



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

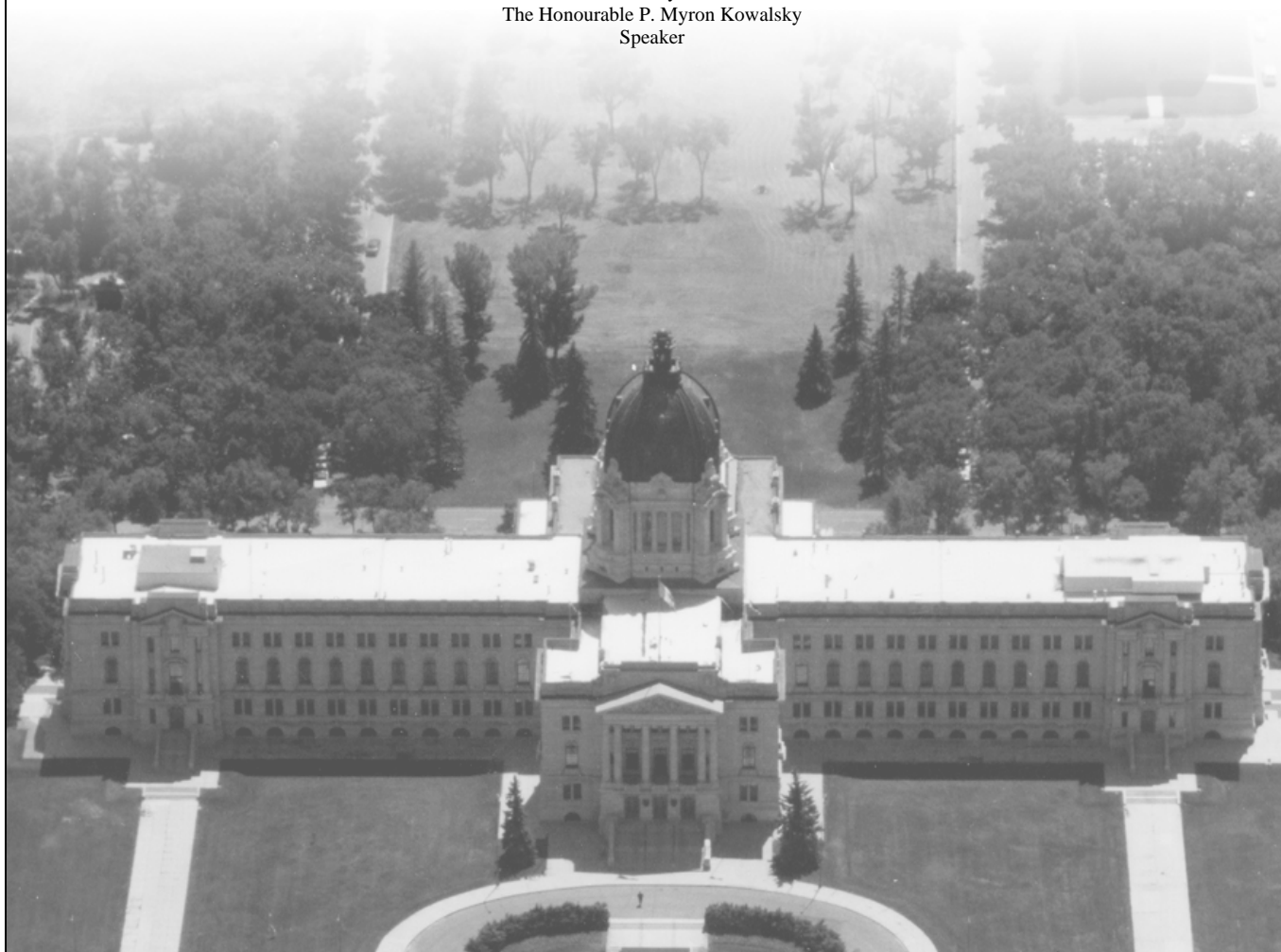
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky
 Premier — Hon. Lorne Calvert
 Leader of the Opposition — Brad Wall

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Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
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Vacant		Weyburn-Big Muddy

[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Speaker: — Order. It now being 7 o'clock the proceedings will resume as per order of this Assembly.

Clerk: — Committee of Finance.

The Speaker: — I do now leave the Chair for the Assembly to go into the Committee of Finance.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**General Revenue Fund
Executive Council
Vote 10**

Subvote (EX01)

The Chair: — The estimates before the committee this evening, Committee of Finance, vote 10, Executive Council. We welcome the Premier and would ask that he would introduce his officials accompanying him this evening.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. We are joined and assisted tonight by Mr. Dan Perrins, who is deputy minister to the Premier; Mr. John McLean, who is director of senior management services, and this will be Mr. McLean's first process of estimates in the House and I want to welcome him here; and Ms. Bonita Cairns, director of corporate services; and my own chief of staff, Ms. Lois Thacyk.

The Chair: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, member from Swift Current.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, thank you, Madam Chair. First off, Madam Chair, let me say to the Premier, thank the Premier in advance for the time here this evening, as well to his officials for being here as well this evening for the estimates of Executive Council. Madam Chair, I'm sure we'll get into some vigorous debate and political debate I'm sure as the evening progresses.

I would say however that I would like to begin with what I think are basic questions of any head of any government, certainly questions that I have, that we have for the Premier. I think the people of the province of Saskatchewan are very reasonable. I think their expectations of their government are reasonable. I think they'd like their government to have a little vision, Madam Chair. I think that's reasonable. A vision for growth and a vision for success for their province.

I think, Madam Chair, they'd like to see their government be fundamentally competent in the management of their resources, as stewards of the taxpayers' money. And in achieving that fundamental, that basic competence that I believe that residents of this province want of their government, I think they'd like to see, they'd like to know that their government has goals.

I think any organization, if it's going to be successful, is going to have goals in the important areas of delivery that that organization may preside over. And, Madam Chair, Mr. Premier, I would ask you tonight to tell the Assembly, tell this Assembly and therefore the people of Saskatchewan what your goals are.

And we'll start with population. We have heard members of that side of the House say things like they believe it's statistically impossible for this province to grow, even at the national average which is just about 1 per cent. We've heard heckling from the back that well in terms of population numbers, we've heard heckling that, you know, 900,000 is . . . there's nothing wrong with that number. The state of Montana has 900-and-some thousand and the state of North Dakota has this, as if it's some sort of justification for the fact that we're losing . . . we continue to lose people in Saskatchewan.

Well obviously if we're going to sustain the quality of life we enjoy in the province, we're going to need more than that. We're going to need a goal set for population growth, and I would ask the Premier to share that with the Assembly now.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And I want to extend my own again greetings to our officials and to all members who are here tonight to participate in the estimates of Executive Council on such a fine Saskatchewan spring evening.

Madam Chair, this session began as all members will recall with a Throne Speech in the fall, beginning a new process for this legislature or a revival of an old process where we will meet in the fall, deal with Throne Speech, and essentially meet in the spring to do some legislation and budget.

And so I refer the Leader of the Opposition to the Speech from the Throne which began this session, Madam Chair, a speech I believe he and his colleagues voted against. Madam Chair, in this speech we set some very visionary goals for the province of Saskatchewan — very visionary goals. And I would argue, Madam Chair, for the time I've been in this Assembly this is one of the most visionary throne speeches that has been read by Her Honour or any former Lieutenant Governor.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Madam Chair, in this Throne Speech the vision and the goals that we outlined very much reflected the vision and the goals that we took to the people of Saskatchewan in the last general provincial election, an election that endorsed those visions and goals. And they are put in this Throne Speech and with some very practical and forward-looking, forward-looking detail.

