

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased today to present a petition on behalf of people who travelled down Highway No. 49, which is in atrocious shape, and they came to Highway No. 23, which was in very bad shape, so they've asked me to present a petition on this highway.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway No. 23 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth in Porcupine Plain and the surrounding areas.

The people that have signed this petition are from Porcupine Plain and Tisdale.

And I so present.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the dangerous and deplorable condition of Highway No. 43. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway 43 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth in rural Saskatchewan.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Gravelbourg, Glenbain, Regina; Lethbridge and Blairmore, Alberta; and Halifax, Nova Scotia.

I so present.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of people who have grave concerns over the condition of Highway 47 South. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 47 South in order to avoid serious injury and property damage.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this are from Bienfait, Roche Percee, North Portal, Weyburn, Torquay, Estevan, and Crosby, North Dakota.

I so present. Thank you.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to

present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan residents who are concerned about the increase in crop insurance. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to have Saskatchewan Crop Insurance reverse the 2003 premium increases and restore affordable crop insurance premiums to our struggling farmers.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Kindersley and Netherhill.

I so present.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise again in the House today to present a petition on behalf of citizens concerned with the alarming rate of rural school closures. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to retain schools in rural communities such as Denzil and supply adequate education for rural families of our province.

And as is duty bound, our petitions will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by folks from Denzil.

And I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here dealing with the high cost of prescription drugs.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reinstate a reasonable annual deductible amount for prescription drugs in Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Davidson and Kenaston.

I so present.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from citizens concerned about Crown leaseholders. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure current Crown land lessees maintain their first option to renew those leases.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Borden and Biggar.

I so present.

Mr. Lorenz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition on the condition of Highway 14. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize the deplorable condition of Highway 14 from Biggar to Wilkie and to take the necessary steps to reconstruct and repair this highway in order to address safety concerns and facilitate economic growth in rural Saskatchewan.

And as duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And this petition is signed by people from Wilkie and North Battleford.

I so present.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of citizens concerned with this government's inaction in addressing the water level issue in the Qu'Appelle lakes. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to do everything in its power to work with First Nations people and the federal government to bring a prompt end to the dispute so that the water level of the Qu'Appelle River system can return to its normal level and end the economic harm and uncertainty this dispute has caused.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the community of Fort Qu'Appelle.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the petitions tabled yesterday have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received and tabled as addendums to sessional papers no. 12, 21, 35, 114, 120, 124, 141, and 162.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand in the Assembly today on behalf of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to present the committee's fourth report of this, the twenty-fourth legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the committee has last met on June 24 of this year and up to that time, we have had the opportunity to examine a

number of reports of the Provincial Auditor. As many as eight reports have been looked at, going back to as far back as 1999 Fall Report Volume 2, up to of course the 2002 Fall *Report of the Provincial Auditor* Volume 1.

Mr. Speaker, the committee still has a fair amount of work to do in that we have not concluded the consideration of all of the chapters of the 2002 Fall Report Volume 2, and that is some of the work that we will be doing, probably later on at the end of this summer so that we will be able to move forward.

And beyond that, Mr. Speaker, of course the Provincial Auditor has tabled very recently the 2003 Spring Report. So the committee will have a fair amount of work to do and in consultation with the Vice-Chair from the government's side, we'll be planning some work sessions, probably in early September or to the middle of September, where we will again be able to meet to consider the report of the Provincial Auditor.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to move a motion, seconded by the member for Regina Northeast, the Vice-Chair of the Public Accounts Committee:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to welcome a group of 21 students from Balcarres School, in the great community of Balcarres, Mr. Speaker. And accompanying this bright, young-looking bunch of students are the teachers: Deanna Hollerbaum, Susan Henry, Ali Matai, Elaine Bailey, and Laura Dixon.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately given their tight timelines, we won't have an opportunity for a meeting. But I do hope that you young ladies and gentlemen enjoy your visit here in the Legislative Assembly. And very best wishes to you and your families and your communities.

I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these bright young students to our Assembly, and their teachers, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, it's my pleasure today to introduce to the Assembly eight people who work in the Legislative Assembly and who were honoured this morning at the Long Service Awards ceremony of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly.

It's a special day for these people who have accomplished either 10 or 15 or 20 years of service with the Legislative Assembly. And I would ask them to rise one by one as I mention their names.

So serving and having received the 10-year Long Service Award, we have, first of all, Kathy Wells, who works at the

human resources and administrative services; Myra Cole, who works in *Hansard*. Having been here 15 years, Linda Spence, who works with the Speaker's office; Anne Hoffmann, who works at the Legislative Library; and not here but I think working at this very moment in *Journals* is Pam Scott, who's also received the 15-year recognition. And having received 20 years of recognition, we have Lorraine deMontigny, from visitor services; Linda Kaminski, from human resources and administrative services; and Tim Prince, from the Legislative Library.

And there are some family members who have accompanied them, and I would ask all members to congratulate and welcome these employees of the Legislative Assembly Office.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce and have members welcome three people who are from my constituency. One I think is part-time these days, but they are also in your gallery and have . . . One of them at least has stood just earlier.

But I would like to introduce Pam Yungwirth, who was a Page here a couple of years ago and has been attending university, and her mother Sandra who works in administration, and one other constituent who stood to receive congratulations, Linda Kaminski. So I'd ask all to join in welcoming these constituents to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members, I have one more introduction. I would like to introduce to you as well, seated beside Sandra Yungwirth and Pam Yungwirth is a guest from Princeton, BC (British Columbia), Eileen Posein. Welcome to the Assembly, Eileen.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Work and the Family

Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the major workplace issues and one of the major social issues of the first decade of this new century is the challenge of achieving a desirable balance between work and the family. Finding a workable solution is critical.

I am proud that we have a work and family unit within the Department of Labour whose work is internationally recognized. Let me tell you about a recent example of how this unit puts the issue of balancing work and family before the public. Together with the Canadian Association of Family Enterprises and the Balancing Work and Family Alliance, they co-sponsored a series of events with the highlight being a luncheon address by Ken Dryden.

Ken, of course, is well known to the rest of the world for hockey. He is also, though, an author and he is also a family person. Mr. Speaker, people were moved to tears when Ken Dryden spoke. His topic, "Towards a different future: how can

we help our kids do better?" His answer to his own question, spend more time with our children. His solution to this challenge, adjust workplace attitudes and schedules so that proper emphasis goes to proper places.

My favourite line in his speech is, quote:

Quality time is a crock! It is our own purposeful delusion.
In fact, essential to quality is quantity.

Hard to argue with a superstar like Ken Dryden, Mr. Speaker. Copies of his speech are available from the work and family unit. They should be read by everyone who cares about work and families. More importantly, it should be acted upon. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

Faces of Racism through the Eyes of a Child

Mr. Toth: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past Monday I was able to attend the Faces of Racism through the Eyes of a Child grand finale at the Davison School in Melville, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this program was sponsored by SaskTel Pioneers and Marieval Enterprise Center Inc. Mr. Speaker, the Cowessess Community Education Centre, grades 3 to 6, and Davison Elementary School grades have partnered together with SaskTel Pioneers and Marieval Enterprise Center to combat racism and bullying.

Young children between the two schools established pen pals, are beginning to gain a greater understanding about each other's culture and life. They've been talking about things that other people or children have done to them that have hurt them and made them feel sad, and they've also been discussing solutions to ensure that those types of behaviours will not happen again to other children.

And, Mr. Speaker, to accommodate this as well, the two schools had an interchange between the schools. On one day they spent . . . the Davison School children, parents, and teachers went to Cowessess and vice versa a couple of days later. And the idea, Mr. Speaker, was to sit down and really discuss racism and bullying and how to combat it.

These communities and corporations have recognized, Mr. Speaker, that racism and bullying must stop and that only by working together can we hope to have an impact.

Mr. Speaker, it certainly was a fine presentation as they presented their grand finale and I trust that through this effort we will indeed be able to begin to address the issues of racism and bullying in our communities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Awards to Yorkton Community Groups

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last

week it was my privilege to present four Yorkton community groups with grants totalling just over \$14,000 for community initiatives funds that support summer programs related to children and youth.

The Boys and Girls Club received \$4,500 to provide opportunities for kids between the ages of 6 to 16 to participate in a variety of programs, including the arts and crafts, daily recreation and sports, and a three-day camping trip.

The second presentation was to the Yorkton boys . . . brothers and sisters who received 3,000 for something called Sizzling Summer Activities Program, which consists of a variety of fun educational activities such as canoeing, archery clinic, the kids and cops program — and highlighting the role of the police officers — and of course the water safety course, outdoor survival, and a sports and recreation day.

The city of Yorkton's leisure services received \$3,500 in funding to deliver a couple of different . . . to deliver in a couple of different locations is designed to help kids 6 to 11 participate in social skills development.

And \$3,500 went to the Parkland Early Childhood Intervention Program that launched a special summer program of respite. This focuses on children with special and challenging needs to provide respite services throughout the week as well as giving parents access to support groups once a week.

Mr. Speaker, these are the kinds of programs directed at supporting this province's children and families and help us to create the kind of wide open future that we talk about. And I'm sure all of my colleagues will want to join me in wishing all of the organizers every success and all the young folks that will be taking part in the summer programming this summer, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Telephone Charges in Rural Saskatchewan

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The past few weeks this NDP (New Democratic Party) government has spent a great deal of taxpayers' money promoting Saskatchewan through their so-called Future is Wide Open ad campaign. The campaign strongly suggests that Saskatchewan is a fair place to establish new businesses and that their prosperity is assured. The people of Saskatchewan and recent new business inquiries know that this is false advertising.

Recently a successful company from Alberta called GrainPlace FirstAgra sought to establish a branch of their company here in Saskatchewan at Glenside in my constituency. The business wished to establish a modern office in this community and inquired to SaskTel as to the cost of three phone lines, one fax line, and a dedicated line for dial-up Internet.

Incredibly the quote to GrainPlace that the first phone line would cost \$221, the next two lines would cost \$13,188 each, and the final two lines SaskTel reduced to a mere \$13,152 each — over \$52,000 in costs. This from a government who

advertise that Saskatchewan is a fair place to do business.

If this business established in a large Saskatchewan community or city, the cost would only be a fraction of the quote received by GrainPlace. However since this grain company wanted to establish in a small town in rural Saskatchewan, they were penalized. I guess the future is only wide open wherever the NDP thinks they can gain the most votes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Students Promote Energy Conservation

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the Assembly today to inform everyone that David Kreps, a grade 2 student in Dieppe School in my constituency, is the Saskatchewan winner of a contest promoting energy conservation.

The 2004 National Energy and Environment Calendar Contest is an initiative of Natural Resources Canada and is co-sponsored in the province by Saskatchewan Learning and Saskatchewan Industry and Resources. Students aged 6 to 13 submit artwork on themes of energy conservation and climate change, and the winning entries from each province and territory are published in a calendar that promotes wise energy use.

David's winning entry, entitled, "Don't Take a Car, Use a Bike," was one of 423 entries received from students across the province. The Saskatchewan runner-up was 13-year-old Kelsey Dionne, a grade 7 student from River Academy in Prince Albert, whose submission was entitled, "Be Smart, Conserve Energy." Both students receive a prize package and Dieppe School in my area also received a \$250 grant to its resource centre.

Mr. Speaker, climate change and energy conservation are issues that are of concern to all of us.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate David Kreps on this winning entry and all students who entered for their interest and participation. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Nomination for International Poet of the Year

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to bring to the attention of this Assembly a young woman from Kelvington-Wadena constituency, Kayla Chorney, who has been nominated for the International Poet of the Year for 2003.

Kayla entered one of her many pieces, called "Ring," in January 2003 to the International Society Open Poetry Contest. She was selected as a semi-finalist in February and from there in March 2003 she advanced to the final competition. Her work has been chosen for international publication.

In April she received another letter stating that she had been chosen as one of the 33 poets whose artistry would be recorded professionally as a special part of a new poetry collection, *The Sound of Poetry*. Her poem will be presented aloud by a

professional reader with a beautiful music form in the background.

On August 15, she'll be inducted as an International Poet of Merit and honoured in Washington, DC (District of Columbia) during the 2003 International Society of Poets summer convention.

Kayla will personally present her poetry in front of her fellow poets from around the world. She will also be presented with an Outstanding Achievement in Poetry Silver Award, as well as a commemorative award medallion to honour her poetic dedication and achievements. She's in the running for a grand prize of \$20,000.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask this Assembly to join with me in congratulation Kayla on her poetry accomplishments and wishing this young poet future success.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Queen's Jubilee Award Recipient

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm absolutely thrilled to take a moment to talk about a person from Meadow Lake, Ms. Unita Esau.

Just last week Unita was honoured with the Queen's Jubilee Award. This award is given to individuals who have accomplished a great achievement or have provided distinguished service to citizens within their community.

What is Unita's achievement? She has given and continues to give the gift of literacy to members of the Meadow Lake community. For several years Unita has been involved with Laubach Literacy Canada. She just recently stepped down as president of the national organization. This award is in recognition of her countless hours of volunteer work in helping others learn how to read and write.

I would now like to read a quote from the June 22 edition of the *Meadow Lake Progress* that sums up Unita's commitment to assisting others in the area of literacy. In speaking about the award, she says, quote:

The top feel good achievement is when one person learns to read and write.

Mr. Speaker, it is people like Unita Esau that make Meadow Lake a great place and Saskatchewan a great place to live in, Mr. Speaker. With people like herself, our future truly is wide open.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Provincial Population Decline

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the NDP government has spent millions of dollars on its Future is Wide Open campaign. We see the stuff everywhere, Mr. Speaker, so now it's time to determine what are the results.

Well according to the latest population figures just released, it's not working. The Wide Open Future campaign is an utter failure because in the first quarter of 2003 Saskatchewan lost almost 1,500 people. That's one of the worst population losses in the last decade.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP may be spending millions of dollars on its PR (public relations) campaign, but it's doing absolutely nothing to stop the outflow of people from the province of Saskatchewan. Why is the NDP driving so many people out of the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Leader of the Opposition — who of course is always quite negative as anyone watching this can see — that there was a slight fluctuation in the population of the province. But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the population numbers are going to catch up to what is really going on in our economy, which is 13 straight months of job growth, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — That's what's going on. And I want to say to the member opposite also, Mr. Speaker, that I received an e-mail from someone who had this to say. They said, you know, I have not heard one negative comment about the campaign — well except for his of course — in fact just the opposite; everyone loves it. I was at a youth meeting, it says, concerning how to keep youth in Saskatchewan and the high school students there said that the commercials on TV make them want to stay and pursue opportunities in Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — The member's time is up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the minister from the NDP may want the opposition to jump for joy because people are leaving the province of Saskatchewan. But the truth is it's breaking the hearts of people from Saskatchewan to have to leave. And the Future is Wide Open campaign has been an absolute flop.

Mr. Speaker, out-migration, net out-migration have more than doubled from the previous quarter. If you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, the NDP are driving many more people out of the province of Saskatchewan than those who are entering our province.

Mr. Speaker, how on earth can the Premier suggest that his Wide Open Future campaign is working when the number of people leaving Saskatchewan has doubled in the last quarter?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well the Leader of the Opposition should know — if he doesn't know, Mr. Speaker — that when his hero, Grant Devine, was premier there weren't 1,500 people leaving in a year, there were 15,000 people leaving in a year, Mr. Speaker. And things are turning around in this province, Mr. Speaker. There's 13,000 people more working now than there

were a year ago. The only thing . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order, please. Order.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, the only thing that would drive people out of this province is the negativity of the Leader of the Opposition and people like him who refuse, Mr. Speaker, to acknowledge that Saskatchewan is on a roll. Mr. Speaker, there are 13,000 more people working, retail sales are leading the nation, urban housing starts are up, oil and gas drilling is up about 60 per cent so far this year, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're on a roll and we're going to roll right over those naysayers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the minister may be right. Perhaps 15,000 people did leave Saskatchewan under the Devine government. And the Devine government lost the election and they deserved to lose the election.

Well, Mr. Speaker, according to recent statistics, 35,000 . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, 35,000 people have left the province of Saskatchewan under this NDP government. Mr. Speaker, this government is going to go down just as hard or harder than the Devine government went down. And it deserves to go down; it deserves to fall flat on its face.

(14:00)

Mr. Speaker, under the NDP government we have seen 18 consecutive quarters of population loss. That, Mr. Speaker, is four and a half years of people leaving Saskatchewan under the NDP government. Mr. Speaker, any way you look at it, that is a disaster of divine proportions and more, Mr. Speaker. Why is the NDP driving so many people out of the province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report that not everyone shares the doom and gloom attitude of the Leader of the Opposition. I'm looking at Saturday's *StarPhoenix* where the Bank of Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, says that whereas the Canadian economy will not grow very much this year, and I quote:

Saskatchewan's resource receipts should hold up very well and . . . (we're hopeful that Saskatchewan will lead the nation in economic growth.)

That's what the Bank of Nova Scotia says, Mr. Speaker. And I want to say also, Mr. Speaker, that we always have our challenges in Saskatchewan but we on this side of the House don't sit around and just complain about everything, Mr. Speaker. We take action.

We take action on oil and gas royalty reform, building the mining sector, reforming taxes, investing in the infrastructure

— highways, education, and building the health care system, Mr. Speaker. And it is positive people that will build the province, not a bunch of gloom and doom naysayers like those people over there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the minister may be hopeful. Mr. Speaker, I'm hopeful too. But the inaction of the NDP . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order please, members. Order. I must be able to hear the question being put.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The inaction of the NDP government is driving people to hopelessness to the point where 35,000 people have left Saskatchewan under the NDP reign over the last four and a half years.

Mr. Speaker, these are young people — primarily young people — from every nook and cranny of this province, from every city, from every rural area who have left Saskatchewan not because they want to, Mr. Speaker, but because the NDP doesn't care about them; the NDP has driven them from the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier, in light of this revelation — another 1,500 people leaving the province in the last quarter — stand up in this House and admit that his government has absolutely failed to keep people in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I'll repeat this because I don't . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to report retail sales are up, urban housing starts are up, building permits are up, department store sales are up, natural gas and oil well drilling is up, potash sales are up, manufacturing shipments are up. And, Mr. Speaker, the number of people working in Saskatchewan is up.

The only thing not up, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, is the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition and his party because they're unhappy, Mr. Speaker. Because when things are going well in Saskatchewan, they're fearful that they won't get what they want, which is power at any cost, Mr. Speaker. Even at the cost of trashing this province and trying to get people to have the same gloomy, down-in-the-mouth attitude that they have.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker? People don't share their attitude. People love Saskatchewan. They love living in Saskatchewan. And we're going to have a very great future, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Advertising During By-election Campaign

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, if the minister believes the Future is Wide Open

campaign is working so well, get the Premier to call the election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, we've always said the future wide open campaign is not . . .

The Speaker: — Order, members. Order, order. Order. Order.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the future wide open is simply a political campaign and today we have the proof, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have two . . . I have received copies of two government ads that appeared today in *The Nipawin Journal* and the Hudson Bay *Post-Review*. One is an ad from the Department of Highways, Mr. Speaker, and the other is an ad from the Future is Wide Open campaign.

Mr. Speaker, The Election Act clearly prohibits the government from running taxpayers-funded government advertising during an election campaign. Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: why is the NDP government breaking the election law?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I must admit that I haven't read either of those papers this morning.

I want to say to the member opposite that we will check and verify the facts. And once the facts are known, we will act appropriately. And if we have, if we have erred, we will correct it. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, The Election Act reads as follows:

During a by-election, no Government department shall publish in any manner any information with respect to the activities of the department.

Mr. Speaker, the clear is intent — even though the member opposite continues to laugh about it, Mr. Speaker — is so that the governing party does not have an unfair advantage in an election by running taxpayers-funded advertising to the benefit of the governing party.

Mr. Speaker, this is a clear violation of The Election Act and the member from Cumberland should know it very well, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Premier explain why his NDP government is breaking the law by running these ads?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my first response, we will check the facts and if there were improper actions, the proper response and the proper correction will take place. We'll take the proper action if there was in fact wrongdoing, but we'll check the facts, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These are the advertisements. The people in Nipawin and Hudson Bay and the Carrot River riding are seeing them today for an election that happens tomorrow. And the government's saying, we'll look into it.

They knew what they were doing, Mr. Speaker, and the law is very clear. The government is not allowed to run government advertising during an election campaign.

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. We must be able to hear the words distinctly.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's an election taking place in the Carrot River constituency — in Nipawin, in Hudson Bay, in Arborfield — areas served by *The Nipawin Journal* and the Hudson Bay *Post-Review*. They're the only weekly papers in that constituency, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP are running behind in that election and perhaps their polling shows that they're even running in third place, and this is sheer desperation tactics, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, why is your government breaking the law?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the House that the departments are directed during an election campaign not to place ads that are not in compliance with the elections Act, and that is very clear. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, if that has not been followed and if those rules have been broken, the appropriate action will be taken.

Mr. Speaker, we will check into it and I assure you that the appropriate action will be taken if wrongdoing has taken place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Appropriate action when the election is tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, and those ads just came out today in the paper, from the Department of Highways and the Future is Wide Open campaign.

There are, Mr. Speaker, exemptions to the law. Those are in the case of emergencies only. The future wide open campaign is not an emergency, Mr. Speaker, it's a political campaign. Advertising for highway construction across the entire province is not an emergency, Mr. Speaker. So neither one of these fall within the exemptions. So clearly the NDP is breaking the law.

Will the Premier admit that the NDP are breaking the election law and what does he intend to do about it? How is he going to demonstrate, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP actually believe in and practise democracy, as in their party name, Mr. Speaker, or is that just political rhetoric?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — How does Grant Schmidt feel about

safety of food in Canada.

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order. Order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the Saskatchewan Party would raise the issue of democracy and belief in democracy after the performance of their leader and their political party in Melville, Mr. Speaker.

I have indicated, I have indicated to the House that government departments are directed to be in compliance with the electoral Act which was passed by this House. I will check the facts, Mr. Speaker, and if there hasn't been compliance with that Act, the appropriate action, believe me, will be taken.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Consequences of Occurrence of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Alberta Premier Ralph Klein met yesterday at the White House with senior American government officials, including Vice-president Dick Cheney. And the news, Mr. Speaker, is both good and bad.

The good news is that the Alberta Premier Klein's strong relationship with the United States is helping to raise the concerns of Saskatchewan cattle producers in Washington, and Premier Klein has indicated that the Americans are satisfied with the Canadian efforts to address the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) issue.

The bad news is that the Americans are saying it is the Government of Japan that is now blocking the US (United States) border from reopening to Canadian cattle.

Mr. Speaker, what steps is the NDP government taking to assist in persuading Japan to remove the roadblocks to reopening the US border for Canadian cattle?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I want to first of all recognize the work that is being done by the Premier of Alberta. When we met in Kelowna it was understood among all premiers that the Premier of Alberta would be travelling to Washington and he would represent all Canadian provinces, and we wish him well.

I want to say today though, Mr. Speaker, I think it's become more apparent that the role of the Japanese and South Koreans in this debate is having an effect on decision making in the United States. This morning I have been able to establish appointments to speak with, by telephone on Friday, the ambassador of Japan to Canada and the ambassador of South Korea to Canada.

When I speak to the ambassadors on Friday I will describe, of course, the safety of the food supply in Western Canada and I will invite both of those individuals to come to Saskatchewan and experience for themselves, and learn for themselves, the

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Compensation Program for Beef Industry

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I want to move on to the applications for the federal BSE compensation program which are finally available today. Many cattle producers are looking at the program applications and coming to the same conclusion. The program absolutely fails the producers hit hardest with the BSE crisis.

For example, assuming that the federal government gets around to establishing a fair reference price, a market price drop of 25 per cent will trigger a federal compensation payment that will cover 94 per cent of the producer's actual loss on the sale. But if the market price nose-dives by 65 per cent, that same producer would be financially devastated because the compensation program would cover just 41.5 per cent of the actual loss on the cattle sale.

Does the minister support the flawed compensation formula in the federal government's BSE recovery program?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, from the onset we've said that we wanted the premiers' option to be the option that would be entertained by the federal government, and that's the ones that the premiers put forward. Those are exactly the same positions that all Canadian Agriculture ministers put forward. At the end of the day the federal government said we're going to have the current formula that we have today, shared on a 60/40 basis.

Would we like to see the premiers' formula in place? We would. But we need to remember that when we put the premiers' formula in place where you pay the first 90 per cent to a level of 50 or 55 per cent, the taxpayers across the country are the ones who will pay the cost, whether or not meat in this country moves or not.

The federal government was of the view that if you have a sliding scale, you will promote the movement of livestock in an orderly fashion in Canada. That has not yet happened today and I expect that it likely would not happen on a fixed percentage to 90 . . . on the 90 per cent to 50 cents per pound today or 60 cents per pound today.

What would happen, Mr. Speaker, is that you'll pay a larger amount of money to the packers because meat yet in Canada is not moving. Meat's not moving, Mr. Speaker, not on the basis of what we're compensating producers; it's not moving, Mr. Speaker, because the border isn't open.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the industry recognizes the compensation package is severely flawed and they would prefer to see a compromise between the premiers' option and the existing program.

They would like to establish a floor price of 50 cents a pound which . . . under which there would be no compensation. But anything sold above 50 cents a pound would be compensated a full 90 per cent. The proposal would still encourage that there wouldn't be dumping into the market irresponsibly. Does the minister support that proposal?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, the proposal that the member is reading from is a Saskatchewan industry proposal. It is not a national Cattlemen's Association's response to what the changes should be. And I'm very familiar with that package. I've just read it from Mr. Wildeman this morning.

We just got off a conference call this morning with Western ministers. Western ministers and the Canadian industry is recommending as well, yet, a sliding scale, not as deep as the previous proposal that the federal government had put forward, capping it . . . not capping it, Mr. Speaker. That proposal from Mr. Wildeman talks about capping.

The Canadian industry is talking about reducing it on a sliding scale of which 90 percentile would apply up until 70 cents. From 70 to 50 cents there would be a reduced level of compensation, and then onwards into the lower prices.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, it is not the compensation package that will get the meat moving. Movement of the meat will only occur on the opening of the border. Will it help the producers in the industry? The truth is, is that it would. But it doesn't get the animals moving, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, we fully recognize that ultimately we need to get the border opened. We recognize that. But we have to know what to do in the meantime.

Setting aside the inadequacy of the compensation formula for just a moment, there's another major problem with the federal BSE compensation program. It requires the producer to sell his cattle in order to trigger a compensation payment.

The problem is that in Saskatchewan there's virtually no market for our cattle. Almost no cattle are being sold for slaughter in Saskatchewan because there is no place in Saskatchewan that is slaughtering animals.

Producers can't ship their cattle to Eastern Canada or west to Alberta because the slaughter facilities are full. So there is no Saskatchewan market for cattle and therefore producers have not been able to move their animals.

What is the minister doing to assist the opening of slaughter capacity in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, the movement of slaughtered meat is the responsibility today of the slaughtering plants and slaughtering houses in Ontario and in . . . primarily in Ontario and in Alberta.

The member is not right when she says that meat is not moving

in Ontario. Meat is moving in Ontario and local meat is moving in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. Meat is not moving to Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

Meat in Western Canada is not moving, Mr. Speaker, because the slaughtering houses are not able, Mr. Speaker, the slaughtering houses, Mr. Speaker, are not able to move the meat as quickly into the retail outlets. Why? Because the retail outlets today, Mr. Speaker, are buying the meat out of the US. That's why. Because the border, Mr. Speaker, is closed. Because the border is closed, Mr. Speaker. And in fact the retail industry in Canada is buying the meat cheaper today and we don't have a market today for our own meat in Saskatchewan. That's why the meat isn't moving in Western Canada today, Mr. Speaker.

And when the member opposite says we need to move the meat in Western Canada, we need to move the meat in Western Canada. But you know what we need to do? We need to ship it east in Canada, Mr. Speaker, which today their own packing houses are supplying their own industry.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Health Care in Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to share some more good news about the state of health care in Saskatchewan.

This morning I had the opportunity to participate in three events in Saskatoon: the College of Medicine's 50th anniversary celebration, an announcement of an additional \$6 million investment into the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, and an announcement of \$900,000 investment into the Saskatoon Health Region for the expansion at the Royal University Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, along with the Minister of Learning, I was pleased to be able to participate in the celebration of a major milestone for the College of Medicine, five decades of achievements. These achievements are the results of many years of commitment and dedication of the faculty, administration, and students.

