won't be an NDP government that finally indexes minimum wage in Saskatchewan. It will be a Saskatchewan Party government.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chair, when looking at the future of our province, it's clear that we need a long-term, sustainable plan for smart growth. And that includes doing our part to address climate change that is occurring, Mr. Speaker. Several weeks ago the Premier travelled to Washington, desperately trying to make the case for our province's environmental record. He talked about the need to “give them as much elbow room as possible.”

But following that, Mr. Speaker, when he returned to the province and delivered a budget not long after that, we saw cuts for funding for environmental assessment and environmental protection and to programs to address climate change. And just over the last two years, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has cut funding for climate change programs by 73 per cent.

So my question to the Premier: why would he cut the funding that is designated for environmental protection, environmental assessment, funding to address climate change through programs, Mr. Speaker, at the same time that he's desperately trying to promote our environmental record abroad?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well thanks again, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the discussion because it's a chance, I think, to again demonstrate to the people of the province a real difference that exists between the NDP and the Sask Party, between perhaps the Leader of the Opposition and our own approach.

Because when we took office in 2007, there was a climate change office. There were no resources in the office. There were monitoring vehicles, as I recall, for northern air quality with no budget to actually have anybody drive them. They were all sitting in a parking lot. We took over from a government that was issuing a lot of press releases about greenhouse gases, about climate change, even under their watch, even while emissions rose under their watch by 70 per cent.

Mr. Chairman, we're not interested in offices. We're not interested in trucks sitting in a parking lot somewhere in Regina. We're interested in action. And that was my message in Washington. It's this government that's implemented a \$1 million boreal lake strategy so that we can, for the first time in the history of the province, test our northern lakes so we can

protect our northern lakes.

Mr. Chairman, in the particular budget that we've been debating here in this Legislative Assembly, there's \$1.2 million to offset the multi-material recycling initiative, something that has been needed; 500,000 for the boreal woodland caribou strategy, \$250,000 for that. There's the south of the divide project for \$300,000, Mr. Chairman. We're serious about our environment and our habitat.

The other point that I was making in Washington is that on a per capita basis — to my knowledge, I stand to be corrected, but we've canvassed sort of North America — to our knowledge, there is not another jurisdiction in North America that is investing more public dollars per capita to deal with CO₂ than the province of Saskatchewan under this government.

And a \$1.4 billion clean coal project — real, transformative, technological change that we are leading — a project that is on time and on budget. Words we don't use often enough in government, I would say: on time and on budget. Ninety-six, ninety-five per cent capture of CO₂. NOx [nitrogen oxides] and SOx [sulphur oxides] particulates, captures all of those. The sale of the CO₂, reused enhanced oil recovery, and then the safe geological storage of that CO₂ — by the way, technology we have because of the previous government's investment in CO₂ technology, and that included the PTRC [Petroleum Technology Research Centre], by the way — and our continued increased investment in this particular area.

So you bet I was in Washington talking about that. Because, Mr. Chairman, we've had members of the New Democratic Party go down to Washington, including his federal leader, including federal members of Parliament, and badmouth Canada in terms of Keystone.

What we need to be doing is going down to the United States and saying we should be doing better in Canada in terms of our environmental record, America. But by the way, did you know this, America, our friends in America? Did you know that we have more aggressive coal regulations in Canada than they do? Did you know that the first jurisdiction in North America that actually put a price on carbon — without that, by the way, this is a moot conversation — was not anywhere in the United States. It was not in the home state of Al Gore. It was in the province of Alberta.

We're following suit with our own greenhouse gas legislation. And the largest clean coal project that, as far as we know, exists anywhere in the world — with public investment and admittedly some risk, but the risk is worth it if we can transform the coal-fire industry, for example, by cleaning it up — is right here in the province of Saskatchewan. That's our record.