We talk in this Throne Speech of building a green and a prosperous economy in this province. We talk about building diverse and growing communities, Madam Speaker. We talk about, Madam Speaker, a community and a society and a province where people are not being left behind on the pathway to opportunity, Madam Chair. These are the kind of visionary

goals. We set goals for our environment. We set goals for sustainable energy. We set goals for immigration.

Madam Chair, we have an overall arching vision and a goal for this province — to build a better life for Saskatchewan people here. That's our overarching goal, Madam Chair. In that goal we want to see, as I said, diverse and growing communities. We want to see population growth. We want to see solid, solid social programming for our people. We want to see a thriving economy.

And as we debate this budget, the budget that I expect again will be voted against by the members opposite, a budget that brings about that vision and that goal in very practical ways, Madam Speaker, let me reference the program of immigration that we've talked about in this Throne Speech followed by some very specific actions in this budget.

We have set some very, very ambitious, albeit ambitious goals but very specific goals in increasing the number of immigrants into our province. Now in this budget that I expect they'll vote against again tomorrow, in this budget significant new resources to reach out to the nation, to the continent, and the world to draw people to our province through the process of immigration.

But it's not just immigration we want to use. We want to develop our own young population, particularly our young Aboriginal population.

Madam Speaker, we are not going to set, we are not going to set a number. We are going to achieve the best that we can possibly achieve in this province. We're not going to set an artificial target. They had a plan. I remember. They ran it in an election when the member from Rosetown-Elrose was leading the party over there. They had a plan. They said they were going to grow the population by 100,000 people. That's what they said — 100,000 people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Madam Chair, where is that goal today? Where is that goal today? Where is that plan? It's been trashed, Madam Chair. They don't even refer to it any more.

Madam Chair, then they come up with, the last session, they've got 100 new ideas. That was in the last session — 100 new ideas. I don't think they talked about growing population by 100,000. The idea was gone by then. But they got 100 new ideas.

Now we come to this session and this budget and the debate about this Throne Speech. There's no plan at all. Not a plan at all. In fact they refused, they refused as late as today with the media to talk about their plans, Madam Chair.

We have set ambitious goals, we have set ambitious visions, and the difference is, Madam Chair, we accomplish our vision and our goals.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Madam Chair, and with respect to the Premier,

with respect to the Premier, saying the word goal a number of times in the answer does not constitute a goal.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Madam Chair, saying that you want a green and prosperous economy does not constitute a goal, Madam Chair, by any fair measure. Saying that you want, saying something about the . . . Saying something about lots of people on the pathway to opportunity is not a goal, Madam Chair.

These are platitudes. That's what they are, Madam Chair. I mean I guess people in the province also have their own goals. We would like summer to be longer and there to be fewer mosquitoes. But they're not goals either. They're just sentiments. They're sentiments. The Throne Speech press release is full of them. The Throne Speech itself is full of them.

The question to the Premier is simple. We've heard MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] on the government side say they don't believe, it's statistically impossible for the province to grow at the national average, which is about 1 per cent. Does the Premier concur with that? Does he believe that it's impossible for us to grow? And if he doesn't agree with it, what is his goal for growing the population of the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, I repeat, we are not going to set artificial numbers which will somehow satisfy the Leader of the Opposition. I'll tell you what we do over here. We set vision and we set goal and then we go about accomplishing it. He says, he says that the vision, he says that the vision of a green and prosperous economy is a hollow vision, a hollow goal. No, I'll tell you what it means. I'll tell you last year, Madam Chair, in this province gross domestic product grew by 3.3 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — That is a growing, prosperous economy. And this year, Madam Chair, the anticipated growth is 3 per cent. These are both well above national average.

Madam Chair, we take our vision and our goals, we turn them into practical reality, and the people of Saskatchewan tonight are seeing that and they're feeling it. There's an optimism in our province that I have not sensed for years. They are seeing the result of strong vision, strong goal, and practical reality and practical policy by this government, not hollow commitments made in an election campaign by leaders of the opposition, which are then lost, lost only months after the election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well the truth of the matter is, Madam Chair, the government used to set goals. The government, Mr. Romanow's government set goals. And I think even this Premier may have set a job creation goal — 30,000-plus jobs over a four-year period, I think was the goal. But of course they fell woefully short of the target. The Premier's government has actually presided over one of the worst job creation records in the

country.

So in the latest effort of the Premier and the Minister of Industry and Resources when they tabled their report, their new plan, there were no goals at all. They had decided, much as the Minister of Health has pointed out with respect to nurse recruitment and retention, we're not going to set a goal. Why? Because we're pretty sure we can't achieve them.

Well the difference of course, Madam Chair, is that — and it's an important difference — the we that they're referring to when they say we can't achieve them, is that NDP [New Democratic Party] government. The people of this province are more than capable of achieving those goals, Madam Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — The Premier doesn't have a goal for population. In fact as far as we know they're looking at a goal for it to be reduced, if you listen to members opposite. Well you know what? There's the minister responsible for the SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] debacle and he's chirping and he has weighed in on the issue of population. I remember that when he was asked about out-migration in the province of Saskatchewan he said, don't worry if people leave because there are more left for the rest of us. Is that the population goal of the government? Maybe that is.

I would argue again, as I have in the past in this Legislative Assembly, that there is some truth to that — that if certain people were to leave the province, there would be more left for the rest of us and it's that front bench right over there, Madam Chair. That's the truth of the matter.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — I will ask the question of the Premier with respect to jobs. What is the Premier's goal for job creation in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, I'm always surprised a little bit how quickly the Leader of the Opposition seems to get angry in his presentations. The fact of the matter is — and these are widely known and felt in the province of Saskatchewan — in the year 2000, more jobs in this province than ever before in our history. This most recent month of April, again more jobs in the province of Saskatchewan than any April on file in the province's history.

If the Leader of the Opposition would turn up a newspaper and look at what's happening in the communities around us, just this week, Madam Chair, just this week the young person who is in charge of operating the student employment centre at the University of Regina said to the people of Saskatchewan he's never seen anything like the job market that he sees this summer for students in this province.

In fact he said and I quote, I quote, Madam Chair, "I can guarantee that any student that comes to this job placement centre will have a job in 24 hours." He has, he says, 2,000 jobs available at this job centre. The story is repeated across the province.

If the Leader of the Opposition and members of the Saskatchewan Party ventured out of this building once in a while they would see, as we see everywhere we travel, help wanted signs in the variety of windows that we pass by — help wanted signs. There are thousands of jobs available today, Madam Chair, in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Madam Chair, the challenge that lies before us, having created this buoyant economy where the headlines are telling us that boom times are here and boom times are coming, having created this vibrant, vibrant economy in the province of Saskatchewan, we have challenges. We do. And that is to meet the needs of this expanding economy, to meet the labour market needs today.

Madam Chair, that's why you will see in this budget — a budget that I expect they will vote against again tomorrow — that's why you will see in this budget, Madam Chair, record investments in training for our young people, record investments. I'm told that we have now over 67,000 training spaces available in the province of Saskatchewan. That's why you see in this budget a commitment to freeze tuition fees for the students of Saskatchewan at post-secondary universities in our province. That's why you see in this budget, Madam Chair, the very budget they will vote against, the most significant cuts to business taxes in the history of Saskatchewan.

Why, Madam Chair? To encourage investment, to see job growth in our province, and provide even more opportunities for our young people to develop and live their careers and lives here. That's what you see in this budget. What does this opposition do? They complain. They get up and they complain. They don't offer a positive suggestion. We haven't heard one positive suggestion of what could be done or should be done in this province. We don't hear it from the Leader of the Opposition on a daily basis.

Madam Chair, this is a government that believes in the future of this province. This is a government that has taken this economy and brought it to new heights. We are seeing more jobs in our province. We are seeing more opportunities for our young people. And as a result of the budget now under debate, Madam Chair, I tell you the world is opening to us for the future and for the future of our young people.