A commitment to support a strong and vital College of Medicine is a major component of our Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care which the Premier and I were pleased to announce in December 2001, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I was also pleased today to announce that we are investing an additional \$6 million in the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency to purchase two new linear accelerators as well as to make renovations to their existing facilities and to increase radiation therapy staff training.

We know that everyone in our province has been touched by cancer. Nearly 5,000 new cancer cases were reported in the year 2001. As we all know, these are not just cases — these are our friends, our family members, our colleagues, and community members. That is why today our government has invested this \$6 million, with 4.8 million going towards to new cancer

treatment equipment and staff training and 1.2 million for renovations to the bunkers that house the linear accelerators.

Mr. Speaker, this announcement is also important to the health care providers who work closely with patients to achieve the best results. We all know new equipment means very little if we do not have the necessary professionals to use it. Having access to advanced technology is a factor that is known to keep and attract health care providers. I'm pleased to recognize, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency's strong recruitment and retention initiatives have been paying off over the past few years.

Mr. Speaker, a \$900,000 investment by our government to the Saskatoon Health Region will allow the planning team to finalize the scope, costs, and design of a multi-phase project to expand the emergency department, to upgrade the operating rooms, and to redevelop the critical care areas at Royal University Hospital.

The Royal University Hospital emergency department and critical care units treat patients from all over the northern half of the province and continue to provide most of the complex tertiary care services for the region. The emergency department requires more space to house the high-tech medical equipment of today's health care environment, Mr. Speaker, and to be able to handle these volumes more efficiently.

The redevelopment and expansion of the intensive care unit and the cardiac care unit will allow medical staff to provide state-of-the-art critical care to all patients who need it. This plan to expand emergency and critical care services within the Saskatoon Health Region is a key element of our Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care.

Earlier this year we announced a \$61 million investment in our provincial budget over the next two years for new and upgraded health care facilities. This commitment allows us to approve and support a number of new projects such as this one, Mr. Speaker, that are necessary to sustain our province's health care system.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, this government continues to invest in our health care system so all people in this province have quality and accessible health care services that will be sustainable into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to respond to the ministerial statement. And I appreciate that I did receive the ministerial statement some half hour ago, so thank you for that, to the minister.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging to see that the provincial government is moving forward and addressing some of the concerns in our health system today. And, Mr. Speaker, the \$6 million that will be put into the Cancer Agency I'm sure is very welcome news for all citizens of Saskatchewan and especially for those citizens whose family and friends today are dealing with the very serious issue of having cancer.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is good news to see that we are moving forward with these concerns because in the past there have, and continue to be, serious concerns over the waiting time that people do incur in this province, whether it be for cancer treatment or for other services.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think back to just last year when the whole . . . when I brought up the issue around a gentleman that was seeking care for cancer and how the doctor that he was . . . that was servicing him tried to get him in for treatment for cancer and was told that he was not . . . did not have priority status and so the waiting time for his patient would be somewhat longer than for other doctors. And there was certainly grave concern by the doctor when he heard that news and even more concern, Mr. Speaker, by the individual that was waiting for the care.

And so I am hopeful that the addition of two new linear accelerators for the cancer society will indeed speed up the time that people have to wait for care.

And, Mr. Speaker, I noted that the minister also spoke about how the health care providers in cancer clinics and of course throughout the whole health care system are the most important part of the system.

And today I would like to commend the health care providers in this province, not only those that work in the health . . . for the Cancer Agency but all health care providers for how they have stepped up to the plate over the last several years and have held the health care system together in Saskatchewan.

And I notice that, I believe it was a week or two ago, that the nurses in the province made a statement about how they want to have a greater part to play in the solutions to the health care system in Saskatchewan, that they want to be recognized for the contribution that they can make. And indeed it has been my experience when I have spoke to nurses and doctors throughout this province that they do have solutions and they do want to have the opportunity to bring those solutions forward, Mr. Speaker.

And so it is good to see that they have been recognized as a very important part of what our health care system is all about and that they are indeed providing much needed care for people in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I noted that the minister also referred to that it is necessary . . . not only important to have the new equipment which he has announced today, but it is also important to have the professionals to operate that equipment. And that again has been a great concern over the last several years in the province, about the number of professionals that we have and certainly many that we have lost from our province. And we would hope that in the future we will see that improve.

And certainly one of the major concerns, especially for specialists, is the type of equipment that they have to use — whether it is in good repair, whether it is up to date. And I know that there was great concern especially in Regina by some of the specialists because of the age of the equipment they had and the lack of funding that had been in the budget over several years to purchase new equipment. And so, Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged that we are moving forward in this front.

The second part of the minister's announcement is the \$900,000 investment by the government especially into . . . focusing on the emergency department of the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon. And, Mr. Speaker, again this is an area that has been a grave concern for many people, not only in Saskatoon but throughout the province about the emergency department and the service provided.

And one of the major concerns has been the waiting time that individuals experience when they go to the emergency department. And if I refer back to the 1999 election campaign and the promise by the NDP government at that time was that there would be a 15-minute, only a 15-minute wait at emergency and that certainly has not been the case since, Mr. Speaker.

(14:30)

We think of the dedication of the nurses and doctors that work in emergency and who provide excellence of care every day in our province but who work under very, very, very stressful situations. I have spoken many times with nurses that work in the emergency department and they have stressed to me their concern over the number of nurses that they sometimes have to work with because of a shortage of staffing, about the overtime. I remember one time being in Saskatoon and the concern was about having to put patients in the hallway. And, Mr. Speaker, so there are great concerns around the emergency wards and the ability for nurses and doctors to be able to provide the appropriate care and in a timely fashion, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, finally I would like to just reference the College of Medicine, their 50th anniversary, and to congratulate the college on their commitment to the province and recognize the facility and the administration and the students, the part that they have played in Saskatchewan. And we hope that they will be there in the future. It is a much needed addition to our province and to our university.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table written responses to questions no. 763 through 774 inclusive.

The Speaker: — 763 to 774 inclusive have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund

Executive Council

Vote 10

(EX01)

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Premier and ask the Premier to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. With me today is Mr. Dan Perrins, who is deputy minister to the Premier. Immediately behind Mr. Perrins is Ms. Barb MacLean, who is the acting director of senior management services. And just behind myself is Ms. Bonita Cairns, who is the director of administration and information services.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I would like to welcome the Premier to the Assembly with his officials for this exercise called Executive Council estimates, or Premier's estimates perhaps is the more common term given to the process where the opposition is able to ask the Premier specifically about his role and his department's role in all aspects of the government and decisions made by that government.

Just by way of introductory comments, I would just like to mention to the Premier that under our system we all have arenas in which we have to be accountable and where we have to answer.

And certainly as Leader of the Official Opposition I know that there are times when I am called into account and have to be prepared to answer questions, and I am happy to do that. I have done that before the media. I have done that in front of the chamber of commerce. I have done that at the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations). I have been even answerable at the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour convention, and I don't mind doing that. And of course when the election is called, Mr. Premier, we will all have to answer for our positions and be able to explain and account for ourselves.

However in this process I am paid a salary by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan to ask questions. I think it's in the, around the neighbourhood of \$100,000 that I get paid to do my job, and the Premier gets paid a little more — I'm not sure what it is, 120, \$130,000, somewhere in that neighbourhood — to do his job. And today his job is to answer the questions and my job is to put the questions.

I will do that job to the best of my ability and will try to cover a fair bit of ground so long as the Premier sticks to his role in trying to answer the questions and doesn't make the answers excessively long. And if we can get this process working really well perhaps, Mr. Chair, we can do a lot of work on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chair, the first question is more of a housekeeping nature, just for my own records and our own information. Regarding his department, that's actually the Executive Council, and I don't ask this question in any sort of accusatory manner, it's just for information, wanting to know what the guidelines are for travel by Executive Council members — that would be cabinet ministers, the Premier himself, and then the officials who work in Executive Council, and also family I suppose in some cases?

Now if the Premier, Mr. Premier, if you actually have that in a document, a procedures manual, that you could provide to myself, that would be a satisfactory answer. If I could have access to that document, it would again save the time of trying to go through your procedures in detail.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, we do not have the document with us in the House but we can have it brought to the House and a copy provided to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Premier. First area that I want to talk about is the role of the Crowns because there's been a lot of debate about the role of Crown corporations in the province of Saskatchewan. There's been a lot of rhetoric and there is quite frankly, a lot of interest in the province about the role of Crown corporations.

My question is to the Premier. Once we get past the rhetoric, is he happy with the current management and the corporate structure of the Crowns as they now exist? And is that the way he would prefer to see the structure remain?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the . . . Mr. Chair, the current structure of the Crowns, which has . . . is a structure that has existed for some period of time — there was modifications made as a result of a Crown review in the 1990s — that current structure which involves noted Saskatchewan citizens serving on the boards of the utility Crowns, it involves the oversight of the utility Crowns and the investment policy through the Crown Investments Corporation, that structure and those people who have served on the boards and, if I may say, the administration, I would argue have provided some very, very good service to the people of Saskatchewan. And I have enjoyed a high level of confidence in the people and in the structure.

At the same time, Mr. Chair, it is my observation that nothing improves, nothing gets better unless we engage in change. And I'm always looking at opportunities for change that can make any aspect of the public sector better.

And in regard to our Crown corporations and public utilities and public investments, yes, I am looking at opportunities for change to make them stronger and better — the change that perhaps may affect reporting and accountability.

We've heard our own Crown Corporations Committee just this week talk about improvements that can be made in accountability. Can we look at different processes of structure or involvement of citizens in our public utilities and public investments? I think there are ways we can do that.

Have I made decisions? I have not, Mr. Chair. But I would say to the Leader of the Opposition, I am more than willing to look at a process of change in our Crowns or in government generally if that change can make them stronger and better.

Let me just say finally, Mr. Chair, that I am not looking at a process of change that I think would be recommended by the Leader of the Opposition or is certainly recommended by many of his members, that that change should engage itself in a significant privatization of our public utilities or the ending of public investment in Saskatchewan. Those are not areas that I want to move the public sector in. I want to move them in areas where they'll be stronger, better, perhaps more accountable, and stronger for the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the Premier.

Mr. Premier, yesterday we were given a document that was done by an advisory board. Can you tell the people of Saskatchewan who appointed that advisory board?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I listened with interest yesterday as the Leader of the Opposition's critic for the Crowns stood in this House and waved about a document, then provided this document I understand to the Minister of the Crown Investments Corporation.

Point no. 1. This is a document that has been prepared as a background piece for the board of the Crown Investments Corporation. And I would argue any responsible board and any responsible administration would have qualified Saskatchewan people presenting options and ideas. I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition has read this thoroughly and he will know that the people involved in presenting some of these optional directions are highly qualified people, well recognized in the provincial community. So we have received their work.

It had not been brought to the attention of the minister or to the level of the board . . . or perhaps to the level of the board, but certainly not to the minister's attention before the critic from Swift Current was waving it around here in the House. But what I found very peculiar, Mr. Chair, very peculiar, and perhaps the Leader of the Opposition could explain this — he says he doesn't want to be accountable in this House — but I'd like him to explain this: how it is that the document originally provided by these noted Saskatchewan citizens had on every page, on every page, clearly indicated, draft for discussion; it said that on every page. Now when the critic from Swift Current produces a document in the House, which is obviously a xeroxed copy of this, words are removed. Words are removed. What words are removed? Draft for discussion, from every page, Mr. Chair.

Now, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to explain how it is that his critic for the Crowns will, I can only conclude, doctor a document before he lays it on the Table in the House?

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm a little disturbed with the Premier's comments. I mean, the Premier is making some accusations in the House, but I believe he should be asked to withdraw. I mean, it just could have easily been that the document that he has had the words added, draft for discussion only.

Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Chair, the Premier's making an accusation and I would like to see him be able to back that up or actually apologize for the statements that he has made.

He very conveniently though forgot to answer my question. My question to the Premier was, did he appoint the advisory board?

(14:45)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Okay. Mr. Chair, to be very, very clear, to be very, very clear, the advisory committee to the Crown Investments Corporation of these noted Saskatchewan citizens — and I would enjoy the moment the Leader of the Opposition wants to stand up and criticize any one of them — this advisory committee was established by order in council. It was established by government for the purpose of advising the Crown Investments Corporation. I'll tell you why, Mr. Chair.

Because this is a government that believes in change, that believes in making our public utilities and our public investments stronger; ergo, we invite Saskatchewan people of significant stature to advise.

We did not ask them to produce this particular report. They are an independent thinking group of men and women and they have looked at some of their challenges and responsibilities which they feel are challenges to the Crown sector and public investment, public utilities, and did this piece of work for internal purposes only.

Now, Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition stands up and will not explain how it is that the document that his critic produces for this legislature has been altered. He says we've altered this? Mr. Chair, this is the document produced by these . . . noted group of Saskatchewan men and women. And if he's suggesting otherwise, I ask him to just ask any one of them if the document they produced did not say draft for discussion. It said draft for discussion. When it was produced in this House by that party and that critic, those words were removed, and I'd like to know why.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you. Mr. Premier, I want to assure you that we received the document in the exact form in which it was tabled. If there was any alterations, it was made prior to us receiving it. And if there were other changes that were made on your copy, they were made by somebody that you received the document from.

But I still want to know, Mr. Premier, did you . . . I still want to know, Mr. Premier, did you choose the members of the advisory committee?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, you know, let me explain to the Leader of the Opposition how the process of government works. The fact of the matter is if a government takes a policy position and we . . . Now the member from Kindersley wants to get into the debate. He'll have lots of time later this afternoon; I invite him to get on his feet and ask his questions from his feet and not from his seat, Mr. Chair.

In government, when we set a public policy like support of public utilities and public investment, wanting to make them stronger for the future, what do we do? We want to engage Saskatchewan people; we, of course, choose names from Saskatchewan people. They will be brought as recommendations to cabinet. We'll look at a variety of names. We want a balance, of course, of business interests, community interests, from working people's interest. We want a balance — women, men, Aboriginal people, First Nations people. We try and put together these kind of committees as a broad-based committee with the expertise that we need.

Of course, I say to the Leader of the Opposition, of course we chose these names. We put them in an order in council and gave them the responsibility.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you. Well, Mr. Premier, if you were involved in choosing the names of the advisory council, why was the minister responsible for Crown Investments

Corporation left in the dark and unaware of what was going on?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the Minister of the Crown Investments Corporation was absolutely, fully, 100 per cent understanding that we were appointing an advisory committee. He had not received their work. He had not received their work; he had not received their report.

Mr. Chair, today in government, across the 11,000 people who work in the public sector of executive government and the thousands of people who are today at work in our Crown corporations, they are at work. They are at work on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. Is this to say that the Premier knows every piece of work that's going on in Saskatchewan today at this hour? Of course not. The minister in charge would have received this report in due course after it had been given discussion and decision through the process. The advisory committee have been hard at work and this report was somehow provided to the member of Swift Current and then provided in an altered form to this legislature.

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Premier, it has been reported that you were fully aware of the members of the advisory committee. In fact, it has been suggested that you actually initiated the formation of the advisory committee, that you did so without the knowledge of the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation, who had no knowledge whatsoever of what was occurring. In fact, there is speculation that the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation won't even be in the portfolio that much longer and that is why you went around him.

Can you clarify that matter for us?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, just to clarify any misunderstanding in the Leader of the Opposition's mind, because there seems to be some misunderstanding, I said earlier, and perhaps he didn't hear me, that this committee was established by an order in council — an OC, an order in council. Order in councils are debated and approved at the cabinet table.

The Minister of the Crown Investments Corporation sits at the cabinet table, participates in the debate, participates in the votes around OCs. This was a cabinet decision. The establishment of the committee was no secret within government. It was debated and established by the Crown . . . by the cabinet of the Government of Saskatchewan, of which the Minister of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) is a very prominent member — and if I may say, Mr. Chair, will be a prominent member of that body for a long time to come.

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, Mr. Premier, but your minister on many occasions has refused to answer questions. He's said that the people of Saskatchewan through the official opposition doesn't have the right to the answers of any questions. But yesterday he declared that he had no knowledge of this advisory committee whatsoever, that he was totally in the dark on its formation, on its work, on the report that it had done.

Mr. Premier, don't you think that if a CIC advisory committee does a report, that the first person who should see it should be the minister?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, we get this on a daily basis from the member of Swift Current and now we're getting it from the Leader of the Opposition. It is absolutely false what the Leader of the Opposition just said on the floor of this legislature — absolutely false — when he said that the minister of CIC yesterday said that he did not know about the advisory committee. That is absolutely false.

And if we're going to engage in the process of questioning and answering here, I would appreciate from the Leader of the Opposition some accuracy in what he says. What the minister made clear yesterday, which I have repeated today, is that this report was not brought to the attention of the Minister of CIC, had not been brought to his attention, nor had it been brought to the attention of the CIC board.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under the rules of the Assembly you're not allowed to do indirectly what you cannot do directly. You cannot say that a member was lying, Mr. Speaker, and to say what the . . . What the Premier just said about the Leader of the Opposition, that what he said was absolutely false, Mr. Deputy Chair, is against the rules in this Assembly.

And I ask that you ask the Premier to retract and apologize for that.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, with all respect to the opinion of the Opposition House Leader, it is the rules of the Assembly that allow for there to be debate in this House. There will often be occasions, Mr. Chair, in which hon. members will not agree as to the accuracy of the information being used by one another.

The Premier has indicated that he believed that the information provided by the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party was false, and he said that. He did not imply that the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party did that intentionally.

As I listened, Mr. Speaker, he indicated clearly that in his view, the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party is misinformed. And, Mr. Chair, there is a . . . the rule regarding language in the use of the House has to do with attack on character and the intention, the intention to deliberately mislead the House. The Premier did not make that accusation, and I would contend, Mr. Chair, that the remarks are in order and that the point of order raised by the House Leader for the Saskatchewan Party is not well taken.

The Deputy Chair: — It's the Chair's opinion that it is a matter of debate. So I would ask though, that the members be cautious of the language they use. This will likely be a long afternoon and I would ask the members to be very cautious on the language they use in the House.

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. And I want to inform the Assembly that my colleague, the member for Swift Current, has contacted us and said that he is watching this by television and that the document that he received, he did not nor did anyone amongst our staff or colleagues, doctor in any way. I want the House to be absolutely aware of that.

My question to the Premier — if his colleagues might let me ask questions, if the Premier's colleagues might let me ask

questions without interference — what is the OC number and what is the date of that order in council that created that advisory committee?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition and I apologize to the House that the information I was provided here not moments ago is not correct; that in fact there was no OC for this advisory board, that this advisory board was provided . . . was appointed by the CIC administration and has been internal to CIC. And I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition and I apologize to the House.

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Deputy Chair, I have been notified that I have to talk to the media about people leaving Saskatchewan. I'll turn the question over to my colleague for just a few minutes and return very quickly. Thank you.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. And it gives me pleasure to be able to stand and present some issues of concern to the constituents of Cypress Hills to the Premier and his colleagues this afternoon.

Mr. Premier, I have two or three subjects I'd like to broach if time permits. But let me start with the most contentious and most unsettling issue of recent concern to our constituency.

As you are well aware, Mr. Premier, late last fall and into the early part of this year, there were four different treaty land entitlement claims placed in the constituency of Cypress Hills. The understanding of everybody was that the first two were set aside by the provincial government because of environmental concerns and other related issues.

The latter two claims that were placed by two First Nations were put in abeyance. Those were the words of the Minister of Agriculture, put in abeyance. Now he and I have had this discussion a few times and I asked him at the time how and by what legal authority the minister could put those land claims in abeyance since the terms of the Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement clearly state that a decision one way or the other had to be made within 90 days.

Now, Mr. Speaker . . . I'm sorry. Mr. Chairman, to the Premier, given the fact that this issue has created so much uncertainty in the ranching community, would the Premier give us an understanding today as to what length of delay we should expect in view of the abeyance and what mechanisms is the government considering to achieve reconciliation on this particularly difficult issue?

(15:00)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I would want to report to the member that we anticipate the work that's going on now will be completed by this fall. And we need to have this work completed by this fall for some of the, some of the important reasons that the member identifies.

I'm informed that the committee at work on this, the committee internal to government, is a committee made up of Justice department people and officials, officials and people from the Department of Agriculture, and people from the Department of

the Environment. They are working together to seek appropriate resolution to this matter, and the Minister of Agriculture has indicated that he wants this work done by this fall. So give it the course of the summer and we should have a clear response this fall.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Deputy Chairman, through you to the Premier. Mr. Premier, is it likely that ranchers can expect to have their renewals to full term made available to them if their land has not been accepted for TLE (treaty land entitlement) settlement or will there be some other renewal possibility?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I think as the member well knows from his, I think lengthy conversations with the Minister of Agriculture and perhaps the Minister of the Environment on the subject — and I understand his concern and interest because of his own constituency and the impact of this — as I understand it, Mr. Chair, there are renewals have been granted for one year.

His ranching families would be looking for the longer-term renewal. And that's part of the discussion we're having with hopefully resolution this fall. But it's clear that we've established the principle that no decision should impact negatively, in a significant, negative way on our ranching families. We have to take that into serious, serious account and we have to ensure the future of our ranchers, and we have to ensure that they do not bear an unfair burden of social or economic hardship.

At the same time we want to respect — entirely respect — the treaty land entitlement process. We are firmly committed and believe in that process. As we heard very eloquently earlier this week from the Minister of Environment, we are here talking about at maximum 2 per cent of the land mass of Saskatchewan. And we know how crucial those treaty land entitlements are to the future of our First Nations and those First Nations people.

Equally, as we discuss the area of the Sand Hills and areas of environmental sensitivity, again here is another very challenging, very challenging set of circumstances, and so we have our officials working together very hard. We look forward to the resolution and the proposal they will bring forward to us and we anticipate that by this fall.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Premier, through the Chair, I would like to put on record again, and I think I've done this before, that through the entire uncertainty of this process with the claims coming unexpectedly quite out of the blue on large tracts of land — some 50 or 60,000 acres in my constituency— I have yet to hear any of the individuals affected say that they didn't think that it was important that treaty land entitlement claims be met and the claims be honoured in a fair and equitable way.

I don't think yet I have heard anybody complain about the prospect of First Nations land holdings going from 1 to 2 per cent.

Mr. Premier, the concern is that these things are brought to reality in the lives of people out of the blue. They have no advance notice. They have no warning. And there is no serious effort to reassure these people that an honourable settlement and agreement will be attained. And in the meantime, until that

point is reached, individually these people feel like not only is their future threatened, that their history is being ignored.

So, Mr. Premier, I would ask that as the Leader of the Government, as the man who is responsible for all things undertaken by the government, that you recognize not just the necessity to honour the claims but that you recognize the necessity to inform people and to deal with integrity and forthrightness and openness.

And if that is not achieved, Mr. Premier, the problem will be suspicion and antagonism. And that can only foster ill will between the First Nations people and the people that are being affected in my constituency.

And I assume, Mr. Premier, that that problem will be exacerbated and replicated around the province unless a more open, forthright, and integrity-filled process is established. And what we see at this point, Mr. Premier, is clearly a situation where not enough information has gone out and where people have been put on the spot and asked to agree to a process that they knew nothing about.

So if your government is in any way able to bring clarity to that process, to bring transparency to that process, it would be greatly appreciated by the people whose livelihood and history is affected.

Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I thank the member for the approach that he is, that he is bringing this . . . to this subject. I hear him saying, on his own behalf and on behalf of his constituents, that what is desired here is a process which is fair and equitable. I think we share that. We share that commitment.

And somebody over there says, transparent. Well obviously we want it to be transparent, as the TLE settlements have been from day one.

And when we speak of transparency and fairness and equity, I think the member knows that in bringing and seeking resolution to this issue, we are involving the ranchers. They're open and have been invited to make presentation. We're talking to First Nations people; we're talking to the industry committee. This is a very wide open and transparent discussion; there's nothing happening here behind closed doors. It's a very wide open and transparent discussion with the goal of fairness and equity to all concerned.

If I may say, Mr. Chair, that in other circumstances we have achieved fairness, equity, success in treaty land entitlement settlements. In the Onion Lake, in the Onion Lake settlement, Mr. Chair, you'll be perhaps surprised to know that we have reached agreement on a settlement of 90,000 acres — 90,000 acres — in fairness and equity with all concerned; a happy, happy conclusion.

There have been no decisions made here; precisely why we are going through this sometimes difficult but necessary process. And we see as the summer unfolds, the work being done. And we can hope for resolution, look for resolution this fall.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I'd like to thank my colleague from Cypress Hills for pinch-hitting for me when I had to stand up. And I appreciate the very important issue that he raised with the Premier.

Mr. Premier, when I was called out, you indicated that you were mistaken, in fact an order in council had not been issued establishing the advisory committee on the restructuring the management of CIC. So does that perhaps then explain why the minister of CIC was unaware that the advisory committee was even struck and doing an inquiry?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — No, Mr. Chair. That does not change the reality that the minister was completely aware of the committee — not aware of the work that they had produced for draft purposes — aware of the committee, but not yesterday aware, or had he seen, this draft report that the committee had put together.

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Premier, in light of the SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company) fiasco, you stated to the people of Saskatchewan that the government and the Crowns had to be more accountable and more open. Do you feel that you have accomplished or are in moving in the direction towards accomplishing that goal, given the fact that the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation wasn't even aware that the report had been completed and was being circulated?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I'd like to re-emphasize for the Leader of the Opposition that the . . . because you see, either . . . The report that his critic laid on the table had the words removed, for draft discussion. I want to assure the Leader of the Opposition that's exactly the words that came from this advisory committee, for draft discussion. There had been no decisions made, therefore no forwarding it to the CIC Board or forwarding it to the minister.

We are here debating what are some draft thoughts and, having reviewed the document myself now, there are clearly some very creative thoughts within the document — and I'm not surprised given the authors of this document, a noted group of Saskatchewan men and women — I believe options that should be looked at very seriously. But at this point they are as described on the very front cover of the document, for draft discussion.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you. Does the Premier agree with recommendations 2 and 3 which would privatize the management of the CIC III (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan Industrial Interests Inc.) holdings in the NewGrade Upgrader?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, it's not even, as the minister points out, a completed document. I've not made any decisions on any of the options in that document. Clearly there are a variety of options presented.

I would dispute the choice of language used by the Leader of the Opposition when he talks about privatization. We know what he's trying to do here. The options as I've read them would — one option — would engage private sector management of some portion or all of the assets held by CIC

III. That is an option.

That option has been exercised in terms of some of the public sector pension funds which are now managed by private management firms. No one would ever suggest that those pension funds have been privatized, not at all. Engagement of the private sector in partnership or in management is not at all to be confused with the privatization agenda which I believe he believes in.

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Premier, if in fact this is not a process that is being driven by yourself and Executive Council — and you've been less than clear on whether that was the case or not, suggesting only that it was an initiative of CIC — if that be the case, would you think that perhaps CIC was launching on this initiative to privatize the management of the CIC III holdings to try to insulate themselves by establishing themselves as those private sector managers in case of a change of government after the next election?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the answer is absolutely not. Absolutely not.

This, Mr. Chair . . . I think it probably is appropriate that I would share with the legislature, and therefore with the public, the names of those who have been engaged in this work.

The Leader of the Opposition has stood in his place this afternoon and has suggested that somehow this piece of work is to provide for certain officials within CIC — I've heard the accusation made in the public by the critic and others over there — that these options and suggestions are being made to create some private sector entity that would benefit, including officials that now may be employed at CIC.

Well, Mr. Chair, the people who are involved in this advisory committee I would never suggest, nor should the Leader of the Opposition, would be engaged in this kind of activity. This is simply not the case. Nor would these noted Saskatchewan people engage in this kind of activity. I want to share with you, Mr. Chair, and the House and the public, just who has been at work in this advisory committee.

The first, Mr. Donald Black, chief executive officer of Greystone Management Investments, a highly respected business person. Not only in this city but across this province, if I may say, across the nation.

The second, Mr. Maurice Delage, the former president and chief executive officer of the Aventis Crop Science Group in North America — Aventis.

The third, Mr. Frank Hart, appropriately the CEO (chief executive officer), president and CEO of Crown Investments Corporation.