No, we didn't continue to fund offices that were empty when we found them, or trucks in a parking lot. But, Mr. Chairman, we took the issue seriously. We made, I think, a fairly bold move, together with the federal government, to fund the world's largest clean coal demonstration project. And it holds great hope for us because, you know, coal is going to be used in China and in the United States and in India and around the world. It's going to be a transition energy. We need to clean it

up for the sake of the planet. And when the technology that comes from this particular initiative at Boundary dam affords the world to do just that, I hope that all members in the House will be very proud of the fact that we've done this. And we'd be happy to travel to Washington or anywhere else and tell that story.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Chair, the Premier can have his message that he takes to the South, but it needs to be backed up and reflected by the decisions that are in the budget. And when you go down, Mr. Chair, and promote your environmental record and then come home to the province and make a 73 per cent cut over two years to environmental assessment, environmental protection programs, Mr. Speaker, there is once again a disconnect between what the government is saying and what is the reality.

Now carbon capture initiatives and research, Mr. Speaker, are hugely important. They're important to the province and they're important to the planet in terms of an overall strategy. But they're part of an overall strategy, Mr. Speaker. And what's missing from the Sask Party government is a long-term plan for more renewable power in the province.

So my question to the Premier: if his goal and his intent is to promote Saskatchewan's environmental record, if his goal, if they recognize that climate change is an issue — I know that the jury's out on that for a number of members on the opposite side, whether they acknowledge that climate change is a reality — if that is a priority, if that is a concern, Mr. Speaker, then a long-term plan for transitions and expansion of renewable power is most certainly needed. Would that not make sense when promoting our plan abroad?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well again, Mr. Chairman, this is a very good discussion to have because he represents a party whose record was a 70 per cent increase in emissions. And their answer was an empty office and vehicles in a parking lot. That was their answer. That's what happened under your watch.

We took office, Mr. Speaker, and we moved to act with respect to renewable energies, not just talk about them, but act. And so from 2008 to 2013, if the member wants to know, let's talk about low carbon technologies in Saskatchewan, the investments made by this government: SaskPower Boundary dam 3 clean coal project, 1.24 billion; SaskPower and natural gas is a low carbon technology, certainly when you reference coal, \$1.8 billion; biomass generation at SaskPower, \$459 million.

[17:30]

Mr. Chairman, it's important for us to note that the biomass, the opportunities, the cogen opportunities in the forest sector allow us to source green energy, but in the bargain reanimate a pulp mill and a forestry asset and create jobs in Prince Albert, Mr. Chairman.

So it's this great confluence between the right thing to do

environmentally — low carbon technology, biomass, which the NDP never got around to — and create jobs in the forestry industry in Prince Albert, something that our members from Prince Albert have been working on.

But the list goes on, Mr. Chairman: centennial wind power facility and other wind power sources, there's been an increase in wind in our administration of hundreds of millions of dollars; heat recovery projects by SaskPower, \$41 million; CCS [carbon capture and storage] research and development project at the Shand power plant, \$60 million; and a partnership, a very dynamic partnership with a demonstration plant with Hitachi.

Aquistore, the deep saline aquifer CO₂ storage project at Boundary dam, \$41 million; Weyburn-Midale CO₂, and that's a project from the NDP now, to be fair, \$35.06 million added; other carbon reducing projects, the Go Green Fund, are now over \$50 million; reforestation, 3.27; Sask biofuels up until now with changes coming, but \$4.2 million. Mr. Chairman, the green energy procurement in government, point six million dollars. The low carbon technology training initiative at the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina has been another two-plus million dollars. Mr. Chairman the list goes on and on. It includes hydro. It includes the Boundary dam project. Again the premise of the member's question is wrong.

The First Nations Power Authority, established by this government, where we want to work with First Nations as they bring forward ideas around renewable energy so they actually can benefit from it in an economic way. Mr. Chairman, the reality is this: that under the NDP you got some talk, an empty office and trucks in a parking lot. And on this side of the House you have \$4.8 billion in low technology investment that is garnering interest the world over. Mr. Chairman, that's the difference.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe it was last Saturday I was up with the member from Cumberland in La Ronge. And I was up there to attend the NORTEP [northern teacher education program] grad, which is a wonderful program that has done so much for the North over the years.

