

May 31, 1984

EVENING SESSION

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 10

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Sveinson: — While winding up just before the bell – the bell was at 5 o'clock – I left the House somewhat confused. And the confusion was basically with the Premier's own stand on how he apportions employment to his servants, not only in the Executive Council, but in cabinet. He indicated to the House that education was certainly not necessarily heavy on his list. He indicated that, certainly and undoubtedly, that the primary qualification he would address any individual in his employ with would be experience.

An Hon. Member: — And loyalty.

Mr. Sveinson: — And of course he mentioned loyalty, as a member opposite would contend. I certainly don't have any difficulty with loyalty. That's certainly a credible quality to have in your employee. I'm no longer an employee or a counterpart of the Premier. I'm loyal to the Liberal party, and I will be for the rest of my life. I come from a long and proud line of Liberals, in fact – a very long and proud line of Liberals. I got side-tracked for a short time while I was at university, as Grant did, in the '60s and early '70s. I'm sure he's even voted NDP in his past. I certainly haven't, but I'm sure the Premier may have. And proudly, and rightly so. I think he had that right to do that.

But where my confusion arises is . . . Mr. Devine, in his selection of one of the biggest cabinets in the history of this province – 25 members compared to 35 in Ottawa . . . (inaudible) . . . 25 million people. This country is somewhat larger than our province. You'd think that with the personal staff that you surround yourself with in Executive Council, and the expanse of cabinet you've got, that you're running a fiefdom of some sort with 20 or 30 million people in it. But that being aside, I would ask you, Mr. Premier, how you have decided in your wisdom, based on experience, to leave a gentleman like the member from Moosomin out of your initial cabinet and again out of your cabinet shuffle. And I would ask you to answer that question.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, obviously the Premier decides who goes in cabinet and who doesn't, and the reasons for it are left with the Premier. He can change it at any time, he can add or subtract, or do whatever.

With respect to the size of the cabinet, I think it's important to point out that if we look at cabinet – to government members – the biggest cabinet with respect to government members in the country is New Brunswick, followed by Nova Scotia, followed by British Columbia, followed by Manitoba, and then Prince Edward Island. So if you look at the size of the cabinet with respect to the number of people that are elected in the Assembly, Saskatchewan ranks very well.

Let me also point out that if you reduce the size of government by 3,000 people, and let's say their average salary would be \$25,000 apiece, on average – on average, say 3,000 people at \$25,000 apiece, that's \$75 million annually that we've saved - \$75 million dollars. Sixty-four MLAs are elected as 64 MLAs. They're here, you can't change that, they're here, they're elected.

If you add four more in cabinet – the previous administration had 21, we've got 25. Let's add four. And say they cost an extra \$20,000 in terms of going to see the people and the travel and the rest of it, that's \$75 million we have saved in terms of the size of government, versus \$80,000 increase in serving the public of Saskatchewan because we have elected MLAs. And everybody – everybody, every constituency I know would like to have their MLA in cabinet. Unfortunately, Regina North West doesn't rank there at all any more, doesn't have a hope until the next election or a by-election's called, but most represent . . . Most constituencies, in fact all of them, would like to see their MLA in cabinet. So the modest expansion from 21 to 25, with its modest increase in expense, doesn't even rank with the \$75 million annually that we save the people of Saskatchewan compared to the previous administration.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well I can appreciate your slashing the needs of the people in Saskatchewan through the civil service, and some areas of course that possibly was well taken.

I asked you a question on a member that was elected in Moosomin in 1975, served in this House long before you were a member of the Conservative Party, Mr. Premier, served the party that you represent very well over a long course of time. I ask you, Mr. Premier, does this gentleman have something in his background that hasn't been observed by the public that you can, in fact, identify as something that should not be in your cabinet?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member knows that I decide who's in cabinet, and I decide for the reasons that I think are important, and that's all I can add.

Mr. Sveinson: — And certainly, Mr. Premier, you decide who's in your Executive Council. Your slur on my personality this afternoon was certainly uncalled for. I think the point that I was unable, because of the slur of your government members addressed to me over the course of one and a half hours, was that you have one of the most, one of the largest personal staffs in the country. And that I would say 95 per cent of the people on your personal staff are not there because of qualifications, are not there because of education, are there because of the huge salaries you're paying, and the political partisanship these people showed, not after the election, but prior to and during the election, and that they've demonstrated since the election. And I believe, and I say it very adamantly, that you should look at ways to pare your personal staff.

Ontario, for instance, the Premier of Ontario has approximately 50 people serving his personal staff in the province of Ontario, but seven and a half million people. How do you explain? How do you explain to the taxpayers of this province, when the salaries on this list range up to \$80,850? How do you explain that you need 100 people serving your needs to get the message out to the people of Saskatchewan that you're running this province with any kind of, with any kind of good management program, or any kind of empathy toward the people in this province, who expect and respect a good government?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, it's quite evident to most Canadians and across Canada that the largest bureaucracy that you'd want to find, and one of the most people are becoming quite ashamed of, is at the national level under the federal Liberal government in the administration of Mr. Trudeau. I will say . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — And everybody recognizes that and that's why everybody's upset with it. Secondly, Mr. Chairman, I would gladly point out that the size of my staff and the salaries paid to my staff are . . . Let's take the top five people in my Executive Council, receive less money today than the top five people in the previous administration, 41 per cent less — the top five.

If we look at the whole department of intergovernmental affairs which is now in Executive Council, it wasn't there before, I would venture to say and my assistant, Mrs. Crosthwaite, is going to get the information that the department of intergovernmental affairs in Ontario is fairly healthy in size. Two things about it here: one, it is now responsible, or I'm the minister responsible, which increases my staff. And secondly, it is smaller than it was before. So again, I have reduced the size of government, have reduced the size of the department that I am responsible for. And if you want to make comparisons, if, say for example, hypothetically Premier Bill David was the minister responsible for intergovernmental affairs, and took those people and put them in his Executive Council, then you would look at a significant increase.

So again I add: if you want to look at one of the most pathetic bureaucracies in size, in growth, in waste, and so forth — and I could go on for hours — everybody in Saskatchewan hates it, watching it in Ottawa. Then I would say: let's look at the Ottawa bureaucracy. But if you want to compare mine to the previous administration, it ranks in terms of size and it certainly ranks in terms of salaries.

If you want to tell the public, or confuse the public and say, "Well it's just bigger without other responsibilities," you can go ahead and try, but I will be very clear and say we have a whole new department in responsible to the Premier, intergovernmental affairs. Intergovernmental affairs is another 20 people. Now, you can add that if you like and say it's part of Executive Council, but I'm the minister responsible and, as a result, I have brought that on. I've also reduced the size of that, but it is now in Executive Council.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well I suppose the comparison we're using, Ontario versus Saskatchewan, that would reduce your personal staff in Saskatchewan to approximately 80 people versus 50 in Ontario. And I still don't believe that the gentleman that's sitting out on his John Deere tractor or his Case tractor or his Massey tractor, that puts in a good long day in this province or works any place else, could appreciate how the expenditures that relate to your own department which exceed \$6 million a year can really be qualified at a time when we are in severe, very severe restraints with respect to spending.

I think as a government, Mr. Devine, you came in, or I'm sorry, Mr. Premier, and I excuse myself, Mr. Chairman. I would say that as a government you came in on a platform of reducing the impact of government on the people of Saskatchewan.

I don't see any evidence of that in your own office and, although you've cut 3,000 people from the civil service, I don't see any evidence or any great large block of evidence to say that you have pared government by any measurable index. I would say that, in fact, we have as much or more government now than we do when we had a very extravagant machine in place under the former government, in the present opposition, who probably, I don't think that the race is on with them to have more people employed in the civil service or in your own staff.

I think the onus is on you as the Premier to cut your staff and let the people of Saskatchewan know that it's not only the fellows or the ladies who are working for the Department of Highways who have had their jobs slashed, but you've even made some move in your own department. The people with Department of Highways who lost their jobs, and several in my own constituency did, were not people

that were functionaries in an office in the legislature whose job was very difficult to define and about the only thing you can really say with any conscience is how much they're earning.

I would suggest that you explain to the people of Saskatchewan how you haven't cut your own staff. You've cut the civil service by 3,000 people. Why haven't you cut 10 per cent out of your personal staff and shown the initiative that the people of this province would expect from a premier who won an election on the basis of less government?

I think the Conservative philosophy, although I could be wrong (and certainly under your administration could be very wrong), was to pare government. And I think that you've done a very, very poor job of doing it. And starting right in your own office there's evidence of that.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate. If the size of government in the province of Saskatchewan, in total administration, is about 3,000 people smaller than when we came into power — voluntary retirement, not filing positions, and just cancelling departments like DNS and others — and if that would run into the neighbourhood of \$25,000 apiece, that's \$75 million less government expense today than it was in 1982, or compared today if the previous administration kept its course, \$75 million less that the taxpayer has to come up with.

Now that's a considerable amount of money. On top of that, let me point out that the department that I now control, for example, intergovernmental affairs, is smaller than the previous administration's. So I've done just what the member opposite has suggested.

And my salary, the salary for the top five — two years later, two years later, just given normal inflation of 7, 8, 9, 10 per cent, would have it now 15, 20 per cent higher — my salary of the top five is .41 per cent smaller than the previous administration.

So both in terms of salary and cutting the size of intergovernmental affairs, cutting the complete size of government, there's no comparison. It's one of the largest changes that you could find in any administration. And it's very significant.

On top of that, we've removed over 1,000 regulations — either cancelled them or removed them — because they've been obsolete. Not that they were necessarily bad when they were set up, but they were out of date, or now wrong, or old, or misguided, or something that was held over that shouldn't be. So we've removed those.

So we're looking at 3,000 people; we're looking at \$75 million dollars; we're looking at over 1,000 regulations; and you say that we haven't made any changes. From the top down, we've made changes. From the top down, it's more efficient. From the top down, there's less people employed. And that's exactly what people asked for, and that's exactly what they've received, so you seem to be talking through your hat.

Mr. Sveinson: — Mr. Premier, your answer is absolute, absolute rhetoric. Your top five individuals who come in green to government with respect to government experience, you're comparing them to the top five in administration who've been here for 11 years. One Sean Quinlan who is in your employ — and I don't know whether he is even qualified as one of the top five — but his salary has risen 25 per cent since he's been hired by your government.

Now you tell me that if you continue to increase the salaries of your top five, that they aren't going to far exceed any expectations that the gentlemen to the right had as government? I would ask you to name

your top five. I'd like to know who they are. Who are your top five paid employees, for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan, who are now earning .04 per cent less than people who had 11 years of experience? Now I think the comparison is fairly, is unfair to the people who were employed by the former government. After 11 years in your employ, I'm sure your Executive Council will double.

You're in the worst times this province has seen since the '30s, sir. And you've taken maybe 2 or 3 per cent of the total number of people working for you out of the, out of . . . (inaudible) . . . You've pared it down by that much, although I'm not even sure you've done that. You've pared the rest of the civil service down 10 per cent. Why couldn't you commit 10 per cent to your own staff in Executive Council? I think that's a reasonable request.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I believe intergovernmental affairs had about 29 positions on it. Today it has 21. That's about 8 positions on 30, which would run well over 20 per cent reduction; a 20 per cent reduction at the top, reporting to me, on top of the 3,000 people that we moved – or in that ball park.

Let me just add, Mr. Chairman, 11 years of experience with the former administration, or 15 years experience with the Trudeau administration, is no reason that you have to keep them. That's the very reason we moved them out. That kind of experience we don't need. That's precisely why we, in a democracy, can change the government. You have 11 years of making mistakes in this province or 15 years of making the same mistakes in Ottawa. And the two go hand in hand. It's the same kind of policies with respect to the national energy program or the Crow rate, or FIRA (foreign investment review agency), or the huge deficits, or the high interest rates, or the unemployed, or the large bureaucracies, or Canadair, or all those things. You want 15 more years of that, but most people in Canada don't, and they didn't want 11 more years of the same thing they found here. They want something brand new and fresh that could say, "Yes sir, we'll reduce the cost of government by 75 million in salaries alone in this administration." And we did that. And I've done it in mine, so intergovernmental affairs is down something in excess of 20 per cent, exactly what you're talking about. So if you want to look at the top figures, I just handed you the whole sheet so you can look at any number you want, and the top are there, or bottom are there, or they're all there.

Mr. Sveinson: — Intergovernmental affairs, sir, just became a part of your own personal service. Prior to the election it wasn't. Compared to the staff that the former government had, I don't believe you've pared your staff. I think that intergovernmental affairs, certainly, you've taken 20 per cent of their staff and removed them, transferred them into your bailiwick, if you like. But I'm asking you, sir, what have you done with the rest of your staff? You've reduced the salary of the top five by .04 in two years. Sean Quinlan's salary has gone up 25 per cent since he entered government. Now I find that very difficult to deal with.

You also indicated that there's 3,000 fewer people working in Saskatchewan in the civil service. Where are these 3,000 people? Who are they? Can you identify those 3,000 people? Because I think the people of Saskatchewan, after listening to you the last two or three days, can certainly appreciate there is much doubt in what you do say occasionally. And I find that there is much doubt that you've removed 3,000 people from the public service, and I think . . . Which departments, and identify then by numbers, and go through the whole government so we can come up with a figure of 3,000 people. And then maybe we can be believers in opposition. And maybe our constituents, who find that your personal staff is less than honourable, in times like we're suffering, for a member of your stature.

And I just ask you again: can you identify where those 3,000 people come from; what departments they've been removed from; where they've been fired; when they've been fired; and how much they've saved the government?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, let's make it . . . I'm advised — and just so that you don't mislead the public — Mr. Quinlan's salary hasn't changed from the day he's stepped in here. I'm advised that's the case. If it's wrong, I'll stand to be corrected. But his salary hasn't changed. So don't imply that his has, and please don't imply that it's gone up 25 per cent if, in fact, that it hasn't increased at all.