Thirdly . . . Fourthly, Mr. Bob Peterson, president and chief operating officer for Denro Holdings, a huge real estate development firm.

Next, Mr. Jim Scharfstein, Q.C. (Queen's Counsel), senior managing partner of the law firm Scharfstein Gibbings Walen & Fisher, a noted Saskatchewan attorney.

And finally, Ms. Carol Teichrob, a former minister of the government. A member of this government, a noted Saskatchewan business person, a farmer, and politician.

(15:15)

Mr. Chair, this group of men and women who did this very significant piece of work, providing options as they were charged to do, would not compromise themselves, would not compromise themselves to recommend that which would somehow create a private sector entity who could then somehow benefit from one of their options. They would not do that and we would not accept it. There is nothing, there is nothing in what this Leader of the Opposition or his critic suggests in this matter.

Mr. Hermanson: — I'd like to thank the . . . thank the Premier for that assurance which of course then would mean that, given his answer, that if there was a privatization of the management of some of the Crown Investments Corporation holdings, that Mr. Hart and those under him would not be part of that private sector new management team. And they would not then be in a conflict of interest in fact recommending such a structure that they might ultimately benefit from.

Another question I have for the Premier is, of the equity investments Saskatchewan Crowns have made outside of Saskatchewan, can the Premier tell us how many returned a profit in the year 2002, and which incurred a loss or were shut down completely?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I do not have that level of detail here in the House. We can get that level of detail.

Obviously in the realm of public investment and engagement and partnership in this economy and investments that have been made by our Crown utilities, some of them have been very successful and some of them have not been successful. That would come I think as no surprise to anyone in this House or no surprise to anyone in Saskatchewan. It would certainly come as no surprise to anyone in the business community where investments, as I think as we all recognize, have not been, have not been entirely successful in the last several months for many, many people.

We will provide for the opposition in due course the detail for which he asks of the year . . . 2002, I believe he said.

Mr. Hermanson: — I'd like to thank the Premier for that assurance and we'll be looking forward to the list. We anticipate it's going to be very long on the loss side and there may not be any items or entities on the positive side of the ledger.

We have heard the minister, your minister, Mr. Premier, for Crown Investments Corporation say over and over again that the purpose of foreign and out-of-province investments is to keep services, the cost of services low in the province of Saskatchewan.

The matter of the fact is though, SaskTel lost money on their out-of-province ventures. We can mention SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) who bought an insurance company in

Ontario called Coachman Insurance. SGI actually made a profit on their business ventures in the province of Saskatchewan, even the general insurance side of the business was profitable in Saskatchewan. But that profit was not even wiped out, but it was certainly obliterated and we've incurred a large debt because of the losses of Coachman Insurance in Ontario.

Can the Premier explain or tell us whether he agrees with his minister that in fact these investments out of the province, the majority of which have been losing money, are . . . Does he agree that they are somehow magically and inexplicably keeping utility rates down in the province of Saskatchewan or keeping insurance rates down when they're losing money?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the people of Saskatchewan today — particularly today — are very, very supportive of: one, their publicly owned, driver owned auto insurance in this province. When we look at what's happened in other regions of Canada, the New Brunswick, Ontario, Alberta, where we have seen skyrocketing insurance rates for drivers and the relatively, relatively small rate increases that we've seen in Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan are very appreciative today of their publicly owned auto insurance and SGI overall — SGI overall.

The Leader of the Opposition will today, as I'm sure he will over the course of the next weeks and months, dwell on those investments that have not proven successful or those investments that have endured some short-term loss. He will not ever dwell on the investments that have made in the public sector by CIC or by our utility Crowns, he will not dwell on those that are very successful, Mr. Chair.

Now I think I heard a member say name one. Well I will name one. She challenges me. I'll name as many as she wants. She calls me to task for one that's successful. Well I wish just yesterday, Mr. Chair, that you and all members of the legislature could have joined with me as we celebrated with the Great Western Brewery the awards that the Great Western Brewery have recently won in Europe at the Monde Selection where the Saskatchewan-based brewery was in competition with beer makers from around the world. At the Monde Selection Great Western earned not one, not two, but three gold medals. That is a proud accomplishment for a group of Saskatchewan men and women at work at Great Western Brewery.

Mr. Chair, you know and the people of Saskatchewan know, and if the opposition is honest they will also admit, that the Great Western Brewery would not exist today in Saskatchewan had it not been for appropriate public investment.

Ah, the member from Wood River has a question. He'll want to stand up . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . He's asking, I think he's asking from his seat. I wish he would get up and ask it from his feet. He's asking how much does the Great Western Brewery owe us. Is that what you're asking? How much does Great Western owe us?

I'll tell you, Mr. Member, nothing. Great Western Brewery has repaid to the people of Saskatchewan and the province of Saskatchewan every penny that was invested in Great Western. That's what they've done.

Now I'll tell you, Mr. Member of Wood River who won't stand on his feet, I'll tell you that brewery would not be here if your philosophy and your philosophy was in place; the philosophy enunciated by the member of Cannington. The philosophy enunciated by the member of Cannington who said that the Saskatchewan Party would never, never — underline it — invest public dollars in this province. That's what he said.

If that philosophy, that policy were in place, there would today, Mr. Chair, be no Great Western Brewery in Saskatchewan; we'd have no brewery in Saskatchewan. What we have is one of the most successful breweries in Canada, if not the world, producing gold-medal-winning ale, beers, in Saskatchewan. That is a great success.

Well now the member from Wood River says that's pretty weak. He says the Great Western success story is pretty weak. Well I think the people who work in Great Western Brewery, and the people who enjoy their product across Saskatchewan and across Canada, would find it very interesting that the member of Wood River would say this is a very weak success story. We think it's a tremendous success story, Mr. Chair, and it's a success story because this government and the philosophy of appropriate public investment was in place. We've built a great industry in Saskatchewan.

And I tell you, Mr. Chair, I can go on and on about the successes of public investment in Saskatchewan and our public utilities, unlike our friends across the way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Premier, you didn't give us the example of a single, out-of-province Crown investment that made money in the year 2002, none of them came to mind.

You did talk about a private sector company now that won an award. I notice you didn't mention that SPUDCO had won any awards. You didn't talk about the wonderful progress . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — You didn't talk about the wonderful progress or awards that you're receiving for your work in the ethanol industry. We haven't seen anything yet. We've many examples of how Crown Investments Corporation has failed under your leadership, Mr. Premier.

There's been a great deal of discussion about what information the Crowns should have to release to the people of Saskatchewan. The general opinion of CIC — and they're on record as saying this — the general opinion of CIC and the Crowns is that no information has to be released. Is that your view?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Again the Leader of the Opposition makes statements in this House that do not reflect the reality. The CIC has never made the statement or claimed that no information should be released. We could pattern a pattern of a growing accountability and transparency over these last several years where more and more is released.

Have we gone far enough? Has CIC gone far enough? I think

not. I think not. And the Crown Corporations Committee of our legislature thinks not, and is recommending that there be further avenues of accountability and transparency and I agree with our committee — made up of all members if I may say so.

So . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well now the member of Arm River has questions. He too should get up on his feet and ask his questions if he has questions.

Now there will be, Mr. Chair, as we progress into the future there will be change and I think accountability and reporting will be, generally. But it is simply not fair that the opposition leader would stand in this House and make a claim that the CIC has said there should be no accountability. That's just simply not accurate.

Now he started his question here about the potato industry in our province. And there is no question, Mr. Chair, no question mistakes were made in those investments of many years ago.

But let me say this, as a result, as a result of these investments, 5,000 acres of potato being grown in this province has now expanded to 10,000 acres of potato production because of, because of those investments. There has been \$20 million in economic development to this province. There's very important new investment in and around the Outlook area taking advantage of the irrigation infrastructure that had long since been paid for by the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition would have you believe and so it is . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Now you see, the member from Arm River is very anxious to get into debate. Get on your feet, Mr. Member, and get in the debate. We will enjoy it. You will enjoy it.

You see now he wants to talk about . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . He just made the point. Exactly, Mr. Chair, the member of Arm River says, well all of this money was spent in the '80s to build the infrastructure. Yes, we sat over there and we watched the money being spent. We did not oppose that investment in infrastructure because it's important infrastructure for our economy. But what did they do with the infrastructure? There it was not being used.

Now when a government and a community get together to attempt to build an industry based on that infrastructure, what do they do? They oppose it and they criticize it all the time. And today we have an industry.

Yes, mistakes were made. We've admitted to those mistakes — no doubt about that. But I tell you there's an industry there today that was not there when those folks were in charge and wouldn't be there if those folks were in charge at all.

And, Mr. Chair, I want you to understand and I want the people to understand, of Saskatchewan, that when we talk about this potato industry and they talk about the \$28 million, the fact of the matter is if you travel there today, Mr. Chair, you will see those potato storage facilities. You will see the asset that's in place. And you will see those facilities in use and you will see crops of potatoes in the ground, and you will see a growing industry.

Why? Because this government is willing to work with people. We're willing to work with people. Yes, we're willing to invest in this economy because we believe in this province and we believe in its future and we believe in its people and we believe in partnering with those people.

And yes, Mr. Speaker, on occasion we'll make mistakes. And on occasion there will be failure. But I'll tell you, Mr. Chair, there will never be success with a government that simply will not partner with Saskatchewan people, will not invest in this economy. I'll tell you that's the recipe, that is a recipe for disaster.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — I was listening very close, Mr. Premier. I was listening very closely for an answer to my question. There was no answer there.

I didn't say that the Crowns refused to release information. I said that some of them said that they don't have to release any information. And I asked if you shared that view and you did not clarify what your answer was. Rather you actually, very interesting, launched out in a defence of SPUDCO's fiasco with the potato industry.

I would remind you, Mr. Premier, that in 1999 in the poll of Lucky Lake rural, which was the poll was closely associated with the SPUDCO venture, the NDP received a grand total of nine votes. People, farm families lost their investment. Some went bankrupt. Machinery dealers were left in the lurch. People who had relocated to the community of Lucky Lake found their houses devalued as everything collapsed around them.

Mr. Premier, there was only one local potato grower left who still dared to grow potatoes when Pak-Wel was established in the community of Lucky Lake to replace the Diefenbaker valley potato corporation.

Mr. Premier, in fact for Pak-Wel to actually process potatoes, they had to import them from the United States because the policies of your government so disabled and crippled the potato industry in the Lucky Lake/Lake Diefenbaker area.

(15:30)

Mr. Speaker, SPUDCO is a swear word around Lucky Lake and if you want to go out and try to defend the actions of your government, you go right ahead because you'll probably lose those nine votes in the next election.

Mr. Premier, my question to you was whether you felt that the Crown Investment Corporation was correct in their attitude, that they don't have to release any information to the people of Saskatchewan. Yes, they do release some but they say they don't have to.

In fact it was reported that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Regina South says who asked that? Well there was a story in the paper about Don Ching being in his caucus meeting, Don Ching in his caucus meeting, at the front of the caucus meeting while the Premier sat in obscurity at the back of the caucus meeting — so we have the Premier at the back; we

have Don Ching at the front — and Don Ching is refusing to answer the questions of that member and his colleagues in their own caucus. He said, I don't have to be answerable for the actions of SaskTel.

Well, Mr. Premier, that's the way it was reported. And I didn't hear a very strong defence in the House and I didn't hear a very strong defence outside of the House from yourself in regards to Mr. Ching's appearance before your caucus. So that's the way it is. Recently, recently that happened in your caucus.

I want to know, as the Premier of Saskatchewan, did you find that acceptable? Are you prepared to sit at the back and let Crown Investments Corporation rule the roost, let Don Ching tell you exactly what to do, when to do, and where to do it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it's going to be a long, long, long time before that Leader of the Opposition ever sits in the government caucus room. That is for sure.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now, Mr. Chair, if the Leader of the Opposition takes as his authoritative source of information an editorial comment written in the Regina *Leader-Post*, if that is the Leader of the Opposition's authoritative source of information, then they are in bigger trouble than I thought.

Now the fact of the matter is this. It is, it is not the case that officials of the utility Crowns or Crown Investments Corporation would suggest that information should not be provided to the public.

I have said very clearly in the House this afternoon, I've said it very clearly to the media that in fact I believe there are opportunities to improve our accountability and transparency and reporting from the Crown sector. Our own Crown Corporations Committee have made, I think, some very significant recommendations.

As you will know, Mr. Chair, we have moved to a summary budgeting position, where next year we'll have summary financial budgeting. The Crown Corporations Committee has recommended a broader disclosure of payees in the Crown sector, as we have in executive government. I am 100 per cent supportive of the directions taken by our Crown Corporations Committee. But this is never to suggest, Mr. Chair, as the Leader of the Opposition just has, that officials of the Crown corporations, be it the public utilities or the Crown Investments Corporation, have ever taken a position that information should not be shared with the public.

Now he's very concerned about Mr. Don Ching. I noted, I noted he's raised Mr. Don Ching's name in the House again this afternoon. I noted, Mr. Chair, that the Leader of the Opposition several days or weeks ago stood in the rotunda and said that if he were to form government the first thing he would do is fire Mr. Don Ching. I want him to confirm that, if he will, for the House today. And while he's at it perhaps he can give us the whole list. Will he give us the list of those he intends to fire? Obviously he's made decisions that if he were in this seat he

would start firing people right away.

So he's announced that Mr. Don Ching is to go. Is he now going to tell the House that he's going to . . . Well who's next? The president of the Power Corporation, the president of the energy corporation, the president of the transportation corporation, the president of ISM (Information Systems Management Corporation)? Which public servants — he must have a list — which public servants does he intend to fire the day he forms, fills the office of premier? Although I may say, it's so far, far in the distant future — in fact it's probably never — that we shouldn't want to worry. But maybe he'll be forthcoming this afternoon and expand upon the list of those he would fire if he were in this desk.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, Mr. Premier, I'm happy to respond. Obviously any public servant that says they will not be answerable to the elected Assembly needs to be . . . and the member for Prince Albert Northcote confirmed that that's what he said, Mr. Chair. No one who refuses to be accountable to this Assembly should be serving the public of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Premier, you're sending some very, you're sending some very confusing signals. First of all the Premier says that it will be a long, long, long time before we will form government and they will sit in opposition. And then he says, when you form government who are you going to fire? Like it's going to happen tomorrow, as soon as he has the courage to call the election.

Well I don't know, Mr. Speaker. I'm actually very impressed with a number of professional people in the public service. And professional people in the public service are looking forward to a new government because they want a professional government as well.

Mr. Premier, we know that if the NDP were in a position to win the election, we would have had it called this spring. We'd already have had the election occurred. If we're going to have to wait a long, long, long time, that means the Premier is afraid to call the election. He wants to wait until the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan orders him to call an election.

The Premier is following in Grant Devine's footsteps. He's making the same mistakes as Mr. Devine. When you're afraid to go to the people, you don't have the courage to make the decision and call an election. And the member from Moose Jaw recognizes that his government is following in the steps of Grant Devine and will bear the same fate as the Devine government when the election finally is forced upon them.

My question to the Premier . . . If the heckling on the NDP side would subside a bit, my question to the Premier is, if the total of the province is climbing every year since you became the Premier, do you still try to claim that you have a balanced budget?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware who it is that prepares the questions that the Leader of the Opposition reads this afternoon, but I'd recommend that

perhaps he get a new writer.

Now, Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about election timing. I'm more than happy to talk about election timing. He seems to be very, very anxious — very, very anxious — that I should call an election. He seemed very anxious that I should have called it last spring . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well now you see the member of Saltcoats, the Saltcoats, he wants an election called. I know why these fellows want an election called, because they're so scared for their own political skin. That's why.

They see the fortunes going like this. I think they peaked some time ago, and they see the fortunes going like this, and so the sooner I can call the election they think it'd be better for their fortunes. But I'd also be concerned if I was the leader of the Saskatchewan Party about getting this election underway, and I would be very concerned if I were the member of Saltcoats in this circumstance, just by virtue about what's going on in the Melville constituency.

Look, we've had a whole session here. The Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party, has really been called upon to make one decision in the whole session — one decision in the whole session — and that was what to do about the duly nominated candidate in the Melville constituency. He had one decision.

Well I think he made the wrong decision. I think he made the wrong decision by telling the former minister, the former member of the Conservative government, Mr. Grant Schmidt — I think they made the wrong decision by telling that minister, that member — that he could not run for the Saskatchewan Party, that he was just off the ship.

And so Mr. Schmidt who, as we all know, is out there mounting a campaign to win that seat for himself . . . And he's taken half the Sask Party membership with him, I read in *The Melville Advance*, on a regular basis.

Then what happens, then what happens up in the Carrot River constituency? They take the hand-picked candidate of the Leader of the Opposition, and in this one he puts in his hand-picked candidate — he won't take the people's choice there either — puts in his candidate, Al Kerpan.

What happens now? The Saskatchewan Party's revolting. They've called a nominating meeting. They've already called a nominating meeting and they're running against the very candidate who's running in a by-election for them tomorrow.

Mr. Chair, if I were the Leader of the Opposition, the member of Saltcoats, and members over there, I'd be very anxious to be going to an election too because it's going downhill on a daily basis.

Now the Leader of the Opposition has a question about debt. He talks about debt. And the fact of the matter — he well knows it and it's widely known in the province — that we have increased the indebtedness of the province in the circumstance of the last two years. Why is that, Mr. Chair? Why is there an increase in the indebtedness of Saskatchewan over the course of the next two . . . the past two years?

The fact of the matter is — and I guess the opposition leader just will simply not admit this — the fact of the matter is in the last two years Saskatchewan lived through the worst drought in the history of this province.

Now when you're sitting on the government benches, not in the opposition benches where you don't have a decision to make, but when you're sitting in the government benches, you have to decide. You have to make decisions on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

This government decided to support the people of Saskatchewan through this period of drought. This government decided we would accept new indebtedness in the crop insurance program. This government decided we would accept new indebtedness to fight the fires in northern Saskatchewan and central Saskatchewan. And this government accepted that we would accept indebtedness to stand behind our livestock producers in a period of drought and now in a period where we're attacked on the BSE crisis.

Now the Leader of the Opposition will go about the province attacking us for taking on new indebtedness . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well now the member of Moosomin has something to say. He ought to stand up in this House. Everybody's got an opinion; they just say it from their seat. The Leader of the Opposition goes around the province attacking this government for taking on new indebtedness on behalf of farmers, ag producers, and communities of the North.

Well the member of . . . where's he from? The member of . . . the Finance critic, he's waving a book around now.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition today in this House to stand up. If he criticizes this government for taking on new debt, which of the above would he have not have done? Would he have chosen not to fight the fires in the North last year? Would he have chosen not to provide the support through crop insurance? Or would he have chosen not to support the livestock producers of Saskatchewan? Which of the three would he have not chosen? Because, Mr. Chair, that is precisely where the indebtedness has grown.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. I just wanted to raise a couple of points. One is while this . . . these estimates are usually quite boisterous, the level has gotten beyond where I'm having difficulty hearing the member that has the floor, and I'd ask members to give both sides an opportunity to be heard. And second, just to remind both members that comments should be addressed to the Chair and through the Chair. Thank you for your consideration.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and through you to the Premier, the Premier didn't have the courage to say that the budget wasn't balanced. I listened very closely. He just didn't have the courage to say it. Or else he believes — or else he believes — that the debt of the province can go up and somehow the budget is balanced. I think he studied some economics. That simply doesn't work. That doesn't cut it.

So then he talked about maybe he could, maybe he could,

maybe he could justify an unbalanced budget by blaming the agriculture sector. I heard him say that, even though his government has raised crop insurance premiums and reduced funding for agriculture. The NDP government under this Premier has substantially raised crop insurance premiums, making it unaffordable to producers, and has reduced funding for agriculture. And yet the Premier has the gall to blame agriculture for his fiscal problems.

Mr. Chair, his problems are that his tax base is leaving the province of Saskatchewan — rural and urban. They're fleeing the province of Saskatchewan because they can no longer stomach his economic policies.

I'm going to ask the question a different way and give the Premier a chance to redeem himself. In your three years as Premier, how many times has the total debt of the province gone up on an annual basis?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the fact of the matter is in the calendar year 2002 to 2003 the budget of the General Revenue Fund of the province of Saskatchewan was balanced without a single dime of withdrawal from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. There is no doubt about that. That's widely known. It's widely recognized by the banking institutions and the credit rating agencies.

(15:45)

When, Mr. Chair, we are going to stand behind Saskatchewan people in a time of crisis and we take on new indebtedness in crop insurance, that is not a part of the General Revenue Fund operations of the Government of Saskatchewan. We accept that new indebtedness. There is no doubt about that.

The balanced budget that's been achieved by this government for the last — now how many years, 12, 13 years? — 12 years, has been recognized by every credit rating agency in the nation and in the continent. We have year after year, year after year after year, received credit rating upgradings, credit rating upgrades. The member of Saltcoats, Saltcoats, says that's not true.

Please to stand on your feet, Mr. Member, and explain to me which credit rating agency in the continent has not given this province credit rating upgrades.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Chair, if it's listening to them or listening to Moody's of New York, I'll listen to Moody's of New York every day of the week when it comes to financial advice.

Now the Leader of the Opposition talks about — in his language, exaggerated as it is in his negative, predictably negative style — talks about the people, he says, fleeing the province of Saskatchewan.

Well as we learned in question period today, when his hero Grant Devine was in charge over here they were leaving at the rate of 15,000 a year — 15,000 a year.

We have seen population loss and we are taking on the challenge of turning it around. That's what we're doing. We're taking on the challenge of turning it around. And you know

what encourages me most, Mr. Chair, is when I speak to young people across Saskatchewan, when I hear the voices of young people across Saskatchewan, and I hear their opinion.

Now the member of Kindersley, I'm sure he'll be very interested in the comments that were made in his community by many of his young people. The *Kindersley Clarion*, the local, the weekly, the paper at Kindersley, went and spoke to the high school students of Kindersley, this year's graduates within the Kindersley School Division.

And I just want to quote the article from the *Kindersley Clarion*, not from some political . . . not some political promotion of my party but from the *Kindersley Clarion*. It says they surveyed the students, they surveyed the students in the constituency, the graduating students this year, and this is what it says:

The survey reveals that about half of those students will attend post-secondary education within the province, about a third plan to work in the province, and the majority think there is opportunity in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — We share the opportunity and the optimism of the young people of Kindersley. The young people of Kindersley wish that we had in this province an opposition that shared that same kind of optimism and confidence in the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Well I share the optimism of the people of Kindersley and particularly the young people, because they elected a Saskatchewan Party MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) and they're convinced there's going to be a Saskatchewan Party government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — The same thing is going to happen in the Carrot River constituency, in spite of the government illegally advertising in that constituency.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Now the Premier talked about bond rating agencies. And his ministers, the Minister for Industry and Resources, his former Finance minister and current Justice minister, are always quoting bond rating agencies. Yet the Dominion Bond Rating agency said that, after the March budget was released, that there was a deficit of \$450 million.

So I ask the Premier: does he agree or does he disagree with the Dominion Bond Rating agency that his government has brought forward a \$450 million deficit budget?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I think the Leader of the Opposition will know this, if not . . . Dominion uses the summary financials. The other investment houses, the other . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . You see, Mr. Chair, it's impossible to answer this opposition. When you begin an answer, they all

begin to chirp.

Mr. Chair, Dominion, as I've said, uses the summary financial. Clearly in the summary financial, the summary financial statements of this province and made by Dominion, assessed by Dominion, will indicate greater indebtedness. I've talked about that this afternoon.

The vast majority of that greater indebtedness will appear in Crop Insurance. There will be a portion in WCB (Workers' Compensation Board) as a result of the investment portfolio. There will be indebtedness shown as a result of support to the drought-stricken livestock producer last year, and to the expansion in expenditures in forest fighting.

It'll be shown. There's no mystery about it. Dominion recognize it. Our own summary financial statements will recognize it.

Other, Mr. Chair, other investment houses will look at the General Revenue Fund statements. And it's in that General Revenue Fund that you will find that this province has maintained balanced budgets for the last 12 years, as opposed to a time when the Leader of the Opposition's friends were in government — some of them who still remain in this legislature, many of whom still advise the Leader of the Opposition.

When that group of men and women were in government, never mind were they sinking the debt of the province in the Crown sector and every other sector, they were running huge deficits in the General Revenue Fund. So they ran the debt up to well over \$15 billion, which has handcuffed and handicapped this province for a decade, and will for many years to come.

Yes, Mr. Chair, there is no denying the fact and no one would want to deny the fact that we've taken greater indebtedness for the province as a result of standing behind the producers of Saskatchewan through a period of extended and extensive drought. We've stood behind the communities of the North in choosing to stand with them as we fought the fires last summer. We've stood beside the livestock producer as they fought the conditions of drought last year, and now we're into the conditions of the BSE.

Yes, we've taken on new indebtedness. That is no mystery. In the General Revenue Fund, in the expenditures of government through the line departments of government, we have balanced the budget; did it last year without one penny being withdrawn from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

And finally, Mr. Chair, may I just point out this. Dominion Bond Rating Service has maintained the credit rating of the province of Saskatchewan through a period of deep distress to our economy occasioned by drought and so on. The Dominion Bond Rating Service has looked at the work done in Saskatchewan, has praised that work, and has therefore maintained our credit rating with no credit downgrade.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And the Premier keeps to referring to the drought as the culprit and yet the indebtedness of Crop Insurance from last year to this year is slipping down a little bit, it's going the other way. It's only a

small portion of the increased debt that your government has incurred.

Mr. Premier, from the time that you have taken office until today, the provincial debt has increased from \$11.1 billion to \$12.2 billion, which means under your watch we're going into debt at the rate of \$1 million a day. Crop insurance and the agricultural drought was only . . . represents a very small portion of the cause for the fiscal mismanagement of the NDP government in the province of Saskatchewan.

Quite frankly, Mr. Premier, since you have assumed the chair of Premier, we've been going downhill ever since. We've been going deeper and deeper into debt every year. Three deficit budgets in a row. Three unbalanced budgets in a row. And yes, we're looking at summary financial statements without the charade of a Fiscal Stabilization Fund without any money in it.

Quite frankly, the Premier has one of the worst fiscal records of a premier in Canada over the last three years and stands in stark contrast to other governments who are trying to move their economies and their fiscal situation the other way.

I'm wondering what the Premier's opinion is on balanced budget laws. We have a very weak one in Saskatchewan now that requires that a budget be balanced over a four-year period, and if it isn't, there's absolutely no consequences. There isn't one minister over there that sees their pay docked if the budget is not balanced even over a four-year term. There's no consequences for the NDP whatsoever for not being able to balance the budget.

Does the Premier support strengthening balanced budget legislation so that there is a balanced budget required over a shorter period of time and there are actually consequences for not balancing the budget?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition stands and says without any demur that the budgets of the province of Saskatchewan since I've assumed the role of Premier have not been balanced. That's what he just said. That's the . . . and his Finance critic says that's correct.

Okay. I ask the people of Saskatchewan who may be watching this afternoon to judge that opinion against the opinion of the Bank of Montreal, the Bank of Montreal Nesbitt Burns who say, in reporting March 28, 2003 — March 28, 2003 — just days after this spring's budget . . . This is the Bank of Montreal who have a headline, a headline on their summary statement about Saskatchewan, "Balanced Budgets — No Drought About It." Balanced budgets.

The Bank of Montreal Nesbitt Burns says, and I quote:

Saskatchewan's Finance Minister Jim Melenchuk presented the Province's tenth consecutive balanced budget today.

In the assessment of the Bank of Montreal Nesbitt Burns, in the assessment of the Bank of Montreal Nesbitt Burns, the budgets of the province of Saskatchewan, including this budget, are balanced.

Now who are you going to believe? Are you going to believe

the political voice of the Leader of the Opposition? Or are you going to believe the Bank of Montreal Nesbitt Burns? Which one? Who is more apt to be telling the exact truth of the matter?

I'll take the word of the bank every time. But I don't need to take the word of the bank . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh I see, the member doesn't like the Bank of Montreal. Well I can't help that, if the member doesn't like the Bank of Montreal.

Well I can bring other banks. If he likes other banks, I'll bring him the reports from the other banks. They all understand that the budget is balanced. The budget is balanced . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You know, it would be very helpful if members opposite, Mr. Chair, got to their feet when they have questions.