And, Madam Chair, mark my words, they will vote against it. They will vote against it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well first of all . . .

The Chair: — Order. Before the next question is put, I'm really allowing a lot of spirited support for those members speaking. But I would ask that members do not yell across the floor while people are on their feet asking or answering questions. Thank you. Both sides.

Mr. Wall: — Madam Chair, let me first of all assure the Premier that members on this side of the House, and specifically myself, the Leader of the Opposition, I'm not angry. But I am very, very disappointed in this government. And we are very, very disappointed even in the answers we've

got tonight because so far what we've found on the Premier's pathway to opportunity is that there are no goals for population growth in this province.

There are no goals even though, Madam Chair, since the Premier took office in February 2001, Alberta has gained 213,700 people, BC [British Columbia] has gained 271,200 people, Manitoba, 66,110 people. And under this Premier we have lost over 7,800 of our most precious resource. And in that context the Premier offers no goal for population.

He doesn't have a goal for job creation even though we know again we have, in a boom time as the Premier has highlighted in terms of commodity prices, we have an NDP economic plan that's presiding over a terrible, one of the worst job creation records in the country. After seven quarters of loss, finally the uptake happened last month. And what did the numbers show, Madam Chair?

They showed that Manitoba next door, not nearly as well blessed with natural resources as we are, is creating jobs at three times the rate as this province. In BC and Alberta it's about 20 times the rate of job creation in this province. So that's the truth of it. That's this Premier's record.

He's managed to do this, mind you, at a time of \$70 a barrel west Texas and a time of high natural gas prices, a time of high commodity prices in terms of potash and uranium. And yet leave it to this NDP government to manage to squander the opportunity that should be here in that kind of a boom time situation.

So there's no goal from the Premier on population growth. He doesn't have one. He doesn't want to set one. Why? Because well he knows his government, his economic plan can't achieve it. Number two, on job creation the same is true, there is no goal.

So what about some other issues, Madam Chair? Does the Premier have a goal for, let's say for instance, nurse recruitment in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, I want to remind the Leader of the Opposition of a number of facts as opposed to the kind of rhetoric we get from the leader and from members opposite, the number of facts. In 2005 there were more jobs in this province than ever before in Saskatchewan's history. That is a fact.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — In 2005 we enjoyed the lowest unemployment rate in this province's history in the last decade, in the last decade. A far cry better, if I may say, than when that, when that Leader of the Opposition was working upstairs here in the Devine government.

This year, 2006, a fact: private sector investment, and these figures are determined by RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] and other financial institutions, the private sector investment in this province is expected to grow 561 million additional dollars — that's a 6.7 per cent increase in private sector investment. That's the prediction for this year. In mining, oil, and gas capital

spending the anticipated growth is a whopping growth of 18 per cent.

Now those statistics translate, Madam Chair, they translate into real jobs for real people in our province. Real jobs for our young people in our province. And that is the record, that is the factual record of the New Democratic Party government in this province.

I will compare that factual record with the record of that government in office any day of the week on any platform in the province. Because there are many people in this province who remember the out-migration, the massive out-migration of Saskatchewan young people and Saskatchewan people generally when that leader and his party governed this province. It was massive. It has taken us a decade to repair just some of the damage they levelled on the province.

Now with that repair in place, we are building this green and prosperous economy. We are providing growing and diverse communities. And we are offering opportunities to our young people. Those are the facts and they are undeniable, Madam Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Madam Chair, the question to the Premier was this: what are his government's goals for nurse recruitment in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, I will speak very directly to the issue of the recruitment and the retention of nurses in our province. And of course to put this in context, I'm not sure there is a jurisdiction in North America who isn't facing some of the same, the same challenges in providing health care providers to meet the needs of today.

Now it is one thing, Madam Chair, to recognize the problem, and the Leader of the Opposition is good about that. It's quite a different thing to move to solution.

Now an interesting thing happened today in this legislature, in its rotunda, when the Leader of the Opposition was asked, why is it you only raise concerns and questions and never a positive solution? Never a plan. Never an idea. You know what the Leader of the Opposition said to the journalist right out here in the rotunda? He said, oh no, no, I'll tell you all about that when we get into the election campaign for the next provincial election. I see. He's not going to reveal any health care plan, no plan to deal with the kind of challenges and the retention and recruitment of nurses or physicians. No, no, no. The people of Saskatchewan should just ought to wait until the next provincial election, then all will be revealed.

Well now, Madam Chair, that tells me . . . Well there's only one or two, there's only two explanations for this. Either there is no plan today, there is no plan at all over there today, and/or this plan is not something that's going to be very popular with the people of Saskatchewan and they don't want to talk about it.

Now here's the difference. Here's the difference, Madam Chair. Here's the difference. We recognize, whether it's in recruitment and retention of nurses or physicians or health care workers

generally, whether it's in the many and varied challenges that face publicly funded health care in this country, we, Madam Chair, come with vision and plan, vision and plan.

Now I'm going to underline the vision. The vision is of a publicly funded and publicly administered health care where your access to that health care is not just determined by what you have in your pocket; it's determined by your health needs as assessed by the professionals in the health care system.

Now, Madam Chair, when we meet a challenge, we come with a plan. In this budget, the budget again I expect the Leader of the Opposition will jump up tomorrow and vote against — I expect it; I expect it — there is within this budget specifically to recruiting and retaining nurses, there is a \$5 million new bursary plan in this budget for nurses.

Through work in this budget and through the minister and the Department of Health, we are today helping internationally trained nurses to come into our province and join our workforce. There are targeted funding resources to implement the action plan, of which the minister has spoken of earlier today, to implement the action plan for recruitment and clinical placement opportunities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, get this. From this budget alone, \$19.4 million, \$19.4 million will be going to training nurses in our province. That is a serious investment. That is a serious investment in meeting our health care needs for health care workers, particularly nurses.

Now the good news. The good news, Madam Chair, is that of the graduating class of April this year, 95 per cent of that graduating class have informed the province's chief nursing officer that they have jobs lined up. And where are they lined up? Right here in the province of Saskatchewan, Madam Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now that's a very focused approach. That's a real approach to meeting the challenges, whether it be in nursing or in doctors or in the provision of other health care workers.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well, Madam Chair, the Premier is zero for three. There's not a goal from this government with respect to population growth. There's not a goal with respect to job growth in the province. And he doesn't have a goal with respect to the number of nurses we need to recruit into the province of Saskatchewan.

Others have goals. SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] has been pretty clear. Their goal is 600. The minister says he's got some numbers, but he won't tell anybody. Apparently he's not telling the Premier either because he just failed to give any indication of what his goal is. What is the number of nurses that he would like to recruit for the province of Saskatchewan?

And with respect to the Premier's recruitment and retention plan, those who weighed in on the issue this week in a letter, they don't like it. They don't think the plan's worth much. They

highlight the fact that while this Premier's been in office we have had a net reduction in the nursing workforce in Saskatchewan, a reduction.

What has happened across Canada? There's been a 6 per cent increase, an increase in the nursing workforce across Canada. Do you know why that is, Madam Chair? Well that's because other provinces, even those with NDP governments like Manitoba, do you know what they've done? They have developed, they have developed a recruitment and retention program that works. And it's working in other provinces.

Our government has done what? Well, they've set some platitudes. And then they've done some reports. And then they've commissioned a report on the report. And did a brochure on the report on the report that the minister waves when the member from Indian Head asks questions about their plan. That's not a goal. And if this government is going to achieve anything with respect to the economy, with respect to the provision of health care, for example, they need to set some goals.