With respect to the 3,000 positions, I've said on many occasions they're positions that are not filled. They're positions that are voluntary retirement, because we got a voluntary retirement package in Crown corporations and departments. And there are departments that are now just small, like the whole department of northern Saskatchewan that used to be fairly large, and now I don't think it even exists. So you can go through department after department after department — early voluntary retirement, vacant positions that are not filled. You can go through Crown corporations. You can go through virtually all of them. And you can . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . I'm just . . . Point them out.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well I guess the question maybe wasn't clear, but it was very simple. And it was simply: where are the 3,000 people you've pared from government? Where were they pared from? You started with intergovernmental affairs, and you did very well in that area. You said that 20 per cent had pared from intergovernmental affairs. I would ask you to go on to the Crown corporations, and I think there's only 27 of them, and in the other government departments, and I would ask you to identify where these people come from. And I'm not going to be satisfied, Mr. Premier, until you do.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member knows that he can go through all the estimates and all the blue books, and he can go through every Crown corporation and every department, and he can look up the positions that were there, those that are filled, those that are not filled. He can look at the voluntary retirement. He can look at all those publications, and they're all public. And he can add them up and he can take them by department, by sector of each department, by Crown corporation and part of each Crown corporation.

He can take Sask Power, and he can go through the whole voluntary retirement thing. He can take all the positions here. Sask Power is in the neighbourhood of, about 500 in Sask Power. All right, he can go through there, retirement, and positions not filled, and so forth. Now, he can look at all of those, and he can add them up, and that's why he's got research. I mean that's what he's supposed to be doing as an MLA, to be able to do that. We provide all that information, and certainly an MLA should be able to get that kind of information that is here in published form to anybody in the Assembly.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, the Premier again hasn't answered the question. And I'm not asking on behalf of my own personal interest. There's 64,000 people on welfare out there who may have the time. Unfortunately, I don't have 100 people on staff to do this kind of research for me. And I'm just asking you. It's the Executive Council estimates; it's the Executive Council estimates, Mr. Premier, and let's just answer the questions.

And all I'm asking is: where are these people? You've used 3,000 for a long time now. Just identify them. They're people. You're a people person; you said that earlier today. If you're such a people person, identify these people. They're real people out there.

This government treats everybody as if they are one of the masses, and they treat budgets as if they're billions. I'm just asking you, get down to the simple level of people. They want to know who these guys

are, or these women are, who have been removed from the public service. Have they retired and their positions haven't been filled? Just tell us. If it's Sask Power . . . Your minister just mentioned 500 have been fired, or have been removed, or whatever, from Sask Power. If that's the case with other departments, it should be very simple.

We've got time. I think the House is open tonight till 10 o'clock. Get the information; bring it in; table it. I want to hear it.

Also, with respect to Sean Quinlan's salary, it did increase by 25 per cent, according to your own records. If you check *Hansard* – and my research staff certainly isn't as big as yours – against the March 31, '83 publication of *Public Accounts*, and do a little arithmetic, his salary went up 25 per cent. And I'm not trying to mislead anyone, but there is a lot of people out in this province whose salary hasn't gone up 25 per cent, and who aren't earning in the 50, 60, 70, \$80,000 price range. They like to read about this when they get home at night. It's something they can dream about.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member just doesn't understand even public accounts. Public accounts are part of the year, so if you're comparing public account numbers and statistics of part of a year, versus the end of the year of another year, you're going to find a significant difference, because it's part compared to the whole. And that's probably what you're doing with Mr. Quinlan.

An Hon. Member: — It's not what I'm doing with Mr. Quinlan.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, I think clearly it is, because I'm advised his salary is not changed. So if you're looking at two different number, and you're basing it on *Public Accounts*, you don't understand the system. It is clear to me that you don't under . . . And I'll tell you right now, we can sit here, Mr. Chairman, and we can stare at each other all night, but if you want to know the changes in the departments and in the Crowns and in vacant positions, you can look them up for yourself, because I'm not going to look them up for you.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I'm glad I've had a lecture on what I do or don't know about public accounts. And certainly, I suppose, I've had it from an expert who's been around as long as I have in this legislature. I know that long service doesn't mean anything, and you certainly wouldn't compliment the member from either Rosthern or from Moosomin. They're still back studying *Public Accounts*. But I didn't necessarily get that figure from *Public Accounts*.

But I would ask you, Mr. Minister, and Mr. Premier, I would ask you if the cost of government has gone down while you've been in government. Has the cost gone down or has it gone up? Has the total cost of government gone down since you've taken the reins of the premiership?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, last year's . . . The size of government expenditures increased 5 per cent the year before last, and this last year was 5 per cent, which is the lowest increase in the last – what? – five years. It would be the last five years. We have taken savings from cutting and reducing the size of the bureaucracy and transferred it into programs – programs like health, where we have record expenditures; nursing homes, record expenditures; rural gas distribution systems; or in education, or in education programs, job creation.

We are taking the savings that we can find during these times and transferring it into the areas that we think the people need help. That is in health care, protecting mortgages, nursing homes – all those things that people need. And our reduction, or the increase in the size of the government deficit, the government budget, is 5 per cent last year, which is the lowest increase in the last five years. And I

believe only British Columbia, which cut and slashed a large number of programs, had a reduction or anything close to what we did.

Mr. Sveinson: — I asked you if you'd reduced the cost of government, and the implication has been that you've certainly reduced the numbers of people working for government. I think by implication the people of Saskatchewan are, in fact, supposed to believe that you've actually reduced the cost of government, which hasn't happened – which hasn't happened.

In fact, you've increased the cost of government. It's gone from \$3,041,094,094 in 1983-84, to \$3,000,211,304.50 . . . Not quite . . . The 50 cents isn't there, actually. I need glasses. I need to get on one of your health care programs.

But all I'm asking you, Mr. Premier, is: how do you slice that when you've cut 3,000 people, which we can't find, and you can't find, obviously? You say you've cut 75 million from the cost of government, and on the other hand, you've increased the cost of government by 5 per cent.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, it's very easy. We are spending more on agriculture than has ever been spent, or as long as I can recall being spent in agriculture. For example, I went through the programs – over \$100 million – in terms of the tax reductions, in terms of the education tax reductions, in terms of the electrical bills reductions, in terms of the farm protection program, the 8 per cent money, rural gas distribution systems. We look at the new health care system. We look at new hospitals, new nursing homes. A thousand beds have been identified as new nursing home construction. All those things are very necessary, in our view, for the people of Saskatchewan.

We couldn't begin to provide those if we didn't watch the size of the bureaucracy. I don't know where the member comes from, with respect to the bureaucracy, with his colleagues. I mean, Ottawa just gets bigger and bigger and bigger, and they don't even try to cut, so I don't know what he's trying to say. If he endorses . . . Either he endorses what we're doing with respect to trimming the size of the bureaucracy and spending it on farmers and small business and so forth, or he doesn't. If he does, that's good. If he doesn't, then I obviously disagree with him because he endorses the federal government, which I suppose that's where he's coming from, now that he's in that camp. Then he'd have to say that he likes a bigger and bigger and bigger bureaucracy, and a growing deficit, and they don't even cut the current deficit.

So, Mr. Chairman, we have cut the current deficit by 20 per cent, this year over last year. We have reduced the size of the bureaucracy; we have many new programs; more tax cuts for the ordinary families, businessmen, and people in Saskatchewan; and we have increased taxes for large companies, and revenues coming from railroads, banks, and oil companies; and we put together a program. And on top of that, we have the second lowest debt per capita in the nation. So other people are looking at what we're doing, and saying that's the direction to go.

And the other day I went through the three comuniquees that we sent to Ottawa – the four western premiers. The four western premiers agreed with what's going on in the province of Saskatchewan; they endorsed it terms of the direction we're going; and they signed it, and they sent it to Ottawa, because they would like to see the federal government do what we're doing. Now you may not agree that the kinds of changes here are extremely important to people in rural and urban Saskatchewan – protection of interest rates on their homes; obviously that cost the government some money. We have cut the size of the bureaucracy and used that money to protect people's homes. The same with farms, and we will continue to do that wherever possible.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I can appreciate what you have said, Mr. Devine. It's easy to kick the federal government when their leader is leaving. I also would indicate that you just said a mouthful when you said the federal government isn't paring, isn't paring, isn't paring, their civil service.

On the front page of the *Leader-Post* today, there's an indication that the federal government is paring their civil service. Don't your staff read the *Leader-Post*? It's on the front page. It's on the front page. It's through the Department of Employment and Immigration. There is some direction to pare the federal civil service.

There has also been a great deal said by the leadership, the present leadership hopefuls of the Liberal Party, that, in fact, they will all – and I am not sure that all of them; I can't quote four or five of them – will certainly address the problem of the size of the federal civil service, unlike Harvie Andre, the member for Calgary – and I'm not just sure what his seat is. He already has a list, a list of 2,000 people.

A Conservative committee sat down and drew the list up, and there are 2,000 federal civil servants who will be fired in the Conservative government, if the Conservative government comes to power. Now, if things like, if things like that kind of news, that kind of news, if things like that kind of news that accelerate the federal Liberal position in the national polls, and it's reasons like those that we're going to see another federal Liberal government. And the arguments you used two or three days ago about why we should have Conservatives elected federally in Saskatchewan can really be used conversely as to why we should have Liberals elected in Saskatchewan.

And I say to the people of Saskatchewan, if they feel they haven't been a part of confederation, they'd better get on the local bandwagon, because the next government, the next government in Canada, is not going to be, is not going to be a Progressive Conservative government; it's going to be a Liberal government.

And I would split Regina, for instance, I think favourably, should be split equally. The Conservatives would have one; the Liberals would have one. And then basically we could address national issues. The Conservatives have led in the polls for the last two years. Suddenly they've disappeared off the scale, along with their friends the NDP. And I say to you and the people of Saskatchewan that when you're marking that ballot, take a careful look not only at the federal Conservatives, but at the rhetoric of this provincial Conservative government.

The say 0.04 per cent cut in the personal staff of the Premier of Saskatchewan is progress. I say that's nonsense, absolute political rhetoric. And he cannot support it otherwise. He cannot support it otherwise, but he stands up and says he's doing his job. He can't even demonstrate in his own department that he's doing his job. And God knows, he doesn't know outside that department what's going on. The people around him don't know what's going on. That's why they're only getting 0.04 per cent less than the former government paid their top five executives. Hired people would know what's happening in this province, and you'll come back with a message that will address the problems of the people of Saskatchewan.

The north-east part of this province has suffered a crop failure in each of the last two, and sometimes three years. And this government has failed to respond to it. The ministers from Ottawa, the Hon. Mr. Whelan, who you would have . . . (inaudible) . . . earlier today, and the senator from Regina and Ottawa have both been out to the constituency. They've both addressed the farmers in that constituency. They both indicated that they're ready to co-operate with the provincial government. The provincial government refuses, refuses, to address the problems of those people in north-eastern Saskatchewan. They don't have the money. They cut the deficit by 20 per cent. The Premier says himself, in 1984 the

deficit was cut by 20 per cent less than the expected deficit that they could have accrued, in fact, if they had addressed the same problem as they did last year. So who suffers?

You've cut Social Services. You've drastically cut the civil service. Are you telling me, Mr. Premier, that everybody that you cut from the civil service in this province was non-productive? That did not, that did not . . . Are you saying these people did not represent any of the gross product in this province? That the 3,000 people cut from the civil service contributed absolutely nothing? I doubt it. Are you telling me that? That's the question. Get up and answer it.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Chairman, in response to the hon. member's tirade, the kinds of things that people in Saskatchewan are very concerned about, very concerned about, are things like the national energy program, and the crow rate, and the national debt, and the high interest rates, and FIRA (foreign investment review agency), and the removal of VIA Rail, and the dramatic increases in taxes at the federal level, and the fuel tax on diesel fuel for farmers, and larger, and larger, and larger bureaucracies in Ottawa, and more insensitive, insensitive people in Ottawa administering this country.

When we look at the record, the record unemployment, it's over a 300 per cent increase in the last 15 years. Record public debt – it's up over 800 per cent, record personal taxation, record annual budget deficits at the federal level, record government spending equal to 43 per cent of the whole economy. Now: record interest rates in Canada, record rates of inflation in Canada, record price increases in gasoline – over 400 per cent, most of it going to the government. And you can remember the former . . . The last election they said it wouldn't increase at all. Two major recessions – the second one surpassed only by the great depression.

When you look at the record in terms of employment, interest rates, debt, deficits, bureaucracy, freight rates, energy programs, all those things, there isn't a single, solitary person in the province of Saskatchewan that has benefited from the federal programs in the last 15 years – not one. No tax reductions, no energy incentives, higher unemployment, huge debt – 43 per cent of all their money now going towards government spending and debt. Mr. Chairman, if you look at that record, why would anybody in Saskatchewan, or in western Canada at all, say with some degree of favour (and that's why the polls show that) that there is no support for that kind of thing?

A party, a national government, that would come out to farmers at this time and say, "I'm going to pluck millions and millions of dollars out of you on your freight rate." Who would do that? Do you know who would do that? A government that doesn't understand and a government that doesn't care. That's why this administration changes taxation. That's why it helps farmers and home owners. That's why it's prepared to tax banks and tax railroads and get more revenue from oil companies to put into the hands of families – real ordinary people in the province of Saskatchewan – because the federal government wouldn't do it.

We've worked hard with the feds to try to put together some programs, even though we disagree with their policies. For the first time in the history of this province, we have an upgrade coming down to the province of Saskatchewan and the city of Regina. And that's going to mean more revenues, more jobs, more economic opportunity, more pipe, more all kinds of things. We are doing those programs despite all the efforts of the federal government to sew up the province of Saskatchewan.

So when we look at the kinds of things we do – reducing the size of the bureaucracy, spending more money on agriculture, spending more money in health and education – it's precisely what the constituents of Regina North West asked us to do. Precisely. It's exactly what they asked us to do. And we're going to continue to do those kinds of things because it makes it easier for ordinary people in this

province to cope with the federal government's programs and policies of high taxation, high interest rates, high gasoline tax, and so forth. We don't agree with it, but we will do whatever we can to cope with it until we change the federal government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sveinson: — Your rhetoric doesn't change from speech to speech, Mr. Premier. But how do you cut taxation on the backs of school-boards and ratepayers in the province? How do you cut cuts to education expenditures right across the province? Programs have been cut; staff has been cut, at a time when the education of our children and the young adults in society is at a crisis.

Recently, one Mr. Walker F. Light, who's the chairman of one of the largest corporations in the country, placed Saskatchewan's education "second-class provincial systems . . ." This is a system that you failed to address with adequate funding.

And you forced local school boards right across the province, rather than taxing the people and doing it in a forthright manner and being responsible for the education that you promised to enhance — you promised to enhance — rather than doing that, you forced the local ratepayers in Regina and Saskatoon and Melfort, wherever you go in this province, to raise their mill rate. And you're saying to this legislature and to the people of Saskatchewan that you haven't raised taxes.