And if we look at how the North has been treated by the Sask Party government we see many concerns, Mr. Speaker. We see poor treatment of the commercial fishing industry. We see the needs of trappers ignored. We also see, Mr. Speaker, the neglect of northern roads, whether it's Wollaston Lake, whether it's on the way to Cumberland House or Ile-a-La-Crosse. We see, Mr. Speaker, the North being taken for granted and not receiving the attention that it truly deserves. We also see human stories coming forward from the North. And we can think of Barbara Blyth, Mr. Chair, an individual who needed a care spot because of cancer, because of a broken foot — a recommendation from her home care worker, Mr. Speaker.

And we've seen a concerning approach in how the Sask Party government views the North, specifically around the role of what is the best plan, what is the long-term sustainable plan that truly seizes the opportunity and recognizes the North as part of an asset to the province, as opposed to a liability, and recognizes that its people — whether they're born into the

richest family or poorest family in this province, whether they're born in the North or the South — that they have opportunity to succeed, they have opportunity to receive a good education, they have an opportunity to participate.

The Premier said, with respect to the North, that the only program that Aboriginal people needed was Cameco. And now certainly, Mr. Speaker, Cameco is a great company. It provides jobs. It supports our economy in a big way, and it is an important player in the North. And Saskatchewan is home to some very good corporate citizens, and we are appreciative of their role. And it's important that they have a strong presence here in the province. But the North needs a lot more than Cameco, Mr. Speaker, to reach its full potential. The North needs a lot more than Cameco so that every child has the opportunity that they need and deserve. And it's also worth noting, Mr. Speaker, that Cameco needs good education initiatives in the North. Cameco needs good roads in order to thrive and in order to provide many of the benefits that our economy receives through its activity.

So my question to the Premier: why is there an absence of a long-term plan, a view of the North as being a huge asset, as opposed to a view of the North as being a liability, and the only solution, as the Premier said, is that Cameco is the answer for everyone. Why is he neglecting the important role that government can have and can play in ensuring that the North is successful?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Well it's been a process tonight to make sure we clarify what the Leader of the Opposition's saying and that we get the facts on the record. What he's just said about my remarks with respect to Cameco are just wrong. They're absolutely wrong. There's a transcript of the speech; it's available to the Leader of the Opposition. And I think it's really incumbent on the Leader of the Opposition when he stands on the floor of the Assembly to make sure that the appropriate quote is read.

Here's what I did say, and I'm happy to stand by it. In fact I sent a letter to the editor to the Prince Albert newspapers to this extent. When you take a look at actually what Cameco has done in terms of their employment record, in terms of employing between 40 and 44 per cent of Aboriginal people, First Nations and Métis people in high-paying, good quality of jobs, when you consider what they have done, they've actually done more than any government program has ever done in this province. Period. That is my point. And they've done it, by the way, without government tax dollars. They've done it because it's the right thing to do, because they've been able to get great professional workers as a result of this. And they are a world-leading company. That's what I said. And I'd invite the Leader of the Opposition to review exactly what was said before he takes such licence as he unfortunately did just now.

Mr. Chairman, we know that northern issues are important for the whole province because of the resources that are available there for the people of the North, but they benefit everybody in Saskatchewan. And because of the special needs that exist with a very small population in a very large area, that's posed challenges for this province for some time, long before our

government came along.

And so, Mr. Chairman, we have been investing in northern roads, in northern education, in northern health care. Mr. Chairman, in fact when we've changed the municipal revenue-sharing arrangement, the pools so to speak, we ensured that — and by the way revenue sharing, as the Leader of the Opposition will know, is way, way up for municipalities — we significantly increased revenue sharing for northern municipalities. In 2013-14, an increase of 19 per cent or \$3.1 million cash for those municipalities to deal with some of the needs that you've referenced.

It's also true in terms of infrastructure. \$40 million to build, operate, maintain highways, airports, and the Wollaston Lake barge in northern Saskatchewan; \$11 million in work that began last year, Mr. Chairman. As part of the work we need to move on a new bridge at Pelican Narrows. There's the 914 Highway that's very important to the economy and transportation in the North. On a per capita basis we invest over double in the North than what we invest in the rest of the province in terms of that kind of infrastructure.