What about post-secondary wait times? There's a number of people that are waiting. As of November 2005, here are some people waiting for training with respect to post-secondary education. How many were waiting for practical nursing training? — 207, Madam Chair. How many were waiting for medical radiological technician? — 521. Primary care paramedic, 123; pharmacy technician, 92; combined x-ray lab tech, 98; continued care assistant, 42. Electricians, we need electricians in the province. What was the waiting list? — 135. For welding, 162; carpentry, 60; automotive service technician, the waiting list is 98.

And for the pleasure, mind you, of sitting on this Premier's waiting list for post-secondary education for an economy that needs these workers, you do what? You pay. You have to actually pay to stay on the waiting list.

I would like the Premier to inform the members of the committee today what his plans are. What are his goals with respect to post-secondary waiting lists in these areas? Maybe he just has a general goal. That would be fine. It would be the first goal he presented so far this evening. I would ask him for that.

[19:30]

And then I would ask him this. When we raised this issue and we raised the attendant fee that the government charges people for the honour of waiting on their NDP waiting lists, when we asked the minister about that, she said that she would make short work of that fee. I think that was the response. It was going to be gone because after all she is the minister responsible. She is the minister in charge. Now right after the minister in charge said that, officials at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] said what? Well I don't think we have a plan to get rid of the fee.

So while the Premier's on his feet, if he wouldn't mind telling this Assembly, telling the people, about his goals for post-secondary wait times, wait lists. What has he done with respect to the fee that he charges people for the honour of waiting on his lists?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Madam Chair, it's an interesting, it is an interesting debate because I tell you the Leader of the Opposition doesn't want to stay on one subject for more than one question. He doesn't want to talk. He doesn't want to talk about health care and health care workers because he has no plan. He has no plan. He's got all the complaint. He has no plan.

Now here, I just had brought today, his exact quote. The exact quote of the Leader of the Opposition when he was speaking to the journalists today — today in this rotunda. When the journalist was asking the Leader of the Opposition if he has any kind of a plan for health care, if he has any kind of a plan for health care, what did the Leader of the Opposition say today in the rotunda? "Well we're going to be very clear with our plan not just for health care but notably the economy and other issues in the next election campaign."

Well you know what? That, Madam Chair, is simply not credible. The people of Saskatchewan know that is simply not credible. It means they do not have a plan today, and they're going to cook something up before the next election. If he has any kind of a plan, any kind of a plan beyond this plan for some kind of a value-for-money audit on health care workers . . . Now he's spoken about this value-for-money audit on health care workers. I'd like to have that Leader of the Opposition tell us precisely who he would have do this value-for-money audit on health care workers.

Beyond that he has no plan. And he will not even speak to a plan. He says I need to wait until the next election. Well it's simply not credible. And it's not satisfactory to the people of Saskatchewan. They want to know where we stand. They know where this government stands. They see what we're doing.

And I just, Madam Chair, want to tell you the result of what we're doing, what we're doing in terms of nursing in this province. We have this year a 2.6 per cent increase in the number of registered nurses in Saskatchewan — 2.6 per cent increase — in terms of licensed practical nurses, 5.8 per cent increase in licensed practical nurses that work in this province, and registered RPNs, the registered psychiatric nurses, a 4.6 per cent increase. That's the record.

And tonight as we meet in this legislature, there are 1,600 young men and women training to be nurses in our province. And the record of the April graduating class — 95 per cent of them at work in Saskatchewan. That is the result of a plan that is working for the young people of Saskatchewan. It is working for the health care system in the province. We're not afraid to talk about our plan. We're not afraid to talk about what we're doing.

I challenge the Leader of the Opposition when he's complaining every day, could he at least just once, just once raise a positive idea, a new suggestion other than his value-for-money audit.

Now he wants to talk about training and employment. He wants to talk about training and employment. He wants a response to the proposal that I know the SIAST board had a look at, of a fee for the waiting list. This too is illustrative, Madam Chair, because the Leader of the Opposition and many of his colleagues don't either understand or won't tolerate others

making decisions, responsible individuals in our province making decisions.

Now the fact of the matter is that we have a board that governs SIAST. And they are charged with making responsible decisions for SIAST. We have boards of governors at our universities who are charged with making responsible decisions. We have boards that have responsibilities for our health care districts. We have school boards elected that have responsibilities. This opposition party, over the course of this session, over and over again question, question those men and women who are dedicating their lives to good decision making.

So it is fair to say that the board of SIAST, charged with the responsibility, was given some opportunity to consider a waiting fee of \$20, I believe it was, \$20 for five programs. Now I'm told by the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment in fact they have rejected that option. They have rejected that option. And so I hope the Leader of the Opposition in fact will congratulate the board of SIAST who, from his point of view I think, didn't want to see that option. They've rejected that option. That's what I'm told by the minister.

But the fact of the matter is we trust these individuals to make good decisions. We trust these individuals to make good decisions for their institutions and for the young people of Saskatchewan.

Now again I want to share with the House fact, not aimless political criticism and complaint. I want to share fact. Today in this training sector — reflected primarily through SIAST but through some other opportunities — in the training sector this budget has the largest single investment in the training sector in this decade, Madam Chair, the largest single investment in a decade in the training sector.

Now this is the budget that the Leader of the Opposition tomorrow, I bet, will stand up and vote against again. He will vote against . . . He and all his colleagues who chirp from their seats they will stand up and vote against the young people of Saskatchewan. They will vote against these training opportunities for the young people of Saskatchewan — you mark my words.

Well that's not the position of this government. We're providing these opportunities for our young people. We want to see them in Saskatchewan. We want to see them developing their careers right here, and we are putting a record investment, a record investment into training in our province.

And if I may say before I take my place, Madam Chair, we have broken some boundaries in this budget, for we are now participating directly with the Aboriginal people of this province. For the first time in history we are directly funding seats and opportunities in the Saskatchewan Institute of Indian Technologies. We want our First Nations youth in this province, our Aboriginal youth, our Métis youth also to be achieving their futures and their opportunities right here in the province. And for the first time in history, we are funding directly seats in the training institute of Saskatchewan Institute of Indian Technology. And we are very proud of that accomplishment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Premier, the question was, is there a goal with respect to wait times for post-secondary training? The answer obviously is no. There is no goal for that. There's no goal for nurse recruitment. There's no goal for job creation. There's no goal for population growth in the province.

But interesting in the Premier's answer, he said he's, well he said he was one question behind. Well we would say to him, with respect, that it's his job to keep up, Madam Chair. And if he is so anxious to find out about the election platform of the Saskatchewan Party, all he's got to do is call a general election in the province of Saskatchewan. We'll outline the entire platform for the Premier.

Interesting as well, he noted how he allows, his government allows, all these third parties to make decisions. And these boards, he won't interfere with these boards or the various review committees he puts in place. It doesn't seem to have stopped what either that Minister of Learning, the former minister . . . of Labour, sorry, or the current Minister of Labour from either indirectly or directly getting involved in the situation with Mr. Matkowski. There's certainly an allegation out there about the government willingness to get involved with that independent board. There is a concern with respect to Legal Aid and whether or not this government was happy to get involved with that independent board.

But on this note, on this note, where the Premier basically says well I wasn't going to make the decision on the wait times fee that they were charging for potential SIAST students. Here's what the Premier said not long ago. He said, on this subject, on the subject of the powers of the Premier and the cabinet he said:

I'll tell you precisely how this works, [he said] I will receive from my departments and my ministers, a variety of advice. But at the end of the day, I'm the premier around here and at the end of the day I will make the choice of what I believe is the proper way to approach . . . [things, Madam Chair.]

So I mean which is it? Which is it? Is the minister responsible for SIAST together with the Premier able to make the decision to say, look these fees are ridiculous, and we're going to stop charging them, or are you just going to let the decision hopefully be made by another group because they don't seem to hesitate to interfere in other areas.