You're saying the federal government does nothing for this province. Who pays? Who pays the lion's share of crop insurance? The federal government. Who pays the lion's share of a lot of provincial programs? The federal government. Who shares programs in job creation? Who shares programs in farming areas like the area that you haven't yet addressed — the northeast part of this province? The federal government eventually has to take the hand of the province and lead them to the problem.

And here you are, you criticize. Well, the polls indicate that you're going to have to take the hand of the same federal government after the next federal election; because students and parents and farmers and businessmen and various sectors of this province just don't believe, just don't believe the rhetoric that you are trying to expel. And they've got good reason for not believing it, because there's no support. There's no support for what you're saying. And the cost of government is not only rising, but it's rising certainly out of proportion to the cost of the provincial deficit.

I think when you're looking at an \$850 million deficit, you should attack some expenditures. And we're on Executive Council. You should attack the expenditures of Executive Council very aggressively — very aggressively.

And if you need more people, if you pare 20 or 30 out, then you need more of them. But make sure they're out there working for their 20, 30, 50, \$80,000, and not just living off the taxpayers.

But the education crisis is a serious crisis in this country, not only this province, and you are not addressing it with any assurance that these people could accept. I, in fact, as a member, decided to address the problem in the city and in my constituency. And I was criticized by that government, by that Minister of Finance right in cabinet — right in cabinet. He told me on the stairs of the legislature one day that I was doing a great job.

He goes into cabinet and says there are several members, several members of your government, that have to be defeated in the next election, not defeated by the NDP, but defeated by Conservatives at their

own nominating conventions. You can't trust that man. The man from Kindersley would slit his grandmother's throat.

But I would like some answers, Mr. Premier, on the education crisis. Possibly you've got a minister that doesn't have the stature in cabinet to address the problem. Possibly you've got a minister – and God bless her, she's a woman . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm not attacking you on the basis of sex. I'm not attacking you on the basis of anything other than the fact that education in this province has not been addressed with the importance you placed on it when you were elected.

In every piece of . . . In every piece – in every newspaper – in every piece of election material you spread around this province that was part of it. Education was addressed as important. I feel it's extremely important, and you're not making new inroads into expenditures with education. You're not offering the moneys that are required for new programs. And I ask you sir: when will you address this crisis?

You said you had the ability to shuffle your cabinet. Maybe you need a shuffle in cabinet in order to come to the realities of where, in fact, the problems of this provincial government lie. And education is certainly one.

Recently Dr. Beke, from Regina said: "We've got to start spending more money." We've got to start spending more money in education or we'll start falling behind. We'll start falling behind the rest of Canada, and we'll start falling behind the rest of the world.

A lot of our graduates (and this hasn't changed) do not stay in Saskatchewan. While you've expanded your facilities – and I'm sure this is part of rhetoric that you'll expel at me after I sit down – you've expanded your facilities for technical schools. Where are these people going to go to work when they finish, when they finish, they graduate? Are they going to find work in Saskatchewan? I would doubt it. I would doubt it.

And I would just ask for a moment sir, that you in fact, expel some of your wisdom on how education will be approached in a forthright manner to assure the people of Saskatchewan that we are not going to suffer through the education crisis that is presently with us.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, only Ontario and Saskatchewan, in all of Canada, increased the education budget 5 per cent. We were the only two provinces in this last year to do so. Other provinces were at zero or a couple at 3 per cent. At the same time the EPF, the established program financing, was cut back by the federal government.

So I can say, Mr. Chairman, that we increased it and only two governments, two progressive government – one in Ontario, one in Saskatchewan – increased the expenditures to the degree of 5 per cent in Canada this year, 1984-85, while the feds cut back.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well I don't think that's an answer to the crisis we have. I mean, I'm talking about education in Saskatchewan. I'm talking about the families in Saskatchewan who are here to receive an education in this province.

I'm saying that your government has done less, has done less than an adequate job to service the funding – the funding that you're responsible for as a provincial government. And to tell me that only two provinces in Canada have addressed this problem in any more aggressive manner than you doesn't really make any difference to those students. A school was closed in my constituency only because of a lack of

funding. Several schools have been closed in Regina the last two years. Difficulties are here and there's no question about it. Staff has been cut in rural schools and your only answer, sir, is that the rest of the province are spending less. I thought you were replacing a government that had that type of philosophy. I thought you were going to address this problem. In fact, the member for Lakeview emphatically outlines in his own political rhetoric, election rhetoric, that education will be looked at adequately, and looked after adequately. I say to you, that you have not addressed that problem adequately.

And I think answers that will, in fact, indicate that somewhere down the road there's a light at the end of the tunnel, and maybe this problem, although maybe it's not even . . . it hasn't even come to light yet. I didn't see a single member in that caucus other than myself out at any closure meetings. There weren't even members of their staff out; they weren't out there listening to the people. I was. And who criticized me? The member for Kindersley. And I'm sure his ratepayers are no happier with their education budget than anyone else is.

So I'll ask you sir, please, for the students in this province, outline a program that will, in fact, guarantee them an enhancement, not just school closures, program cuts, teacher staff cuts. Come up with an answer that addresses the problem. And certainly the fact that two provinces in this country, two provinces increased their budget no more, or no less than you did isn't an answer. They won't accept that. You'll be gone in another year, two years. I would ask you to respond.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, we have led the nation in increases, expenditure of education, I believe tied with the province of Ontario. An increase of 5 per cent where other provinces are zero, a couple of them are three. The federal government has been cutting back in its share established program financing, cut, cut, cut, cut. We are increasing. So if you want somebody to blame, phone his colleagues in Ottawa.

Mr. Sveinson: — Federal government last year on education in Canada spent six and a half billion dollars – six and a half billion dollars. If you decide that you need more funding, there's a way that you can negotiate with the federal government that I'm sure will become, will result in a positive impact on the budget you have provincially. Like, you know, you address all the problems, that's basically . . . There's Mr. Folk, he's an expert at curling. I'm sorry I shouldn't . . .

Mr. Chairman: — If you're going to refer to one of the members, refer to them by their cabinet post or their constituency.

Mr. Sveinson: — Sorry, Mr. Chairman. You just mentioned that I was an expert in education. I don't pretend to be an expert in education. I spent a great deal of time attempting to get an education, but I certainly don't pretend to be an expert at some of the members opposite obviously do.

I suppose when it comes to education, they treat it like they do everything else. They treat the people out there as masses and they treat the expenditures in millions and billions. And percentages . . . You'd think the individuals who are out there in the schools in this system could really care about 5 per cent, or Ontario, or the masses that you treat? They're people out there, Mr. Premier. They're people, and address them as such.

And let's hear some solutions. Your minister hasn't given us any. I have talked to members of school boards around the province, and they haven't given . . . She hasn't given them any assurances, either. You stand up and give me a two-minute answer. I guess you want to go home tonight. We've got lots of time. I think the education of our children is the most important thing we can be doing as legislators, and I don't believe you've addressed that problem, and some other people don't believe it either.

Mr. Light, in fact, his corporation employs 78 disciplines from 350 universities. That likely even overshadows your own personal Executive Council. He indicates that you have a second-class system in Saskatchewan. You get up in your political rhetoric and you address it as if, well, so what? So what? So what? We've got a second-class system in education. So what? Well, that's not the attitude that I would expect of the provincial government.

Well, you slashed, and by your own words, you cut the budget by 20 per cent. Maybe you shouldn't have cut the budget by 20 per cent. Maybe that 20 per cent should have gone into education, until, as you yourself said, your resource-related companies are back on their feet and contributing to the provincial product once again.

I'm sure, Mr. Devine, that if you had the personal initiative, that Saskoil . . . And your Chairman recently said Saskoil should be sold. And maybe, on behalf of your students in this province who expect an education, and whose responsibility it is to educate them, the province government's, maybe they should look at selling that asset and putting the \$300 million that it's worth into education. And maybe the return – the return of your oil company this year was 1900 per cent plus – maybe the return from small business, as a result of an elevated education, will be more.

I don't know what your position is on your Crown corporations anymore. I heard one day that you said yourself you'd sell the ones weren't profitable. Well, you can't. That's not how the market system works. You've got to wait till they're showing a profit. Saskoil now shows a profit. Maybe you should consider your Chairman's recommendations and contribute some money towards the people in this province that count – our children.

And I don't believe that they're going to accept the answer that you gave me just a few minutes ago, that Ontario and Saskatchewan have addressed the problem in the manner that they've increased the budget by 5 per cent. The ratepayers and some of the people on school boards in this province, after you go through the 5 per cent and found that it's not 5 per cent – it's less. It's less than 5 per cent. In many cases, it's just over 2 per cent, the actual increase in expenditures. So that, in fact, you're very close to the several provinces in this country who didn't maybe address the problem of education.

Mr. Light also says in this article – it was published in *The Globe and Mail* on May 12, 1984 – that all provinces, not only Saskatchewan, have the same second-class system of education. So that while you're not addressing the problem, just because other provinces refuse to do the same, is that any reason for you to say, "Me too, me too?" Should you just say, "Me, too. We're not going to address that problem." Yet earlier today I heard you address the Leader of the Opposition, saying that roads into northern Saskatchewan would be building roads to nowhere. We want to elevate the education of these people, so I think you understand the benefits.

I'll ask you, Mr. Premier, why haven't you increased the funding? Knowing the benefits, knowing the benefits; realizing you've got many more people on welfare and on unemployment than should be; realizing the benefits of education, maybe you should address it in a little more serious manner. I would ask you to respond to that.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate that we increased our budget by 5 per cent. There's only one other province in the country that did that. The federal government, I might add, and the hon. member says, spent 6.5 billion all across Canada. Well, all I can say to that, that that is a small amount of money, considering we spent virtually three-quarters of a billion on Saskatchewan alone. So, the federal government has contributed virtually nothing.

We are increasing our expenditures on education; we are proud of it. In some ridings it's increased 15 per cent; the average is five. Mr. Chairman, no other jurisdiction is doing any better, and the federal government is doing significantly worse.

Mr. Sveinson: — But does that improve the system, Mr. Premier? I mean, what are you doing? What programs are you initiating? How are you addressing, improving, the system of education in this province? Is there extra funding available? Have you got answers?

Because 20 years down the road, it's going to become very critical that the people of this province have an upgraded education. Even those of us that do have a good education are going to have to look at upgrading, because times are changing so rapidly and governments are also changing rapidly. I suggest to you that you have already lost a lot of support in this province over a lack of initiative in education, and you'll continue to do it, unless you have some concrete answers.

I have not heard those answers tonight, and the people of Saskatchewan haven't heard those answers, and we don't need your gas tax speech. Recently you had an auction sale in Saskatoon – six and a half million dollar profit. Where did it go? Did it go into the general revenue? Maybe you should have put that into education.

There were people fired, although your minister doesn't acknowledge it. They were fired so that equipment could be sold. Maybe their education should be uplifted so they can go out there and get a job.

You know, I just find that your attitude, your arrogance . . . Your arrogance is unbelievable with respect to education. A man of letters of your stature, a professor at a university, I find it somewhat . . . I just don't believe the responses. Only one of a 5 per cent increase, and it doesn't even approach, it doesn't even approach inflationary costs in the same field.

So how can teachers, and how can schools, and how can universities address a progressive education system that's required, without some extra funding?

And I'll tell you that the unemployment and the welfare will get worse unless we address that problem very aggressively. We're a small province. We've only got a million people in this province. I think we can address the education system in such a manner that every one of us has at least the opportunity, and certainly address it with some initiative so that we have an interest in getting a sound, basic education in this province. And I don't think your government has done it.

I know because . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The Minister of Agriculture says I don't know; I don't know anything about education. Well, that's exactly what he just said. And I said earlier in this debate, I don't pretend to be an expert in education, although I do have an interest in education, and my interest has led me to, in fact, examine the system to the degree that I find it inept – inept in 1984 in this province.

And I think I've explained that the inept part of our system is widely known. A business executive indicates it's second-class. This government rode in on the rail that it's first-class in everything – health care, education, and a very broad range of political innuendo – first-class.

Well, in education, a third party indicates that you're not first-class, and I put the challenge to this government. I would like to see this Mr. Light come out and suggest that your system of education in

this province is first-class, and if you can't do it as a government, maybe somebody else will. Because I'm telling you, the people in this province are not happy, are not happy with your position on funding of education in Saskatchewan. And if you've got anything to . . . I'll give the Premier an opportunity to an inadequacy that possibly he hasn't recognized. And I hope tonight I've brought it to his attention. I'll give him an opportunity to respond.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, let's make it very clear. The hon. member says that he is quite interested in education. I don't believe that when Education estimates were up, he asked one single, solitary question to the Minister of Education. Not one. And this evening he's ranting and raving that education is really something that he is very concerned about. Mr. Chairman, I don't believe he asked it.

Second, Mr. Chairman, just let me briefly review. We have two new high schools. We're building a new technical school; a new training facility; curriculum review; 9.5 per cent increase in special education; record numbers of people in school at all levels, and particularly the universities; and leading the nation in expenditures in education on the increase – while the federal government is cutting back and cutting back and cutting back.

Again, I stand on our record. It's one of the best in the country in terms of new facilities, in terms of expenditures, and so forth. We'll compare it with anybody else's.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I would ask you, Mr. Devine, to outline the education strategy.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. I have to advise the member from Regina North West that he is not to use personal names, and must use either the title "Premier" or "the member for Estevan."

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I would ask the member from Estevan if he would outline the government's strategy on education, on how it will result in a first-class system in this province.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, we, the Government of Saskatchewan, is extremely proud of its teachers, of its professors, of the technicians, of all the people that work in education. The staff that works in the Department of Education, Advanced Education, the staff that works in technical schools, in high schools, in public schools, in private schools, universities, all over the province of Saskatchewan . . . We're very, very proud of them. They're first-class people. And we are so proud of them that we are spending more in percentages than anybody else, except Ontario, to make sure that they can perform that first-class service that is top-notch education to the people of Saskatchewan. We review curriculums, we build new high schools, we build new technical schools, we provide very large increases in terms of special education needs.

Mr. Chairman, no other province can match it. And we're proud of it because we're really proud of the people that work in education in the province of Saskatchewan. Evidently the federal government isn't, because it keeps cutting back. It cuts and cuts and cuts in terms of established program financing – and then it says it spends, and the hon. member says it spend \$6.5 billion in education all across Canada. Well, we are approaching \$1 billion alone in the province of Saskatchewan.