Some will say, well more needs to be done. I think probably they have said that down through the decades. That's a fair comment. It's a good debate to have. I do think it's important for the government to be held accountable with respect to northern investment. And on that count we're happy to explain what the record of the government is. We're happy to share exactly what we've done. While we admit more work needs to happen, Mr. Chairman, I think the action we took with respect to northern revenue sharing, which was an historic increase of 19 per cent — the first time they've ever had an increase like that — was undertaken by this side of the House. I hope that's an indication of the priority we place on northern issues.

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

Mr. Broten: — Well, Mr. Chair, I do have concerns with the priority placed, and we can go back to the discussion we had earlier on in the afternoon with respect to the recommendations from the task force. And while the task force recommendations are not exclusively addressing northern issues, they certainly have a huge influence on the North and a huge relevance to the North and the future of the North. So to have the Premier earlier on say that the recommendations, many of them will be ignored, when we think about the future of the North, with that comment I think that is concerning and something that deserves examination.

In committee last week, Mr. Chair, the member for Lakeview asked about the date of the next election and an official from the Ministry of Justice said:

... the answer to that isn't quite as straightforward as it could be. As the member is aware, there was a provision that was passed that provided that, notwithstanding the fixed elections Act, if there was a federal writ period that was going to overlap with the provincial writ period, it could get pushed to the following April. So essentially we're looking at the first week of November in '15 or pushed over to April in '16.

And that's from the Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee on May 1st, 2013.

So my question to the Premier: so since the answer about the next election date is not quite as straightforward as the legislation would suggest given the remark by the official, when will the Premier make it clear when exactly our next election will be?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — You know, Mr. Chair, you know, this is actually a good debate to have, because under the NDP we could never have this debate. We could've stood up in the opposition benches and said when will . . . the next election would be, and they would've just laughed because there was no set elections. Because way back then in those days, games were played with the calling of an election.

Mr. Chairman, I think we've been very clear and the legislation is clear and the reason for the legislation is clear. Our preference is the first Monday in November every four years, period. But we know that in November of 2015, there will be a federal election that will be happening at the same time as a provincial election because they also have a set date. And so we were quite public about saying — and we didn't hear any objections from the NDP at the time — that if the federal government would not move off of their set date, would not indicate . . . And by the way I talked to the Prime Minister about this and other premiers did as well, because other provinces have the same challenge. If the federal government wasn't moving off the date, we can't have a federal election and a provincial election at the same time. And so we set another date a few months later. The date is April 4th, 2016. That's the date. That's the latest possible date.

Now if for whatever reason the federal government, there's a federal election prior to the date, our legislation I believe reverts back to the original date. Moreover we revert back to a four-year, first Monday in November, after this anomaly of an April election potentially in 2016. And I don't think I can be any clearer than that.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Premier for the explanation. I wasn't suggesting that something untoward was occurring. It was simply providing, Mr. Speaker, information. With a fixed election date, knowing that there is a conflict, this is a question that many people have had especially as it relates to being open and transparent, Mr. Chair.

This afternoon, Mr. Speaker, we've touched on a number of topics that are important, that have relevance to Saskatchewan families. We've looked at the area of seniors' care, Mr. Speaker, talking about instances where individuals have had concerns, Mr. Chair, where they have not received the type of treatment they need. We think of the situation of Carrie. We think of the situation of Lynne. We think of the situation of Michael. Individuals who have come forward, Mr. Chair, because they have not been treated and they have not received services as they need to, that we haven't made the care for seniors in our province the priority that it needs to be.

We've also, Mr. Speaker, spent considerable time on the area of pre-K to 12 [pre-kindergarten to grade 12] education and the need to ensure that we are making the best steps, the need to ensure that we are thinking long term, that we are respecting educators who are in the classroom, and that we're taking the best steps for our kids. We've talked about things like capping classroom sizes as one option in order to ensure the best possible opportunity for our children, and talking about an approach with educational professionals in the province that's based on respect and it's based on co-operation and working together.