I'm going to give the Premier one more question, one more chance with respect to goals. There is significant wait times for post-secondary programs and we need the skilled workers these programs can produce. Does he have goals? Maybe if he doesn't have them handy — I understand that — will he just endeavour to send them over to the opposition when he finds them, when he finds his goal for wait times for post-secondary training?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well now, Madam Chair, I want to review the *Hansard* very carefully with what the Leader of the Opposition just said because I believe that Leader of the Opposition in this House tonight made some very serious

accusations, some very serious accusations about interference with the Labour Relations Board. He didn't suggest that they were accusations of somebody else; he made the very accusations himself.

And I wonder now, if he wants to talk about this kind of interference with duly appointed citizens who are governed, does he in fact, does he in fact share the view of the member — Where is Mr. Morgan from? Saskatoon — the Justice critic over there? Does the Leader of the Opposition share the point of view of the Justice critic from Saskatoon who said in this House, who said in this House that members of the Legal Aid Commission were carrying out a political vendetta, a political vendetta. Does the Leader of the Opposition share the opinion of the Justice critic that the Legal Aid Commission was conducting a political vendetta in regard to the issue around Jack Hillson?

Now interestingly you see, the Justice critic there he said it in this House. He said that in this House. You couldn't pry those words out of his lips out there. Well I wonder if the leader has a little more courage. He makes the same kind of accusation here in the House about the Labour Relations Board, about political interference. He then makes the same accusation about the Legal Aid Commission made by the Justice critic over there. I wonder if he's got a little more gumption than the Justice critic. Will he go out in the public when he's not protected, when he's not protected in here and make those same kind of accusations? Madam Chair, we are going to review the *Hansard* of the leader's comments very, very carefully tomorrow.

Now let's talk about the broader principle. Let's talk about the broader principle which apparently either the Leader of the Opposition doesn't understand or doesn't want to understand. We invite citizens, sometimes through a broad public selected process, sometimes through direct appointment, to provide their expertise and their talents to boards of governance for various agencies, commissions in our province. We appoint those people, giving them the trust of government, giving them the trust of the public. And we honour their work. We honour their work. We don't second-guess every decision that they will make.

Now they may favour a government that will second-guess the decision of every school board, of every board of governor at the university, of every board member in SIAST. They will want to question the work, I expect, of the board that now governs Investment Saskatchewan. They will want to question the engagement of citizens on our Crown corporations board. They would want to govern like I'm afraid I see their government in Ottawa governing, straight out of the PMO [Prime Minister's Office] or straight out of the Premier's office. That's what they're suggesting.

Now, Madam Chair, that's not our approach. Our approach is to work with people in this province. Our approach is to partner with people. Our approach is to draw the expertise of Saskatchewan people and utilize that expertise because Saskatchewan people . . . You know, not all the wisdom in this province is located in this room, or at least on this side of the room.

Madam Chair, there are people who are willing to contribute

their time, their efforts to legal aid commissions, to labour relation boards, to governance of SIAST, to governance of the university. We work with them, Madam Chair. We work with them. We do not supplant their appropriate decision making. Now . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well they shout from their seats. Who was that just shouting? I don't know. It's hard to hear in here on occasion. You know, they shout from their seats. They won't . . . There's lots of opportunity. Any one of them have lots of opportunity to get to their feet. But no, no, no, they shout from their seat all the time.

Now the Leader of the Opposition had some interest — at least for a moment or two — he had a little bit of interest in what's happening . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . There you are, Madam Chair. They're shouting again . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh it's impossible, Madam Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well, Madam Chair, there was plenty opportunity in those questions for the Premier to enunciate some sort of a goal in these very important areas for the province. I think the people of Saskatchewan would like to see that. Not a platitude, not a statement about the pathway to opportunity and the unbreakable fabric, but a goal, Madam Chair, that speaks to growth, that speaks to the future.

And you know what? Absolutely I think it's fair that any government that sets a goal risks the fact they won't attain it. But you know what? I think the people of this province will have a lot more respect for a government that sets a goal and develops a plan, executes a plan to get to that goal, even if they fall a little short. They have a lot more respect for that kind of government than the kind of government that offers only instead platitudes and no specifics and no, no goals in terms of where the province will go.

I will turn now though, Madam Chair, to the Premier's own Executive Council budget for just a few minutes, if I may. It's interesting to track what's happened in the Premier's communications budget. In 2001-02 the Premier, his first year in office, the communication budget was \$1.124 million; '02-03 it went down actually, 1.064 million; '03-04, 1.063, stayed about the same; '04-05, 1.063. And then in 2005-06, '05-06, the budget dropped by a half million dollars to \$1.56 million. The Premier justified it at the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Increase, sorry. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is correct. It increased by \$500,000.

[19:45]

Now, Madam Chair, the Premier — at the time I think when we had this meeting last spring — offered this as an explanation. He said:

Mr. Chair, there have been . . . I think anyone who observes the functioning of this legislature for any period of time will recognize there has been an unprecedented number of written questions provided by the opposition.

And may I just say, before I continue with the quote, and thank the hon. members for all the hard work they do with respect to written questions they're asking on behalf of the people of

Saskatchewan. But the quote goes on to say: "We believe that each of those written questions deserve . . ."

Wait a minute. They're laughing now that the Premier a year ago said, "We believe that each of those written questions deserve serious attention and a serious response and an accurate response."

And so therefore that must have been his justification for a half million more in taxpayers' dollars for the Premier's personal communications expense.

Well, Madam Chair, the budget for '06-07, the budget is up significantly again — 1.84 million taxpayers' dollars for the years that this Premier has been in office. The communications budget has increased a whopping \$720,000. That's 64 per cent.

Would the Premier just explain to the members of the committee and the people of Saskatchewan, what value are they getting for a 64 per cent increase in the Premier's personal communication budget?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Madam Chair, this is so typical of this leader and that party. He describes this as my personal communication budget — my personal communication budget. Have you ever heard anything so ridiculous in all of your life in this legislature? Only from that leader and that party. And he wants to talk about personal communications. I expect we're going to be talking about his personal communications before the night is over.

The communications function of Executive Council is the coordinating communications function for the entire Government of Saskatchewan. The entire Government of Saskatchewan's communications is coordinated through Executive Council. That means the broad number of public service advertisements and so on — while some being paid for by various departments — are coordinated through this department. It is this department that will promote to the nation and to the world and to our own people the province of Saskatchewan, joining with other departments.

Now, Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition talks about the discussion we had a year ago. Of course he won't talk about the full discussion. He'll take, as they always do, one little section of the discussion. Yes, I talked about the number of questions that have come from this opposition in record, record numbers. Questions that take hours and hours and hours of public service time, willingly given, to achieve it. But I tell you, Mr. Chair, these answers that are provided to the legislature don't just appear out of air. They are accurate and they are researched. And, Mr. Chair, they take a great deal of staff time.

I think last year was the record, 1,340 questions. This year I think we're up to 1,000, 1,100 — something like that, Mr. Chair. Of course it takes people to do it. But this is not to be confused with a personal communication budget. It is the coordinating function for the communications of the Government of Saskatchewan.

And given the kind of misinformation, the misinformation that

is put into the public airwaves by that leader and that opposition, paid for I may say by the taxpayer of Saskatchewan . . . Every time that Leader of the Opposition appears in your television screen, every time we see his face on your television screen, you ought to be reminded that's being paid for by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. And we've had such a vivid example lately of the misinformation that he's willing to put his face beside on a television screen in Saskatchewan and then ask the taxpayers to pay for it.