So, I think now – and I believe over \$700 million in education in the province of Saskatchewan, and the feds only spend 6.5 across the whole country. So, again, we are increasing, we are targeting it in terms of the special need s- technical schools for handicapped people, education for the people in northern Saskatchewan, particularly natives. And I went through it all today with respect to native educational programs and training. We'll stack it up against anybody's in North America. So, we are proud of it, and we are going to continue.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, education, for those of us who don't know, is a provincial jurisdiction. The fact that the feds spent 6.5 billion was incidental. But the accusation was made earlier in this debate that the federal government contributes nothing. Well, the federal government contributes in every facet of government.

The question I had earlier, of a provincial education strategy to take us out of the second-class system into a first-class system, I think has some merit, Mr. Premier.

I would also indicate that there are school teachers out there who can't find jobs because of budget cuts. There are school teachers out there who have been cut from staff because of budget cuts. There are also people out there that have to suffer to get to school. They have to suffer the system because of a lack of initiative by the provincial government. Mr. Light indicates that there should be a national conference to uplift our whole system in the country.

I ask you, Mr. Premier, and I ask you once again if you would outline, not the pride you have in our school teachers in this province . . . I have a great deal of pride in our school teachers as well. I have a great deal of pride in the people who are involved in the field of education, not only in Saskatchewan, but right across this country. I think your education was U.S. orientated for the last part of your career. I don't think you're going to apologize for that. I'm not asking you to. I'm asking you to outline an education strategy that the people of Saskatchewan can be assured with – that we'll be first-class in education in this province forthwith, not necessarily just hereafter.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I have outlined in detail in the last day, or day and a half, programs that we've brought forward in education. I remind the hon. member he never asked one question of the Minister of Education with respect to her estimates on education. I went through the programs, special training programs, increase in funding, increase in students, and increase in facilities. And it's our intention to make sure that we provide those kinds of increases, increases I might add. Other provinces may be zero, but we are increases – 5 per cent, tied with the province of Ontario. And we are going to make sure that money goes in the most important areas of education and we're looking at technical schools, high schools, special education, and so forth.

Now the programs are long. If he wanted to get into the detail of every bit and part and piece of the education estimates, the least he could do was ask the Minister of Education one question. But he wasn't even caring enough at that time, evidently, to ask a question.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well knowing my interest in the education area, I'm sure that the day that the Education estimates were on the Table, the government made sure that I wasn't in the House.

The other evening, leave was requested to pass an early sitting today. I refused leave, but what happened yesterday? I was out of the House, I was only out for five minutes, and what do you do? You sneaked the old motion in, and you sit early today. I may even have agreed with it . . . (inaudible) . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. Order, order. The topic here is Executive council estimates, and while you're allowed to ask the Premier questions on anything with respect to government, procedural matters in the House are not really on the topic.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I thought it was very interesting that the Premier should address me and point out that I wasn't in the House during Education estimates. I was just giving a reason. I was just outlining

why I may not have been here. Knowing my interest, and the member from Kindersley knows my interest in education, said at one time I was doing a wonderful job, only to just . . . Bang!

The member from Kindersley's the House Leader . . . A bit of a sneak preview on what the people can expect if we ever lose the government, because his main ambition is to be the premier of Saskatchewan – not the Finance Minister, the premier. So I would indicate to you, Mr. Premier, you want to watch your back, as well, because you've got people in your own caucus who aren't necessarily on your side.

You still haven't addressed the problem that I've asked on education. And I think I've asked a very sincere question, and sure, you can skirt the question by suggesting that I wasn't in the House. I don't think that's adequate. I didn't get the answer to my question: do you have an education strategy in Saskatchewan? That should have been the question, because I don't believe you do, and if you do have an education strategy, I would wish, and I would hope, that for the people of this province, you would outline that education strategy, and do so now.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I've gone through the education programs and strategies several times, and I'm not going to go through it again. The hon. member wasn't here for Education estimates; he wasn't here for Advanced Education estimates. He never showed up in caucus when he was on this side of the House; he doesn't show up in the legislature. I can't help that. I can't modify the behaviour of the member opposite.

I have outlined several times, and I'm not going to do it anymore.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I'd say that's a very low blow, the minister from Estevan indicating that I didn't show up at his caucus. Whether I did or I didn't, I don't think that's the issue. The question is education. And I find that the people of north-west Regina have an acute interest in the education of their children.

And we are a constituency of young families, primarily, although there are people from every walk of life and every age who live in my seat. You've closed the school in our area, although you've promised and you budgeted to open another. But that doesn't answer the problem for the people who suffered because of the closure of that school. And the people who continue to suffer in another school in my constituency, Centennial, because the program, the French immersion program, is being underfunded and they're forced to find other alternatives. There are families in that area whose children have been forced to move three times in the last three years because the program changes from school to school according to budgets and according to funding. I ask you, Mr. Premier, and I ask you again. I want some answers.

I want some answers on the strategy of this government. If it hasn't got one, just say you don't have one. Otherwise, I would like to know what your strategy for education is. I'm certainly suggesting that I don't show up or didn't show up in your caucus, or, in fact, that I wasn't here on the day, in fact, that you had estimates. And I have missed a few days on other business. That's unfortunate, but I'm a single and lone member. I can count the days that I see members on your side of the House that haven't been here more than two or three days in this session.

And I don't want to get into the mud. I think that the Premier should surface above it and stay above it. But he's been in it all day today. And he continues to submerge in the muck every once in awhile. I don't know whether that does his ego any good, or whether he thinks it's going to save time. But I believe sometime your ego overrides your good sense, sir. And my question was not on the topic that you, in fact, addressed the last time you were on your feet. It was on education issues, issues that are really . . . (inaudible) . . . of people out there. They understand these issues. They don't know anything about your staff. I mean your staff is obviously a great deal, and in number, a great more than any high

school in this province would, in fact, dream of employing. Relative to the services the same people do, and the salaries you pay, that's not the question.

My question was simply: do you have an education strategy? And if you do, I'd like to know what it is.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I've gone through the educational strategy several times in the House. I know that the Minister of Education has been holding meetings around the province. I believe that she just finished 10 meetings, and in Regina. The hon. member says he's interested — he never showed up at the meetings. Probably 150 would show up in Regina meetings on education.

He didn't show up. I didn't see him there; at least, he wasn't reported to have been there. And, I believe it's the *Star-Phoenix*, Mr. Chairman, the *Star-Phoenix*, May 26, 1984 . . . If you want to look at strategy, the editorial says this:

Education Minister Pat Smith is to be commended for her efforts to involve parents, educational professionals, and others, (in searching) in a searching discussion on the future of education in Saskatchewan.

And it goes on to say that:

Smith's attempt to get a fix on where Saskatchewan stands and where it's going in education is a proper step right now.

Well, the minister has been leading the nation in a getting a hold of education, providing a strategy, and increasing in terms of public expenditures, and so forth. So I'm not going to repeat them.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I'd like to read, just briefly, from *The Globe and Mail*, and quote:

Canada is failing to train its brain power. So is the United States. That makes Canada's problem even worse (even worse), because the brain drain is to the south.

And the brain drain continues to be to the South.

Mr. Devine — I'm sorry — Mr. Premier, most of your education, or at least the last part of it, was received in the South. I think you should be aware, very aware, of the problem we're looking at with respect to the education here in this province.

He goes on to say:

The shortage of trained people, (says the chairman, and he's the chairman and chief executive officer of Northern Telecom) could do more, in the long term, to determine (to determine) the future of (North America and) the North American economy than the activities of our international competitors, the size of the deficit in both countries and the level of interest rates combined.

So that this gentleman who runs a private sector company, who you identify with very well, indicates that the education in the number one, the number one priority in society. And you failed to address these estimates this evening with a solution to the fact we are second-class, as is said by Mr. Light, chairman of Northern Telecom. He has a great number of graduates in his employ. He has the ability to see the

needs, the future needs, of a very technical industry. I'm not so sure your government does have that ability.

I'm asking you to address the problem in a manner that will satisfy the people of this province that two generations down the road, the people and the students of this province will be fully equipped, fully equipped, to face the world and to be productive in this province. And as he mentions, it's more important to adequately address education than it is, in fact, to worry, to worry about the 20 per cent slash, if you like, of your \$850 million deficit.

And you're not slashing the 850 million; you're slashing your annual deficit by 20 per cent. This gentleman indicates it's more important to assure the children of this province, and the children of Regina, and Saskatoon, and Carrot River, and Maple Creek, and your constituency, that they have an adequate availability of anything that can be offered to assure them that they can face the world with an adequate education to support them and their families in the future.

I ask you simply: if you have a strategy would you please outline it? If you don't, say no.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. The member is becoming repetitious on this particular topic, and I caution the member that if he insists on being repetitious, we would have to go on with another speaker. So if he has any other areas that he wishes to cover, I would encourage him to do so.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I think you were a little exuberant in your criticism, and maybe you were just a wee little bit ahead of the facts. I mean, I haven't got an answer. I suppose the Premier doesn't have to answer the question, and that's what the Chairman is telling me.

Mr. Chairman: — The member from Regina North West is correct. The Premier doesn't have to answer any questions. However, he has indicated he's answered the question, and you're asking the question again after he's told you twice that he's answered the question. So I'm asking you to get on to another topic, or to . . . You may be critical if you wish, but you can't be repetitive while you're being critical. So please proceed.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, in summary, I would just like to ask that this government, that this Premier, and this cabinet, and this caucus, have not addressed the needs of education in Saskatchewan adequately.

An Hon. Member: — At all.

Mr. Sveinson: — Or at all. And as a Liberal government, and as a Liberal government . . . And I think if you go back in history the last Conservative government in this country was replaced by a Liberal government. And I don't think the nature of the Anderson government was much different than the nature of the Devine government. I think the nature was very similar. The only difference was, the Anderson government replaced the Liberal government, and the Devine government replaced the NDP.

But I say that you haven't addressed that problem, and you haven't addressed many people problems that relate, that relate to a future in this province secure in the knowledge that we have an education, and a system to support our children that is adequate and first-class, and first-class relative to the rest of the world, not relative necessarily to Manitoba, which seems to be the province that you like to dwell on most.

I suppose the area that we've dwelt on in the last two or three hours, certainly with respect to the patronage salaries of the Executive Council, lead us into another area of patronage, and that is the patronage of contractors who serve this provincial government.

Earlier in this session there was a great deal of debate on the nature of the contract given to a local auction firm to auction off 500 pieces of road-building equipment in Saskatoon . . . (inaudible) . . . This government refused this legislature information such as the commission paid to the contractor or the auctioneer. I said at the time the commission was 8.5 per cent. And while they didn't deny it, I still say it – 8.5 per cent. The total value of the sale, approximately \$6 million - \$500,000 went to that contractor, and I believe that when we have an expenditure in that magnitude in this province, the people of the province have the right to know just, in fact, the details, and specifically, the commission paid to the contractor who, in fact, endeavours to do the sale.

Now, I realize that it's not necessarily in the interest of a government to let the people who support it with their taxes know exactly how they're spending their money. And I think that's become very clear in these estimates, Mr. Premier, very clear, that your intention is not, in any circumstance, to, in fact, include the taxpayers in your government's expenditures. And I think the example that is most clear in my mind – and the debate was most active in this House and your minister, the Minister of Supply and Services from Meadow Lake, refused to acknowledge – is the auction sale.

I was invited by the minister to attend. And maybe that was the day that the Education estimates were on the Table. I went up to the auction sales . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And I can't recall whether it was or it wasn't. But I went up to attend and just see, in fact, how that sale would be conducted. And I must say that the contractor that had the job must be complimented. He did a job that was first-class; first-class. But as the sale went on that morning – and I had an opportunity to talk to a great number of buyers from all over North America – the consensus was that the prices at that sale were well above the market value of the equipment; well above the market value of the equipment.

Now earlier today, we had in our Assembly, we had members of HUDAC (Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada), who would understand market value. They build a house, and it sells for market value. You go into a subdivision today, and you'll find a house that will sell for market value. Unless there's something very, very, very active in the market-place, you will find that home selling within 5 per cent of the general range.

I say to this House, the day in Saskatoon . . . And I talked to several, I talked to several people who were in the retail business who said, you know, you can buy that equipment on my lot, and I'll give you a long-term, I'll give you a long-term warranty on the equipment for less money than you can buy it at this sale.

I would ask the Premier if the taxpayers of this province would get the assurance from him and his ministers, and the Minister of Highways – who is not present tonight; probably out on business – and the Minister of Supply and Services, would give the people of Saskatchewan the assurances that the equipment that was sold in this province won't be paid for by the taxpayers when it comes to deal out the contracts to your friends in road construction.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I would agree with the hon. member that the auction went off very well. It was very well run. It got great, great prices. People acknowledged in the industry that it was very well done. The minister has advised the Assembly that he will be providing all the information in terms of what it was sold for, and any kinds of detail, and I'm sure we'll all be quite proud of it.

Mr. Sveinson: — I acknowledge that the sale was well run. I don't think that the commission paid was deserved. I believe that you could have run that sale on half that commission and had just as good a sale as you had at 8 and one-half per cent. I'm just suggesting that the member, or the contractor that held the auction — unlike the member of the opposition suggested while his experience was related only to teacups and saucepans, or whatever he said that day in the House — I say he ran a good sale. But he was paid too much for the sale he ran. At 8.5 per cent, it was too much — plus the equipment, the market value for that equipment . . . There must have been some reason that suddenly in Saskatoon, with people in the industry buying the equipment, that the prices would jump 25 to 30 per cent higher — 225 to 30 per cent over market value. It somewhat indicates that maybe the government was involved in the purchase of some of this equipment. It's easy enough to do, it's easy enough to do.

I would suggest . . . I would ask you, Mr. Premier, to explain why this equipment sold in Saskatoon for 30 per cent higher than market value, when a month earlier in Edmonton it was 30 per cent less at a similar sale.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, again I would say I agree with the hon. member that the people carrying out the sale did an excellent job, and that's the reason for the success.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, that doesn't happen in the market-place, though. Just because you have a good salesman, it doesn't mean a home. If you can relate it to the real estate market, it will sell for 30 per cent more, unless the buyer decides he wants to buy it back himself.