Now, Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition tries to paint a picture that in the last three years this province has found itself in financial difficulty. Well that's an interesting situation. You can take the opinion of the political leader of the Saskatchewan Party or you can take the opinion of Moody's investment house of New York City, likely this continent's most, likely this continent's most authoritative investment house.

What does Moody's of New York say about the state of affairs in Saskatchewan? Well I'll tell you this. In the year 2002 the province received a credit rating upgrade from A1 to Aa3 from Moody's of New York.

Now you can believe the Leader of the Opposition or you can believe the Canadian chartered banks; you can believe the investment houses of North America or you can believe a politically motivated Leader of the Opposition.

Now, they want to talk about the predictions in growth rate here. Yes, we have a confidence in this economy but it's a confidence that's founded on the research of officials in the Department of Finance whose track record over the years has been impeccable in predicting the growth levels of Saskatchewan.

We share their enthusiasm, we share their encouragement, but I tell you it's not just shared by officials in the Department of Finance and by members of the government, it's shared equally by the Global Insight.

The Global Insight now predicts, on May 23 of this year, just weeks ago, that in Canada the strongest growth is now forecast for Saskatchewan. Not for British Columbia, not for Alberta, not for Manitoba, Quebec, Ontario, or the Atlantic provinces. Not for any of the territories, but predicted for Saskatchewan. And I want to quote Global Insight:

This will lead to an extremely strong recovery (it said), forecasting growth this year of five and a half per cent.

We believe in Saskatchewan, Moody's of New York believes in Saskatchewan, the Bank of Montreal believes in Saskatchewan, Global Insight believes in Saskatchewan. There seems to be only one group of men and women who do not believe in the strength and the future of this province and I'm afraid they're mostly seated right across from us in this legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. And it's actually now becoming insulting to the people of Saskatchewan to hear an untrue picture painted about the province's finances. I asked the Premier about summary financial statements. He prefers not to talk about summary financial statements.

(16:00)

I clearly explained to the Premier, using his own documents, that debt under his watch has increased from \$11.1 billion to \$12.2 billion. The auditor of Saskatchewan, a non-partial actuary, says that the Premier of Saskatchewan and his NDP government have increased the indebtedness of this province over the last three years.

And yet the Premier is still trying to play the charade that he was successful with the first year of his premiership suggesting that somehow there's good fiscal management and the budget is balanced.

The Dominion Bond Rating agency says that the current budget is a \$450 million deficit. The auditor of Saskatchewan, the Provincial Auditor, says that using proper summary financial accounting this province has had three successive deficit budgets.

And the Premier still insults the people of Saskatchewan by playing word games suggesting that in fact that is not the case. Thankfully the people of Saskatchewan have caught on to the word games that the NDP have been playing.

And it's clear now to the media and everyone in Saskatchewan that this government is going backwards financially and that we are now increasing the debt burden on future generations. Just as the Devine government did. Just as the Rae government did in Ontario. Just as the Getty government did in the province of Alberta. We can lump the current Premier and his crew in with those folks who cared little for future generations and for their own political benefit increased the debt of the province for the short-term benefit — political benefit at that.

Given Saskatchewan's fiscal and political situation within Canada, we often find ourselves at the mercies of the policies of the federal government. And many times the Premier and I have agreed on federal-provincial issues. I would wonder if the Premier can give me thoughts on the state of relations between our province and the federal government at the current time? Are they improving or are they deteriorating in his opinion?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I want to come to the Leader of the Opposition's question because I think it's an important question. But I need to go back and repeat again, because apparently the Leader of the Opposition has not heard my question.

There is no denying — I do not deny, the Minister of Finance does not deny, the auditor recognizes it, Dominion Bond Rating recognizes it — that the indebtedness of the province has grown in the last two years. There is no denying that and nor would I want to deny it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — How many times have I said that this afternoon? I think I've said that seven times this afternoon. I think I have finally had a member over there hear it.

The question is, Mr. Chair, when that indebtedness is significantly and by vast majority related to new indebtedness in crop insurance . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well it is, Mr. Leader of the Opposition. And the fact of the matter, it is.

When it is in . . . related to costs of fighting the forest fires last year . . . (inaudible) . . . some indebtedness in the Workers' Compensation Board and to programs to support the livestock industry, I say to the Leader of the Opposition, number one, which of those should we not have done? Which of those programs should we have not supported? Crop insurance? Fighting the fires? Or supporting the livestock industry? Which would he not have us do?

When he finishes answering that question perhaps then he could stand in the House and explain therefore how is it, almost on a daily basis and clearly during by-election campaigns, he and his party intend to spend upwards of \$1 billion in new spending. I can document the expenditures that they commit in new spending. Every day they say there'll be more spent on education, more spent on health, and they will fix all of the highways.

Now it doesn't add up, Mr. Chair, because they're also saying they're going to cut all the corporate taxes in Saskatchewan to give a huge tax break to the corporate bodies in Saskatchewan. They're going to spend all this new money. And they're not going to take on debt.

Well there is only one answer and I hope the Leader of the Opposition is prepared today to say it. There is only one way you can fund that kind of a budgetary measure and that's to sell off assets. There's only one way you can manage the province the way they suggest they would want to manage the province or the way they suggest it should be managed and that's just to sell off assets. Well that maybe gets you through a few years but it won't get you through many years.

Now, Mr. Chair, I think I'll just move on to the question that the Leader of the Opposition has put here, which I think is an appropriate and a very good question. He talks about the relationships between Saskatchewan and the national government; between the region, Western Canada, and the national government, and it is not a happy circumstance that I'd want to report but in my view that relationship has not been improving but in fact deteriorating over the last several months.

And it deteriorates when issues are being faced by Western Canadians or issues are being faced in regions of Canada, for instance the Atlantic region; it deteriorates when there is a lack of responsiveness or understanding or action from the central government.

This is being felt by, I think, virtually every province in the West these days. And we've seen it vividly illustrated around the BSE file, on the relatively small issue of the change that our Minister of Labour requested in terms of the workers' Employment Insurance and the waiving of the two-week period. The kind of response, the arrogant response that we've received

from Ms. Stewart and the federal government does nothing to build a solid relationship between the region and the nation.

We had to fight tooth and claw to have Ottawa understand the depth of crisis that exists in the livestock industry as a result of the BSE. We've had to fight tooth and claw to bring about a change in agricultural policy generally, the APF (agricultural policy framework). We've had to fight tooth and claw for almost every issue that has faced Western Canada. This does not build a good relationship.

The political balance in the nation, in my view, no longer effectively represents the economic and social balance of Canada. There is a political overweight in terms of the government's representation in Central Canada, and under represented outside the centre where the economy and society of Canada is a much more balanced economy and society, where there is strength right across the nation both economically and socially. And that is currently not reflected, in my view, in the current makeup of the House of Commons. And I guess one can only hope and work hard to see that change.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And to the Premier, I was particularly pleased to hear him actually confess that we have a deficit budget. When you look at proper accounting such as summary financial statements that's the way it is, and that really means that all that gibberish about what the Bank of Montreal had said, not based on summary financial statements, was in fact a way to try to be deceptive as far as the people of Saskatchewan is concerned. And the NDP just simply cannot get away with that kind of rhetoric anymore.

As far as representation in the House of Commons . . . And I agree with the Premier on some of these matters. In fact Saskatchewan does not . . . has not shown the clout that we require at the federal level.

Of course one way to increase our clout, one way to increase our representation in the House of Commons, is to grow our population. The Premier has no plan to do that. The Premier is planning on declining enrolments in school. The Premier is happy to see people leave at a rate of 35,000 people over the last four and half years; seems to think that's not a bad record because it wasn't as bad as one year that Grant Devine had. If that's what he's using for a measuring stick, heaven help Saskatchewan, Mr. Chair.

Quite frankly, also if the Premier wanted to see better representation in parliament he could be more outspoken and supportive of a Triple E Senate which would give Saskatchewan more representation in the Parliament of Canada, but I haven't heard him be very outspoken on that issue as well. And his federal party wants to actually abolish the Senate. So they're divided on the issue, Mr. Chair, which of course makes them very ineffective in dealing on the national level.

Now, Mr. Premier, you talked a bit about our impact on the BSE file, and it was just very recently as you alluded to that Jane Stewart, the federal minister of Labour, was in Saskatchewan, didn't even bother to notify her counterpart, the Minister of Labour here in Saskatchewan, that she was coming even though there were some very critical issues that needed to be discussed.

We also have a minister in your cabinet responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs. And I wonder if that might be part of the problem, part of the reason why the federal government pretty much ignores the NDP government in Saskatchewan. Because you see, the person that you chose to be your Intergovernmental Affairs minister happens to be the person who had to stand up and apologize to the people of Saskatchewan for not being forthright with these people over the last six years on the SPUDCO file.

And perhaps it's difficult for our federal counterparts to take this government seriously when you as a Premier suggested this is the very best minister that you have in your cabinet and you put him in charge of the file of dealing with the federal government. That obviously has not sent the right message to Ottawa, an entity that often does try to overlook the province of Saskatchewan under the best of conditions. And it appears that the decisions that you have made have made it more difficult to have a good relationship and a stronger relationship and a more impactful relationship with our federal government.

I wonder if the Premier would in fact comment on why he chose the disgraced minister responsible for SPUDCO to serve as the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

The Chair: — Order, order. Just before the Premier answers the question I just want to make a couple more points.

One, the member in his comments made a reference to trying to be deceptive and I believe that that was unintentional, however that phrase would be unparliamentary. So I would just caution the member to be very careful to be on the correct side of the line.

And second, if members could speak to the Chair and through the Chair — both sides — I would appreciate that.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I appointed the member from Prince Albert, the hon. member from Prince Albert, as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Aboriginal Affairs for one reason: he is one of the most experienced and competent ministers and members that sits in this legislature today. He is head and shoulders above, in competence and experience, any member that sits across the way. Any member. Any member. Including, for certain, the member of Weyburn.

Now the Leader of the Opposition, who we all know spent a tour of duty in the House of Commons as a representative of Saskatchewan — you know that, Mr. Chair; I know that — he sat right there in the House of Commons, a Reform member of the House of Commons. Now wasn't that an effective, wasn't that an effective voice for Saskatchewan; wasn't that an effective voice? The opposition leader thinks that he is respected in the national circumstance. I beg to tell him it's somewhat different.

Now is it any wonder we have some trouble in Ottawa when they were told by the current Leader of the Opposition when he sat in the House of Commons . . .

An Hon. Member: — What did he say?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well I've got pages of it, pages of it

here. Let me share this with the House.

There should be . . . June 2, 1995. This is the current Leader of the Opposition of Saskatchewan when he sat in the House of Commons as a Reform member of the House; now a member of the Alliance, I assume. He said there should be no guarantees to small business and there should be no loan guarantees to farms. They should not be treated any differently.

He said in the House of Commons:

I am not complaining . . .

In the House of Commons he said, on March 30, 1995:

I am not complaining about the cuts in support to agriculture.

I will say it again so that it's clear to the House.

I'm not complaining about the cuts to the support to agriculture. Probably Reform would have done some of the cutting differently (he said).

June 19, 1995. The current Leader of the Opposition, then the Reform member of the House of Commons sitting in opposition in Ottawa, he said, quote:

The time is now to move and prepare farmers for an open and more competitive market economy. Removing the restrictions on the movement of agricultural products may be painful initially but it will prepare farmers for the increased competition south of the border.

I could go on and on, Mr. Chair. Is there any wonder we sometimes are fighting an uphill battle in Ottawa when we've had representatives of the Reform Party which now occupy the provincial benches that have painted that kind of picture on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan?

Yes, Mr. Chair, we have to do battle with the national Liberal government. We have to do battle with . . . Sometimes we have to do battle with our international trading partners. We sometimes have to do battle on the international market sphere. But it's tough when you also have to do battle against the opposition in Saskatchewan who have painted such a picture on behalf of Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(16:15)

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And the Premier has misconstrued comments that I had made, as he has done in the past, as other of my political opponents have done in the past.

The Premier, the Premier fails to understand that my support amongst the agricultural community has been humbling on my part. In fact, Mr. Chair, I heard our Premier, I heard our Premier in this very House say that he felt agricultural subsidies should be reduced.

Now I will be fair to the Premier. The Premier made those comments in the context that that needs to be a global phenomena, that all countries need to reduce their subsidies since Saskatchewan producers will be more competitive and will fare better in a less subsidized global economy.

That's exactly the same position that I took when I was a member of parliament and it's the same position the Saskatchewan Party takes in opposition. It's the same position that the Saskatchewan Party will take in government.

I would ask the Premier not to misconstrue my comments and to take them out of context as he has done in the past. Simply, it doesn't work. It doesn't benefit him politically. Perhaps it makes his colleagues feel good, most of whom know absolutely nothing about agriculture; don't know the front end from the back end of a horse, Mr. Chair. But yet they allow their leader to misconstrue comments even though I refuse to misconstrue his same comments that he made in this Legislative Assembly.

Now, Mr. Chair, I want to go on to the Future is Wide Open campaign. It's been going on for some months now. In fact in the months of April and May, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars of advertising were spent on the campaign and monies were spent prior to that.

I think an edict went out from the government, put all the . . . every document that goes out from government, put the logo on there — the Future is Wide Open — unless it happens to be bad news and then just omit putting the Future is Wide Open logo on that type of information. So if you, you know, if you're refused some benefits from the provincial government, don't bother advertising the Future is Wide Open. But if it's a feel-good news release or some Crown propaganda, by all means put the logo on the information.

So I want the Premier to tell us, what are the tangible results that we have seen from this new slogan and the advertising campaign? The one tangible result that we were looking for was population growth. But that, in fact, didn't occur and, in fact, we're not even neutral on population. We're declining in population in spite of the Future is Wide Open campaign.

Now it's probably good for the advertisers and I don't begrudge them the same . . . you know, a single cent of money that they have garnered. I think the advertisements are actually quite good. I mean they show Saskatchewan's landscape and Saskatchewan's people. I have no problem, I have no problem with that. I love our lakes and our landscape, our forests, our prairies, our cities, our communities. We all love Saskatchewan.

But what's it doing to reverse the fortunes of Saskatchewan? What's it doing to reverse the outflow of people from Saskatchewan? What tangible results are there that the advertising campaign is working? I don't see any. Perhaps the Premier can tell us of a few.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, I find in my travels across the province and my travels across the nation, that this campaign is applauded — applauded by people in the business community; it's applauded by people in the labour community;

it's applauded by people in small town Saskatchewan; it's applauded by people in our cities; it's applauded by people across the nation.

Well, now the member from Weyburn, she wants to ask questions. Mr. Leader of the Opposition . . . I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition should permit some of his members to ask questions. They've all got questions from their seat. She said who is applauding? She said from her seat, who is applauding the Wide Open Future campaign? Well I am going to quote at length. And the Leader of the Opposition wants one tangible. I could give him dozens and dozens and dozens. He wants one? Here's one tangible result of taking on this great campaign to celebrate and promote Saskatchewan.

Headline from May 29 this year, days ago, headline, Alberta chief executive officer, Alberta CEO praises the province's Wide Open Future campaign. Now they can, they can criticize all they want, they should just listen. Nancy Southern is a prominent . . .

The Chair: — Order.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Nancy Southern is, and I'm quoting the article from *The StarPhoenix*:

Nancy Southern is a prominent member of Alberta's business elite, but she was unabashed Wednesday in endorsing the Saskatchewan government's Wide Open Future marketing program.

Southern (further on in the article, Mr. Chair, Southern), the daughter of Atco chair Ron Southern, talked about the pride she felt in seeing a Saskatchewan government ad while reading the National Post Tuesday night on a flight from Toronto.

Quote, Ms. Southern:

"It brought me a great sense of pride when I was looking through the financial section to see Saskatchewan's banner ad," she said prior to quoting the ad's catch line: "More is more. Saskatchewan. Our future is wide open."

Quote, Nancy Southern, CEO of ATCO, quote:

"I think the marketing campaign Saskatchewan has undertaken is first-class," she said. "It's terrific and it's going to be terrific for the economy here and your government is being extremely pro-active and is being entrepreneurially oriented in attracting new businesses."

Quote, Nancy Southern, CEO of ATCO:

"It should be highly commended for the new opportunities being developed."

Mr. Chair, again I will take the opinion and the views of Ms. Nancy Southern, CEO of ATCO, way above any political harping and negativity from any member of the opposition in this legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. And I say to the Premier, we have no quibbles with the quality of the advertising. Actually Phoenix Advertising was at one of our fundraisers. They attended one of our fundraisers and I complimented them on the quality of the ads. The problem is that nobody believes the NDP government behind the ads — that's the problem, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Now I would say to the Premier I want to read a letter. If the Premier would settle down, I want to read a letter that I received back on January 28 when the Future is Wide Open campaign was being launched. And it says:

To: Elwin Hermanson: (it's got my e-mail address and it says)

Subject: Keeping our young people in Saskatchewan.

To whom it may concern,

I read with great interest Elwin's speech about keeping young people in Saskatchewan. I am one of those people he described. Everything that . . . (he) said in that speech was true.

And I'm not making anything up here, Mr. Premier; this is what it says.

I was born (I was born) . . .

The Chair: — Order, order. Order. Order. Order, order. Order. Order. Order. Member, I was not able to hear most of what you said in the last minute so you may want to go back and start it back from there.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you. Because of my humble nature, it's a little hard to read those comments but I'll try and do it again Mr. Chair.

To whom it may concern,

I read with great interest Elwin (Hermanson's) speech about keeping young people in Saskatchewan. I am one of those people he described. Everything that . . . (he) said in that speech is true.

I was born in St. Anthony's Hospital in Esterhazy, a small town in the southeastern corner of Saskatchewan. My parents, like many of the people in (the) Esterhazy and area, worked in the potash mines close by. Upon my high school graduation in 1999, I packed my bags, kissed my mom and dad goodbye and moved to Saskatoon to attend the University of Saskatchewan.

The city of Saskatoon made such an impression on me in my first year that I decided that when I graduated, I would make Saskatoon my permanent home. I loved everything about Saskatoon: the big city with the small town feel, all the flowers in the summer, the beautiful university campus. I never dreamed I would leave my home province.

Then (the) reality set in. I saw U of S graduates moving to Alberta and the United States and I heard the horror stories about the job prospects in Saskatchewan. Grads weren't leaving because of . . . taxes anymore, they were leaving because there just weren't any jobs. Even those who wanted to stay in Saskatchewan risked taking a lower-paying job that wasn't even in their field.

So I moved to Calgary. My heart ached to be that far away from my family and friends. I didn't want to go, but I had to. If I wanted a future, it could only be in Alberta.

I cannot tell you how many people that live in Calgary are originally from Saskatchewan. I'm willing to bet that there are more ex-patriots in Alberta than there are left in Saskatchewan. The greeting between us "ex-patriots" is, "Did you turn out the light when you left?" We all laugh, but deep down inside we hurt for our home province and long for the day we can move home (will that day come?).

My husband and I often talk of returning home one day, but he . . . would have to take a significant pay cut if we did. It's a sad, sad indication of the state of the economy when even accountants can't find a job that will support the family. I don't . . . know if I could (even) get a job in Saskatchewan.

What makes me . . .

Mr. Chair, I hope that the NDP listen to this paragraph:

What makes me (the) angriest is the attitude of the NDP government. They pretend like nothing's wrong, that the economy is just fine. It's not fine when Saskatchewan's few taxpayers pay for my education and I have to work and pay taxes in another province!! I was livid when I saw TV ads promoting Saskatchewan. In fact, I wrote a letter to the editor of every newspaper in Saskatchewan expressing my displeasure:

And the letter reads:

Dear Premier Calvert:

Do the taxpayers of your province (do the taxpayers of your province) a favour and cancel your ridiculous and expensive media campaign designed to convince people to move back to Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan does not need glossy ads bragging about sunshine and golf courses. Rather it needs a leader who is committed to fostering economic growth through tax cuts. It needs a leader who is committed to reducing the debt. And it needs a leader who will make government smaller and more efficient.

Until Saskatchewan gets that leader, the best and brightest minds will continue to leave the province seeking opportunity elsewhere.

I was born and raised in Saskatchewan. I went to University in Saskatchewan. I would have loved to have stayed in Saskatchewan.

But I moved to Alberta where taxes are lower, government is less intrusive, and where hard work is rewarded.

Mr. Calvert, there are countless others like me here in Alberta. We would love to move home one day. But it will not happen as long as the tax-and-spend socialist policies of your government are in (your) place.

And no amount of government propaganda will change that.

Sincerely

And she gives her name and says that her age is 21 years.

The PS (postscript) says:

I want Calvert to see that the young people of Saskatchewan are not buying into his propaganda and that we are leaving and . . . will continue to leave. I want him to know that there are more tax-payers within Calgary's city limits than there are in the entire province of Saskatchewan. With this in mind, how does he think Saskatchewan will look in 15 years? Will the light be turned out by then?

I want to encourage you, Mr. Hermanson. You and your party are on the right track. Your policies will allow young people like me to work (and pay taxes) at home. I look forward to the day when your party forms Saskatchewan's government and I can finally move back home.

Mr. Chair . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — . . . this is not the only letter like this I have received. I have a whole file full of them, primarily from young people who have said they're not listening to your Future is Wide Open campaign. They're looking at the reality. They're looking at the facts. How, Mr. Premier, do you respond to a heartbreaking letter like this one?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I listen with interest and obvious concern when the Leader of the Opposition reads that kind of a letter in our legislature. And I too have received that kind of letter. Why precisely we are engaged in building the economy of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — It is why exactly we are taking realistic and practical steps to provide opportunities for individuals of his generation and younger generations and older generations. Why exactly, Mr. Chair, we have made our income tax system in Saskatchewan one which is now competitive with any jurisdiction in Canada and equally more fair than most jurisdictions in Canada to all people.

Precisely why in the last several months we have undertaken significant renovation of our oil and gas royalty regime and taxation regime, such significant and dramatic activity which

has created new and dramatic activity in the sector, providing new employment opportunities; precisely why we have changed the mining regime in this province; precisely why we are expanding our economy; precisely why we are investing in this budget year, record dollars into education to train and provide opportunities for our young people.

(16:30)

When we hear the concern, Mr. Chair, we are driven to work, driven to act — just what this government is doing. And if I may say, doing something more than just the negative complaining on a daily basis that comes from members of the opposition.

And you know, Mr. Chair, we have sat in this session — I don't know what it is now — approaching 70 days, approaching 70 days. I haven't heard one positive proposal for the province of Saskatchewan from . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . There it is, the one, the one proposal they will make when challenged is call an election. Their only interest is politics. Their only interest is politics; they have no interest in substantive public policy that might change this province in ways that we can provide an opportunity for that young man, his family, and many others.

Now, Mr. Chair, I receive letters like that, but I receive thousands of letters which are quite different, Mr. Chair. I want to share then a few comments with the Leader of the Opposition from correspondence that I recently received. And I'll read from a number of pieces of correspondence. And in fact we could spend the rest of the day with me quoting correspondence that I have received on the single issue of the Wide Open Future campaign.

From British Columbia, in response, specifically in response to the Wide Open Future campaign, specifically a response that says:

I recently read with interest and excitement of your Future is Wide Open campaign. I know that Saskatchewan's a wonderful province and it's the best kept secret in Canada.

From Minnesota:

Dear Sir:

I heard you on the . . .

You know, Mr. Chair, if the members opposite want to hear the response, they should — or if they want to ask questions — they should get up and ask the questions. If they want to hear the response, they should listen. They ought to listen to this voice from Minnesota who wrote me, and says:

Dear Sir:

I heard you on the radio the other night, CBC in Minnesota, and for some time I've been thinking about moving to Canada. Your comments have made me curious about your province.

Well you see, you see, you see, Mr. Chair, it is virtually

impossible in this legislature to have a serious discussion about the future of this province; virtually impossible with an opposition who is motivated by only one thing, only one thing — not good public policy, only politics.

Day after day after day, only politics while myself and members of this government on a daily basis are out and about in Saskatchewan; when we're across the country talking about the future of Saskatchewan; working with Saskatchewan communities to build that future; working with Saskatchewan young people to provide opportunities; investing in education when they say we shouldn't invest in education; investing in education capital when they say we shouldn't invest in educational capital; partner with communities to provide job opportunities like Great Western Breweries, where they say we shouldn't be doing that; building an ethanol industry in this province when they criticize and say we shouldn't be doing that; working in the forestry when they say we shouldn't be doing that.

They have one concern and it's becoming more and more apparent today. The only thing they're concerned about is politics — is politics.

So, Mr. Chair, Mr. Chair, we are going to continue to work. We're going to continue with the Wide Open Future campaign. We're not going to be deterred by the negative nabobs and the negative voices that come from across the way.

We're going to continue with this great campaign because it's appreciated by the people of Saskatchewan. It's being welcomed across Canada. It's drawing attention to Saskatchewan, the kind of attention that we've never had in past. And we simply will not be deterred by the negative voices of a bunch of men and women who simply are interested in their own political futures.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. The Premier has been suggesting that he has letters of support for the advertising campaign. I'm not quibbling with the Premier about the advertising campaign. In fact if there was some substance behind it, if there was a government of action behind it, I would perhaps do the same thing myself, Mr. Chair.

But the problem is that people make inquiries. They like the advertisements but then they check into Saskatchewan and they find out there's no jobs, there's no opportunity, Mr. Deputy Chair.

And the proof is in the numbers. The proof is in the numbers. Our population is declining. Every quarter for 18 consecutive quarters, thousands and thousands of men and women — citizens of this province who love Saskatchewan — have left because of lack of opportunity under an NDP government. Those are the facts. Those are indisputable.

And it doesn't matter how many letters we have praising the Premier's advertising campaign. The numbers speak for themselves. The NDP government has failed to provide a climate, an environment, a province where people feel welcome, where they feel hopeful, and where they want to

make their future.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chair, I have a letter that was written to the Premier. And this letter says, "My name is . . ." And they list their name, so the Premier has this letter as well.

. . . and I am an environmental engineer who lives in Calgary. On April 1, 2002, I ceased to be a citizen of Saskatchewan. I believe that I am one of the people who your "Wide Open Future" campaign is targeted towards.

Mr. Calvert, in my heart I will always be a Saskatchewanian. I grew up there, was schooled there . . . my parents reside there . . . (and so) do my wife's. However, I will likely never return to live there. I didn't always think this way — my move to Calgary was one to take advantage of a better job that I thought would allow me to move up the corporate ladder before returning in a few years with more experience and perhaps obtain an even better job back home. I realize now that this will never be the case.

While the cost of living in Alberta may be more (A fact that was made abundantly clear to me through all the negative comments I heard once I announce my impending move to Calgary), my quality of life has skyrocketed upwards. In Saskatoon, I was part of a double income no kids household, with a small mortgage and two paid cars.

Mr. Chair, the minister for governmental affairs does not care that people who love Saskatchewan are leaving. They're begging, they're pleading, for a government to listen to them and the minister heckles.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — The minister has the nerve to sit in his seat and heckle the people of Saskatchewan who have left, who have given up on the NDP government. That is a shame.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Now I know that that minister is near the end of his career. I know that that minister will retire comfortably some day, but I'm concerned about future citizens who want . . . young people who want to stay in Saskatchewan and are appalled by the minister's attitude, by the minister's comments. That, Mr. Chair, is one of the most disgusting comments and just unacceptable a comment that I have heard in this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Chair, if the minister of governmental affairs will let me continue . . .

The Deputy Chair: — Order. Order. Order. Order.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I want to read this letter because it's important that the NDP members hear these comments. The person goes on to say that:

In Saskatoon, I was part of a double income no kids

household, with a small mortgage and two paid cars. While we never really had trouble paying the bills, we didn't have a lot to spend on ourselves for entertainment. Living in Calgary for less than a year and still paying for the capital costs of the move, I am in a similar situation, though with a house three times the size (of our home) of our one in Saskatoon, and enough left over every month to do something fun. Not all of this is due to raises - I pay (\$4 in taxes) \$4 less in taxes off my paycheque despite a 25 % increase in pay.

My point of this letter is not to berate you for the socialist tendencies of your government, nor to try and rub your nose in my good fortune. My point is to try to help. I am a Saskatchewan boy, and will always be. Saskatchewan here (and probably in most places) is viewed as somewhat backwards, and I don't like that impression. In Texas, they even call it "Red Saskatchewan". I'll let you guess why.