The information that comes from this Executive Council and from this government is accurate information. It's to the point, Mr. Chair. And I tell you, part of that budget is to answer the flagrant abuse of written questions in this House by that opposition.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Chair, welcome aboard. Mr. Deputy Chair, that's really quite an incredible answer and it does go to I guess the next issue of advertising that the Minister of Finance engaged in, though not in this particular . . . in the Premier's Executive Council budget which has gone up over 60 per cent since he became the Premier. I'm not sure if he needs more communications help than did Premier Romanow, that much more, but certainly a 64 per cent increase begs a lot of question for a lot of people. The people of Saskatchewan have different priorities I think than worrying about the communications budget for the Premier that's gone up 64 per cent.

But with respect to the Finance minister's advertising, I'd like the Premier to justify, to justify it in the context of these remarks made by himself when he said, this government, referencing the government of the 1980s:

. . . this government must be spending millions of dollars on self-serving advertising. It's just, in my judgement, Mr. Speaker, the wrong kind of priority.

Does the Premier, does the Premier still agree with that sentiment today?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Let's find me those liquor bills here. We'll talk about the '80s all right. Mr. Chair, Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition stands up and asks why it is that the Government of Saskatchewan needs to communicate accurately to its citizens and beyond the borders of this province. Why it is the Minister of Finance needs to communicate accurately the good news of this budget that they won't vote for. Why is that?

Well, Mr. Chair, he wants me, he invites me, he invites me to share with this House tonight and with the people of Saskatchewan what he does with taxpayers' money. He puts his face, his face, in a political ad on taxpayers' dollars on the television screens of Saskatchewan and this is what he says. This is what he says in his ad paid for by the taxpayers. He says to the people of Saskatchewan, in reference to the government, are they cutting your taxes? Then they put in a little sidebar, higher taxes burden the province.

Well the fact of the matter is, Mr. Chair, in this budget you will see the largest single cut to business taxation in this province's history. That's what you see in this budget, to create the

competitive environment that we know will draw investment, that we know will create jobs, that we know will create a future for the people of Saskatchewan and the young people of Saskatchewan. He says in his paid-for ad by the taxpayer that the taxes are going up. The taxes are going down, Mr. Chair.

He says, he says in his ad, is university more affordable? That's what he says in his ad. Is university more affordable? Then he had an ad running that said that no, no, the tuitions are rising. That's what he said in his ad. The tuitions are rising. That's a plain inaccuracy, Mr. Chair. It is an inaccuracy. Last year we froze tuition fees. In this budget which he votes against, we are freezing tuition fees for two years. Well he admits there's kind of an inaccuracy there so he puts out another ad which says now, is university more affordable? Higher tuition costs, higher tuition costs. That is misleading, Mr. Chair. He's doing that with taxpayers' dollars.

Is there any wonder the Minister of Finance has to take to the airwaves to provide accurate information to the young people of Saskatchewan that this government stands with them, that this government has frozen tuition fees not just a year ago but for two years, that this government is having a serious look at the whole question of financial accessibility through the work of the member from Regina Elphinstone? We need to tell the people accurate information because of this kind of misinformation coming from the Leader of the Opposition.

Then he says in his ad paid for by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan on our television screens, then he says: are they helping cope with higher energy costs? The implication is we're not. The fact is we are, with the Energy Share program, Mr. Chair, widely known in the province and widely appreciated in the province.

Now you see, is there any reason that we need to provide accurate information to the people of Saskatchewan? Of course there's a reason when you've got a Leader of the Opposition taking taxpayers' dollars and providing clear misinformation to the people of Saskatchewan. What for? What for? For his political benefit. Not for the benefit for the people of Saskatchewan, not for the benefit of the future of this province, but for one benefit — his own political benefit and the fortunes of a political party that needs taxpayers' dollars to get his cause done.

Well, Mr. Chair, this is not a government that puts politics before principle. This is a government that puts principle first. That's what we're doing over here, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Wall: — Well if there's any television ad out there that's asking the people of the province what this Premier has done with their taxes, I hope the people in 63 out of 81 of the former school divisions see the ad, because they'll know that the answer is that Premier has raised their taxes after promising to reduce their taxes. That's his record.

Mr. Deputy Chair, that Premier amazingly went to Birch Hills and had another video dance party announcement, the likes of which they haven't had since they announced the imaginary ethanol plant at Belle Plaine. And what did the Premier solemnly say? He said education property tax burden is too heavy on farm land and this government was going to do

something about it. And this government did something about it. This NDP [New Democratic Party] government set out an amalgamation plan of school divisions that set out a budget, funding for education that resulted in a tax hike in 63 of 81 former school divisions. That's that Premier's record on the issue.

So if anybody in Saskatchewan is saying, is questioning this Premier's commitment to affordable taxation in the province, boy that question that they have in their mind is justifiable. Sadly, it's justified by the actions of a Premier who doesn't mind issuing press releases that say one thing, but then delivers a budget and forced amalgamation that does completely the opposite thing, Mr. Deputy Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — It's not my words, Mr. Deputy Chair. The Premier himself said that the self-serving advertising . . . And we've all seen the ads of the Minister of Finance and, you know, the minute I think . . . I think we understand that Minds Eye Pictures of, you know, a big-time movie studio apparently helped with these ads. And we know they've been involved with this NDP government in many different ways, financially and otherwise, but no doubt able to produce a high-quality product. And so they shine up the Minister of Finance in these ads and we see him telling people, in very general terms — in very general terms — about the budget.

Now in previous years, in previous years, under the tenure of the former minister of Finance, the member for Regina Victoria, I think that's the name of his . . . No it's not. The member from Regina that was the former minister of Finance, you know what he did? I would say this, Mr. Deputy Chair, he was much more responsible. He understood that yes, there's some attendant communication requirements with a budget. A budget is an important document in the life of a province.

And so that minister of Finance understood that he had a responsibility to communicate what was in his budget. And you know what, Mr. Deputy Chair? He was able to do it for, I think, less than \$60,000. About 10 per cent of what this Premier is now spending to burnish the image of his government and arguably the Minister of Finance, one of his chosen successors perhaps, I'm not sure.

To the Premier: does he still believe what he said in 1988 about self-serving advertising? Does he still believe that? And if he does, how has he lost his way so much that he would approve a tenfold increase in the budget to advertise the budget from that former Finance minister to the current Finance minister?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, when it comes to the kind of self-serving advertising that's being paid for by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan on our screens on a daily basis by the Leader of the Opposition, you bet I'm opposed to it. You bet I'm opposed to taking tax dollars and funding the political future of a leader and a political party. And it isn't, by the way, going to work because the people of Saskatchewan are not fools.

When they see a Leader of the Opposition who you would think would be concerned about his own credibility, standing up in an ad paid for by the taxpayers, paid for by the taxpayers that is

completely, completely averse to the truth, Mr. Chair, I would be very, very concerned if I was that Leader of the Opposition and his credibility . . . And talk about self-serving ads, you bet I'm opposed.

Now he talks about the ministry of Finance and the advertising they've done for the budget. Of course we are going to tell the students of Saskatchewan, we're going to tell the young people in Saskatchewan that there is a future here; their future is here in this province; that this is a government that will stand behind them because the people of Saskatchewan are standing behind them. And yes, we're going to tell those students that we are dealing with accessibility to post-secondary education and financial accessibility. You bet we're going to tell those students that their tuitions are frozen for two and three years in a row. And we're going to explore every option to make sure that post-secondary education for our young people is accessible, depending on what's in your mind and not what's in your wallet. You bet we're going to tell the young people.

And, Mr. Chair, we are not going to cease in telling the people of Canada, the people in North America, and the people of the world about the competitive tax regime that is in Saskatchewan; about the welcoming investment climate for their capital and for their labour that exists in this province. You bet we're going to do that.