And I suggest that if auction sales, and that particular auctioneer, are so successful, the minister of housing, or the minister in charge of Sask Housing, should maybe consider using him to sell his empty units. I mean, if the market, if the market can be leveraged that much in one action sale — which I doubt very much having worked in the market-place a good many years myself — I think it does deserve an explanation in a lot more depth, Mr. Premier, than you just gave us. And I would ask for that explanation.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, the auctioneer advertised. He said it would be a very good sale. People came and they paid very high prices for the equipment, and the entire thing was a very big success.

Mr. Sveinson: — While I appreciate your answer again, Mr. Premier, I don't necessarily agree with it, and I don't think the people of Saskatchewan are prepared to agree with it. I would suggest that there were some people who were at that sale — who were there explicitly to raise the price of the equipment. You had . . . 500 pieces to the Government of Saskatchewan is not a lot of equipment.

And all we want, in opposition, is assurance that the contractors that are doing business in Saskatchewan with the same equipment — that it will not be reflected in the contracts given to those contractors; the premium prices they paid won't be reflected in the contracts given the private sector for road building. That's what I've asked and you haven't given me an answer. You're telling me on a rainy day in Saskatoon that the buyers come in, and they go crazy. Well, they don't do that. These are professionals; they're professionals.

I can give you one example. Four cats that sold — four large caterpillars — they sold to . . . The final bidder on the first of four, which were all included if you wanted all four, was a developer from Saskatoon. They sold for \$65,000. He took two, and a friend took another one, at 65,000. They went back on the auction block. The fourth cat sold for 51,000, which reflects again, who was bidding against these individuals to drive the price up to 65,000.

You shake your head, Mr. Devine. There is good support to say that they drove the price of that equipment up themselves, with the help of Mr. Katzman – I'm sorry, the member from Rosthern – who seemed to be in command at the sale. I don't know what he . . . He was back at a command post, and the auctioneer was back and forth, and they were on their calculators, and I suppose if they weren't getting enough for the equipment that they'd have to bid it up higher.

But I believe that there was a fix on somewhere, and that the equipment is going to come back to haunt us, and the taxpayers in Saskatchewan are going to pick up the premiums that were paid for this equipment.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, let's make it very clear to the public of Saskatchewan. The hon. member started off picking on women, he goes on to seniors, and to teachers, not he's picking on businessman, local businessman, saying that they are fixing when they run a first-class operation. I don't condone that kind of allegation. I don't like the way that he has picked on female employees. I don't like the way that he has picked on education. I don't like the way he's picking now on businessmen, small businessmen in the province of Saskatchewan. And if he's trying to tell me or the rest of the public or anybody else that he's doing Saskatchewan people a favour right now, he's in dream-land.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, Mr. Premier, you're in dream-land. A member of the opposition indicated you dream in Technicolor, and I think at times it's even three-dimensional. And you refuse to answer the questions. You refuse to answer the questions. I'm not making any undue allegation. I'm just suggesting that the market does not support, the market doesn't support the prices paid that day. And that was a fairly common discussion at the sale. So I just want an answer. Were there that many more contracts? Is there more road building than expected in Saskatchewan?

Where are you coming from? I fail to understand that in Saskatoon on a May afternoon that equipment that sells in the 50 to \$150,000 range suddenly, suddenly would sell for 30 per cent over market value.

And I don't think your explanation, slurring my credibility – that's what you've done, and that's what you've attempted to do – I don't even think that's conducive of an honourable gentleman like yourself. I would think you would stay out of that area altogether and let some of your henchmen around you, like the member from Kindersley, or the member from Qu'Appelle do that sort of thing, or the member from Swift current; she said she'd like to do that. Well, certainly I'll give you every opportunity – you can have every opportunity. I won't say any more.

But Mr. Devine – I'm sorry, Mr. Premier, you still have not answered the question regarding the market value of highways equipment that was sold. I'm sure that if you had a sale of the housing the minister of housing has empty in this province, you'd find that it would be a lot closer to the market value than the 30 per cent additional moneys paid for the heavy equipment in Saskatoon. And I'm just indicating to you tonight that rather than answer the problems, you suggest that I'm slurring education in some manner by addressing a problem that is not only recognized provincially, but is recognized nationally. And I don't know how, in fact, you expect, as the Premier of this province, to address problems that I've raised tonight by singularly slurring my own personality.

You didn't certainly contribute a great deal of leadership while I was in your party, and you're not contributing a great deal of leadership since I've left your party. And I would suggest to you, Mr. Premier, that the nine members you added to your cabinet were added because you were afraid that your leadership was in trouble – the so-called “pizza club” that was so well written and documented. There

were several members of your caucus that were at those meetings. And maybe you were right, and maybe you weren't, but you certainly perceived there was something afoot. And your perception wasn't too far out, Mr. Premier. Your perception wasn't too far out.

There are still members in your government who envy my position – envy my position – who would like to have the opportunity to address you in the manner that I've had the opportunity to address you today. And they would expect the same answers that I expect. And my constituents, my constituents of north-west Regina, have also accepted the move that I've made, and done so with a great deal of support, with a great deal of support. I'll tell you that your leadership, the leadership of the Progressive Conservative party, was certainly a factor in that decision. And if there's any more movement, I can understand when you'll take me and single me out publicly and slur me.

And all I asked you: The lady next to you – and I address her as a lady – has likely got all kinds of capability. I think I have every right, as a member in opposition, to ask you what she's earning. And if I think her job is only politically motivated, I have every right, on behalf of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, to indicate that I feel her job and her salary is politically motivated, and she is not deserving of the salary or the job she has – if, in fact I decide that it's politically motivated and that's the only reason she's there.

And there are a number of people, men and women, in your Executive Council who are there for no other reason, no other reason than political motivation on your own behalf, if they aren't friends, personal friends. And Michael Leddy would fit that category, and you know where Michael Leddy is today.

An Hon. Member: — Where?

Mr. Sveinson: — I think they fired him, although I don't know for sure. You fired him before, Mr. Premier. I guess the question would be: is Michael Leddy, is he gone for good, or is he back? Or will he be back? And as a strong and certainly a personal friend, I'd just like an answer to that.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, the only person that's gone for good from our caucus is the member opposite, and it's true he's gone for good. He will not be back. He will not be back in the legislature; he will not be back in this caucus; he will not be elected to anything.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to market value, just let me say market value is what people agree to trade something at. Buyers agree to buy, sellers agree to sell, and that's the price. And if the prices are high at a sale – and I've been to lots of farm sales, auction sales – it's what they agree to trade at. And if you have a good auctioneer, you can get good prices, and that's exactly what happened in Saskatchewan, and it was well run.

Mr. Sveinson: — I certainly don't feel qualified to suggest that the Premier of Saskatchewan will be back in this legislature, and I absolutely feel that he's totally unqualified to make the same comment about me. In fact, I lived in your constituency for many years, Mr. Premier. I have a great number of friends down in your constituency, as I do in many constituencies around this province. The Speaker's own constituency – I've had several calls since I've crossed the floor, to address problems that he's having in his constituency, because that's my home. And people . . . They know they can depend on me to go in, and find an answer, and find a solution; and I do, and I will, and I have.

So I suppose the only threat to you that I can offer is that if I ran in Estevan, you'd be in trouble . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . No, I'm not kidding; I'm not kidding.

But I don't want to get into that, Mr. Premier. I feel that you're in enough trouble. You're in enough trouble in Estevan without accelerating. And certainly I don't want to raise the expectations of the people in your constituency who would like to see me run against you in that constituency, even as a Liberal.

The hon. Bob Larter served that area admirably for many, many years; for many, many years. I don't know if you've done the same, and you've delivered the same service to the people of Estevan. I don't find that you have, although I don't necessarily say that you won't. I think you're in trouble, and you know it. You know it all over the province. This government is in trouble. It's on its last legs. I've even heard rumours that it's going to call an early election, like November, just to put into perspective the difficulty you're having around this province.

And I've travelled far and wide across this province, before, during, and after I became a Liberal. And I'll tell you, Mr. Devine – I'm sorry – I'll tell you Mr. Premier, that it's important that you and your caucus, if you expect to survive, even, as a government at all, better get out there and address the problems that I've, in fact, indicated are serious in Saskatchewan.

And address them, not with the arrogance that you have addressed me today – don't address them with the same arrogance. Do so with some sincerity. Do so with some sincerity. I think it's important that the people, even while they are faced with a Conservative government who refuses to address the problems, I feel it's important, at least, to have some representation that they elected, and occasionally can hear that there is some direction, although there's very little direction.

An Hon. Member: — It's going to get better now, Mr. Premier; I'm going to help him with his questions. It's going to get better. I'll help him with his questions.

Mr. Sveinson: — I've got two members of the Conservative Party. They've come over here. I'll tell you this gentleman, he could quickly park himself right back here. Do you want it on T.V.? And they've surrounded me. Now, they're going . . . Now the slaughter's going to come from caucus. I mean it. I'm just doing a little research while I'm on my feet. My researcher, and I let the public know, makes I think it's 258 a month. And I can say that they've been working full time in addressing these estimates, so if you'll bear with me – the Premier's research staff spends about 6 billion a year, so I think comparatively I deserve a little time to research and find . . .

An Hon. Member: — Take all the time you want, Bill. Come on, easy does it. Cool down. Settle down, settle down. We can't afford to get rattled in . . . (inaudible) . . .

Mr. Sveinson: — I'm not rattled, gentlemen. We've got lots of time. The next thing that I'd like to touch on is basically the exuberance of this Premier to travel internationally on behalf of the constituents of Saskatchewan. I suppose the first question I would have, Mr. Premier, would be: could you please outline since you've become Premier just exactly where you've travelled outside of Canada?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, with respect to a question raised about sincerity by the hon. member, let everybody be quite sure then that I am very sincere when I say that I don't respect the judgement of the individual member. And judgement is very important.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. Order. The member for Regina North West has had ample time to speak his views, and he will get more time, so I ask him to be still now while the Premier answers.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, the majority of my travel has been associated with either and specifically potash trade or the twinning arrangements with the People's Republic of China. And I talked to a potash conference in Vienna. I went on to Brazil to negotiate some potash agreements and trade. Also into the United States and then later I went to the People's Republic of China and, as you know, the governor of Jilin, Governor Zhao is coming to Saskatchewan, I believe tomorrow, and so it's been primarily tied to trade, specifically potash and international, I would suspect. You could call it good will with respect to the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well I thank you, Mr. Devine – or Mr. Premier. I would like to . . . On each trip that you've taken, and I'd like you to outline what personnel who are not on government salaries who travelled with you at government expense, and also the personnel who are not on government salaries who travelled at their own expense.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member should know that's been raised several times; it's on the blues; we're brining it forward, and it will be provided to everybody in the opposition.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I'm asking for that now, Mr. Premier. I demand that you present it to the House this evening.

The China trip – let's just isolate the China trip. Once again, can you give us the people who were on government salary and were also receiving – were also travelling with your entourage. Could you also outline the people who were not on government salary but who were covered by government expenses in the same entourage, and the people who were not on government salary who were paying their own expenses while you were travelling on a government – on a trip paid by the government to the Republic of China?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, we will provide it to the hon. member, but I can say clearly that there was nobody that wasn't on government salary that was paid for by the government.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, that isolates, certainly eliminates some people who were travelling.

I would also then request the people who were on government salaries that were travelling with your entourage. Their numbers and their names.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, that's being presented to the opposition in detail. It's been asked for, everybody will get it as soon as it's compiled and brought together in the normal course of events.

Mr. Sveinson: — I think that its imperative that the Premier, who, with the entourage and at the expense of the people of Saskatchewan, travelled abroad – I think in detail it's important that you outline the mission, and, in fact, the result of this mission, in every case, and I would ask you to outline that tonight in estimates.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, if the hon. Member was in the House even part of the time during estimates, he would know that all that will be provided, and we are gathering that information, and the public has full disclosure of all those people that travel with ministers internationally, what they're for, etc., etc. And that is provided. And he can't expect to receive it in five minutes from the Premier during these estimates. It just isn't the case. It is being provided. It's all documented. And it will be given to the public and each member of the opposition.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, Mr. Premier, Mr. Chairman, you do have a staff of close to 100 people. I'm sure that the information is, in fact, in the House tonight. There's 10 or 13 of your staff with you. Are you saying that these people can't provide that information now? And if so, why not?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, obviously the member doesn't understand the tradition of parliament. I mean, in every Legislative Assembly across the country, and indeed in Ottawa, they do it the same way. They ask the questions. The questions are prepared, and they're tabled, and they're given. Would you expect that if somebody stood up in Ottawa and asked the Prime Minister where he went, how many people he took, all that information, that he would just table it within seconds? No. That isn't the parliamentary tradition. The tradition is: you ask for it; it's put together; it's provided in a documented fashion, and it's distributed to the opposition and they can look at it. The public can look at it. The press can have it, and so forth. And that's the way we do it in Saskatchewan. And when you learn that, then you'll understand it.

Mr. Sveinson: — I can appreciate that the Premier is a superb teacher. There was a time, in fact, Mr. Premier, when I had expectations that you might be a great Premier. Those expectations have fallen, and they fell rapidly. And the reasons are that you've refused to tell the people of this province exactly what the activities of you and your staff in this government are. I suggest to you that whether you were, or any one of the members of your front benches – and I see the member from Kindersley again, giving you advice on how to answer the question. Well, I have a healthy disrespect for him, and I have a healthy disrespect for your answers.

And I suggest to you that, with the staff you've got in this House tonight, you can send a courier out, you can do something, I'm sure, to find the answer that I've requested. It's very simple. It's strictly: who was in your entourage on your international travel? And I'm not so sure that the Prime Minister of Canada wouldn't offer that information if he was asked for it in estimates. I'm sure he would have it.

The member from Meadow Lake thinks it's a reason to howl. He's over there. He looks like a laughing idiot. I'm just asking, Mr. Premier, and I'm telling you that I want the information. And I'm sure the people of Saskatchewan, the hard-working people of this province, who earlier you indicated were responsible for the second lowest debt in Canada – your government has nothing to do with the debt of this province other than they have increased the debt; the people of this province are responsible – the hard-working people of Saskatchewan who require these answers and want these answers. They would like these answers now, not tabled in the legislature some time next winter or the following spring just prior to an election or after an election. They would like the information now. And I request it now.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, anybody that's been watching the estimates, either in the Assembly or on television, knows that the hon. member hasn't raised a question that wasn't raised at least 10 times by the opposition. The NDP raised all these questions. We said we'd provide the answers in the traditional, conventional fashion, and we will. So, if the hon. member had been in the legislature, if you'd sat through the estimates, and if you'd listened to the opposition – and the Leader of the Opposition and the members of the opposition asked these questions – you'd be up-to-date. But you're months and months behind. Now you're trying to catch up.