Mr. Speaker, as an opposition we are committed to working with the government when it makes sense. And I think of Howard's law as one example, an opportunity where we were able to come together, realize there's some common sense legislation that's in the best interests of all Saskatchewan people, and find some agreement on both sides of the House. I wish, Mr. Speaker, that same spirit in the olive branch that we extend with respect to Bill 85 would also be received by the Sask Party on this front. And I'm disappointed, Mr. Speaker. Today, by the Premier's remarks, we see that is not going to occur.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chair, we will most certainly shine a light on issues that need to be revealed and shown to the Saskatchewan people. It is our role as an opposition to hold the government to account. When there are times to co-operate, we will. But when things are off-track, when things are not in the best interests of Saskatchewan people, that's when we will stand up and we will most certainly speak out.

Mr. Speaker, my approach and the approach of the official opposition is not to change the things that are working well in the province. But we must recognize, Mr. Speaker, the areas where they are not working well, that we need to do better. The Saskatchewan people most certainly deserve to do better.

We need a plan, Mr. Speaker, for sustainable growth. We need a long-term vision. We talked about it in the area of education, Mr. Speaker, and we talked about it in terms of our view of the North and how we should be treating and working with northerners, recognizing them as an asset and not a liability, Mr. Speaker.

We need a government that listens, a government that consults, and a government that works on the basis of common sense. And increasingly, Mr. Speaker, individuals in the province are having problems with the notion, with the double messages that are coming from the Sask Party government. At a time when the economy is doing well, people wonder why seniors aren't receiving the care that they need. Families wonder why their kids are in a crowded classroom. People involved in our university campuses wonder why the billboards boast that times have never been better, but then they hear of program cuts. They hear of layoffs. They hear of tuition going up, Mr. Speaker.

And this is the disconnect that we are seeing with respect to the message, what the congratulatory news releases say that are issued by government, and what Saskatchewan families, what Saskatchewan people are actually experiencing and actually feeling, Mr. Speaker. And you can absolutely believe, Mr.

Speaker, that as an opposition we will continue to come forward. We will continue to hold the government to account and ensure that the interests of Saskatchewan people are first and foremost.

Mr. Speaker, when the economy is doing well, it's concerning that the Sask Party government is failing on a number of fronts with respect to the services that are provided to Saskatchewan people.

We can think of pre-K to 12. We can think of crowded classrooms. We can think of the crumbling gym here in Regina. We can think of the cases of the seniors, of the situations that our grandparents or our parents or our partners find themselves in, Mr. Speaker, not receiving the type of care that they need in order to have the dignity and the respect that they deserve in their golden years.

My question to the Premier: why the increasing disconnect that we hear, Mr. Speaker, coming from the Sask Party government? We have billboards, we have news releases coming from the government saying that things have never been better, but the reality that people are experiencing when they think about the care for their seniors in a long-term care facility, when they think about the learning conditions for their child in a classroom, when they think about their activity on a university campus, there is a disconnect there.

My question to the Premier: when the economy is doing well, why is the Sask Party government failing Saskatchewan people on these fronts?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks, Mr. Chairman. And I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition and the deputy leader for their questions tonight. I thank them for their work this session as well though I know we have a few days to go. It's not quite over. I want to make sure I thank my officials before I forget to do that. I think I've done that in the past. I appreciate their support as well as the support of ministers who have helped me to answer some questions today that the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Rosemont have put.

You know, in his summary — I assume that's the summation — in his summation, the Leader of the Opposition talks a little bit about what this government does in terms of billboards or press releases. Well we're not the first government to issue press releases to herald certain dates or events or accomplishments in the life of the province.

I draw the Leader of the Opposition's attention to a press release issued on the 26th of March 2003. It's obviously 10 years ago but it was right after some population numbers were released. And his party was bragging about what was happening with population numbers, except here's the press release. It said, "Out migration at lowest level in four years."

And in the quote, the Minister of Industry says, "Our economic momentum gives us confidence for the future." Our economic momentum. See, you know, you talk about a disconnect. There was a real disconnect there. The NDP then and still consider falling, momentum.

In the new Saskatchewan, people call that gravity, and they expect better. They really do. They know that this province, with all of its resources, should be the leader that it has become in the country, not necessarily because of the government, but I hope we have helped it along with our policies.