In Alberta, the first question asked when a problem arises is: "Can someone make money fixing this problem?" and then (the) appropriate companies are asked to get involved. In Saskatchewan, the first question is "How can the government fix this problem?". This attitude can only be changed through leadership (and) Mr. Calvert, that's up to you.

I won't bore you with the facts like the consulting engineering business in Saskatchewan has to compete with SaskWater, the Saskatchewan Research Council, and other crown agencies, or . . . (the) capital investment . . . (of) Saskatchewan almost always has to be obtained through the Crown Investment Corporation. You likely already know these things lead to less competition, a lack of business investment, and subsequently a loss of people following the money out of the province. What I will do is ask you to be a strong leader.

You know that in a strong economy, everything else falls into place. Good education doesn't make a strong economy - a good business environment does. If you want people to stay in the province, create a place for business to thrive. This means doing things like privatizing the SRC and other crowns, not allowing government agencies to compete with consultants and other businesses, and abolishing the CIC. Let private investment fund the economy. Of course, there are many others, but you have many more tools to identify those opportunities than I.

Mr. Chair, the letter closes by saying:

I implore you to consider the effects of the current course Saskatchewan is on, and to take serious action to change this course. While I no longer have an immediate vested interest in seeing these changes to fruition, I do still have family in Saskatchewan, and (I) love my home. I hope one day to return.

Sincerely,

This was a letter that was written to the Premier of Saskatchewan and copied to the opposition.

Mr. Chair, for the period ending October 1, 2002, Saskatchewan experienced the worst population loss in a decade. And the only response from this government is to say, well it was bad when Devine was the Premier; during the '80s they lost people too. That's not good enough.

Saskatchewan used to be the third most populated province in Canada. There was a time when we were ahead of Manitoba. Manitoba has far fewer resources than the province of Saskatchewan and yet Manitoba has surpassed Saskatchewan in population. Nova Scotia, I believe, is gaining ground on the province. We may actually get bumped — if we were to remain under an NDP government — be bumped from sixth place to seventh place, given the trends that we see in Saskatchewan at the current time.

There is hope. The Saskatchewan Party talked about growing the population by 100,000 people in 10 years. The minister for Regina Wascana Plains said it was impossible. She said it was impossible. It was a story in the paper. Since that time . . . Well, Mr. Chair, the members of the NDP don't believe Saskatchewan can grow. We know they don't. They're up in their . . . They're yelling in their seats, suggesting that this is not an achievable goal.

Well, Mr. Chair, the mayor of Regina, Mayor Fiacco, suggested in the next 10 years he believes Regina can grow by two . . . by about 60 or 70,000, up to 250,000 people. That's in the same 10-year period. If Mayor Fiacco is correct — if Mayor Fiacco is correct — that's more than half of the Saskatchewan Party goal.

Just recently there was a conference in Saskatoon put on by Agrivision, and they suggested that they believe Saskatchewan's population can be doubled in 30 years. His own ACRE (Action Committee on the Rural Economy) committee suggested there could be substantial population growth in Saskatchewan — even in rural Saskatchewan the population can grow.

Why is the Premier's, why is the Premier's members casting doubt on the ability of this province to grow? Why does the Premier's member from Wascana Plains say it's impossible? Why does the Premier's Education department suggest that enrolment is going to drop by 35,000 students over a decade? It's obvious that if the Premier and his government sends mixed messages, on one hand saying that the Future is Wide Open but on the other hand preparing to govern fewer people rather than more, not making changes to taxation structure, not making changes to labour laws, not making changes to the corporate capital tax, not making changes to infrastructure — if the Premier's not prepared to do anything, nothing will change.

Now quite frankly the mayor of Regina, in spite of the Premier cutting his revenue-sharing dollars, is working on a plan. He has a committee. He has a group of people that are working on their task force that are prepared to grow the city of Regina.

The chamber of commerce in Saskatoon are working on a plan to create thousands more jobs and grow the population of the city of Saskatoon. The community of Biggar, in my own constituency of Rosetown-Biggar, has a plan to grow the population.

Why is the Premier of the province and the NDP Government of Saskatchewan the only major force and entity that have no plan to grow the province, as is proved by the fact that our people are leaving the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, I'm sure all members enjoy when the Leader of the Opposition brings letters to read. I could summon up dozens and dozens of letters to read supporting the activities of this government, supporting the Wide Open Future campaign, supporting the directions they've gone.

(16:45)

I've quoted today one voice from Alberta, Ms. Nancy Southern from ATCO. We could spend the rest of this day quoting Canadians through their letters to me, through their public comments, about the strength of this great campaign.

But I tell you, it does cause some concern for me when the Leader of the Opposition stands up in this House this afternoon and says of the Wide Open Future campaign and the message that we are providing to Canadians across the nation, when the Leader of the Opposition, her loyal . . . Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition in Saskatchewan, stands up in the House and says, quote, "there's no substance behind it." There's no substance. That's what he said. His House Leader, when we announced this campaign, said it's snake oil. Snake oil. No substance to Saskatchewan; Saskatchewan is snake oil. That's the description they give this great province.

When people of Canada are looking at the activities that are happening in Saskatchewan — in the forestry, in the oil and gas industry, in the innovative industries, and high technology — he says that's no substance. That's what the Leader of the Opposition says. Is there any wonder that his voice grows less and less credible across Saskatchewan?

You know, Mr. Chair, the leader . . . the member from Thunder Creek, who will not get on his feet either, asks all of these questions from his seat. He said, no results. No results. Did you hear the reports of the Global Insight that Saskatchewan's growth is forecast to be leading in Canada? The leading province in growth in Canada, now forecast by Global Insight. He says that's not result. Did you hear earlier today, Mr. Chair, the member . . . the Minister of Industry and Resources report the job statistics in Saskatchewan? Now 13 consecutive months of job growth in this province. Month after month after month of job growth, Mr. Chair . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, never mind that, it's just a fact. Never mind that, it's just a fact.

Do you know, Mr. Chair, in the month of April — and I think members of the opposition would even admit this is not so bad — in the month of April there are in Saskatchewan 13,000 new jobs as opposed to an April ago. But what is perhaps even more noteworthy, Mr. Chair, that of those 13,000 new jobs about half of them are jobs for young people and the vast majority of them are full-time jobs in this economy.

Now I noted with interest that the letter writer to the Leader of the Opposition . . . And I'm not surprised, the Leader of the

Opposition will have some political supporters and some political support who will accept his view of the world. But I would take some exception with one of the comments made by the leader's quote here in the afternoon. I think the letter writer pointed out that education is not the way to grow the economy, that education is not the most essential thing.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I differ. I differ. I know it's in the letter; it's in the letter, you're right it's in the letter, and the Leader of the Opposition is quoting the letter.

So I tell you I take the point of view that yes we need the conditions of good economy. What have we been doing? We've been putting the conditions of that good competitive economy in place. We've renovated the entire income tax . . . personal income tax system in the province under our personal income tax reform, the like of which the province has never seen. We are competitive with any jurisdiction in Canada.

We have renovated the sales tax circumstance in Saskatchewan so that we have the lowest sales tax — the lowest sales tax — on the narrowest range of goods of any province in Canada, with the exception of Alberta.

But, Mr. Chair, you know and Saskatchewan people know that we do not lay on our people a health care premium.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — We do not do that. Even though members of the opposition have suggested it, we don't do it.

We have the lowest sales tax in Canada on the narrowest range of goods and services. Our manufacturing tax, our manufacturing tax provisions are now . . . are the lowest in Canada. We have reduced small-business tax.

Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Chair, pardon me. We have put together a very competitive, very competitive economic sphere in which to do activity. So competitive that we're recognized now, the cities of Saskatchewan — Regina, Saskatoon, Weyburn, Prince Albert; Weyburn, Prince Albert — these cities are recognized by KPMG as being some of the . . . and the most competitive cities of their size in the Midwest of the United States of America and in all of Canada.

We have built a very competitive . . . Is there work yet to do? Yes sir. Yes sir, there is work yet to do. We've made some adjustments in this budget again but we do it, Mr. Chair, unlike the opposition, in a sustainable way.

What do they say? They say somehow we're going to grow the population of Saskatchewan by 100,000 people. How are we going to do it? Well we're going to sell off the Crowns; we're going to cut the corporate taxes; and we're going to reduce labour laws. That's their prescription for 100,000 people. Now how that works, Mr. Speaker, I don't . . . Mr. Chair, I don't know and most Saskatchewan people can't figure it out either.

Now what's been going on? We've been making this a competitive, competitive place to invest and do business. Number two, we are investing in the education of our young people; we're investing in the education of Saskatchewan

people because the key to the future, Mr. Chair, is in education.

We have in this province an asset unlike any other province in the nation, an asset which is our youthful population. We have now one of the youngest populations in Canada. We have one of the largest Aboriginal young populations in Canada and, Mr. Chair, that is a great, tremendous opportunity and asset to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

In a time, in a time when there will be labour demands, the demand for skilled labour, the demand for trades, the demands for teachers, the demand for people to work in the public sector whether it be in education or in health care, the demand for people to work in agriculture and the diversified agricultural industries, we have a great potential in our young people and particularly our young Aboriginal people. And, Mr. Chair, this government believes in that generation and therefore we are investing in education.

Now you will recall, Mr. Chair, I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition recalls, that when we went out in the last campaign that Leader of the Opposition and his entire party, what was their commitment to education? They said they would fund education at no more than the rate of inflation which essentially is zero — zero.

When last year we endeavoured to expand the capital of education they fought us every day. They have fought us every day during this budget debate about the biggest, largest commitment to education in this province's history. Every day they come in here and they fight us on this. Well we're not going to be stopped. We are not going to be stopped investing in the future of Saskatchewan and investing in the future of our young people.

Yes we need a competitive place in which to do business. We need a competitive place in which to live with a good cost of living. But equally we need to be providing the tools for our young people to take advantage of that economy that's building.

And then, Mr. Chair, we decided that it's about time that Saskatchewan began to tell its story. It's about time we began to blow our own horn because this is a government that believes there is tremendous substance in this province, tremendous substance, unlike the House Leader over there, now unlike the Leader of the Opposition who says there is no substance . . . and snake oil says the House Leader over there. We don't believe that. We believe there is a tremendous potential in Saskatchewan; a province of tremendous resources, of tremendous people, and of tremendous innovation.

And while I'm speaking of innovation, Mr. Chair, here too, here too is a great key to our future that is fought by the opposition all the time. Mr. Speaker, you know . . . Mr. Chair, you know that we soon will be home to Canada's first light source synchrotron, a tremendous innovation for the people of Saskatchewan, the people of Western Canada, the people of Canada. In fact, one of four in the world. That synchrotron is being built in Saskatoon today because of the hard work of this government, the University of Saskatchewan, the private sector, and the Government of Canada. No assist, no assist from over there. They fight us all the time. They don't believe in that kind of public partnership or that kind of public investment; no, they

don't.

We have developed here in the city of Regina and in the city of Saskatoon, through public investment, through partnerships with the private sector which they would not be involved in, or so they tell us, Innovation Place in Saskatoon, the Research Park here in Regina; partnering here in Regina for instance with the oil industry in the oil and gas research centre out here, in the greenhouse gas centre out here. We're now partnering with the community of Regina to make this a national research site for sustainability, for community sustainability. And add on to that — and oh they have fought us on this one; every day they fight us on this one — a forestry research centre in Prince Albert. A forestry research centre in Prince Albert.

That's what you do, Mr. Chair, to expand your economy. Look what's happening in our forestry. Just look what's happening in our forestry. In the last three years \$900 million of new private sector investment in the Saskatchewan forestry. That's opening an economy to northern people, to people across Saskatchewan.

What have we had to do? Of course we've had to fight the softwood lumber. We're in the midst of debating within this legislature a Bill that hopefully will help us reduce that or eliminate that tariff on our softwood lumber. And we appreciate the opposition's support in getting this Bill passed.

But they've fought us on the forestry research. One of the key, one of the key industries in the future of the province, and what do they do? They send their, they send their . . . the member, if you can believe, Mr. Chair, they send the member from Sask Rivers out to criticize this decision to build a forestry research centre in Saskatoon.

Well he goes up and he talks to the people in Prince Albert . . . I'm sorry, in Prince Albert. He goes up and talks to the people in Prince Albert and they tell him this is good work. This is good work on behalf of the business community. It's good work on behalf of the government. It's good work on behalf of the citizens of Prince Albert.

So that member from Saskatchewan Rivers he comes back and he reports publicly here: no, no, I made a mistake; we shouldn't be criticizing that. The next thing you know the leader's out in the rotunda saying, no, no, the member's wrong; it's a mistake; they shouldn't be building that forestry research centre.

The fact of the matter is this is a government who believes in working with communities, who believes in working with the private sector and the business community, who believes in working with the trade union movement and labour people in this province, who believes in working with Aboriginal people and First Nations people.

And that, Mr. Chair, is how you build the future. You don't build the future with empty slogans like 100,000 in 10 years. You don't build it with empty slogans. And I'll tell you for sure you don't build it by simply slashing the taxes on the corporations and selling off the Crowns and decimating the labour protection for Saskatchewan citizens. You're not building a future there.

Do we believe in growing and seeing the expansion of the

population of Saskatchewan? You bet we do. And like the mayor of Regina and the city council of Saskatoon and people right across Saskatchewan, we're telling the Saskatchewan story.

You'll know the I Love Regina campaign, Mr. Chair. You're a member here. You'll know the Saskatoon Shines campaign. And you know the campaign that's reaching right across the nation: Our Future is Wide Open. It's a wide-open future. And we're not going to be stopped.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Chair, when the Premier has trouble answering the questions, then he filibusters on the answer. That was a long, rambling discourse about nothing in particular and everything in general.

I do want to respond to a couple of earlier comments he made. He talked about some facts and he's using job numbers. Well in fact job numbers have gone up and down since the 1999 election but quite clearly there is no way that the Premier will keep his first promise in the last election campaign to create 30,000 jobs in four years; no way that he will keep that first commitment with the people of Saskatchewan.

So that's the first promise and it was a broken promise. And what's sad, Mr. Chair, is that goal of 30,000 jobs created was a very, very modest goal. It wasn't very imaginative at all. So quite frankly, the Premier throwing out job numbers is not very impressive at all.

And the two facts that are important, which the Premier always wants to dodge, is the fact that the population is dropping and the debt is rising under the NDP government in Saskatchewan.

Now one other comment I want to make, and I want to make it clear that I agree with the Premier, that education is important. And it's important to this economy. He referred to that comment in the letter. The problem of course is under the NDP, funding was cut for education.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — I think through the 1990s, under the Romanow administration to the tune of about \$350 million, education was cut. And so quite frankly, the NDP government have failed the young people of this province by cutting funds to education. And I want to assure the people of Saskatchewan, and I certainly will tell the Premier of Saskatchewan, that a Saskatchewan Party government will not ignore the educational needs of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Now in the wake . . . And the Premier seems to have lost interest. He can't answer the questions so he's lost interest — he's adjusting his hair I see — but I'm going to keep asking him questions anyways. In the wake of the SPUDCO affair, the Premier suggested that he was going to start making changes to procedures in cabinet.

And I would like to know what changes he has already

implemented? What changes has he made as a result of SPUDCO on who signs off on what, what amounts are authorized by a minister, what amounts have to come to the whole cabinet, how he deals with CIC? What actual changes and procedure and spending limits and authorization procedures for ministers and Crowns has the Premier actually implemented since he made a commitment to do so to the people of Saskatchewan?

(17:00)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I think, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, over the last number of years there have been significant changes in the Crowns and in decision-making processes within the Crowns.

His very specific question has to do with the change, the exact change, that I will have made since the work that was done around the SPUDCO investigation. I think the most obvious and clearly public change is that now all investments of any substance, standard investments in this province, before that decision is made, those will be reviewed by a respected third party . . . entity, very often a financial house or one of the banks.

That is a very significant change, Mr. Chair, that I think has some significant import on ensuring that we are able to make . . . And as I've said many times in this House today, we are deeply committed to partnering with communities and with private businesses in building the Saskatchewan economy. We want to ensure that when those decisions are made they can be the best possible decisions. Therefore we have undertaken this new level of rigour which will involve on any substantive investment, a third party review by an outside source of expertise.

Mr. Hermanson: — I thank the Premier for that answer. We unearthed another scandal that must be owned by the NDP government regarding the mega bingo losses. Originally the government indicated that the loss would be \$6 million. Suddenly they were caught up in some facts that that wasn't correct and that the total cost to taxpayers were \$8 million.

Given the commitment that the Premier has just made about changes, can he assure the people of Saskatchewan that had mega bingo occurred after these changes, that they would have been reviewed by a third party, before it happened?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, in looking back at all of the events around the mega bingo, there's been much debate during the course of this session. In fact, in the case of the mega bingo, my understanding is that in fact there was a third party review conducted. In fact, it was Western Canada gaming that was engaged at that time to give the third party review. In this case, that did not provide for a success in the endeavour. That's pretty obvious.

I will argue, as I'm sure most citizens would argue, that you want to work with your charities. You want to work with those who are at work in the community. I remember those days. I was part of the community. I was part of a service club that was

involved in bingos and fund raising. And I know how there was a desire at the community level to see this province engage itself in this mega bingo concept.

In my experience, it didn't work. It didn't work on the ground. It didn't work with the players. It had some flaws. In this case, it was reviewed third party and that did not ensure that we still did not have the resulting activity of the mega bingo.

So in answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question, yes, that kind of an arrangement would likely receive a third party review. But I can't commit to the Leader of the Opposition that that third party review could absolutely guarantee that you wouldn't find a similar circumstance.

Mr. Hermanson: — My question to the Premier: is that third party review a public document and if so, could he provide it to the opposition?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I'm not clear. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition could re-ask the question.

The fact of the matter is, as I understand it, the Western Canada Lottery Corporation was engaged to review the proposals as a third party, independent body. They reviewed the proposals and provided to SLGA (Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority) the recommendation on . . . to move forward.

Now the minister has many times in this House explained this, and I think has provided all of that detailed information and that detailed report. It'd be in the *Hansard*; he's provided it to the media.

In this case the third party review was conducted by the Western Canada Lottery Corporation who . . . I can't think of anyone else who would be better qualified. They looked at the proposals and recommended the one that was eventually undertaken those years ago.

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Chair, to the Premier. We understand that there was a, that there was a authorization to tender for contracts for software. But prior to that a decision had to be made to get involved in the whole mega bingo issue, project. And that decision, we understand, was made by SLGA. It wasn't made by any other party. So there would have needed to be a third party consultation done to make the decision as to whether to go, to launch into the mega bingo project or not — not as far as tendering for software and those subsequent decisions that were made after the major decision was made to go forward.

So I'm wondering if the Premier could table the study, the third party study that was done that convinced cabinet to launch into the mega bingo project.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I . . . The fact of the matter is, and I don't want to mislead the Leader of the Opposition, there was not a third party study done for the decision. Once the decision is made, then third party expertise is sought. That's usually the way it works in government. You make a decision and then you, and then you . . . well the leader of . . . the members opposite find this amusing but I tell you this is how it works in government. They'll never know this because they'll

never be here. But this is how it works in government.

The public policy makers, your decision makers within the government, are called upon to make decisions. You make the best possible decisions. If you are going to implement, you want to get the best possible advice. So . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well you know, I'll tell you. I'll tell you who should be seeking some advice. It's the member from Cannington. That's the member who should be seeking some advice.

Because you know what the member from Cannington says, Mr. Chair? You know what the member from Cannington says? Well I could pull it out here, I could pull it out here. The member . . . I'm going to quote now a news release, a media release from the Saskatchewan Party caucus, a Saskatchewan Party caucus news release dated January 15 of this year. This is a straight quote from the House Leader across the way:

D'Autremont said a Saskatchewan Party would not make any equity investments in any private sector company.

They would never, ever make an equity investment in a company in Saskatchewan.

Well I guess there is some protection in that. If you would never make an investment in the economy of Saskatchewan, there is some protection in that; you can never make a mistake. I guess there's some protection in that. If you would never partner with community-based organizations in trying to seek their charitable revenue status improvement, if you would never partner with community organizations, you can never make a mistake. If you would never invest in the Great Western Brewery when they needed that investment, you can never make a mistake.

But I'll tell you, you'll never see any positive economic development or social development in this province if these people adopt that kind of attitude and that kind of policy, as indicated by the member of Cannington.

Mr. Chair, a decision was made by cabinet that there would be a linked bingo game as part of a larger gaming strategy that was put in place at that time. The various ministers . . .

I'm just going to read this because I know the minister has read it, but apparently the opposition doesn't get it.

. . . the various ministers responsible for the SLGA over the period of time during which this linked bingo was approved, developed, and implemented, and operated would have been monitoring all of SLGA's work.

. . . (That) monitoring would have occurred through regular meetings and briefings, as well as updates provided to . . . (the SLGA) board . . . (which consists of) the minister responsible . . . and another member . . . (of) cabinet.

The minister responsible was aware of the decisions being made in SLGA. The cabinet approved them, Mr. Chair; there's no doubt about that. Again we repeat in this House time after time after time, over and over again, all through the session. They haven't got one new thing to ask, so we're back to mega bingo.

Well the fact of the matter is, the decision was made for a linked bingo as part of a larger gaming strategy. When that decision was made, we went to the appropriate third party, which in this case would be the Western Canada Lottery Corporation, for an assessment of these proposals.

The Western Canada Lottery Corporation . . . I don't know, the opposition doesn't like them, either; it doesn't trust their views. They don't trust the Bank of Montreal; they don't trust Moody's; maybe they don't trust the Western Canada Lottery Corporation. But the fact of the matter is that in their capacity they advised this government; the decision was made.

Now again, there is no denying the fact that the mega bingo, the mega bingo project did not have the desired results. It didn't have the desired results but is it therefore the position of the opposition that the government of the day should not have engaged in this effort with the charitable organizations of Saskatchewan? Is that their view, that we should not have listened to the voices of the charities across Saskatchewan? Is that their view?

Is it the view still that the government should never involve itself in partnerships or public sector or private sector equity investments and partnerships? Is that the view? If that's the view, then let the leader stand up and let's declare it so the people of Saskatchewan can hear it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well the Premier's, the Premier's answer was indeed insightful.

The Premier indicated that decisions are made by cabinet without due diligence being done. And then the third party, the third party inquiries are undertaken. That means that in the case of SPUDCO, the government, the cabinet — the NDP cabinet — decide they're going to go ahead with SPUDCO before they have done due diligence. They make that decision without information, without knowledge. And farther down the road they get due diligence done.

In the case of mega bingo, they trusted the Western Canadian Lottery Corporation to do the diligence for them. But in fact Western Canadian Lottery Corporation communicated to the NDP government that they do not consider themselves an expert in the work and therefore that they will rely in the skill, expertise, and judgment and representation of suppliers.

That was the third party recommendation that the government, the NDP government was relying on after they'd already made the decision to go ahead with mega bingo. It's no wonder none of their projects are turning out. They do not have a proper due diligence process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Chair, I know now why they're in trouble with the Broe deal. Broe has no knowledge of the ethanol industry. They've not been involved in the ethanol industry. And yet they've decided, they've made the decision to marry themselves to Broe without having done due diligence, without Broe having their financing in place. We just see the

same mistake repeated over and over and over again.

So they lose \$28 million on SPUDCO because they have improper procedures. They lose \$8 million on mega bingo. And I think the Premier said that all of his, all of his changes in procedure wouldn't have corrected that — wouldn't have corrected that. They're still using the same process.

And quite frankly, Mr. Chair, they're going down the same road with the Broe deal — the same road. And that is absolutely appalling. It is absolutely unacceptable that a government that has the trust . . . that is entrusted with billions of taxpayers' dollars do not put in place proper accountability, proper spending authorities, proper reviews, proper investigations before they commit these millions and millions of dollars.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — The result, the result is disaster after disaster. The result is the minister getting up in the legislature and apologizing for the mess that he's been responsible for six years. And he's still in cabinet. It's absolutely appalling.

(17:15)

Now I want to turn briefly to agriculture because it still is an important industry in Saskatchewan, not the only industry, but a very important industry. With the outbreak of the BSE and ensuing aid package, the federal government has upped the pressure to sign the implementation agreement for the agricultural policy framework. Can the Premier give us the timetable for signing on to this agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, it would appear that the Ag ministers are all meeting in July. Four other provinces have already signed on, so it may be fair to say that July is a likely sign-on date.

Mr. Hermanson: — I thank the Premier for that answer. There have been a number of concerns raised about the signing of the implementation agreement, mostly having to do with the lack of detail surrounding the programs under the APF. I want to know if this is a concern of the Premier. For instance, can he give us the details into how the new super NISA (Net Income Stabilization Account) program will work and what the cost will be for producers?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I am not able to speak to some of the detail of the new NISA. I'm confident that the Minister of Agriculture would have had this discussion with the Agriculture critic in his estimates. If there is detail that the Leader of the Opposition wants, we'll provide all the detail that we have. There's no doubt about that. And I think it's important that we get the detail right. In these matters, it's important to have the detail right and so I want to be sure that we can send it.

Obviously, Mr. Chair, we've worked pretty hard, particularly the Minister of Agriculture, but government generally worked pretty hard to try and shape this new agricultural policy framework to be the best that we can build. For too long, for too long in this country, we've gone with the ad hoceries and so on

that we're trying to build what could be a sustainable long-term support program for agriculture, not just in Saskatchewan but across Canada.

I would argue that some of our goals have been achieved in the APF; that we are in much better shape today than we are when we began this discussion.

But at the same time there are areas that we think yet need to be addressed, particularly indexing in the programs and in the matter of trade injury. And here we have simply not seen the response from our national government that is absolutely required in the matter of trade injury. I believe that we as a province happily accept our responsibility to support agriculture in our province in appropriate measures through appropriate programming when that support is occasioned by climatic conditions, drought, infestation, whether it be grasshoppers or you name it.

But in the matter of trade injury, injury that's occurred, that's occasioned by international subsidies, by treasuries much, much greater than the province of Saskatchewan — whether it be the European treasuries, the American treasuries, or Asian treasuries, it doesn't matter — that that requires a much more proactive response from the national government.

We do not see in the APF what I think is anywhere near an appropriate response to trade injury. So there will be, we would hope, an addendum.

We think the areas of achievement are substantial. We've come a long ways but there is yet work to do.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and to the Premier, we have obviously many times discussed the inadequacies of the APF and in fact my Agriculture critic has questioned the Minister of Agriculture on many occasions, and any solid information has been very difficult to get most of the time because your Minister of Agriculture indicates that he wasn't fully informed or the decisions hadn't been finally reached as to what shape the new programs would actually take.

There is in fact a real concern that this new super NISA will not look at all like the old NISA program, but it will look an awful lot like the old AIDA (Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance) program and CFIP (Canadian Farm Income Program) program which your government and which the official opposition have equally been very critical of — agriculture programs not well suited to the agricultural needs of the province of Saskatchewan and its producers.

In the new APF that we are contemplating or I understand your government is contemplating signing perhaps as early as this month, that of course is one portion or one step in the signing of an agreement. There are more than one step to signing the APF and in fact the first step is the agreement of intent and that doesn't include all of the details, it just means you intend to follow through and put together a program that will serve the needs of producers.

Saskatchewan was very slow in signing the intent portion or stage of the new APF. In fact it had gone a long ways with a lot of other provinces before we signed on, on the intent stage. And

yet we seemed to be quite eager to sign on to the implementation stage, which of course actually is the agreement that will deliver the program to the producers.

Does the Premier agree with being very slow in signing on the intent stage and being very hasty in signing on in the implementation stage?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I don't think it's quite fair, Mr. Chair, to describe our signing of both intent or the detail as hasty. As I pointed out, a number of other provinces have already committed and signed to the full level of detail and implementation.

I'm informed by the Minister of Agriculture those provinces are our neighbours to the west, Alberta and British Columbia; our neighbour to the east, Manitoba; and Newfoundland and Labrador. And in those four are of course a significant, a significant, significant level of the agriculture-producing provinces of Canada.

So I wouldn't describe as hasty our intention to move into the implementation phase.

And I'm reminded by the Minister of Agriculture this afternoon that beyond the programs we've discussed, the four other pillars of the APF are food safety, renewal, science and technology, environmental stewardship, and there's a package there of \$28 million. And particularly at the top of that list, food safety of course is a matter of significant, of significant concern right now. And we want to be sure that we can access for Saskatchewan producers the full benefits.