And I'll take any amount of criticism that man or that party over there wants to deliver because I'm going to tell, we are going to tell the story of Saskatchewan. We are going to blow this province's horn. We've been quiet too long and we are going to see it done, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Industry and Resources, everyone in this government.

Now he made some comments about a very valued, a very valued participant in the Saskatchewan economy, particularly in film and video, Minds Eye Pictures. I'm not sure if it was Minds Eye that did these particular Finance ads or not. I don't know about that but I know it's a valuable, it's a valuable group.

But what the Leader of the Opposition ought to check out is whoever does his ads and spells the name of the province wrong, spells the name of the province wrong. Can you believe it, Mr. Chair? The Leader of the Opposition would put his face on an ad paid for by the taxpayers, full of misinformation, and then spell the name of the province wrong.

I observed yesterday — it's a peculiar thing — someone who wants to be the government of Saskatchewan, they can't spell government. They can't spell Saskatchewan. I wonder, Mr. Chair, if they can spell the word of.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[20:00]

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the hon. member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Talking about spelling, I remember just this morning getting a news release from the Minister of Agriculture spelling agriculture wrong.

But anyways talking about plans, talking about plans for what this government has, what about the plan for the Watrous long-term care facility? For a number of years they've been planning the long-term care facility in Watrous. You keep talking about plans. What plans will you give them, Mr. Chair? Will the Premier answer what year they will build that facility.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I beg the indulgence of the House. I simply could not hear the member's question because the member from Rosetown-Elrose was hollering so loud. I could not hear the member's question. I beg his indulgence. Could he repeat the question.

The Deputy Chair: — The member for Arm River-Watrous, before I recognize you again, I want to ask members on both sides of the House to please keep the volume down, keep the heckling down, keep the shouting across the House down. Let's have some order in the Chamber. I recognize the hon. member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Chairman, my question to the Premier is, the town of Watrous has been trying to building a long-term care facility for a number of years. You talk about planning. Do you have any plans? Can you tell them right now when they can start construction on it?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I thank the member for his question. I do not have at my disposal tonight the detail of the capital planning and the capital program of the Department of Health. I don't know if the member had that opportunity to ask this very same question to the ministry of Health when they were here for estimates. I don't know that. I will commit to the member that we will find, we will find a more specific answer to the Watrous situation. I'm not aware of where the Watrous proposal is in the capital planning of the Department of Health.

Now I think all members will recognize that our . . . Well there's the member from Cannington shouting from the back door now, Mr. Chair. He ought to stand up and shout on his feet instead of just shouting from the back door.

Mr. Chair, Mr. Chair, I think all members will be aware that the Department of Health, through its coordinating, through coordinating efforts, will draw together all the proposals for capital expenditures from all of our health regions. There will be a prioritization. There must be a prioritization. We cannot simply do all of the capital work in one year. And much of the capital work takes a fair bit of planning, particularly health capital.

So I will find from the Department of Health where the Watrous proposal is in terms of the priorities for capital. But what the House needs to know tonight, Mr. Chair, what the House needs to know tonight in this budget now under consideration, we are increasing health capital in this province by a full 20 per cent in this budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — A full 20 per cent increase in health capital. That's capital for hospital projects. There will be capital

for some, I expect, long-term care projects. There will be capital for other health needs in our province. That's a 20 per cent increase. Now I served for a time in the ministry of Health. I cannot recollect a budget that I was responsible for where we had a 20 per cent increase in capital. And I congratulate the minister — and I congratulate the department and government generally — for coming forward with this very major investment.

And I know this capital, some of it is going directly into the Leader of the Opposition's own constituency, right into the regional hospital at Swift Current. That's what makes us, we as members of government, very puzzled when the Leader of the Opposition and members over there will stand up and vote against that kind of capital commitment to health care facilities in the province. It is completely a mystery to me why the Leader of the Opposition would stand up and vote against the very capital commitment that will provide a regional hospital in his own city of Swift Current.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You talk about not knowing where it is. Well I don't think you know where it is. I don't think you do know. I've been asking questions on this for a number of years. This process started in 1994, is when they first went. In 1996 the Department of Health, your officials, your department, determined that . . .

The Deputy Chair: — Order. Order. I'd ask the hon. member to please make his remarks through the Chair. Thank you.

Mr. Brkich: — Okay. Mr. Chair, this has been going on for a number of years. In 1996, Department of Health, their officials, that government over there said that should be a high priority for capital funding. They've had over 10 years to plan this, over 10 years to plan this capital funding for this project, Mr. Chair. For 10 years, them people in Watrous have . . .

I was there last year. You know what? The roof was leaking there. You know what? And they don't know whether they should spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to fix it or to wait because maybe next year this government just may okay the funding. In over 10 years this government can't plan, can't tell the town of Watrous when they're going to build it.

They're not asking . . . This proposal didn't come out two months ago, didn't come out six months ago, didn't come out two years ago. Came out over 12 years ago. For 12 years you've been putting them off. All they want is a date. They want to know maybe next year or the year after so they can plan. They still have to raise money because construction costs keep going up. Every year they have to keep raising money because they don't know how much the cost of inflation is costing them and what the extra cost is going to be.

You're putting that people and that town in a hardship and also the residents in there that in overcrowded, that need a new building. And in 10 years or 12 years . . . You talk about planning. You have no plan to even figure that out. Your share of the funding is probably the whole thing that a few years ago, Mr. Chair, was over seven and a half million dollars. It's not a big investment that you could figure out over 10 years.

You know what they're saying in Watrous? This government couldn't organize a three-car parade.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I just want to say I have a high level of regard for the member who represents the community of Watrous. And I know he speaks with great passion because he feels it, and he feels it on behalf of his constituency. My view is that he's one of the few over there that's not putting politics ahead of principle, and I respect his passion. I respect his views.

I also respect that in meeting the capital needs of the people of Saskatchewan there are many, many demands, and there must be prioritization. There must be prioritization. I well recall representing the great people of Moose Jaw in this legislature when that group of men and women were in government, and we were in desperate need, desperate need of new nursing home facilities. It took well more than 10 years before we saw the reality of that need filled.

I respect the members opposite. I respect the member from Watrous who's representing the community of Watrous here tonight and who brings passion to this debate. I've committed, I'll find for the ministry of Health precisely where it is in terms of the priorities and get back to him.

Again I say though, it is very peculiar that when there is a budget that provides 20 per cent increase in the capital spending for health care capital, facilities and other capital, that this opposition would vote against it.

It is very peculiar in my view, Mr. Chair, that when the national government, the new Conservative government of Canada puts a 6 per cent increase in health care funding generally for Canadians — a 6 per cent — the Leader of the Opposition and this party over there, they jump up and down and say, that's a very, very good budget. It's a very, very good thing.

This government has placed in this budget, not a 6 per cent increase, not a 7, not an 8, not a 9, but a 10 per cent increase in health care funding, a 20 per cent increase in health capital funding. And members opposite will vote against it. It doesn't make any sense to Saskatchewan people, and it is simply not credible, Mr. Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the hon. member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Chair, tonight I'd like to talk to the Premier a little bit about agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan. I'd like to talk a little bit about what's happening to farm families out there and what's been going on for the last number of years and times right now I would compare to the 1930s. Although the dollar values are far different and the situation is different, many farm families are struggling just as

they did in the '30s.

And I would like to ask the Premier tonight in light of . . . We've gone through the BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] out there on the family farm. We have the highest input costs and the lowest grain prices we've had for many, many years out there. And I'd just like the Premier to maybe tell me what actually his government under his leadership is doing for farm families this year. What can he tell the farmers out there?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I thank the member for the question and again, I think, a member who has some bona fide concern about farming families in this province, as do we. I don't think there's a member in this legislature that doesn't have a deep concern for the farming families of Saskatchewan particularly, Mr. Chair, this spring where we know, where we know that income crisis is having a devastating effect on many of our farm families, where we know the sale catalogues this spring have been thicker than they've been for many years.