The Leader of the Opposition is asking for a long-term plan. It's exactly what we released this fall, a six-point plan for growth that is sustainable in the province with targets around the areas where we, Mr. Chairman, want to see the dividends of growth applied in education and in health care, Mr. Chairman, because we understand on this side of the House that growth for the sake of growth isn't really the point.

But rather we want the economy to grow so the tax base is broader and we can eliminate a 440 wait-list, and we can build record levels of education infrastructure with more needed. That we can invest in health care; that we can hire 1,000 more nurses and we can have 200 more doctors working; that we can increase the seats at the university in terms of the College of Medicine; that we can provide for increases in the highways budget and massive increases in revenue sharing for municipalities — it's all really part of the plan for growth that we've had. And that's going to be sustained into the long term.

And I don't agree with the Leader of the Opposition. I think the people of Saskatchewan understand that there's going to be, from time to time, people who come forward who have fallen through the cracks. And they have a job to raise them, and we have a job to raise them. And then we have a job to deal with them. I think they understand that.

I think they also though understand that whoever the government is, that's going to happen. And what they truly want from a government is a long-term vision worthy of this province, a long-term vision that understands that everything that member wants to do with public finances — and he's spending a lot in his first month or so as leader — has to come from an economy, has to come from a tax base. I think that's where the disconnect is.

The disconnect in this province is between the NDP I think and maybe even the new Leader of the Opposition, when all through three hours of estimates I think he mentions growth in this province once, twice, maybe three times. People in Saskatchewan are talking about growth. Some of them are referencing the challenges of growth, that we have to deal with them. But mostly it's a good thing. Mostly people understand that when we're growing, when we're leading in so many respects in the country, it at least gives us a better chance to deal with all of the social issues, to provide better health care. That's the complete vision. That's the complete package, Mr. Chairman.

And we know that we have more work to do in any number of areas. We know there's going to be mistakes from time to time. But, Mr. Chairman, we're not turning back on this vision we have for a province that is growing, and more importantly, the rest of the sentence: what do we do with dividends of that growth?

I think those priorities are on broad display. I think there is a connection as a result with the people of this province, one that

we'll never take for granted, one that we're going to work hard to earn that connection, one that we will work hard to earn every single day. Mr. Chairman. That will be the priorities. That will be the priority of this side of the House. It's that complete vision and one that is worthy of a province.

We're not the wee province. We are not a have-not province, Mr. Chairman. We're not a province for whom growth at the national average is a statistical impossibility. Those were all descriptors when those folks sat on this side of the House. That's the disconnect. It was then and it is now, and we're going to work hard to ensure that it doesn't repeat itself. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to thank the Premier for the exchanges that we had this afternoon and thank the officials who assisted with responses that we received. And thank all members for their encouragement, sometimes across the floor and sometimes through a note or something like that. So I wish everyone a good evening. Thank you.

The Chair: — Seeing no other members wishing to enter into the debate, we will proceed to vote the estimates. Subvote (EX01), central management and services in the amount of \$5,814,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Subvote (EX07), Premier's office in the amount of \$590,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Subvote (EX04), cabinet planning in the amount of \$1,005,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Cabinet secretariat, (EX05) in the amount of \$538,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Subvote (EX03), communications office in the amount of \$3,175,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Subvote (EX08), house business and research in the amount of \$434,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Subvote (EX06), members of executive council in the amount of \$131,000. That is statutory. No vote is required.

Subvote (EX10), intergovernmental affairs in the amount of \$4,556,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Subvote (EX11), francophone affairs in the amount of \$901,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Lieutenant Governor's office, subvote (EX12) in the amount of \$674,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2014, the following sums for Executive Council, \$17,687,000.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. There being no further business before this committee, I would invite a member to move that the committee rise and report progress and ask for leave to sit again. I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Speaker.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — At the next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting. Okay, now being past the hour of 5 o'clock, this House stands adjourned to 10 a.m. — just making sure everybody was paying attention — 10 a.m. Thursday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:58.]

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Premier

President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd

Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Kevin Doherty

Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. June Draude

Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Health

Hon. Donna Harpauer

Minister of Crown Investments
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority

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Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
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Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan
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