And so we look to the signing in July with the caveat that I've already put on the thing, that indexing and the whole matter of trade injury, we feel that needs yet to be addended, addended to the discussion and addressed more so than we've seen addressed to date.

Mr. Hermanson: — I thank the Premier for that answer. And in fact if these concerns are not met, what is the plan of the Minister of Agriculture; what is the plan of your government? If we don't get that addendum, if we don't get those considerations, will the APF be signed on to? Or is it the commitment of this government not to sign on to it until those details are put in place in a way that is acceptable to the industry in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well as I think I observed earlier, Mr. Chair, in our discussion this afternoon, it would seem in recent months at least, or perhaps in recent years, that every time we have to engage Ottawa it's a fighting and a clawing to move things forward. It's taken quite a substantive battle to move us to this date.

If those are not achieved prior implementation, then we're going to be where we were in the negotiation of the APF. We're going to be working with the industry. We are working with the industry. And we'll work with other provinces, including those who have signed up, to move to the next step, which is going to have to fight for the old trade injury piece and the indexing piece and other areas that may be identified that are insufficient.

I just want to be very clear. Our commitment to sign the APF moves us into the programming as it's been described. This is not a commitment that we remain silent or will somehow then say everything is fine. No. We've achieved this much; what more do we need to do and how are we going to work at it?

As we've brought it to this state, we'll work with other provinces, we'll work with other ministries of agriculture, and we'll work with the industry. And I think in combination that's how we've been able to move the Government of Canada to the place at least where they are now.

Mr. Hermanson: — That's not, Mr. Chair, that's not a very clear answer. And obviously it doesn't give us much of substance to take back to producers in the province as to what they can expect from this program. And we feel really badly about not being able to communicate more clearly to our constituents what the details of this new APF will be and what the bottom line is for the Government of Saskatchewan.

Last year and somewhat the year before, much of Saskatchewan was in a severe drought climate, and the Premier alluded to that earlier. What is in the new APF that will protect producers from the ravages of droughts like we have seen in the last couple of years?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well I would like to be able to report to the Leader of the Opposition that somehow we had some significant control over the climate or the weather and we could prevent the drought. We can't guarantee that.

But that's why we've built the safety net programs to deal with the circumstances that may be by drought or by flood, as I said, or by insect infestation, or whatever challenge may occur. When those challenges are of nature, we think there is an appropriate response.

When those challenges come to us from international trade subsidy, again I repeat we think there needs to be a much more significant national response.

But in answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question, we are building and strengthening those long-term safety net programs. There is the APF. There are the crop insurance programs. These we see as the response necessary to those particular challenges to producers and the farm community of Saskatchewan.

If the Leader of the Opposition has more to say about what should be done than they are saying in their current campaign literature, I would very much appreciate the opposition advising this legislature, advising government, on what he thinks we should do — what programs should be put in place, what is the level of funding they should have, where does this level of funding come from?

It's one thing to get up and say, what are you doing? It's another, in a responsible situation, if the Leader of the Opposition would stand up and say, well here are some programs we think you should implement and here's how they can be funded and here's how they will benefit the producer. I'm more than happy to listen to any ideas that the Leader of the Opposition may have. To date in this session, I have not heard

one. So perhaps today will change that pattern.

Mr. Hermanson: — If the, Mr. Chair, if the Premier would check out his history, he would know that following the 1999 election, when agriculture was in a very critical situation, in fact there was an emergency debate in this very legislature on the issue of agriculture, the Saskatchewan Party was involved . . . The Premier is not listening to my response, but I will give it to him anyways. The Saskatchewan Party was involved with the industry and with the government, the minister at the time was Mr. Lingenfelter, and we were involved, we were inside the doors discussing the details that were required to help agriculture.

The Saskatchewan Party was informed by the NDP government that we could only be a part of that group as long as we did not criticize the NDP in Saskatchewan. We could criticize the federal government, but we weren't permitted to say anything negative about the NDP in the province of Saskatchewan.

Obviously the official opposition cannot fulfill its role if it's not allowed to review the province's role in agricultural issues. So the Premier's predecessors, Mr. Romanow and Mr. Lingenfelter, were making gag orders for the official opposition, telling them, telling them that they had to march to the NDP's step or they couldn't play in the, they couldn't play in the band.

Well quite frankly, Mr. Chair, the parliamentary role of the opposition is to be in a position where it can review the actions of the government. That is our responsibility. As I mentioned to the Premier at the beginning of these estimates, that is why we are paid by the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan. If we are going to be gagged by the government and have to play only by their rules and praise the government even should they deserve some criticism, well, Mr. Chair, we are not fulfilling our responsibility to the people of Saskatchewan.

(17:30)

I would say to the Premier, when he calls the election, we will clearly outline our agriculture policy. And I daresay it will be miles and miles ahead of the agriculture policy that the NDP might want to propose. So again I would ask the Premier to answer the questions.

The federal Finance minister, Mr. Manley, has suggested that federal economic growth projections will be revised downwards because of the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) outbreak and because of the BSE outbreak. I want to know from the Premier of Saskatchewan, what are his new economic projections for economic growth in Saskatchewan given the impact of BSE on our provincial economy? How much lower than 6.8 per cent will our real GDP (gross domestic product) growth be?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I don't think the Leader of the Opposition can get off the hook quite this easily. It is passing strange that the Leader of the Opposition can stand in the Saskatchewan legislature and say, I'm not going to divulge any of our policy until you call an election. Now that indicates to

me one or two things — either there is no policy or it's a policy he's not very proud of.

Obviously we are in an election year. Between now and the fifth anniversary of the last election there will be a call to the polls. It is very interesting that the Leader of the Opposition will refuse not to . . . to discuss even their policies on agriculture within the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. He says no, no, we're not going to speak; you've got to wait for an election and then I will reveal all.

Well now this . . . I believe it's unheard of in Saskatchewan politics. I tell you, when most oppositions are looking to seek government, they're more than happy to talk about their policies. They're more than happy to advise the government on what the government should be doing.

What we have is an opposition that says, we have no advice to give the Government of Saskatchewan. And the Leader of the Opposition just stood in the Saskatchewan legislature and said, I will not give advice to the Government of Saskatchewan because in 1999 we joined a committee, a committee which went to Ottawa, came home, and then violated all the commitments that we had made to hang together and fight Ottawa; no, they went offside as soon as they got home.

Now I do have at my disposal — I think so — a bit of campaign literature that seems to be going around the city of Regina here about agriculture. Now I guess what I can do is see if the Leader of the Opposition will in the legislature at least admit that this is the policy of the party.

He says here that under agriculture they would negotiate a new long-term safety net program to stabilize farm businesses and protect farm families from international commodity price wars. Well that's the policy. What's the detail? What are the details of the long-term safety net program that will differ from the APF? What's the detail?

He says that they're going to introduce an enhanced crop insurance program. Well tell us about the enhanced crop insurance program. Tell us how it will be funded, because all day they've criticized this government for accepting new debt under crop insurance.

Mr. Chair, they can't have it both ways. You can't have an expanded crop insurance program and not provide the public funding. So how much public funding are we going to have for that?

They're going to reduce, he says under agriculture, the burden of education property tax on farm land. Well let's hear the detail. Let's hear the detail. And then interestingly enough, Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition, the Saskatchewan Party, say that they support producer choice in grain marketing. They support producer choice in grain marketing.

Now just what does that mean? Does that mean they support or do not support the single-desk marketing of the Canadian Wheat Board? Does that mean they do not support the Canadian Wheat Board? Well then, let us have them stand up. The Leader of the Opposition has an opportunity right now in the legislature to stand up in public and answer some of these questions.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well the Premier's not doing his job; the Premier's not answering questions. He's pretending to be the Leader of the Opposition and after the next election he'll have the opportunity to be the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Chair, the Saskatchewan Party has been crystal clear on agriculture policy. There was a drought last year. We came up with five emergency measures we were prepared to implement. The government, I believe, rejected about four of them. They were excellent and they were specific details.

On the marketing of our wheat, we support the Canadian Wheat Board but we believe it should be a voluntary marketer of Prairie producers' wheat. We've been clear on that since the inception of the party. I don't know where the Premier's been; maybe he's been hiding in the basement in Moose Jaw or something.

Our agriculture policy is clear. All of our policy is clear. And there will be more details when the election is called. We're prepared to do the job. The Premier just has to call the election.

Now I mentioned, Mr. Chair, that the NDP slammed the door on the Saskatchewan Party being involved inside the tent on agriculture issues back in 1999. But under our current Premier — that was the former premier, Mr. Romanow and the former Agriculture minister, Mr. Lingenfelter — but today nothing has changed. We have the worst crisis facing agriculture in my lifetime — the potential destruction of the beef industry in the province of Saskatchewan, and that extends beyond our borders to all of Canada.

The Minister of Agriculture, who also was the minister of industry and trade, Industry and Resources — I'm not sure which one — got up in this House and criticized the Parliament of Canada for recessing last week when the BSE crisis was still not yet resolved. And at the same time, the other minister and the member for Regina Victoria criticized the official opposition in Saskatchewan for wanting to be at work on behalf of the people of the province.

Now we know that the NDP are taking a rough ride and they're really hammered whenever they come and sit in this Assembly, and we know that they really want to get out from under their responsibility. But it was appalling, in the midst of the BSE crisis, to hear the member for Regina Victoria and to hear members of cabinet suggesting we should just all go home and abandon the people of Saskatchewan, abandon the beef industry — that the Minister of Agriculture had everything under control; it's all in his capable hands and we should just trust him.

Total disregard for the Legislative Assembly. Total disregard, Mr. Premier, for the MLAs who represent most of rural Saskatchewan, most of the beef producers, most of the feedlot operators, many of the auction markets in the province of Saskatchewan. We were told to just go home; everything would be fine.

Well, Mr. Premier, we suggested a way, we suggested a way so that the member for Regina Victoria could go home and relax in his backyard. But we are prepared to stay on top of this issue.

We suggested that the Agriculture Committee — and it seems appropriate that there should be an agriculture committee in the province of Saskatchewan — should meet regularly to be briefed on the BSE issue. I mean we were briefed, Mr. Premier, on the 9/11 issue. You ensured that the official opposition was briefed on what Saskatchewan was doing on security issues out of 9/11. This is a crisis of greater immediate impact on the province of Saskatchewan, the BSE crisis, and yet your government is suggesting that we should all go home, we should put our feet up on the deck, and just ignore the problem.

Mr. Premier, we want the Agriculture Committee to meet on a weekly basis and if need be we want you to recall the legislature in August if the US border is not reopened. Will the Premier show consideration to one of the province's most important industries and agree to our very reasonable and appropriate request?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition today began his presentation in this process of estimates by making it very clear that he was not today going to answer any questions — that he today, in this legislature, would not advance answers to questions; that he would not be discussing his party policies and so on. He made that very clear in the comments that he made at the start of this process this afternoon. Now he says he needs this legislature to voice his opinion.

Well, Mr. Chair, since the day that we became informed about the situation of the one isolated case of BSE in Alberta, every day hence, this Minister of Agriculture has been at work on this file. He has consulted . . . he has consulted regularly — it cannot be denied — with the Agriculture critic across the way. If there's any denial of that, I'd like to hear it now. Immediately. He has participated in conversation and consultation with the opposition.

We have appreciated; as I'm sure the livestock producers of Saskatchewan have appreciated, as I'm sure the citizens of Saskatchewan have appreciated it, for the most part we have dealt with this issue in a non-partisan fashion in this legislature. And there's no use in now trying to engage in partisan discussion about it. We face a common problem.

Now the fact . . . But you see, you see, Mr. Chair, they will look for any opportunity to criticize, to pull down.

Now the solution, Mr. Chair, is to continue working together. Decisions that will need to be made, if they are required to be made in the legislature, we will call this legislature. If the Leader . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . But you see, Mr. Speaker, you see, Mr. Chair, my point is made. All they want to do is make noise. All they want to do is make noise. All they want to do is to try and be heard.

Is there a deep concern over there? Well I'm not so sure of the deep concern. Well the Leader of the Opposition says the legislature should be sitting to deal with this. Well interestingly enough, he should have his members show up.

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Chair, I'm sorry to see the Premier

losing his temper.

We're doing our job. We've not missed a single assignment in this legislature since he recalled the legislature. For him to, for him to suggest that in some way we have not been involved in every question period, every . . . We have not . . . We have been involved with every Bill, the few that they have introduced. And, Mr. Chair, we have handled the estimate process extremely well and professionally.

So I would suggest the Premier should apologize for those uncalled-for comments.

Now the Premier suggested that we should continue in a non-partisan way to deal with the agricultural issue, the BSE issue. What better way to do that than to allow the Agriculture Committee to continue to meet in July? If he's sincere, that's what he would do.

And you know, it's just bizarre that he would forget that he's the Premier and start asking us questions about what our agriculture policy is. I gave him two or three specific examples but that wasn't good enough because simply he doesn't have a position. He doesn't have an agriculture policy.

And so he thinks that perhaps because the NDP doesn't have a policy, maybe the official opposition doesn't either. Well I tell the Premier, we are very clear and specific on our positions, and our policy is very complete and detailed — far better than anything that the NDP has proposed.

Now let us . . . Because we're not getting answers on agriculture, I just simply ask the Premier a question that I know he'll answer off the top of his head. When will construction begin on the Broe ethanol plant at Belle Plaine?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — When, Mr. Chair, the appropriate financing is in place.

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Chair, I asked . . . Mr. Chair, I ask the Premier when will the construction on the Broe ethanol plant at Belle Plaine commence.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, why does the Leader of the Opposition and the Saskatchewan Party fight ethanol? Why? It will commence, I tell you, Mr. Chair, it will commence when the appropriate financing is in place.

You see, Mr. Chair, we've spent some good quality time this afternoon and in this session with the Saskatchewan Party demanding that we do extreme due diligence when we are going to partner or take equity positions in expanding the economy. Fair enough. They claim great due diligence. We are doing just that. We are ensuring that the best possible financial arrangement can be achieved before we commit to enter into that financial arrangement.

They know the parameters that we have set out. We have been very, very open about the parameters of this deal. They seem to have a desire that this deal should not proceed. They seem to have a desire that this industry should fail. That of course would be good, I suppose, for their political future so they could tramp around and make some political hay. I'm not interested in

political hay.

I'm interested in building an ethanol industry in this province. I'm interested in building an industry that will provide a clean fuel source, that will use the grain of our producers, that can provide the distillers grain for a growing livestock feedlot industry. I'm interested in building an industry, not taking shots . . . taking pot shots.

We will, as the opposition has recommended, we will do the due diligence. We will take the time to ensure that the best possible deal is put in place, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Hermanson: — My question, Mr. Chair, to the Premier, is: when will construction of the Broe ethanol plant at Belle Plaine commence?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the construction will commence at the Broe . . . at the ethanol plant in Belle Plaine when the appropriate financing that is respectful of the interests of the Saskatchewan taxpayer is in place, and not before.

(17:45)

Now, Mr. Chair, he . . . the Leader of the Opposition was part of a political movement that once formed government in this province in the 1980s.

Oh he shakes his head. He said he wasn't supportive of the, he wasn't supportive of the Conservative government. The Leader of the Opposition did not support the Conservative government? He shakes his head. Well this is a shock to me.

But the fact of the matter is, when his political persuasion were in government here, I tell you, deals were being made right, left, and centre; and we're still paying for some of them, and we're still renegotiating some of them.

When we are going to sign a deal to provide for ethanol financing in Belle Plaine, it will be the best deal that we can achieve for the people of Saskatchewan, and that's when the construction will begin.

Mr. Hermanson: — Well, Mr. Chair, I guess we're still paying for GigaText, we're still certainly paying for SPUDCO, we're still certainly paying for mega bingo. The Premier is as guilty as anyone in Saskatchewan for misspending taxpayers' money.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — The Premier stated categorically that the funding, the financing is in place. He also said when the financing is in place, the construction will commence. So I ask the Premier, when will the Broe ethanol plant facility at Belle Plaine's construction commence? When will it happen?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I think I've said this now four times. When all of the appropriate financing is in place, achieving the . . . Mr. Chair, you know it would be very helpful, I think, if the Leader of the Opposition and some of his colleagues took advice from their member from Lloydminster. If they would listen to their member from Lloydminster on occasion, I think they would be well served.

Now I'm going to quote, I am going to quote their member from Lloydminster. The Leader of the Opposition should listen to this because if he took counsel from that member more often than some of these other members, I think he would be well served:

This is a report from the *Meridian Booster*, Lloydminster:

While there is concern from the Saskatchewan Party the financial plans seem to be delayed, (fair enough) Lloydminster MLA Milt Wakefield isn't entirely critical of both parties(CIC and Broe) for taking their time in the deal.

"I'm concerned but when you're . . .

This is quote, the member from Lloydminster, he says:

"I'm concerned but when you're talking about a project this big, there has got to be adequate and thorough pre-preparation done so that we don't mess up. To attract ethanol in the province and make Saskatchewan the production leader, I still think this is a great objective."

Why doesn't the Leader of the Opposition stand up right now and say you're doing the right thing? You've got a great, you've got a great objective in ethanol and you're doing the right thing by taking your time to get the financing right. Why doesn't he have the courage to say what his member from Lloydminster will say, instead of just trying to play pure politics now with ethanol?

Mr. Hermanson: — The official opposition cannot give the government support because they have not convinced us that they know how to do due diligence yet. They have not put the procedures in place to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are not being squandered.

Now, Mr. Chair, I think I misunderstood the Premier, and I apologize if I did. I thought he said in his first answer that the financing was in place. I understand now, and he has said, that the financing is still not yet in place, and so I apologize if I asked him questions that did not properly relate to his answer. I did not hear him correctly.

But then that begs the question, when does the Premier anticipate that the financing will be in place?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, obviously the financing has not come as quickly as we all might have hoped. And now we have a circumstance, and I think even the most partisan of the voices over there would admit, we have — if the partisan voices would be quiet for five seconds — Mr. Chair, I think even the most partisan of voices over there would admit that this BSE circumstance is affecting the entire livestock . . . (inaudible) . . . and that the ethanol industry and that distillers' grain is deeply involved in this ethanol industry. One more reason we need to move forward on the BSE file.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think there is little use in me trying to communicate a sensible answer to this opposition because they simply, they simply will not listen.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's unfortunate the

Premier is losing his concentration over there, so we'll change the focus. Perhaps we can get him back on track.

I would like to ask the Premier, does he still believe that nuclear energy is dirty energy?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I believe that the waste product of nuclear reactors is an extreme hazard to human health and the environment and must be handled with the kind of diligence unlike almost any other substance or product on earth.

Mr. Hermanson: — The Premier didn't quite answer the question. He made a statement earlier that he thought nuclear energy was dirty energy. Well it depends on a person's perspective. There is . . . Nuclear energy produces no greenhouse gases. The Premier has been supportive of Kyoto. Nuclear energy is in fact good for our, good for our . . . good for the people who are supporting the reduction in greenhouse gases.

In fact we rely, our economic future relies on countries purchasing uranium mined in northern Saskatchewan to generate nuclear energy. The United States generates a large percentage of its electricity from Saskatchewan uranium. They're providing jobs for Saskatchewan people, including many Aboriginal people in the province of Saskatchewan. France generates I think a majority of its electrical energy powered by nuclear plants with uranium from Saskatchewan.

Obviously if our future is wide open and we're promoting Saskatchewan and its potential, it's not helpful for the Premier of Saskatchewan to go around saying that nuclear energy is dirty energy. So I think he needs to be very clear. Does he believe that nuclear energy is dirty energy?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, would the opposition leader be so kind as to pass me the quote that he is citing in the House — my comment that he cites today that I have declared nuclear energy to be dirty energy? Would he provide the quote for me?

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have it on my desk but my colleagues will try and track that down and we will present it a little later.

However I wanted to also pursue another issue with regard to energy. And the Premier talks in a somewhat holier-than-thou attitude about how non-partisan his side of the House is and how in fact we're playing politics all the time. Well it so happens that one of my colleagues introduced a private member's Bill. And is it ever a terrible private member's Bill because it suggested there should be an oil and gas recognition week.

Now oil and gas happens to be the, you know, the major industry in Saskatchewan. I believe it's now ahead of mining and perhaps agriculture as far as generating revenue. In a very . . . an appropriate way the member for Thunder Creek asked his NDP colleagues if they would lend support to his private member's Bill. The oil and gas industry wants that recognition.

Now we have mining week in Saskatchewan and we recognize agriculture and we recognize many other industries and very

worthy causes in Saskatchewan and nationally and internationally. We have earth day, we have all kinds of good things, Mr. Premier.

But we don't have a week in recognition of the oil and gas industry. So my colleague, in a spirit of non-partisanship, in a collegial way, approached this House and asked your side of the House to support his private member's Bill which would recognize oil and gas week.

But I suggest, Mr. Chair, and perhaps the Premier will refute this — and if he does, that's great, they can still have a day or two to do something about this — but I suggest that because it was presented by the official opposition and the NDP did not want the official opposition to get credit even for the recognition of oil and gas week in Saskatchewan, they have refused to allow his Bill to move forward.

Does the Premier support that type of petty attitude? And if he doesn't, is he prepared to do something about it and let that Bill go forward before this House adjourns for the summer?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, on principle, on principle, in fact I have, and have appreciated, that we have in fact in past passed motions that have been presented by the opposition. I think the member of Moosomin recognized the food bank movement in this province with resolution.

Now I'm informed — not having been privy to some of those conversations — but I'm informed that the negotiations towards the end of the session, that our House leaders have made agreements about the agenda. I am not confident that at this hour that that agenda will permit a change. It's a discussion has been established between the House leaders and I don't want to particularly intervene in the House leaders' discussions of the agenda.

But let me just say this, there is no principle that I hold or we hold that this could not be potentially a development here. But I would want to refer it to our . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I can only speak to what I'm reported to through the matter of the House leaders.

Perhaps if the member from Cannington wants the floor, he should take the floor officially. Please get to a microphone. Mr. Chair, I would invite . . .

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Premier asked if I would provide the source of his comment about nuclear energy. And you know, we have it here. It is from *The StarPhoenix*, January 31, 2003. It was on page A2 and it said:

The Premier also made it clear (I'm quoting from the paper) (that) he doesn't support nuclear power or a nuclear waste dump.

"If we can supply power to Alberta, we'll do it through cogeneration or wind. The notion that you could build a reactor that's economic is a very, very questionable assumption. And this isn't a clean source of power. It's probably . . .

He doesn't even say dirty. He says:

It's probably the dirtiest, given what comes out (of) the tailpipe . . ."

So I'd be happy to table *The StarPhoenix* article if the Premier so chooses or so requests. Obviously, obviously the Premier has forgotten the interview that he had just a few months ago with *The StarPhoenix*, or at least the news conference that *The StarPhoenix* was reporting.

I would like to move on to the issue of revenue sharing and property taxes. The cities of Saskatchewan have expressed a grave concern at the reduction of revenue sharing they have received from the province of Saskatchewan.

As a matter of fact when the new Finance minister released his budget in late March of this year, I think the most profound criticism of the budget came from the mayors of the cities of Saskatchewan who were appalled and who felt betrayed that the Government of Saskatchewan, the NDP government did not come close to meeting the revenue-sharing amounts that they had anticipated would be forthcoming.

Now I'm not sure what was promised by individual cabinet ministers on the other side, but we really sensed that from their public pronouncements of criticism over the budget and the fact that revenue sharing was not increased substantially, that the government had failed to keep commitments that the cities felt they had been entitled to and would be receiving.

Mr. Chair, urban revenue sharing in 1991-92 was 62.2 million. Urban revenue sharing in 2001-2002 was \$26.9 million. How is the Premier going to account for this drastic reduction in revenue sharing for our urban municipalities?

(18:00)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, we've enjoyed a very, very good working relationship with the urban municipalities, with rural municipalities, with our northern municipalities.

Yes, it's fair to say that inheriting the financial mess that we did in the 1990s, early 1990s, that revenue sharing was diminished in that period of time. But the record in the last two budgets and upcoming budget is a record of restoring a value of revenue sharing. So a 10 million last year, a 10 million this year, and a commitment to 10 million next year in direct revenue sharing.

But in addition to revenue sharing for our urban municipalities and our rural municipalities, for municipalities across the province, we have instituted grants in lieu of taxes where there are provincial facilities. And now there is a program of grants in lieu of taxes and that has grown significantly. We have invested significant dollars in our centenary grants and our infrastructure programs, many of which have been of a direct benefit to our urban municipalities.

Would our urban municipalities seek more support from the province? Of course they would. If we had resources that could be fairly applied, it's a high priority area but there are also many other high priority areas. We have high priorities in health care, and education, and highways, and so on.

There is a discussion, there has been a discussion about the

division of those revenue-sharing dollars. Some arguing from an urban perspective that they should be more matched to population, others from a rural perspective saying there should be an equal distribution.

And that's a discussion that continues to go on. I know there's a fruitful discussion happening between SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and the department, the government right now, on that particular issue.

We have come some significant way in the past several years in providing provincial support to our municipalities, and with revenue sharing over the last two budget years and our projection to the next budget year is increases in each of those budget years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Chair, the Premier suggests that the reason why revenue sharing is low in 2001-2002 is because of mistakes made in the 1980s. Mistakes were made in the 1980s, but the urban revenue sharing, after all those mistakes were made, were still \$62.2 million. After 10 years of NDP government that had been reduced to \$26.9 million. So does that mean it was mistakes of the 1990s that caused the Premier to drastically cut revenue sharing to urban municipalities?

Interestingly enough, Mr. Premier, SaskTel on its risky non-core investments lost \$65 million — \$65 million blown out the door. And yet the Premier cannot increase a paltry \$26.9 million of revenue sharing to urban municipalities.

Mr. Chair, it is no wonder the urban municipalities of Saskatchewan feel betrayed by the Premier and his NDP government.

I just want to ask a couple of questions on a different subject. Mr. Premier, has your government met with officials from the treaty governance office of the FSIN?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, just to be absolutely clear, the Leader of the Opposition suggests and says in his comment, why has this Premier cut funding to revenue sharing? The fact of the matter is since I've been Premier, there's been increases in revenue sharing every year with a commitment to next year. That's the fact.

We meet regularly, Mr. Chair, we meet regularly with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. I very recently have signed a bilateral protocol to ensure that we meet regularly; both as individual ministers, as Premier with chief, as a cabinet with members of the FSIN.

We are meeting very regularly with the First Nations in whatever area of endeavour that we're engaged in, whether it's in the treaty discussions or whether it's in the discussions around gaming or economic development or social development, just as we meet regularly with individual tribal councils, individual First Nations and their chiefs.

So if the Leader of the Opposition has a more specific issue or question to raise, I can try and address it.

Mr. Hermanson: — Well I thought . . . Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thought I was fairly specific. We know that the Premier has met and his officials have met with FSIN.

But we specifically want to know if he or his officials have met with the treaty governance office of FSIN.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, perhaps I can get from the opposition a little more clarity.

We know the governance tables and treaty discussions happened there. There is the work of the Treaty Commissioner? Is he referring to the work that's conducted by the Treaty Commissioner? What specific work is he requesting the information about?

Mr. Hermanson: — There is . . . Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is a treaty governance office as part of FSIN. And we're wondering . . . I mean, they are involved in the negotiations over self-government. I mean they play a fairly important role in the future of the Aboriginal people of Saskatchewan.

And we are asking simply if your government, your officials, your minister or ministers have met with officials of the treaty governance office.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I can't detail the meetings of all officials in government. We'll find out if there needs to be some detail provided about when, where, and so on. But I'm absolutely aware that we sit at the bilateral tables. We're in discussions with the First Nations around treaty governance all the time. We're meeting with . . . I meet with the chief regularly. We meet with the, as I said, the leadership, the vice-chiefs; we meet with the grand councils; we meet with individual chiefs.

And if your question is, do some officials from the Government of Saskatchewan meet with officials about treaty governance with the FSIN, I assume they do. But we can, we can gladly provide you any detail you might want about it.

Mr. Hermanson: — Well we'd appreciate . . . Thank you, Mr. Chair. We'd appreciate it if the Premier would in fact do that.

But we would also ask him if he can tell us today what his government is doing to fulfill the end of the tripartite agreements with relation to Aboriginal self-government. Where are things at?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I suspect, Mr. Chair, that's the question that the Leader of the Opposition is perhaps more interested in. And we're in the midst of that process. It's not a concluded process by any means.