I'm not going to respond and put people through another whole series of pieces of research when we already have it in the mill. It will be provided. It will be provided to you and to the other members. The questions have already been asked. You're just late. And unfortunately you weren't in here. You had two or three shots at Advanced Education and you didn't ask. You didn't ask any questions to Education. You didn't ask any questions to many of the ministers. So, the questions have been asked before. The answers will be provided, and they will be provided in the traditional fashion.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Member for Estevan, I think that what you just stated is less than the truth. I have spent a great deal of time in this legislature, during question period, during estimates, reporting on bills, and every other fashion. And I feel that singling me out and suggesting that I have not been in this House is less than honest. And I know that to suggest that anyone in the House is telling a lie is less than parliamentary, so I cannot address you in that fashion. But I say that it's less than honest. And I would request that you apologize for making such a derogatory and dishonest statement about a member of this House.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, let's set the record straight for the public. The first time this new Liberal voted was when he stood and voted against expanded hours for the Legislative Assembly. That's the first time he voted in this Assembly. And he said he's been here and doing all kinds of things. He hasn't been here for a lot of the estimates. He hasn't been here for an awful lot of the action. And the very first time this brand-new Liberal voted was just the other day when he voted not to extend the hours in the Legislative Assembly. So let's have the record straight.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I don't think you have the record straight, sir. I have chosen, on many occasions while I've been sitting in this House, not to support a motion that was tabled by yourself, or your government, and I have also decided at the same time that a motion tabled, and that I would have to support from this opposition. Rather than vote with the government or the opposition, I've chosen to leave the House. And I did so with conscience, sir. And whether . . . I think if we counted the votes that you've been present for since you've been elected, I think that the performance is less than adequate for the Premier of this province.

But that's not the question. That's not the question that I addressed to the Premier of this province. I simply asked him for some information that a staff of 100 people can't provide. He indicates that the opposition has asked on many, many occasions for the same information. It hasn't yet been tabled. I'm suggesting that I want the information now – that I would like the information, simply. And I would like the information that the entourage that you took on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan to travel internationally at the expense of the hard-working people of this province. All I'm asking was who you took, and how much it cost. I don't think that's asking too much.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I've said many times the information has been asked several times by the opposition. It will be provided in the traditional fashion.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, it looks like we have to go into something else because again, the Premier of Saskatchewan refuses information that's very basic, very basic. I don't think it should be difficult. But I would like to quote from a speech made by the Premier to the Progressive Conservative convention in Saskatoon in November.

An Hon. Member: — Oh, you've got some confidential material, do you?

Mr. Sveinson: — It's very confidential material. But in the speech, and I might say that the speech is inundated with rhetoric, and that they weren't, even though the Premier and his staff and his government believe that the people that were there were all believers, that isn't necessarily the truth.

But he indicates the people of Saskatchewan had a dream of what Saskatchewan could be. I think they've also got a dream of what Saskatchewan is, if they base their information on what has resulted as a result of information coming from this committee. And it could be better. He says that it could be

better – that it could be first class in a lot of other things. And they really believe, they really did believe that if the Japanese people had Saskatchewan for five years you wouldn't recognize it.

Now what are you really saying, Mr. Devine? You said earlier that this province had the second lowest debt in the country. Now that debt was on the backs of the hard-working people in Saskatchewan. And I suggest to you, sir, that the people of Saskatchewan are as hard working and productive as any in this land, and certainly as any in the world. And you're indicating to your conference that if the Japanese people had this province for five years, the dream may come true. I would ask you to explain that.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I mentioned earlier that the hon. member started off several hours ago attacking women. He's picked on seniors and teachers, small business. Now he's picking on the Japanese. Mr. Chairman, the member is entitled to his opinion. It differs from mine, and I think we should just let it go at that.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well I suppose it's very funny, Mr. Devine, and I don't find it . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. The member from Regina North West has been asked many times tonight not to refer to other members in the House by their names. You're supposed to refer to them by their cabinet position or their constituency, and I would ask him to keep that in mind.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. I think I've slipped three times tonight. But this dream the Premier had about how the province could be improved so dramatically if the Japanese were to have this province for five years - I would just like that to be clarified in the minds of the people of this province who have worked so hard, who have worked so hard over generations to, in fact, arrive at what we have in this province today.

And I think in spite of the fact that we had an opposition like the NDP over most of the last 30 or 40 years, I think, in spite of that, that the people have overcome, and they've delivered a very productive province. And you now manage that province, and I think it's a slur on their credibility. You've slurred my credibility all night. Now I would like an explanation of why you slurred their credibility. And I don't think it's funny, Mr. Devine.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Perhaps I could take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to quote the hon. member. If I could just quote . . . Mr. Chairman, if I could take this opportunity to quote the hon. member, and he's talking about what we've done in Saskatchewan in the last couple of years. Let me just quote, and this is recently distributed . . . recently distributed in Regina North West. This is dealing with what we have done for the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Chairman, could I have the attention of the Assembly so the hon. member can hear this, because he asked the question. The hon. member says this, and I quote. Here it is, Mr. MLA Regina North West, and this is what he says:

Since April of 1982 the positive policies of your Progressive Conservative government have made Saskatchewan a good place to live and raise a family. The economy is healthy, and through the leadership of Premier Grant Devine our province will surge ahead in the 1980s.

Quote – the MLA from Regina North West.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I hold in my hand, it says here: "Regina North West, Bill Sveinson, MLA, a special report on the economy of Saskatchewan." On the economy of Saskatchewan –

he asks about that. The MLA for Regina North West said, "We made promises." And he says the following: "In the spring of 1982, Saskatchewan voters . . ." Mr. Chairman, could I have the MLA from Regina North West please pay attention. Please! The MLA from Regina North West said, "We delivered. The provincial tax on gasoline was removed within hours of taking office, the single largest tax cut in Saskatchewan history." And the MLA from Regina North West said, "We delivered."

Remember when interest rates were as high as 18 per cent . . . 18 per cent? We introduced a mortgage interest reduction program at 13.25 per cent. Over 43,000 home owners benefited from the plan. And that's exactly what we said we would do. That's what I said in my speech in November.

This is what the MLA from Regina North West endorses, and said, "This is how we delivered. The gas tax, the mortgage tax . . ." And he goes on, in a very large brochure: "Build-A-Home program, health care over \$1,000 per capita, unemployment is the lowest level, Saskatchewan population making records, lowest unemployment in Canada, lowest gasoline prices, very good utility prices." And it goes on to say that, "The health in our economy . . . and through the leadership of Premier Grant Devine, our province will surge ahead in the 1980's."

Now I say to the hon. member, he's answered his own question. He just asked me if we were going to live up to the expectations. He spent good hard cash telling people about it. Now, either he is loyal to what he said and believes, or he doesn't have any conscience at all.

Now the people of Saskatchewan are going to have to decide: is this true what the hon. member signed. And he signed it on the back. He signed it; that's his signature. And he endorsed it, and he backed it up, and he said all these things. He said it. And he . . . this is in response to the question he just asked. Now either he condones it or he doesn't have any conscience. You can't believe what he says.

This is what he says. And the people of Saskatchewan can look at the brochures that this individual says. This is what he says, and he signs it, and he talks about it. Now either he condones it, or he doesn't. If he doesn't, then he has no conscience because he didn't believe what he wrote. Then it's a bit hypocritical, Mr. Chairman, if he didn't believe it and wrote it. But he did, and he signed it. And it said this province was doing very good, keeping the promises, delivering, doing all those things that we said we would do. And he signed the brochure and said that that was the case.

Now, either he's got the integrity to endorse it, or he has no conscience at all. And I'll let the people of Saskatchewan and the public judge for themselves.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, the Premier of this province continues to direct his questioning, and a personal slur on my credibility. And while he's allowed to do that within the broad context of this committee, I suggest that he earlier, in this committee, gave me a lecture on parliamentary tradition.

I think it's very unparliamentary, and I think you'd be hard pressed to find, in the *Hansards* of this land, a single estimates where a premier of a province had so directly, and so concisely, and so completely directed his questions at a slur on an individual that works in this House, works on behalf of his constituents, and doesn't necessarily condone, or doesn't necessarily condemn all the legislation that that government's passed.

But I say to you that the people will decide. The people of this province will decide, but they won't decide on the integrity. They don't have to decide on the integrity of me as an individual; only those in North West have to. But they have to decide on the integrity of this government.

And I say to you that they would be hard pressed anywhere in this land to find a slur that has been so complete and so concise with respect to the integrity of an individual member of this House. And I suggest to you that that deserves an apology from the Office of the Premier. It deserves an apology from the Office of the Premier.

The question I asked earlier in this House was simply how you can say to 1,000 gathered Conservatives that if the Japanese people had this province for five years, they could make it what this wish it would be. And you haven't answered the question, sir.

I say to you that the people in this province are as hard working, and are as generous, and have as much empathy as anybody in this land. And they've proved that their productive ability exceeds most people in this land. And they've done so for generations without you as a Premier, and they'll do it again without you as a Premier.

But I ask you to tell this House tonight exactly what you mean in this statement that you made regarding the Japanese people taking this province over in order to replace the productive abilities of the people of this province.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, in response to the hon. member's question, I've just taken his own brochure and described in some detail, as he has, the kinds of things that we have done. He's entitled to his opinion of whether he thinks that's successful or not. He said it was. He signed it. He said that we delivered. And it's very positive. And I agree, if he doesn't have the conscience to endorse it now, that's up to him.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, that's consistent with the answers that you've given tonight. Consistent with the inability, the inability as Premier to address the real problems of this province.

I think, with respect to a statement like that, not only have you slurred their abilities as a productive part of society, but you've indicated there are people in this world whose abilities far exceed ours in Saskatchewan. And I suppose that leads back to the question of education.

You're admitting there's a problem. You've suggested there are people in this world who could address it a lot more immediately than we can from a Saskatchewan perspective. But you've failed in this debate tonight to offer any solutions to that problem, or any solutions to the question of education, the question of health care, the question of broken promises. I mean you address me with, with a brochure, and you question my integrity, as the Premier of this province.

But how many promises have you broken as a Premier since the last election? I recall one promise that was very emphatically, very emphatically in the cover of every brochure that was sent out I'm sure, in this province. And that was one that you were going to lower the taxes in Saskatchewan by 10 per cent. Instead of lowering the taxes in Saskatchewan by 10 per cent, you've, in fact, initiated a collected deficit of \$850 million. You indicate that the taxes are lower by 10 per cent – I would ask you to explain how?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, we have initiated the largest tax cuts in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. We have removed the tax on gasoline, which is about \$100 million a year. We have

now targeted income tax reductions in the areas of research and development, processing and manufacturing, tourism, and in the livestock industry.

And you talk about 10 per cent – you're looking at an area of 25 to 30 per cent tax reductions in income tax, never been done before in the history of this province or, as far as we can find particularly in livestock, ever been done before across Canada. They are the largest single tax reductions in the history of this province.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well the promise related to income tax . . . The gasoline tax was another promise; you, in fact, carried that out, but the income tax promise was 10 per cent in your own election material. Now you're questioning my integrity – relating to a pamphlet that I put out. You haven't delivered, Mr. Premier, on 20 per cent of the promises you made to get elected as a Conservative government in this province.

Another promise you've made over successive elections is that you're going to remove – you're going to remove the provincial sales tax. Can you give us some indication on when – when you're going to lower the provincial income tax by 10 per cent, and when you're going to remove the provincial sales tax?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I just reported the largest single sales tax reduction in the history of the province occurred – we took the tax off gasoline – that's a sales tax reduction. We've continued to reduce the sales tax – we took it off utilities, it's now off homes, it's off farms, the sales tax on electrical bills.

And we will continue to reduce it as long as we believe we can. In terms of income tax, we have targeted areas that way far exceed 10 per cent reduction in income tax. Some cases they're 30 per cent, and when you start looking at . . . (inaudible) . . . they may even be more than that with respect to livestock. So the targeted tax reductions you see now are in excess of the 10 per cent. And in terms of sales tax they've never seen reductions like that any place in this province before, and they're some of the largest ever across Canada.

So I'd say to the hon. member – when you look at targeted tax reductions we now have, if you participate in these tax reductions – the lowest income tax system in the country.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well I'm relating to the income tax that is paid by the average worker across this province who earns \$26,000 a year for a family of four. You promised those people, you promised them. And you question my integrity, and I question yours with respect to promises that you made. Campaign promises that you made, and you made over successive elections – your party made over successive elections.

And I suggest to you that you will not, and you cannot reduce the provincial income tax for those people who are earning an average wage and have two children in their family. You will not, and you cannot. Certainly you've addressed some of the problems of your high earners – those people that have to use tax shelters to, in fact, protect income. But you haven't protected the people of this province who are the real people. You continue throughout this debate to refer to the real people of this province, but I don't think you know who the real people really are. I'm sure you don't know who the real people really are. They aren't the big-business people who have to protect income through a tax saving scheme that presently is available, and will be available through your provincial government in several areas. I'm not questioning that.

Your promises were simply that you would reduce, for that family of four on an annual income of 26,000 a year – you would reduce their personal income tax by 10 per cent. I doubt that you'll ever do that. I'm certain you won't. Your colleagues in Alberta, who have a \$13 billion Heritage Fund, increased taxes – increased taxes. Sitting on 13 billion and on the backs of the little people, what do they do? They increase taxes. And I would expect the same thing of this government and your government in the event that you were, in fact, sitting on the same kind of a situation.

Other broken promises – I suppose the one that comes to surface the most clearly in the cities of Regina and Moose Jaw are the failure of this government, the failure of the minister from Regina, the failure of this government to address the water problem in Regina. That promise was made by a provincial government without a caveat by a federal government. That promise was made to the people of Regina. Have you upheld that promise, sir? No, you haven't. And I would doubt, I would doubt very much that you will uphold that promise before the next election. You can't do it. You don't have the money to do it.

But sure, you make the promises. Sure you accrued some votes. I'm sure you got many votes as a result of better water for Regina. But can we expect, can we expect your government to deliver? Can we expect your government to deliver on better water for the Regina-Moose jaw corridor? Before the next election, was the commitment.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, all I can do is use the member for Regina North West's own brochures to show how we have addressed the problems and kept the promises for the ordinary families. We've reduced the interest rates for ordinary people. At low incomes, we have the lowest income tax in Canada, bar none . . . (inaudible) . . . \$25,000 and less; that's the lowest in Canada. And at 35,000, I believe, it's the second lowest. And anybody else that wants to, at that level or others, participate in the new income tax savings, they can, indeed, have the lowest income tax in the nation. And that's why we are providing it.

And we said that we would provide, on average, a 10 per cent reduction in income tax. We have targeted some areas that are way in excess of that. Now, when we have the lowest income tax level in Canada at 25,000, plus brand-new targeted tax savings, clearly, clearly for the average income owner that is in the area of \$25,000, we are indeed the lowest, and it's declining. Now with respect to sales taxes, as the hon. member knows and power bills . . . (inaudible) . . . the sales taxes is off power bills for families, for farmers, and so forth.

When you look at the education tax on the home quarter, we've removed that – ordinary families. That is a very significant reduction in tax. It's \$11 million. So when you add it up, just for rural families alone, over a hundred million annually that is going in terms of tax breaks or expenditures to the people of Saskatchewan.

And the member opposite wrote all about it. He spent hundreds and hundreds of dollars telling the people of Regina how we have delivered. And now he's saying that he didn't do this. Well, he did; he signed it. Now I know the hon. member is upset because he didn't like what I told him. I told him I didn't think that he would win the nomination, Regina North West, and he pouted, and he left. He said you don't have very good judgement . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Chairman, all I can say is the member is upset because I agreed with his judgement. I disagreed with his judgement, and he's still upset. I don't have much respect for his judgement; I didn't then, and I don't now. He's entitled to his opinion; I'm entitled to mine. He, in writing, puts down what he thinks we've done to deliver; I agree with him. If he wants to say that he didn't do this or he didn't sign it or he

didn't endorse it, that's fine. He has described his conscience, he's described what we've delivered. I agree with him if he now says that he didn't do it, or he didn't sign it, or he didn't pay for it, well then, he'll have to explain it himself.

Mr. Sveinson: — You know, I'm losing more respect for Mr. Premier. Every time he opens his mouth, he tends to come out with an untruth. There is no, absolute no substantive basis that you and I ever discussed my nomination in North West Regina. And if it was in a private conversation, I don't see why you would raise it in estimates at any rate. But it wasn't in any private . . . It was not in any private conversation we ever had. And I don't know how the rest of this caucus can sit back and support that kind of a lie. I cannot figure it out. It is an absolute lie and that upsets me because I would give you more integrity than that, Mr. Premier, and I would support you on the basis that you had more integrity.

But I know now you don't have, and that should upset not only me as a member of the Liberal Party, but also every individual in this province. When they come in and have a private conversation with you, can they expect it to become the front page news? Is that what they expect? Is that the kind of integrity we can expect from the Premier of this province? I would hope not. I would hope not. The Liberal Party has some integrity. They have some integrity, and they live by it, and they govern this country with it, and they have for many of the last hundred years. Never have they slurred on an untruth, on an absolute lie. A premier of a province comes out and slurs an individual of another party . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. Order! I would ask the member from Regina North West to retract that statement where he used the word lie.

Mr. Sveinson: — While recognizing that the word lie cannot be used, I suppose I would have to address it as an absolute and complete untruth. And that's exactly what it was, and I would . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order! The member from Regina North West either retracts his statement or doesn't retract it. If he refuses to retract his statement, I will use the same procedures I used before supper.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I'll retract it. But at the same time I would ask the Premier of this province who knows, in his own mind, that there was never any discussion. And on what basis would you ever have a discussion with a member of your caucus and indicate that he couldn't win your provincial nomination. Provincial. He said northwest Regina. He said Regina North West.

Has he discussed it with a member from Canora, or the member from . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I don't know where – there is not very many people present here from Regina – the member from Moose Jaw North, possibly, or the member from Melfort. I know that the member from Kindersley, in cabinet, indicated there were several members in your caucus who shouldn't come back – whose nomination should be contested. But we certainly never had that discussion, Mr. Premier. I would ask you for an apology for even bringing it up.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I advised the hon. member that I didn't believe he could win the nomination in Regina West.

An Hon. Member: — You said Regina North West.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Regina West. That was the discussion, because the nomination was coming up. I said I didn't think that he would win it. I didn't think that he would win it. I don't believe that he would have won it. I don't believe he'll win anything in the future.

And I . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . so he may disagree. He may disagree; he has his own opinion. He does what he thinks he should do. I think I do what I think I should do. And we can agree to disagree. I've said that to the Leader of the Opposition. Let's agree to disagree. I don't have all that much confidence in your judgement, but that doesn't mean we can't agree to disagree. That's what the democratic process is about. So, I'm saying that you may be upset because I didn't agree with your judgement. I didn't then, and I don't now. So you can have your opinion, and so be it. I have my opinion, and we might as well leave it at that. Obviously we don't agree about a lot of things. And I don't particularly have much confidence in your judgement. But that's – I mean you can speak your mind, and I will speak mine. And in the final analysis, the people will have to decide. So be it.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I have a healthy disrespect for your judgement as well, Mr. Premier. And I would like to ask you if other members of your caucus have had similar discussions where their judgement has been in question. And I suggested the member from Moosomin, and the member from Rosthern, who were elected to this House in 1975, and are members that I respect, are members that I suspect – while I have a healthy disrespect for you, I do respect some members of this House.

Are you telling me that publicly you have indicated to these members, as well, that you do not trust their judgement? I don't think they've been fairly treated within your caucus, or they would be in cabinet. If experience means anything, and it tended to mean a lot to you on appointing your own Executive Council, I think it should have been addressed in a little more important fashion when addressing your own cabinet.

But can you tell me, Mr. Premier, how many other members of your caucus do you not trust their judgement? I can understand mine, that since I've left your fold, I'm sure you wouldn't have said that prior to leaving your fold. And you never told me before I left your fold. It's an outright mistruth. But how many others in that caucus do you feel the same way about?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, as the hon. member raised it, the premier of a province, the Prime Minister of the country, selects his own cabinet for his own reason. Obviously not everybody in caucus can be in cabinet at the same time, obviously. So, a premier has to make up his mind when he makes that decision. And that's the responsibility that goes to a leader.

Now I respect the opinions of everybody here, and particularly everybody in caucus who goes through good times and bad. But I have little or no respect for individuals that are not loyal to me, or loyal to a caucus, or loyal to a cause. And particularly I have some difficulty with an individual who would sign this, saying that we've kept our promise – sign it and endorse it – and then turn around and say that that isn't the case after he's already signed it. Either he didn't believe it at the time, or he has little or no conscience. And people will have to judge for themselves.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I've never said that I didn't sign that, or, in fact, I didn't publish that. I have never said that within the context of these estimates or anywhere else. What I've said is you've addressed the answers in this committee tonight in less than a credible manner by slurring and doing it continually throughout the estimates, while I've been on my feet, by slurring my personal credibility. And I don't see that that has anything to do with the answers to the questions that I've raised.

And I still fail to realize, or fail to appreciate a premier that could come down so hard on one of his own – I was one of your own, Grant, and I left. I lost the confidence I had in you quickly. Unfortunately many other members of your caucus and many members of the public have done the same thing, but for the same reasons. You don't advance in society, or with people, by criticizing other people. I say I have a healthy disrespect for you because of your judgement of me personally. I'm not criticizing you as a

person. You've got every right; you've got letters, you've got degrees, you've got abilities that I wish I had. I'm not questioning that.

I stand to say that at one time I felt that you'd make a good premier. You surrounded yourself with an inept cabinet, and an inept, and an inept Executive Council. And you've proven that in last year's estimates and proven it again in this year's estimates.

And I just say to you that the questions that I've had, and I've raised today, have been pertinent to this committee. The answers haven't been. I'm not so certain that I should have, in fact, addressed the committee, because you've failed to answer any questions. You came out . . . As soon as I got to my feet, you were on the attack.

The hon. member from Qu'Appelle was sitting there feeding you the attack line, and you took after me on women. Now there was no relative, no relative sense to your train of answers, because I didn't attack women within the context of this committee. What I did do was I questioned you on your Executive Council, and if you have women employed in Executive Council, all the better for the women you have employed. But I still have the right to request information of those women without having my attitude to women slurred by the Premier of Saskatchewan.

And I don't know. The rest of this committee tonight could be used with just apologies from the Premier. Just apologies to me, and to women, and to old folks. When have I addressed this committee in less than a complimentary way to the old folks of this province? I have suggested they're the most productive, and they have been the most productive people, and among the most productive people in this country. And you come out with the idea that I've slurred them. You've slurred them in your own speech by saying that their children, the grandchildren of the people who formed and established this province, should be replaced by Japanese workers for five years to get us back on track.

Now you say it in your speech to the Progressive Conservative annual convention last year. Now when have I slurred, when have I slurred old people, the elderly, my grandparents; when have I slurred them in this committee?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, obviously the member is entitled to his opinion, and I'm entitled to mine. I don't really think he asked a question on this last little tirade. His opinion is different than mine, and I think we should just agree to disagree.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well I don't think we should just agree to disagree, Mr. Premier, because you made the allegation that I did slur the elderly of Saskatchewan. And certainly within the context of this committee, I have not given any indication that I haven't anything but absolute and total respect for the people of Saskatchewan.

A recent program you've introduced for the people of Saskatchewan I think somewhat questions their integrity. You've offered them \$1,000 to upgrade their homes, but you've failed, you failed, within the context of this legislature, to address the problem. You've delayed it till August 1st.

By the time they get the moneys together to put the work that's required into those homes – and the contractors and whatever else has to be approved by your government – we're late into fall. Now I think the old people of this province, and the elderly, and the people on pensions who qualify for a program like that should have had it available immediately. There was no excuse. The excuse is, and the only reason for it is simply that you are unable to address the problem because you don't have the money. You don't have the money.

You were determined . . . Because of the Minister of Finance's direction on the budget deficit, you were determined to come out and prove to the people that sure, sure, we can reduce this year's deficit by 20 per cent. What a play on . . . What a play on political diatribe. Almost, almost . . . I'm tell you, that kind of diatribe in this province is almost unprecedented, and you'll suffer. The minister from Kindersley is laughing. He thinks it's a joke, but he will . . . He says that . . . The people of the province aren't laughing at me, Mr. Minister, they're laughing with me. They're laughing at ministers like you, and people like the Premier, whose indignance of members in this House is . . . The only thing that's been very clear in this entire debate tonight is the Premier of this province has demonstrated his singular indignance for a member of this House.

Earlier in debate today, Mr. Premier was suggesting that gold mines might be opened in Saskatchewan. I mean that is absolutely out of touch with the market-place and out of touch as far as potential development in one of our richest areas in this province is concerned – absolutely out of touch. The production costs of gold are quite in excess of the market value of gold, in this province, or anywhere in the world.

And I would just like to, for a moment, while he's addressing his officials, suggest that the debate this afternoon, relative to the North of this province, presented by the Leader of the Opposition was extremely true, was extremely true. They have a 90 per cent unemployment in the North. They have 25,000 Northerners, of which only a few thousand are working, and they're addressing the problem with more education, and the prospect, as Mr. Premier said, of gold mines. Can you imagine that? The prospect of gold mines when the price of gold doesn't support the production cost in a new operation.

I would ask the Premier to explain that a little more concisely: where the mines are opening, when they're opening, and how many jobs they would supply to Northerners in the area that are being addressed so aggressively by this government in the mining sector.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, if the member from Regina North West wants, perhaps he can be a consultant to Claude Resources, because they've announced that they are going to be mining. Flin Flon Mines are going to be in operation. In some cases they're going into full production. So perhaps he knows more about gold mining than the people in the mining business – I'm not sure – but these people have announced that they're going to have a gold production in the province of Saskatchewan, and it is going to make money, and it is worth while, and they are going to be employing people. They're both in the private sector, and they seem to know what they're doing. But if the hon. member feels that he knows more about the market, he knows more about the machinery market evidently, or the heavy equipment market than the auctioneers do, and he knows more about mining, perhaps he could get a job as a consultant with the miners.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I don't profess to be an expert in mining. But I do have some doubts about the sincerity of even the private sector who are presently opening gold mines in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Premier, I suggest to you that the doubts of the private sector opening gold mines are confined to the companies that you presently or just, in fact, mentioned, I think Flin Flon minerals has been in operation, in fact, tentatively, for several years. It hasn't happened since you became the government. I can assure you of that.

While you've addressed the mill with an extra . . . You've guaranteed a loan on the mill operation. I suggest to you that Flin Flon has been on the market for the last 10 years. The Minister of Mines and Resources suddenly indicates that it just popped out of the blue after they became government. Well that

is not a fact, sir. They have been around for many years. That mining operation has been promoted. The stocks have gone up and down, the confidence of the investors has gone up and down, and I'm not sure that they have yet milled an ounce of gold. If they have, I stand to be corrected.

Claude Resources is certainly a mining operation that it just floated an initial underwriting. Now when are they expecting to go into production? Is it an open-pit operation? Is it a hard-rock operation? Two years, I believe, unless the gold prices change. And there was an editorial recently in *The Glob and Mail* and the *Leader-Post* from the gold mining industry indicating that the confidence of the investors who are opening these mines, until the price rises, isn't there to develop these mines.

And in fact, if they are developed – and you indicated earlier today that there would be a broad cross-section of Northerners employed in these mines – I would ask you in what areas would these individuals be employed. And are you offering, as a government, are you offering at your technical school in Prince Albert, are you offering “stove” mining? Are you offering drift mining? Are you offering things that are related to the mining industry, like sampling, engineering?

I realize that at the University of Saskatchewan you can get degrees in engineering relating to the mining industry. Not many of those graduates work in this province. I can assure you of that. Most of them work outside the province, and a lot of them work outside the country. But I would ask you to bring me up to date on Claude Resources. I realize they've recently underwritten an initial underwriting, as far as I'm aware. That certainly doesn't translate to any jobs in the near future, and possibly not in the distant future.