And we're at table with on one hand, the MLTC, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, and the tremendous work that's been going on there. And we're at the table with the FSIN. And we're at table with the federal government. And of course we're there as the province.

The work is not completed, as the opposition leader I am sure would recognize. It's long and complicated and arduous but we have a deep commitment to that work. And I think some real

evidence of progress that has been made but the work is not done and we continue to be at it.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's not a very complete answer. I'll ask another question. Perhaps I'll be more successful.

What, Mr. Premier, has your government done to educate the people of Saskatchewan on Saskatchewan's role in the treaty governance process?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it was just not so long ago that we've committed that treaty education would be part of our school curriculum in Saskatchewan, so that all citizens can understand the importance of the treaties. We have the work of the Treaty Commissioner's office who is doing tremendous educational work right across the province. I would invite the Leader of the Opposition to review the kind of work that he's doing.

I wonder . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, is the question here . . . Are the questions being framed to have the debate about whether we support the process? If it's a question about whether . . . If the question . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well maybe this member . . . You know, all day I have had members of the opposition from their seats, very brave, but not a one of them will stand on their feet other than the leader. Now if the member from Sask Rivers, who apparently does not support this process by what he's saying from his seat, wants to get on his feet and say it, then get on your feet and say it.

Now, Mr. Chair, if the Leader of the Opposition is seeking to ask the question, do we support the process, do we support moving to recognize the implications of the treaties, those important treaties between the First Nations of Saskatchewan and the Crown, you bet we support those treaties. And we, you bet, support the process of what needs to be done. And so, if it's a debate about whether we support the process, there's no equivocation on this side of the House.

And if we want to engage in the debate, then I would ask the Leader of the Opposition, does he and the opposition members support the process?

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well the Premier seems to be very uninformed about what's happening, but we are concerned that tripartite agreements are ongoing and the province has been dragging its feet. The province hasn't been playing its proper role in this whole process.

You know, the members on the other side, they talk a good line, but when it actually comes to doing things, moving the process along, they've been sitting dead in the water, Mr. Chair. And quite frankly, there's a lot of people losing a lot of patience with the NDP government over their inaction on this file as well.

Mr. Chair, we'll move on to the . . . Mr. Chair . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order. There appears to be some private conversations going across the floor and I would ask the . . . If they do want to, if they do want to have the private conversation, I'd ask them to move behind the bar to have that private conversation.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that intervention. But I was rather surprised by the Premier's comment that that was unbelievable when he really doesn't even seem to know anything about the file himself. How would he know what's believable and what isn't believable? The Premier is out of tune with what's going on and what the needs of the province of Saskatchewan are and particularly what the needs of our Aboriginal people are.

Let's move on to the issue of justice. Mr. Chair, from the past three years of statistics from Statistics Canada, numbers show that Saskatchewan is still having one of the highest crime rates in the country. That seems hard to believe because you know we think of Saskatchewan as a law-abiding, peaceful, warm, hospitable place, and for the most part it is. But for some reason we still have both property and violent crime problems in the province of Saskatchewan and it's something that absolutely has to be addressed.

We have one of the highest youth crime rates in Canada. And now, Mr. Chair, I have been privileged to meet with young people all across Saskatchewan and 99.9 per cent of our young people are outstanding citizens of this province. I'm proud of all of them. But in spite of that, we have a high youth crime rate in this province. Why is that so? Does the Premier admit that the NDP has failed to deliver on its promise to place 200 more police officers in the province of Saskatchewan? Might that in fact be contributing to our high crime rates in the province?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, on the question of the levels of policing in Saskatchewan, the Leader of the Opposition will know but will not recognize, of course, that since 1999 this government has seen to it that all of the vacancies that existed within the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) across Saskatchewan that time are now filled, now filled. Not . . . Now filled. Vacancies filled.

Now they will not count those as new officers. They are not new positions, but they are clearly new police officers in the field. The member of Humboldt seems to have some knowledge of this; I understand that.

(18:15)

In addition, 146 new officers. What does that result in, Mr. Chair? Well it results in a report from StatsCan that Saskatchewan's police ratio is now the highest, highest in Canada. Saskatchewan has the most police officers per capita of all the provinces. Saskatchewan has 198 per 100,000 people, followed by Quebec and Manitoba, Friday's report says . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . So now the member from Canora says that we still lead in crime. We do not lead in crime. We have some high crime stats in certain areas, there's no doubt about that. Why the Leader of the Opposition, the member of the Saskatchewan Party, want to go tramping around the country saying we lead in crime — because it's good for their political cause, I suppose. They'll say or do anything.

Now the reality is we have some high crime stats. We had some very high crime stats in terms of auto theft, particularly in the capital city, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, North Battleford. We have seen a significant reduction. We've seen a recent climb in those numbers, but again back down this month as the minister

reports. And we've been able to accomplish that, not through a process of throwing young people into inappropriate punishment, but by being diligent in their apprehension, diligent in their application to workers, and diligent in working with the police.

Now the Leader of the Opposition says, why do we have this? Why do we have this? Well it is fair I think to say that much of the young offender activity in our province, criminal activity, may well be related to family conditions, to FAE (fetal alcohol effects) and FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome). I think that is a fair observation. Now if . . . What is the solution therefore?

Well the solution is therefore much deeper than simply more police officers. We really do need to kind . . . do the kind of work that I know the member from Humboldt has been very supportive of. How can we work with families to eliminate these kinds of issues that have such a devastating effect on these young people?

But I would ask the Leader of the Opposition, if he agrees that some of the difficulty we have with some of our young people is directly related to FAS and FAE — that was my observation when I worked in the field of young offenders — if he agrees with that, is then the solution to take the young person that's been affected by this kind of tragic circumstance and put them in a boot camp? Is that the answer? I think not, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. The answer of course was again incomplete. The Premier talked about new police officers but we know that the total number of police officers given retirements and such have not allowed the province and the NDP to meet its commitment of 200 new or additional police officers here in the province of Saskatchewan.

It's just one of many, many, many, many failed promises from the 1999 election campaign — a campaign that I think the Premier was involved behind the scenes as an advisor or as an election campaign strategist, something along that line. And that's very, very disconcerting.

Mr. Chair, the time has gone all too quickly and I wished we had as much time as we've already spent to deal with a number of issues. We haven't talked very much about SPUDCO; we've brought that issue up a whole lot in the House. I have a number of questions that I wanted to ask about health care. And I'm going to run out of time and not be able to ask as many questions about health care, about education, and more questions that I wanted to ask about SLGA.

Just on the health care file though, I have to make a couple of comments for which I want the Premier to respond. The problem that has been identified, it was identified by the NDP prior to the last election, is we do not have . . . we have too long a waiting list in the province of Saskatchewan. And the NDP made a commitment to reduce waiting lists by — I believe it was 30 per cent, if I remember correctly — 30 per cent smaller, shorter, waiting list for health care procedures in Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Chair, they haven't shortened at all, they've doubled in length. People are waiting not just weeks for health care procedures, they're waiting months, and they're waiting years for some health care procedures. And no, they may not be life

threatening but they hurt. They hurt a lot. If you need a hip replacement, it hurts not to have one. Every step you take hurts and the NDP government doesn't care. They haven't been prepared to fulfill their commitment to shorten waiting lists; they are longer than ever.

Why are they so long, Mr. Chair? Well we have an inadequate number of health care professionals in the province of Saskatchewan. Now it would seem to me, Mr. Premier, that that would be a problem that could be fixed. If we don't have enough health care professionals, let's train more health care professionals.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Under the NDP we have seen, we have seen seats for training for health care professionals cut — fewer nurses trained, fewer other health care . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member, the member for Regina South says, no. The member for Regina South is wrong. The numbers used to be over 400 nurses trained on an annual basis and now we're somewhere in the neighbourhood of 2 to 250 nurses trained on an annual basis.

Quite frankly, Mr. Chair, there are more nurses and other health care professionals in Saskatchewan retiring or leaving the province than we are training. We have nurses who are run ragged trying to care as best as they can for patients. They are frustrated. They communicated back to the NDP government prior to the 1999 election that they were upset.

The Premier seems disinterested in this. I'm not sure why. I don't know what he's reading there but he doesn't seem to care about our health care system. There have been incidences under his leadership, following his becoming the Leader of the NDP, where health care professionals have expressed not only their deep concern but their utmost frustration at the lack of NDP action in training more health care workers in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now we have a situation in our province where, if you want an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), if you want an MRI, you have to hope that it's either through SGI or Workers' Compensation because otherwise if you have to depend on the normal health care system to provide you with an MRI, you wait for weeks and weeks and months and months. Of course if it's costing MRI or SGI, they quickly transfer you to Edmonton and you can get one in just a few days.

Now if the average citizen, if an MLA wants, needs an MRI . . . Perhaps, Mr. Chair, someone may have a tumour; someone may have a tumour and it's growing. They may have to wait weeks and months to get an MRI unless, Mr. Chair, they dig into their own pocket . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. Order.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know the NDP don't take criticism on health care policy very well. They think that they somehow are the custodians of our health care system. They think they're the defenders of our medicare system. Now, Mr. Chair, they've become the abusers of our health care system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — They allow people to suffer undue pain and hardship, be off work for months and months because they can't get adequate health care in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan used to be a leader in health care. We are now trailing the other provinces in the delivery of health care to our people.

If you think you may . . . If your doctor thinks you may have a tumour, you have to dig into your own money. So much for our medicare system. So much for availability of medicare. You got to dig into your own pocket if you want health care. You got to go to Alberta or some other place, spend \$600 of your own money to get an MRI or else Saskatchewan's NDP will leave you to perhaps die for lack of attention by our health care system.

Mr. Chair, we have seen the greatest abrogation of responsibility by a provincial government on health care that this nation has ever seen — right here in the birthplace of medicare, right here in Saskatchewan, and under the watch of an NDP government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, if this government had any courage, if this government had any commitment to the people of Saskatchewan, they would do one of two things. They would either act, they would put forward a program that they could act upon, or they would call an election and let the people of Saskatchewan sweep them out of office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Chair, why doesn't the government have the resources to fix health care in this province? Well the federal government have transferred more dollars for health care — still not enough, Mr. Chair, but more. And other provinces have taken advantage of those extra dollars. What have we done in the province of Saskatchewan?

Well I think SaskTel spent \$100,000 to buy a balloon — \$100,000 to buy a balloon and float it around Saskatchewan. How many MRIs would that have bought, Mr. Chair?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — But it's more important to this NDP government that they fly a SaskTel balloon around Saskatchewan for \$100,000 cost to the taxpayer than it is to care for the . . . to look after the health care needs of the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Chair, it's more important to invest money on the Australian stock market and lose it than it is to have safe highways in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Chair, it's more important to spend millions of dollars on a Future is Wide Open campaign than to put funds into education for Saskatchewan's youth.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Chair, the NDP love to go floating around, go floating around, do their processes, do their news releases, cut the ribbons here and there, do their photo ops.

I saw two of the ministers who were in trouble today in routine proceedings. It was a member's statement. And I saw the member from Meadow Lake get up and try to make a good news announcement because he's going to lose his seat in the next election in the Meadow Lake constituency.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — And, Mr. Chair, I saw the . . . I saw other members stand up in the House and give statements. I saw the Agriculture minister get up and announce he was handing out a few dollars to a few organizations in the Yorkton constituency. Why is he doing that in the last days of this session? Because, Mr. Chair, the Minister of Agriculture is going to lose his seat in the next election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — And, Mr. Chair, the minister's not going to lose his seat by 6 votes or 100 votes or 200 votes, he's going to lose his seat by hundreds and hundreds of votes. Because the people of Yorkton, the people of Meadow Lake, the people of Saskatoon, the people of Regina, the people across Saskatchewan have lost patience with an NDP government that has lost touch with the people of this province; with a government that's more concerned about, as Janice MacKinnon said, at being wheeler dealers — being wheeler dealers. Going around making deals in Australia. Going around making deals in Nashville. Going out and making deals in Atlanta, Georgia.

Mr. Chair, they're trying to sell a land . . . an automated land titles system that doesn't work. They're going to Albania. They're going to the Ukraine. Mr. Chair, they went to Manitoba. Nobody wants the thing because it doesn't work. They spent \$107 million on a plan that nobody else believes in. Why should the people of Saskatchewan believe in a government that cannot deliver good programs and good services to the people of this province?

Mr. Chair, day after day after day the Premier, his minister for CIC, the Minister of Industry and Resources, the Minister of Agriculture get up and refuse to answer questions on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. And they say, what would you do, to the official opposition. What a cop out. What a sad state of affairs when a government can't get up and speak for itself, defend its actions, and tell the people of Saskatchewan what they're doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Chair, the only solution is to call an election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — The Premier was not elected in the last general election. He won the leadership of the NDP Party because NDP members in this province wanted something safe. They wanted the status quo. And so the current Premier represented the status quo — wasn't going to move the NDP off in any direction other than what they had seen in the past.

What was the result, Mr. Chair? The result has been a government of inaction; a government where an unelected Premier is hanging on and hanging on in fear of going to the people of Saskatchewan and being repudiated.

Mr. Chair, the Premier committed to calling an election in the year 2003. He's already missed his primary opportunity. He should have called the election this spring. If he had any courage, if he really believed in his government, he would have called the election in the spring of 2002. Mr. Chair, he is going to regret not having called an election. The people of Saskatchewan this fall, when he does have the courage to call the election, will throw that bunch out and elect a Saskatchewan Party government and we will grow the province by 100,000 people in 10 years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(18:30)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it is . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, I expect that that speech might work at a Sask Party rally, but it sure doesn't work in the legislature and it sure doesn't work with the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — You know, I'm beginning to think, Mr. Chair, it doesn't even work with the Sask Party membership. You know, we had a little discussion today about the political future of our various political parties here in Saskatchewan. Now I observe what's going on in the Saskatchewan Party and it doesn't bode well for that leader.

He says he wants an election. Well it's pretty clear why he wants an election — because every day we don't have an election, they are going down in public popularity. They're going down in the popularity of even their own party members.

You take a look, Mr. Chair. I invite the members to take a look and I invite the public to take a look at the activity of this particular leader and this particular political party just over the last several weeks, just over the last several weeks.

Now sitting in opposition, of course, I understand there's not much you have to decide. There's no real responsibilities, I guess, except to be a little bit upfront and honest once in a while. But you do have a responsibility to uphold democracy within your own party. Surely there's a responsibility to uphold democracy within your own party.

And what have we observed of late of the Saskatchewan Party? Well 1,200 of their members — a large membership if I may say — came together in the Melville constituency to nominate a candidate. They nominated in a properly conducted nominating campaign one Grant Schmidt. The Grant Schmidt victory in Melville was the voice of the people of Melville. The voice of the people of Melville in a democratic process.

And what happens? In the most undemocratic of activity I've seen in the history of Saskatchewan, the leader of this official opposition says he will not be the candidate, I will not have him. He insults one of the most important citizens of the province, demeans one of the most important citizens of our province, says they won't have him. That's how they treat democracy.

And so I ask the people of Saskatchewan, I ask the people of Saskatchewan if that's how this political party and its leader will treat its own members — its own members — how will they be trusted to treat the people of Saskatchewan and listen to the people of Saskatchewan? How could they be trusted?

The Leader of the Opposition started this tirade of the last 10 minutes on the matter of health care. He was talking about our commitments to health care. Well let me talk about commitments to health care; let me talk about commitments to health care.

In the province that has now developed, I would argue, the most substantive action plan for the development of health care coverage and services for the people anywhere in this country, you will not find in any other province as detailed or thorough an action plan as you will find in Saskatchewan — a plan by the way, Mr. Chair, that was built in co-operation with the people of Saskatchewan through the good work of the Ken Fyke Commission and some tough decisions that we have made to lay the groundwork for the future of health care in Saskatchewan. He asked some very pointed questions about the training of health care professionals. He would have you believe, he would have you believe that health care professionals are not being trained in this province.

Just this past week, this Minister of Health, and this minister of Education . . . of Learning signed an agreement with the University of Saskatchewan and the medical college that will secure the future of that College of Medicine well into the future . . . (inaudible) . . . College of Medicine, with no assistance from that group over there, only criticism.

Now, Mr. Chair, in the most recent years, I just want to, I just want to share, if the member of . . . if the . . .

The Chair: — Order, order, order. Order, order. Members, the Chair does not want to be part of the debate, but I am having difficulty hearing the member who has the floor so if members could just bring the volume down a bit, I would appreciate it.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now if you would listen to the member of Canora, or the Leader of the Opposition, you would believe that we are not training health care professionals in this province.

I just want to read into the record the number of graduates

registering with the SRNA, the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, over the last number of years. Note these numbers: 1998 the number of graduates registering, 101; 1999, 115; the year 2000, 149; the year 2001, 146; the year 2002, 253.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Between 1999 and today we have grown the number of nurses training seats in this province by 65 per cent, from 180 to 300.

Now would that have happened under the leadership of that leader and that party? No chance. No chance. Because they absolutely committed in the last election, what would their funding to health be? Zero. They would freeze the funding to health.

When we have given health increases ranging from 6 to 8 to more per cent every year because this is a government that believes in publicly funded medicare, publicly administered medicare, well-funded from the public treasury.

Is the solution the solution that is proposed by the Leader of the Opposition to health? The solution proposed by the Leader of the Opposition, given particular voice by the member of Weyburn, what is the solution they say? The solution is private hospitals. That's what they say — private hospitals.

Well I'll tell you, this government, this province and the people of Saskatchewan full stop reject the Sask Party's notion about privatization of medicine, private hospitals, private-for-profit hospitals, not under the watch of this party or this government ever.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And right as we speak, Mr. Chair, right as we speak their candidate in the Carrot River Valley has been running around that constituency saying that what we need is an Americanized model of health care brought into here. That's what their candidates say. Is there any wonder therefore that the Carrot River Valley . . . that Carrot River Valley Sask Party want rid of that candidate? Is there any wonder about that?

Now we have a situation here, Mr. Chair, where this province is moving forward. Appropriately in recent days this has been described as a province on a roll — a province on a roll. Now you would never know that, you would never know that by listening to that Leader of the Opposition or any member of that caucus. You would think this province is in the, in the basket case category it was when they left government.

Well I'll tell you, the prognosis of the officials, the prognosis of the bond raters, the prognosis of the bankers, the people who declare that this province is on a roll, are correct. They are correct.

We've had some tough times and I'll tell you, Mr. Chair, the test of a government is not how you do in good times; the test of a government is how you do in some tough times and we've had some tough times. There's no doubt about that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — We've had some tough times. We've just come through the two worst years of drought in the province's history. That's not been easy. We've just come through the circumstance of September 11 and all of that effect on the markets of the world. We're now fighting our way through a BSE circumstance. These have not been easy times.

Can you therefore believe it, Mr. Chair, that now this province in the last two years has moved from a circumstance where we were losing jobs in record numbers to a situation where now we have enjoyed 13 straight months of job growth — 13 straight months, 13 straight months.

Can you, can you imagine a circumstance, Mr. Chair, where in the last two years we have taken this province from a circumstance, where we have a circumstance where our economy was showing modest growth to a situation where today we are predicted to lead economic growth in all of Canada — right here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — You'll know, Mr. Chair, you'll know and the people of Saskatchewan know right now we are enjoying record high — record high — vehicle sales, housing starts, consumer confidence. This is a province on a roll.

Right now you'll know, Mr. Chair, we've seen tremendous growth in our forestry. We're fighting the battle of the softwood lumber.

We've seen tremendous growth in the oil and gas, in the oil and gas economy of Saskatchewan. Year over year now 60 per cent, 60 per cent growth in drilling and exploration in our province. We stand on the cusp, Mr. Chair, of perhaps one of the world's largest, one of the world's largest diamond developments. This is a province on a roll.

And what this province will not do, will not do, is accept the negative voices, the voices of complaint, the voices of protest all the time from a Sask Party that has the gall to stand in the legislature and say we're not going to share our ideas, only in election campaign. Can you believe it, Mr. Chair? We will not share our ideas unless it's in a campaign.

You know the member, the member of Estevan, the member of Estevan stood up in Estevan, according to *The Estevan Mercury*, stood up in Estevan in her own chamber of commerce and apologized — apologized did the member of Estevan to her chamber of commerce — that she couldn't share any of their policy ideas. She couldn't share their policy ideas. And when the local journalist asked her well why is that, she said well you know what, every time we share a policy idea the government steals it.

Well I'll tell you what, Mr. Chair. This government has no interest in many of the policies of the Saskatchewan Party. For instance, we have no interest in the policy of the Saskatchewan Party which was identified by the critic of Liquor and Gaming earlier this session, no interest in the policy that says they're going to privatize liquor sales in this province — no interest in that policy.

In fact we have no interest in their policies of desiring to privatize the Auto Fund of SGI — that's what it says in their public policy document. We've got no interest in pulling, in pulling the Crowns to such a circumstance that they're on their knees and can't compete anywhere. We're not going to privatize the Crowns. And I tell you, we're not going to accept this doctrine of theirs that there should be no public investment. We will not.

So the member of Estevan does not need to worry about us stealing her ideas, Mr. Chair. We're not about to steal their ideas because we and the vast majority of Saskatchewan people reject their ideas — reject their ideas.

But I tell you what we are going to be about, Mr. Chair. I tell you what we are going to be about. We are going to be about continuing the work that we're doing as government — continuing building, expanding the economy of Saskatchewan; continue to build and expand the opportunities for our young people in Saskatchewan, whether they be employment opportunities or educational opportunities. We are going to continue to build and expand the publicly funded, publicly accessible health care system that we enjoy in Saskatchewan and lead the nation. We are going to continue to care for our neighbours and our brothers and sisters who are in need. We are going to continue to build and expand resources for the province's families.

This budget year, Mr. Chair, this budget year we have committed to expanding the child care spaces in the province by 1,200 — the largest expansion of child care spaces. In this budget we are reaching out to our disabled brothers and sisters, sons and daughters and neighbours to provide, to provide new resources, financial, and to provide new access into the workforce and contribution to our community.

We are going to build and expand with our First Nations people in this province. And we are going to respect and treat with fairness and equity the First Nations people of our province. And we are going to respect agreements that we have made with our First Nations people. We are going to walk with dignity together into this new century.

And I'll tell you this, Mr. Chair, just while I am on my feet, you will not find this Premier or this leader saying one thing at the FSIN and quite a different thing in this legislature or in other circumstances. I'll tell you that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And what will we be doing? What will we be doing, Mr. Chair? We will be celebrating the future of this province because the future of this province is a wide open future, Mr. Chair. And against all of their protests, against all of their protests, this Premier and this leader, this government and this party will not cease in telling Canadians, in telling people across this province, in telling people across this continent that the future of this great province is a future that is wide open — wide open for those who will dream big, plan well, and work hard because we believe in this province, Mr. Chair, we believe in this province.

(18:45)

And you know we look down the road, we just had a tremendous visit in our province from the Earl of Wessex where together we celebrated with the communities of Regina, Lloydminster, Melfort, Moose Jaw, the centennials. And we're looking down the road to 2005 when together across Saskatchewan we're going to celebrate the 100th anniversary, the 100th anniversary of this great province.

And we're going to be celebrating the commitments of those First Nations who first wandered these prairies and forests, and we're going to celebrate the contributions of the pioneers and the immigrants who have come over the generations. And we're going to look to ways to introduce and welcome new immigrants to this province as we move to the centennial.

And we're going to be celebrating the innovation of this province whether it be in medicare or in the Arts Board or in the innovation that's now occurring in our universities. We're going to celebrate our innovative spirit. We're going to celebrate our co-operative spirit. But more than anything else, we are going to understand that 2005 is the first year of our second century — the first year of this brand new century which, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Chair, will be Saskatchewan's century.

You just mark my words and mark my words about one other thing, about one other thing. I know I'm going to be in this desk, these members will be on this side of the House; there will be more of them. And from this side of the House this government and this Premier will be celebrating the centennial of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, I want to offer a sincere thanks to the officials who have assisted us in the deliberations this afternoon. I fear we did not draw upon their knowledge or expertise perhaps as much as we could have or should have, but I sincerely thank them.

And because we are accompanied today in the House by Mr. Dan Perrins, who is deputy minister to the Premier and therefore the province's most senior of civil servants — a man who has, if I may say, given a lifetime of public service to this province, began his career in the public service as a social worker — I want to say when I extend thanks to Mr. Perrins and to officials of his office, we are, I'm sure, as legislators extending thanks to the entire public service — the entire public service, many of whom over the course of this session and through the course of estimates have served us well in this legislature, but in vast numbers serve the people of Saskatchewan on a daily basis. So in thanking the officials today for their assistance, I want to, through them, thank the entire public service of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to move, after very much progress, that we report the Department of Executive Council and that we move to the Department of Learning.

**General Revenue Fund
Learning
Vote 5**

Subvote (LR01)

The Chair: — And I recognize the minister to introduce her officials.

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Chair of Committees. To my left is Dr. Craig Dotson, the deputy minister of the department. Further to the left and one behind is Dr. Margaret Lipp, executive director of the department. Behind Ms. Lipp is Dr. John Biss, executive director of university services.

Further along the back, next to Dr. Biss, is Brady Salloum, executive director of student financial assistance. In front of Mr. Salloum is Kevin Hoyt, director of financial and corporate services. Directly behind me is Dr. Michael Littlewood, executive director of school legislation and administration. And behind Dr. Littlewood is Darlene Heska-Willard, director of institutions.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And good evening to the minister and her officials once again. This is likely to be the last time we'll have an opportunity to present questions and hear the appropriate answers.

And we'd like to cover a variety of areas some of which we will re-cover from earlier discussions, areas where we didn't get quite as in detail or in depth as we would have possibly liked. And we're hoping to cover some new areas as well this evening. So thank you to the minister and her officials today.

Mr. Chairman, through you to the minister, when we were last speaking on the floor of the House, one of the questions that we had asked was the \$750,000 that was given directly to a company by the name of StarTAC.

And if I recall correctly, Madam Minister, you said that that money was given to the company specifically for proprietary training. Can you indicate for us, Madam Minister, where that money came from?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — The money came from Industry and Resources.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Through the Chair to the minister, was the Department of Learning ever asked to contribute that equal amount of money to cover the budgetary amount from Industry and Resources?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Not to our knowledge.

Mr. Elhard: — Is it just a coincidence then, Madam Minister, that some of the regional colleges lost an amount equivalent to \$750,000?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — The money did not come from our department.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, did the money come from any of the agencies or colleges that report to the department?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — No.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, is it anticipated that these types of cash, direct cash payments to businesses that want to come to the province of Saskatchewan for one reason or the other will become a hallmark of the NDP government?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair or Mr. Chair of Committees. Since 1995 we have had in the department employer-specific JobStart and Future Skills money. So this is not a new endeavour.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, could you explain for us what circumstances would require money be given companies from the strategic initiatives fund and what monies might come from the JobStart, Future Skills program? What is the distinction that would decide where the money comes from?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — The strategic initiatives fund is a component of the JobStart, Future Skills initiative. The criteria for that is . . . we will send to you. We don't have the official here tonight that has that information, that detail, so we'll send that to you, the criteria.

Another thing I just want to add is that the Industry and Resources budget provided the \$750,000. Our department provided 1.04 million over three years.

Mr. Elhard: — As I understood it, Madam Minister, the additional money you talked about was for the StarTAC project over the next three years. Is that correct?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Yes, that's right, through the JobStart, Future Skills initiative.

(19:00)

Mr. Elhard: — I would like to . . . I'd like if I could get some additional information, Madam Minister, going to a different subject area, on student support programs. We had talked about that on page 94 of the budget and that arose, Madam Minister, out of a request for an indication of why operational support had dropped by \$257,000. That figure can be found on page 92 for this year.

And at the time of the initial request you indicated that the drop was because of the transfer of the IT (information technology) technology capabilities from the post-secondary section, (LR11), and that had been transferred to student support programs, if I recall correct, (LR13).

Now I looked at this and realized that there was a significant difference, about \$600,000 roughly, in operational support in the student support programs category. So we've got a figure of about 300 and . . . I'm sorry, 257,000 that came from the post-secondary sector. But there's probably \$350,000 in the new area that you talked about that is over and above that figure.