There have been a great number of small mining operations that have been underwritten, only to suffer the ravages of the market-place, and the ravages of the market-place have had a dramatic and real effect on the mining industry in the last five years. I ask you: in what context is Claude Resources opening in the very near future?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I can't speak for the private mines in the province of Saskatchewan. The private miners are telling us that they're going to be opening new mines, and it will be profitable, and they're employed people. And I'm sure the hon. member can call the offices of the private miners, whether it's Flin Flon or Claude Resources or whatever, and get the information. I can speak on public projects. I think the private sector can speak for itself with respect to mining.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I'll just address that question to you, Mr. Premier, in a little different context. How many people presently work in the North in mining-related industry?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, the latest program that we've introduced in the mining sector, and that is the accelerated tax breaks and the depreciation and so forth, has resulted in about \$2 million extra money going into exploration in the province of Saskatchewan. Now how many, how many new jobs that will translate into, it's very hard to forecast, and with respect to the total number of people employed in the private sector and in the public sector across northern Saskatchewan in mining, I just don't have the information.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well I say to you, Mr. Premier, there was a great deal of exploration in the mining industry prior to your program. So I would ask you: how much is presently being spent, then, in northern Saskatchewan by mining corporations, including the 2 million that's related directly to your program?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I just advised the hon. member that I don't know how many people are totally employed in mining, public and private sector, across Saskatchewan. I do know that we can

estimate, as a result of our targeted incentives, an additional \$2 million will be spent on exploration in northern Saskatchewan because of these programs. Now that's very positive. If they find more very solid ore bodies, it means more and more jobs and so forth. Even the activity in exploration is sound. So it's an additional \$2 million that will be spent now, in addition to what was going on before. So it's new activity.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, most of the capital for the small, I suppose the mining companies that are high-risk, is raised in the Vancouver market. Are there any companies presently involved in the new exploration in northern Saskatchewan that trade on that market; and if so, I'd just like to know the name of these companies.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I have no reason to know, and I don't know. And if he wants to find out who's trading in the private sector in mining, I'm sure he can contact the private sector.

Mr. Sveinson: — I don't think that's such an unreasonable question. I mean, you address it as if it's totally unreasonable. The earlier question that I did address was . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . The earlier question . . . The earlier question that I addressed to you, Mr. Premier, regarding job opportunities and opportunities in the mining industry relative to your technical thrust and technical schools, can you outline programs that these technical schools will offer that will enhance northerners to participate in the mining industry.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, let me make a point once again. The hon. member asked me specific questions about the private mining business and about the resource sector. I think it's fair to say, Mr. Chairman, and I believe the people of Saskatchewan should know this – the hon. member had the minister responsible at his disposal for his estimates. He could have asked all that detail with all the officials of the minister responsible for resources – all of that. And they have all the information and so forth. But he didn't ask one question. The hon. member from Regina North West wasn't even here to address those problems with the man who is in charge.

Now, he asks me. I deal with overall policy on all topics. I can't be expected to know what the price of gold is on the Vancouver exchange, or what private firm is doing this or that. The Minister of Energy may be able to, with his officials. So I say it's a little bit of grandstanding that the member from Regina North West gets into when he starts asking these questions that really nobody in government is responsible for, as to what the private sector is doing with respect to mining, or what the price of something is on the Vancouver exchange.

So, Mr. Chairman, let me say that I will be glad to address the questions that are reasonable. I don't know the answers to the private sector questions. And it would have been much more productive as it is in all Legislative Assemblies, if the member had been in the House to ask the ministers about education, about mining, about mining, about northern development, about economic . . . Did he ask the Minister of Finance anything? Did you ask the Minister of Finance one question in his estimates? Not one. Did you ask him anything in question period? Not one.

You save all this up because you think you get some TV time, because the Premier's going to be in estimates. Well let me make it clear – very clear. I believe you've got all the TV time you deserve for this evening.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, you've made a number of observations, I'm certain, about my character and about other related areas, this evening, Mr. Premier. I think that you and your hundred individuals within your Executive Council, who give you advice in all areas of government, and your minister is sitting here this evening who is in charge of the mining programs in this province. I think you could answer questions relating to the mining industry, and I think you could do it very, very adequately.

I mean these gentlemen aren't on salaries in the 20 and \$25,000 range. They don't relate to the average people in this province. The gentleman sitting next to you giving you advice right now is earning likely in the neighbourhood \$80,000 a year. I think the onus is on him to have some answers. I mean, what is his job? I think we've gone through that. I hate to have you answer that again because I'm sure you don't even know.

But I believe I did not ask you this evening what the price of gold was on the Vancouver exchange; I didn't ask the question. You intimated that I did. I asked you how many spaces in the technical institutes in Saskatchewan are, in fact, designed to enhance the ability of Northerners and other people in this province to take advantage of a huge and vast wealth in the earth of this province that are north? How many spaces are there that address this, in fact, this industry?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, clearly the Prince Albert Technical Institute will have special courses dealing with mining technology. The courses are now being developed with respect to courses being taught, courses being taught now in technical schools or universities with respect to mining. I am glad to take notice, and I will provide the information to the hon. member. I'm not the Minister of Education, the education officials aren't here. If you would have done this in education, you could have had it. But I will take notice to provide the information that the hon. member asked with respect to mining classes or related classes that are being taught at educational institutions across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well that is fair and reasonable, Mr. Premier. It's about time. It's 10 minutes before the hour. It's the first question you've answered in any sincerity this evening. And I think I respect you for your answer, no question about it. I would also just in the interest, just in the interest of the public of Saskatchewan, I would like you to outline for us where SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) is involved in the mining industries in the North. And will, in fact, it be a vehicle for only raising money, or will it be a vehicle to go into joint ventures with mining companies to develop gold, silver, lead, zinc and other minerals that we do have in abundance in Saskatchewan's northland.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, SMDC already is in joint ventures. That's what it does.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well I thought this government had a new direction. I mean, I'm just asking, Mr. Premier, if that direction will remain the same.

I heard you criticize, very emphatically, the NDP for getting involved in uranium earlier today. I'm just asking you: will SMDC continue to be a vehicle to, in fact, finance joint ventures in very high-risk mining ventures, as you, in fact, admitted this afternoon?

The SMDC of the past has entered into some very high-risk and very non-profitable joint venture mining operations. And you're suggesting to me that you will continue to do so, on behalf of the taxpayers of the province. Is that what you just said?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I said this afternoon that the NDP opposition had changed their mind. They are publicly agreed now that they shouldn't have done what they done, and they have passed a resolution to close the mines in northern Saskatchewan.

Now, they admit that they have made a very large mistake. They spent several hundred million dollars in northern Saskatchewan, and they admit now they made that mistake, and they shouldn't have done it. And now they would close all the mines.

Well, I agree that they made a mistake, and they have squandered hundreds of millions of dollars. So we said the role of this administration is not to be the participant and the referee either, so we're not going to expand the uranium mines in the public sector. And we are not just going to holus-bolus close them, because hundreds of millions of dollars of the taxpayers' money have been put in there.

So we will manage it to the best of our ability. In some cases, SMDC is in a joint venture. And that will continue.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well I think you answered a question earlier that the nature of SMDC would be, in fact, to be involved in joint ventures in the future. Maybe I misunderstood your answer.

Are you saying that SMDC will continue to be a joint venture vehicle for private enterprise or private corporations who are involved in high-risk mining ventures in northern Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member knows that a federal Crown corporation like Eldorado Nuclear is involved in joint ventures. And SMDC's involved in joint ventures. In fact, Eldorado Nuclear and SMDC are involved together in joint ventures. One's a federal Crown corporation, and one's a provincial Crown corporation. That's been the case in the past that they have those joint ventures. The precedent has already been set.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, Mr. Premier, you just finished criticizing the former government for involving itself in high-risk joint ventures which, in fact, involved the development of Saskatchewan's uranium industry.

I didn't ask you whether the federal Crown corporation was involved in such joint ventures, or would be in the future. I asked you where the direction of this government will be with respect to the expenditures of taxpayers dollars, with respect to joint ventures in high-risk mining operations.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, there is no obligation for anybody exploring in uranium mining in Saskatchewan to go into a joint venture with the public sector. Only at the national level do they have those kinds of obligations, but not in the province of Saskatchewan. And there's no back-in provision. We removed that. We didn't say we would have bought the uranium mines. We inherited the uranium mines in the public sector.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well what would be the criteria of SMDC today? What would be the criteria to enter a joint venture mining venture in northern Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, we would only do it if it made money.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well that's a fairly opportune way to address the situation. Does that mean you'll never, in fact, ever again be involved in a joint venture in the mining industry? The commodity prices of minerals can range in a yearly or a monthly basis. The company that establishes a mine doesn't know when, in fact, the mine is established, whether the projections for that commodity will, in fact, pay for the operation or not.

How can you be so certain that if you get involved in a joint venture you're going to make money? After all, it's just unreasonable to suggest that the only operations you're going to be involved in will make money. While you criticize the NDP for being involved in uranium, at the time they got involved, the price for uranium did make sense. So I don't think that is necessarily one of the criteria. What will the criteria be to be involved in joint ventures in the mining industry.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I said that the criteria would be whether or not it would be profitable. I guess what would help me, if the hon. member would advise me what he thinks Eldorado Nuclear should do. What's the position of the Liberal administration with respect to Eldorado Nuclear in mining, in joint ventures, and so forth — prospective joint ventures, or existing joint ventures., and so on? I mean the federal government has some pretty broad prospective implications for mining across Canada. And Eldorado Nuclear is right smack dab in the middle of it. Now, am I to assume . . . I guess will assume that the hon. member is saying Eldorado Nuclear should get out of the mining business. So, unless I hear otherwise, I'll make that assumption.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, I haven't assumed anything, Mr. Premier. I don't think I'm here to answer questions on behalf of Eldorado Nuclear. I'm strictly here as a member of the opposition to clarify the government's position in northern mining operations. And earlier today you included mining as one of the great employment operations or employment opportunities in the North. I'm just asking you. In order to develop a mine it does cost a great deal of money. And, in fact, in many cases there are several mining operations involved in the initiation of a new operation. But it does take several years.

And I don't know how a government could approach a philosophy with joint ventures in mining by suggesting that it will only get involved in profitable ventures. I mean that is — that's absolutely absurd, absolutely absurd. And the Premier stands up and tells me, as a member, that I should outline Eldorado Nuclear's involvement in the mining industry in order to maybe clarify your position. It's not absurd. It's not absurd. Just take a look at the industry.

An Hon. Member: — Don't be ridiculous.

Mr. Sveinson: — It isn't ridiculous. I'm just saying that I've had . . . I basically have asked the Premier a very simple question. I'm asking him how the direction of the taxpayers' dollars are going to be involved in the mining industry.

I would suggest to you that the involvement in the mining industry is a very high-risk involvement, unless one of the major players are involved. Is the Teck Corporation in northern Saskatchewan? Is Dome Minerals in northern Saskatchewan? No, they're not. You've got some very junior players in northern Saskatchewan, which gives you a relative idea of how much confidence the major players in the mining industry still have in this province. They don't have the confidence to get involved as a joint venture till whatever mining operation decides that they want to open as a junior company in northern Saskatchewan.

But the Government of Saskatchewan could definitely get involved with the juniors. And they have; they are involved. Flin Flon mining is not a major mining company. It's a junior mining company, and you're involved with a loan guarantee. Now what is the guarantee from Flin Flon Mines, for instance? What guarantees do you have that they're going to make money? I mean, I think the figure was 1.1 million that you guaranteed. I would ask you, Mr. Premier, what guarantees have the people of Saskatchewan got that that money is protected?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member believes, due to his right-wing philosophy, extreme radical right-wing philosophy, that the government shouldn't be involved in anything, well, that's his right. And I asked, and I'm going to assume that he doesn't believe Eldorado Nuclear should be involved at all. And I'll make that assumption until he corrects it.

Now secondly, with respect to mining, I say we may become involved if it's profitable. And he doesn't agree with that. So the alternative is to become involved when it's a loser. Now he may understand what that means. But I would rather be involved in a joint venture that is profitable than one that is a loser. Now if private firms want to become involved in mining in Saskatchewan they can just go get it and do it. There's no obligation or no back-in-provision by the Government of Saskatchewan. In fact it's been removed. And I don't even believe the hon. member . . . We've gone through several estimates here, but the minister responsible for SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation) went through his estimates. I don't believe you asked him one question, not one question about mining, SMDC, or anything. Did you save it up for tonight?

Well, I think it shows that you're not really sincere about getting the kinds of information that you want because you won't take the time to talk to the people who know all the answers with respect to individual departments, individual Crown corporations, and so forth. So you show up finally for the Premier's estimates. Well again, your philosophy may be different than mine, your philosophy may be different than mine, and clearly that it is. Mr. Chairman, I . . . Just leave it as it is.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well you indicate that you only get involved in profitable ventures. Has Flin Flon Mines paid a dividend?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Allow the Premier to answer. The member asked a question; allow the Premier to answer it.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, the hon. member had the opportunity, had the opportunity to ask all the detailed questions about mining he would like. In Crown Corporations, SMDC estimates were up, and he never showed up. And I think the public should be aware of that, that he doesn't show up to talk to ministers and ask ministers specific questions.

I have said that our policy with respect to mining is not the same as the former administration. They admitted they made a mistake. They made hundreds of millions of dollars of mistakes. We're not going to do the same. Our programs now are different. You don't have to go into business with the government if you want to mine in northern Saskatchewan. If we decide to joint venture with a particular company, it's because we believe that it will be profitable, and not a loser.

Now that's about as clear as I can make it. There's no obligation. If the ministers in cabinet decide to make some investments, it's because we believe it will be profitable. We don't want to do it if we believe it would be a loser.

Now there's a clear distinction. If the hon. member would like us to invest in losers, obviously his judgement is different than ours.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well I certainly haven't indicated that I want you to invest in losers, Mr. Premier. I've simply asked you whether the company you're involved with, Flin Flon mining, has paid a dividend. That would indicate that it's a profitable organization in my mind. You can study the CIC (Crown

Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) annual report if you want to learn about a loser; but I'm asking you about a proposed winner.

An Hon. Member: — Which one?

Mr. Sveinson: — Flin Flon Mines. I don't believe they paid a dividend. Plus your last statement on perceived profit was a lot different than your first statement on expected profit. So I don't think you're very consistent on your position with respect to joint ventures. I suppose if it's a good friend you'll get into a joint venture, whether it can establish a profit or whether it can't. If it's not a good friend, of course, then there'd be no consideration. But you failed to answer this question as well, Mr. Premier, and I'll call ten o'clock.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:06 p.m.