So, Madam Minister, can you identify for us where the extra monies came into play?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — On page 92, the decrease of 300,000,

\$300,000 was due to the consolidating of the IT systems. The corresponding increase on page 94 of 600,000 was due to moving the 300,000 over as well as the increase in salary costs.

Mr. Elhard: — Well, Madam Minister, if that is the changes that have been made, are you not, are you not indicating a double entry here? If you've got the increase in salary costs and the transfer of the IT costs from the post-secondary education over to the other section, are you not . . . are you not somehow misrepresenting the actual figures?

The salary section of post-secondary shows a growth of \$331,000. The operational support shows a reduction of \$250,000. If you have that taken together, that doesn't add up to an increase of \$600,000 in the student support programs. It does quite the contrary.

Hon. Ms. Junor: — There are a couple more things in the budget that I could mention that would perhaps make you feel more comfortable with the increase.

As well as the salary increase and the consolidation of the information technology there is also one . . . consolidation of the information technology into the integrated income support system, which is IISS, and then there was one-time funding for the IISS. And then there's the transfer to K to 12 (kindergarten to grade 12) education of the career services hotline and the northern shared services branches.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, let's talk about the salaries under post-secondary education, (LR11). Under expenditure by type it says salaries \$2.573 million for 2003-2004. Now by my calculations that's an increase of \$331,000 and I'm sure that there must be some explanation that would satisfy me.

When I look at the loss of dollars in the operational support and the increase in salaries and I extrapolate those to the other section as you indicated, those don't add up to \$600,000. We actually have a net of about \$180,000. So I'm assuming that the other elements that you talked about in your previous answer will add up, make up the difference from about \$180,000 to the \$600,000. Can you verify that for us?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — The answer is yes.

Mr. Elhard: — Then the next question, Madam Minister, would be, will you?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — I have said that we can verify it, but if you want it in writing we'll be happy to provide that.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, I will accept that offer and hope that that's available as soon as possible.

The other area that I'd like to return to right now is as a result of our discussions a couple of days ago. I asked the minister at that time, has the minister or her officials inquired of SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) to determine if the advisory committees have recommended reverting to classroom scheduled training for the various trades programs as opposed to the competency based approach encouraged and promoted by SIAST previously.

I asked at that time for an explanation. I was wondering if the minister or her officials had contacted SIAST to determine what their response was to that particular issue?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — SIAST has about 50, over 50 discrete programs, each of which is serviced by an advisory board, some of which who have never had the competency based program approach. And we . . . SIAST itself is governed by a board that makes their own program decisions. So no, we have not contacted them.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, would it be your intention to contact them just to ask them about the justification for that decision, not in any attempt to sidetrack or derail their decision, but just to confirm why it is that the decision has been taken?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — The SIAST board and the SIAST advisory committees are doing a very good job of responding to industry needs and they are doing a very good job of deciding their programs and their students' needs. I wouldn't presume to interfere with their process so I will not be asking them for any justification of their decisions.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, would it not be in the interests of the province and the education providers as well as the students themselves to try and determine if there isn't some measurable outcome that may have been determined, given the competency based approach that has been so successful versus classroom instruction regimented approaches to these same programs?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Every program at SIAST is intended to build competencies and skills and I . . . they are doing a very good job of that. So I don't intend to ask them any of this.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, I think that, as a matter of public policy, it's important that the Minister of Learning have a very clear understanding of which types of approaches work most effectively. And I would think that in your capacity as minister, that even out of pure simple curiosity, you might want to ask that type of question for the sake of maybe helping guide public policy decisions in the future by the government of the day.

Madam Minister, I've got . . . I want to return to the, just briefly, to the issue of the salaries matter that I overlooked momentarily. There was an increase, as I mentioned, of \$331,000.

When I asked that question of you at the previous instance, you indicated that that represented a 2.5 per cent increase, that it was a negotiated increase for the department payroll. But if I do the arithmetic, that actually turns out to be a 14.76 per cent increase. And I'm wondering how you can explain the discrepancy.

(19:15)

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. There's two parts to the increase. One part is the 2.5 collective bargaining increase, the general economic increase. Another part of it is, of that part that's with the collective agreement, is increments which people move up on

the salary scale, as their years of service. Another one, the second one is the one-time adjustment to the department's budget from the result of the Learning department amalgamating.

And I just want to mention the first part of your question, your preamble about me . . . my curiosity of asking the SIAST board or the department heads for their evaluations. Our Department of Learning regularly corresponds with SIAST and has regular conversations and reports from them so I don't need to satisfy my curiosity.

Mr. Elhard: — Well, Madam Minister, I won't ask you about your curiosity again. I just . . . I think that's an important part of being an effective public servant, that you have some curiosity about the impact of the public policy decisions that are being made by the government and by agencies outside of government that are funded by the taxpayers' dollars in this province.

And I would, and I would recommend that, you know, that some curiosity be exhibited by your department, that it would indicate not just an interest in the department which you lead but would indicate a broader interest in terms of the public good in the province.

Madam Minister, the June 23 *Hansard* has provided me with some additional questions that I would like to delve into right now. At the time of questioning we had talked about the various colleges, the affiliated colleges, universities, federated, and educational agencies. And you gave me a breakdown of the various amounts of money being spent this year compared to previous year allocations.

And you mentioned affiliated colleges without distinguishing who they are. Would you give us a list of which colleges fall under the affiliated colleges category?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — The affiliated colleges are Emanuel and St. Chad, Briercrest Bible College, Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Andrew's College, Canadian Theological Seminary, and Central Pentecostal.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Also at that time we talked about other educational requirements that were underwritten by the provincial government and I think that you indicated Aboriginal and northern education in 2003-04 would have \$8.255 million directed to that sector.

I notice also that we talked about Aboriginal and northern education initiatives, the Gabriel Dumont Institute with SUNTEP (Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program), the urban native teacher education program, the Northern Teacher Education Program, and then also the First Nations University of Canada, the northern health access program, and NORTEP, which is the Northern Teacher Education Program student lease costs.

Now, Madam Minister, I'd like you to describe for us what the department's role is in terms of funding Aboriginal and educational opportunities, whether it be First Nations specifically or maybe Métis opportunities because, as far as the First Nations requirements are concerned, it's my understanding

that by and large the federal government picks up those costs. So what does the province contribute and on what basis?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — The Aboriginal institutions that I was speaking of are not First Nations for the most part; there's only one. I'll name them. The one, the one that is, is First Nations University which just changed its name last Saturday. And that we fund for the non-Aboriginal students that go there.

The other ones that we fund under the Aboriginal category are Gabriel Dumont . . . Gabriel Dumont Institute, SUNTEP, the NORTEP program, a northern health access program, and NORTEP student lease costs.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, would you be willing to explain for us how it is you make those funding arrangements? What consideration is given? Is it on a per student, a per pupil basis? Is there grants over and above that for administrative costs? Would you please detail those few items for us, please?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — We have different arrangements with each of the institutions, contracts with each one of them based on several different things. But for each one of them they are different contracts.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, could you give us some details of what the contracts entail? Is there a specific dollar figure on a per student basis? Does that vary from contract to contract? We need some, just a little bit more information on that particular arrangement.

Hon. Ms. Junor: — I'll give you two different examples. I'll talk about the SUNTEP, which is based on 180 students, roughly 10,000-plus dollars per student. Whereas Gabriel Dumont is a core funding, a block amount, so that they have a core capacity to function.

Mr. Elhard: — Can you give me a little detail of a similar variety on the NORTEP program and any other of those Aboriginal initiatives that the department supports?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Okay. For NORTEP it's the same as SUNTEP — it's per student. Whereas for FNUC, the First Nations University of Canada, it's an estimated number of non-First Nations students, which will include Métis students as well, and we fund it that way, per student.

Mr. Elhard: — So if the estimate runs pretty close, do you just maintain a certain figure? And if the estimate is out, do you increase the funding? How flexible is the funding for the attendance of the students at the FNUC?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — We don't adjust our costs during the course of the year if the student enrolments go up or down.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, through the Chair, would you tell us what approximately it costs per student to fund attendees at the First Nations University of Canada?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Our expenditures per student at the U of R (University of Regina) and the First Nations University, which is affiliated with them, is approximately \$10,000 a year per student.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Minister. I'd like to move into another area just briefly.

It arises out of a conversation we had on June 9 at which time I was asking you about the oversight of the student loans program and when adjustments might be made to the various funding levels for students from year to year because of the cost-of-living increases and so forth. And at that time you indicated that the student loan program is under continuous scrutiny and that there would be, this month, a meeting of the federal, provincial, and territorial committee that is struck or charged with the objectives of looking at the student loan program.

And I would just like to know, Madam Minister, has that committee met yet and, if so, has there been any indication of a willingness to increase student loan levels to recognize the increasing costs of living and the higher tuitions?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — That committee is meeting tomorrow and Friday. And a couple of items that are on the agenda are the levels of assistance. And they're going to review several research projects that have come to their attention.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Through the Chair, to the minister, would the minister be able to provide some input to the official opposition as an indication of good faith, possibly? When the meeting has been finished and when the decisions have been taken, would we be privy to that information?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — This is not a committee of ministers. They do not issue a public report. They report back to their departments and then to their ministers and through them . . . to their deputy ministers and then to their ministers. There's some items that are included on their agenda that are brought forward by the student associations of the country. So they do have input of students directly.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Through the Chair to the minister, there's another area of growing concern within the animal science realm and that has to do with the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan and the extreme pressure that it has been put under because of a lack of financial resources.

Now I understand that there has been some movement in that regard. The federal government allotted a certain amount of money unexpectedly to improving the operations at the veterinary school at Saskatoon at the U of S (University of Saskatchewan), but that ongoing shortages of financing have really restricted their capabilities. And in view of the BSE scare and several other related types of issues, the importance of animal veterinary capabilities has increased significantly.

I understand that we are experiencing a significant shortage of veterinarians in the province of Saskatchewan, if not the entire country. And as the pressure on that animal science grows there will be a significant need, from a public policy perspective, I assume, to meet those requirements with additional funding.

Can the minister elaborate for us what her government's plans are with regard to funding on an ongoing basis the school of

veterinary medicine?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — The new agreement that was signed last year between the four provinces that are partners in this college has allotted another \$1 million to the college, which started this year and will continue.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, is that \$1 million the share for the province of Saskatchewan, the Department of Learning, alone, or is that the total for all the partners in the veterinary college?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — One million dollars is the commitment shared by all four provinces.

Mr. Elhard: — How far does that go, Madam Minister, to reaching the objectives or the requests of the school?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — The four provinces, with the knowledge, consent, and agreement of the university and the college, agreed that this was the amount that was acceptable to all parties.

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Minister, we're going to shift gears a little again, if we may. I recall in our discussions on the Department of Learning estimates — post-secondary specifically — some time ago, back in May, we got into quite a lengthy discussion about the accessibility of students . . . or for students to a university or a technical school education.

We also talked about student funding and the pressure on post-secondary institutions to provide adequate space for students who wanted to come. And coincidentally after that discussion there was an article in the *Maple Creek Advanced Times* newspaper of May 26 this year where it was talking about Anadarko Canada, an important oil company and gas company player in the southwest part of the province specifically, but I think quite active in other areas around the province.

And at that time, Anadarko had facilities in the community of Richmond and Maple Creek, both important communities in my constituency. But it appeared that because of the uncertainty of being able to attain the proper education for potential employees, the company relocated their Richmond office to the city of Medicine Hat.

Now as you might appreciate, Madam Minister, losing an important employer from a small community like Richmond to the community of Medicine Hat was devastating to some great degree.

But I just want to quote, if I may, from this particular article where it talks about the reaction of Anadarko's area supervisor, Brent Beck. And he's quoted as saying in this paper:

We try to maximize local employment opportunities in Maple Creek and Richmond but these are dwindling and we're being forced to rely more heavily on Medicine Hat. It's becoming more difficult to find people with the necessary skills. Anadarko is seeking people with post-secondary education or trade skills to staff its Saskatchewan operation.

He said an engineering degree is becoming the entry level where previously a technologist diploma was accepted a few years ago. He said the industry is advancing quickly as newer technologies become available and the ability to use these technologies is placing greater demands on people.

He goes on to talk about increased occupational health and safety requirements, worker compensation guidelines, and so forth, which all put pressure on their need for skilled labour.

Madam Minister, I bring this to your attention just to underline, just to underscore, again, what I believe is the vital necessity of increased opportunities for post-secondary education in this province.

And at the time of our previous discussion, I chided the minister and her government for not providing adequate support to the post-secondary sector to achieve the full potential of the young people of this province.

And I understand that there are difficulties — budgetary difficulties — and tough decisions have to be made, but too often, Madam Minister, I find that we are prepared to make decisions that are in the current best interests of our society while we tend to ignore the future best interests of our society.

As a comparison, we talked about the increases of spending by the Department of Health this year — a significant amount. But the increase alone in the Department of Health was more than the Department of Learning gives to the University of Saskatchewan. So what we have done is we have chosen to deal with an immediate issue but we have sacrificed to some extent our long-term potential, and we are borrowing from our children's inheritance.

So, Madam Minister, I want to read, as a final indication of what I believe is the reality for us today, I'd like to read this into the record. It's not original. I borrowed it from the *Regina Leader-Post* editorial board. And this was taken from their paper of May 29. And it reads as follows:

Tuition hikes running at three times the rate of inflation are providing an ugly annual lesson in economics for University of Regina . . . students.

The latest 8.5-per-cent increase follows tuition hikes of 8.8 per cent in 2002 and nine per cent in 2001. That's more than 26 per cent in the past three years — with even higher increases at the University of Saskatchewan.

Between 1993 and 2002, tuition fees for Saskatchewan undergraduate students increased by 75 per cent, according to Statistics Canada. If the current rate of increases continues, tuition fees will almost double over the next decade — a time when huge numbers of the baby boomer generation will retire and Saskatchewan . . . (will need) skilled workers.

Scholarships and bursaries help some students, but the reality is that many children from less-well-off families won't be able to afford university — and many of those who can will graduate with debts of \$35,000 or more.

Provincial government funding increases to the universities have been mired in the two- to three-per-cent range in recent years — barely enough to keep up with inflation, let alone the growth needed to keep the institutions competitive.

. . . base funding for post-secondary education is inadequate . . .

. . . the government has put post-secondary funding on the backburner, allowing the growing load to fall on students. This is not acceptable. The province's "wide open future" must include viable universities accessible to all, regardless of financial means.

Madam Minister, I couldn't have said this better.

And I guess I'm somewhat concerned by the government's response to this issue in view of the fact that I asked some written questions a couple of days ago asking for the numbers of students that were turned away from universities and colleges in this province when they applied to the various programs.

And instead of answering the question, the government chose to convert that written question. That means the government is ashamed of the answer.

Madam Minister, this is an unacceptable situation. This is unacceptable in terms of our future as a province and we must do more in this regard.

Madam Minister, I'm going to conclude my questions, and I turn it over to my colleague.

Hon. Ms. Junor: — I have a couple of comments. The question you're referring to I believe we'll be doing on Friday, which we do have the answer for. And while we're talking about reading into the record, I want to talk about funding for education.

You, on May 8, the member from Cypress said that the Sask Party would have capped the rate of funding to education at the rate of inflation — nothing more, nothing less. I believe that's in *Hansard*.

So I just want to . . . It is in *Hansard*, May 8. It's May 8 in *Hansard*; I even have the page. I just want to read for you, give you an example. In education in the . . . at the university level which is the affiliated colleges, universities, and the Aboriginal institutions, since 1999 this government has increased funding 24.8 per cent. The rate of inflation, which is what you would propose to have funded these groups at, is 12.9 per cent, which would have made that group of institutions have \$22 million shortfall.

The funding to SIAST in the same period was 19.5 per cent increase. The rate of inflation was 12.9 per cent. That would have made a \$4.6 million difference with your proposal.

With the regional colleges we have increased their funding, since '99, 36 per cent. Yours would have been at the cost of living which is 12.9 per cent. The difference there would have been \$1.5 million.

I'm not even talking about K to 12 which is a \$61 million difference between what we have increased the funding and what your proposal would have done. So I want that on the record.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. Madam Minister, and to your officials, I also would like the . . . one last opportunity to ask a couple of questions.

First of all, for the record I want to remind the minister that for K to 12 education, we actually have lost \$380 million since 1991 because your government didn't freeze education levels at that '99 rate, so I think that there is a considerable amount of savings that the Education department gained on the backs of property owners.

And, Madam Minister, by the combining these two departments it's easy to say we're spending \$1.2 billion on education when . . . The general public thinks that's a whole lot of money. Of course it is, but obviously, as my colleague from Cypress Hills says, it's not enough. We are borrowing for the future of our children.

(19:45)

Madam Minister, there's no point in talking about the money issue of it any more because, as I said previously, you determine it. Your government decides.

There's a number of people on that side of the House make the decisions on what their government priority is and until we get the opportunity to have the books and know what's going on, we're not going to be able to tell you exactly what we're going to do. But I can tell you that education is going to be a priority and more than just lip service.

Madam Minister, my question to you is twofold. First of all, when it comes to the French program, there is \$4.65 million. Can you tell me, does all that money come from the federal government, and how many employees are working in that department?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Just before I answer the member's question, I just wanted to point out to the member from Cypress that if he wanted to know what page in *Hansard*, it was page 983 of May 8.

The question about the French school is \$4.65 million. Most of that money, \$3 million of that, flows directly out to the school divisions and that is from the federal government. The rest of the money is to support the 22.5 employees.

Ms. Draude: — Is the amount of money that goes to French students the same amount as goes to students in our public and Catholic system? And is all the money that's . . . Is there any of this money that goes to any other agency, or building, or group of people outside of the K to 12 education system when it comes to French programming?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — The students are funded K to 12 the same as English students. Most of the money, on page 93, you'll see that the support we give to French schools is under the FOG, under the foundation operating grant. And there's other things

that are funded with the 4.65 million is the university Language Institute.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, one of the big challenges and opportunities that we have in this province is dealing with our Aboriginal children because they're going to be part of growing the province and having a future that's bright for everyone.

And I do know that the Department of Learning signed an MOU (memorandum of understanding) with the FSIN and we discussed it a time ago. But we've had an opportunity to meet with the FSIN treaty governance office to talk about some of the issues and talked about how to ensure that everyone buys into this MOU.

It's one thing to sign an agreement and another thing to make sure that everyone that's involved in the education system is aware of it so that we all feel like we're part of the system. We can't just spring an issue . . . spring this order or the discussion that's made up . . . Once everybody has talked about it, we can't go to the general public and say, this is the way it is; I hope you're happy with it. Because people have to, along the way, buy into it and feel like they're part of it.

I asked if there's been an opportunity not just to communicate what's happening to Aboriginal people but to non-Aboriginal people. And I don't know if you've set up meetings with the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) or with the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) or with the general public. I do know that the Aboriginal people are meeting with the bands and tribal councils across Saskatchewan to make sure they feel like they're part of the issue.

But in order for everyone to have a total buy in, we have to ensure that everybody's voice is heard. We have the . . . If we don't do that, we're going to create a wide . . . a big divide within our province.

Right now the issue is usually between Aboriginal and the federal government, but this is a tripartite agreement and something that we are all working on together. So my concern is that we make sure that through your department, the Department of Learning, that we have everyone in the province knowing what's happening as we start building on this agreement and designing the agreement to ensure that our children — Aboriginal children, non-Aboriginal children — are going to be working together in the future.

We have . . . The demographics show that we're going to require everybody in this province to help grow together. And we know the alarming figures right now and the Aboriginal population doesn't . . . It looks like we're not going to have, if it doesn't change, we don't have the growing number of Aboriginal students that are going to have the education they need to help build this province.

So I'm very concerned that your department take the lead and show that . . . and when it comes to the self-governance and it comes to dealing with the education issue, that your department ensures that everyone in this province knows what's happening when it comes to this agreement.

So can you tell me, are you setting up meetings? Are you dealing with trustees and teachers and the general public to ensure that they know what we mean when we're talking about memorandum of understanding for education, when we talk about self-government, when we talk about building the future together? What is your department doing to ensure that we are all going to be on the same page?

Hon. Ms. Junor: — Just a couple of points. The agreement, the MOU is a bilateral agreement. It's not a tri-partite agreement. The Department of Learning is not the lead department on governance issues. We're not the lead department at the governance table.

Last week the department met with the educational partners . . . or partners in the education sector, the learning sector, and had a range of items on the agenda, one of which was the MOU.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Minister, I do believe that this department, the Department of Learning is going to be . . . is holding the key to the future success of this province. And it doesn't matter whether it's Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal children, we have to make sure that this department takes the lead in so many different areas of government.

I haven't seen it happen, whether it's initiatives of government or the monies to put into it. But I know that in the future we're going to be seeing this department . . . or we'd better be seeing this department make a difference in the lives of everyone in this province.

So, Madam Minister, I know that we won't get a chance to discuss this issue or any issues in Learning again this year and so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you and to thank your officials because I know they're very dedicated. And I know that they know what's going to be . . . what it's going to take to build the future. So thank you to each one of them.

Hon. Ms. Junor: — I'd like to take this opportunity also to thank the members for their questions and to thank the department and all the officials for their valuable assistance and coming seven times to this Assembly to answer the questions . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, not eight. But thank you very much to everyone and thanks again for your questions.

Subvote (LR01) agreed to.

Subvotes (LR02), (LR11), (LR08), (LR03), (LR12), (LR13), (LR15), (LR04) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Learning
Vote 169**

Subvote (SA01) agreed to.

(20:00)

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Education Infrastructure Financing Corporation
Vote 170**

Subvote (ED01) — Statutory.

**Supplementary Estimates
General Revenue Fund
Learning
Vote 5**

Subvote (LR03) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Learning
Vote 5**

Vote 5 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Learning
Vote 169**

Vote 169 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates
General Revenue Fund
Learning
Vote 5**

Vote 5 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization
Vote 1**

Subvotes (AG01), (AG02), (AG05), (AG06), (AG07), (AG12), (AG04), (AG08), (AG03), (AG09), (AG10) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization
Vote 146**

Subvotes (AG02), (AG07) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan
Vote 147**

Subvote (AG01) — Statutory.

**Supplementary Estimates
General Revenue Fund
Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization
Vote 1**

Subvotes (AG07), (AG09), (AG10) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization
Vote 1**

Vote 1 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization
Vote 146**

Vote 146 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates
General Revenue Fund
Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization
Vote 1**

Vote 1 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Centenary Fund
Vote 70**

Subvote (CF01) agreed to.

Vote 70 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Community Resources and Employment
Vote 36**

Subvote (RE01), (RE02), (RE04), (RE05), (RE07), (RE10), (RE03), (RE06), (RE09), (RE12) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Saskatchewan Housing Corporation
Vote 143**

Subvote (SH01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Community Resources and Employment
Vote 36**

Vote 36 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Corrections and Public Safety
Vote 73**

Subvotes (CP01), (CP02), (CP04), (CP07), (CP06) agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates
General Revenue Fund
Corrections and Public Safety
Vote 73**

Subvotes (CP01), (CP02), (CP04), (CP07), (CP06) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Information Technology Office
Vote 74**

Subvotes (IT01), (IT02), (IT03) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Corrections and Public Safety**

Vote 73

Vote 73 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates
General Revenue Fund
Corrections and Public Safety
Vote 73**

Vote 73 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Information Technology Office
Vote 74**

Vote 74 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Culture, Youth and Recreation
Vote 27**

Subvotes (CR01), (CR02), (CR03), (CR09), (CR07), (CR05), (CR06), (CR08) agreed to.

(20:15)

**Supplementary Estimates
General Revenue Fund
Culture, Youth and Recreation
Vote 27**

Subvote (CR03) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Culture, Youth and Recreation
Vote 27**

Vote 27 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates
General Revenue Fund
Culture, Youth and Recreation
Vote 27**

Vote 27 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Public Service Commission
Vote 33**

Subvotes (PS01), (PS02), (PS06), (PS04), (PS03), (PS07) agreed to.

Vote 33 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Environment
Vote 26**

Subvotes (ER01), (ER02), (ER08), (ER09), (ER10), (ER03), (ER11), (ER16), (ER15), (ER05), (ER07), (ER04), (ER14) agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates
General Revenue Fund
Environment
Vote 26**

Subvotes (ER10), (ER16), (ER07) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Saskatchewan Watershed Authority
Vote 164**

Subvote (WA01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Northern Affairs
Vote 163**

Subvote (NA01) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Northern Affairs
Vote 75**

Subvotes (NA01), (NA02), (NA03), (NA04) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Environment
Vote 26**

Vote 26 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Northern Affairs
Vote 75**

Vote 75 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Northern Affairs
Vote 163**

Vote 163 agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates
General Revenue Fund
Environment
Vote 26**

Vote 26 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Executive Council
Vote 10**

Subvotes (EX01), (EX02), (EX07), (EX04), (EX03), (EX08) agreed to.

Subvote (EX06) — Statutory.

Vote 10 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Finance
Vote 18**

Subvotes (FI01), (FI02), (FI04), (FI03), (FI06), (FI05), (FI10), (FI08), (FI09) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Finance — Servicing Government Debt
Vote 12**

Subvote (FD01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Debt Redemption, Sinking Fund and Interest Payments
Votes 175, 176, 177**

Votes 175, 176, 177 — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Fiscal Stabilization Fund
Vote 71**

Subvote (FS01) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan
Vote 151**

Subvote (MF01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Finance
Vote 18**

Vote 18 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs
Vote 30**

Subvotes (GR01), (GR02), (GR04), (GR05), (GR07), (GR08), (GR03), (GR06) agreed to.

**Supplementary Estimates
General Revenue Fund
Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs
Vote 30**

Subvote (GR05) agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending And Investing Activities
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Vote 140**

Subvote (SW01) — Statutory.

(20:30)

**General Revenue Fund
Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs**

	Vote 30	Subvotes (IR07), (IR03), (IR11) agreed to.
Vote 30 agreed to.		General Revenue Fund Industry and Resources Vote 23
	Supplementary Estimates General Revenue Fund Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs Vote 30	Vote 23 agreed to.
Vote 30 agreed to.		General Revenue Fund Lending and Investing Activities Industry and Resources Vote 171
	General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32	Vote 171 agreed to.
Subvotes (HE01), (HE02), (HE04), (HE06), (HE08), (HE10), (HE03) agreed to.		Supplementary Estimates General Revenue Fund Lending and Investing Activities Industry and Resources Vote 171
	Supplementary Estimates General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32	Subvote (IR01) agreed to.
Subvote (HE08) agreed to.		Supplementary Estimates General Revenue Fund Industry and Resources Vote 23
	General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32	Vote 23 agreed to.
Vote 32 agreed to.		Supplementary Estimates General Revenue Fund Lending and Investing Activities Industry and Resources Vote 171
	Supplementary Estimates General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32	Vote 171 agreed to.
Vote 32 agreed to.		General Revenue Fund Justice Vote 3
	General Revenue Fund Industry and Resources Vote 23	Subvotes (JU01), (JU02), (JU04), (JU03), (JU05), (JU07), (JU08) agreed to.
Subvotes (IR01), (IR02), (IR07), (IR03), (IR04), (IR05), (IR16), (IR06), (IR08), (IR09), (IR10), (IR11) agreed to.		Supplementary Estimates General Revenue Fund Justice Vote 3
	General Revenue Fund Lending and Investing Activities Industry and Resources Vote 171	Subvotes (JU04), (JU03) agreed to.
Subvote (IR01) agreed to.		General Revenue Fund Justice Vote 3
	General Revenue Fund Lending and Investing Activities Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan Vote 159	Vote 3 agreed to.
Subvote (SL01) — Statutory.		Supplementary Estimates General Revenue Fund Justice Vote 3
	Supplementary Estimates General Revenue Fund Industry and Resources Vote 23	

Vote 3 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation
Vote 154**

Subvote (SO01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Saskatchewan Research Council
Vote 35**

Subvote (SR01) agreed to.

Vote 35 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Labour
Vote 20**

Subvotes (LA01), (LA02), (LA05), (LA03), (LA04), (LA07), (LA06), (LA08), (LA09) agreed to.

Vote 20 agreed to.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan
Vote 165**

Subvote (CI01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Vote 152**

Subvote (PW01) — Statutory.

**General Revenue Fund
Lending and Investing Activities
Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation
Vote 153**

Subvote (ST01) — Statutory.

(20:45)

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — That's good. Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise, report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 20:48.

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