And it's a result of years . . . We've gone through some years of significant drought in this province. We've weathered the BSE crisis. And we continue to be forced to weather international subsidy that forces this income crisis upon our producers — producers, if I may say, Mr. Chair, who have diversified, who have changed, who have explored almost virtually every new option.

What is this government doing, the member asks. Well there is significant commitment in this budget to the CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] program. He will know that a year ago we announced the full funding of CAIS for this year. There's the base funding this year. We have the new work that's being done with and by Ottawa. We want to assess all that. We're supporting the CAIS program and supporting some of the changes that are being made to make it a better program.

There is significant commitment in this budget to the crop insurance program. There is significant commitment in this budget to farm families through educational property tax relief. I know this was raised earlier by the Leader of the Opposition. He says there's no relief.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Chair, in this budget there is 67 million — 67 million new dollars for the farm families of Saskatchewan to alleviate some of that property tax burden, to move us to a province-wide average of 60/40, the kind of average that the producers of Saskatchewan have called for, for many, many years, for many, many years — for decades in fact, Mr. Chair. We have achieved it with a commitment this year in this budget of \$67 million to the farm families of Saskatchewan. And again it is a peculiar circumstance when these kinds of resources are being provided to the farm families of Saskatchewan that the member opposite and the members opposite will stand up and vote against that kind of budget, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. To the Premier, Mr. Chair, I'd like to talk then about education tax. That seems to be about the only thing that he could mention that they've actually done for farmers.

But let's go a little further with that education tax dollars. On the east third of the province, with reassessment in the last couple of years we've saw our assessment skyrocket out there. And what has happened, when the assessment's gone up, the foundation grant's gone down? What's happened to the mill rate in the school divisions? They've gone up. What — 63 out of 81 in the province of Saskatchewan are having to raise their mill rates. Now that doesn't sound to me like you're doing any favours for any farmers in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Premier.

And, Mr. Premier, I'd like to know if the Finance minister discussed the budget with you before he actually drew it up, because you may not, and you don't seem to understand that last year the budget for agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan was \$430 million. Do you know, Mr. Premier, what it is this year? It's \$264 million.

At the same time the Premier, Mr. Chair, said he understands the hurt that's going on in rural Saskatchewan. Anybody that understands the hurt going on and could at the same time cut \$166 million out of the CAIS funding is just totally amazing.

And he also said oh, we put all this money into crop insurance. Do you know, Mr. Chair, what he did with crop insurance? He cut \$12 million out of the Crop Insurance Fund. How on earth does that relate into any relief or help for Saskatchewan farm families?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — You see again, Mr. Chair, we have an example of members of the Sask Party at best confusing the facts — the kind of thing they do on their televised ads. That member knows full well . . . I believe he's had this discussion three times with the Minister of Agriculture. I believe he had this very same discussion in the estimates of the Department of Agriculture. If he didn't, I don't know why he didn't.

He will know that in this budget there is 67 million new dollars. It does not flow through the Department of Agriculture. It flows through the Department of Government Relations. That's real tangible money for Saskatchewan farm families. That's real dollars.

[20:15]

Mr. Chair, he also knows that in last year's budget we fully funded CAIS for last year and this year, fully funded for last year and this year, Mr. Chair. He knows that, but he wants to play the mischievous game of appearing that the support is falling. The support is growing, Mr. Chair.

Now this province and its people support its farmers and its producing families at a level that is significantly, on a per capita basis, higher than any other province in the Dominion of Canada, significantly higher. Fair enough, Mr. Chair, because we support, we support, we support the producers of Saskatchewan. We understand the importance to our total provincial economy. But it's a fact, Mr. Chair, that the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, through their government, at a level that is double and even triple what other provinces are doing.

Now we put this in context, then, of what the national government is doing, what the national government is doing to support Canadian families and producers coast to coast. And I invite that group — who has now a real relationship with the new Conservative government — to compare what Canadians through their national government are doing for producers to what the governments of the United States and what the governments of Europe are doing for their producers.

Mr. Chair, Mr. Chair, this national government — whether it's Liberal or Conservative — have not stood behind the producers of Canada as governments in the United States and Europe have done. And until we can bring resolution to the international subsidy sponsored by Europe, sponsored by Washington, the national government of Canada is going to have to be there.

Now what we're seeing . . . We're seeing some change in CAIS. Some of it positive. Some of it we're not so sure. But we're also seeing this new national government pulling the opportunity of the railcars from the farm coalition in this province. And I hope that was raised by the Leader of the Opposition when he was in Ottawa.

There is work we need to do with our national government, work that we would be assisted by that opposition. And therefore it is very peculiar, Mr. Chair, when the Minister of Agriculture from the Government of Saskatchewan joined with farm leaders from the entire sector of the farm community in Saskatchewan to go to Ottawa to work on and with this federal government, that the member who now stands in his place and asks questions tonight refused to go, refused to go to Ottawa with the Minister of Agriculture and the farm leaders from Saskatchewan.

He was invited. He refused to go. And when he was asked why, his only explanation was, he doesn't get along with the Minister of Agriculture. Well the member should get over that. The member should get over that for the sake of Saskatchewan producing families. Join with us as we work with the national government to bring more benefit in this very difficult time for the producers of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. For the Premier's information, I was just a little late getting on the plane. I got on the one last week and went down and talked, and it must have done something because we got what? Billion and half dollars come out. Somebody did something.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chair, I'd like to go back. The Premier talked, in his response he was talking about playing games. Let's talk about playing games and talk about the games they play with their CAIS funding.

In the last two years, they haven't put the CAIS money upfront, and farmers couldn't go to the bank and rely on that for operating loans. They had to wait till the eleventh hour, till that government was under pressure and finally coughed up the money.

And what are they do again this year with \$1 billion windfall from gas and oil? They have the money available to deal with it now, and we're talking estimates for agriculture. We're not talking exact dollars. We're talking estimates. By now CAIS has been in play long enough. They should have a pretty good idea what it's going to cost them this year, and they could have put that money in. And I find it amazing that with the money available from the windfall of gas and oil money, they wouldn't see fit to help farmers out at this time of year.

Mr. Speaker, as I said to the Premier before — and I don't know if he even realized this — that they cut the budget from 430 million to 264 this year. It didn't seem like it in his response because he was so positive in his thinking about all the things they're doing for agriculture.

Well let's list some more things they've actually done for agriculture this year. He talked about crop insurance. I talked about the \$12 million cut there. On top of that they kicked out over 500 farmers out of the crop insurance program. They would not extend the deadline. And I find that amazing, Mr. Chair, because that wouldn't have cost Crop Insurance or it wouldn't have cost the Saskatchewan government or the Saskatchewan taxpayer one red cent to delay that for, say, three months. We had the occasion of a farmer come in here four days late. And would they reinstate his crop insurance contract? Absolutely not. It's heartless, Mr. Chair. It's something that this government should know better, should not devalue the rural population in Saskatchewan to the point where they've totally written them off.

It's time to come to the table, fund the CAIS program, put your money upfront. He knows as well as I do. The Agriculture minister knows they're going to have to fund it somewhere. Put it in, Mr. Chair. Put the money upfront.

And, Mr. Chair, what also happens when you cannot get crop insurance, you do not get an operating loan from the bank. You cannot apply for a cash advance because you're not in the program. So what they've done by not even extending the deadline and giving these farmers a chance, they've cut them out of all these other things. And I'll bet you in many cases, there's farmers that are selling out that are caught in the squeeze or declaring bankruptcy or just giving up out there.

Mr. Chair, we have land that's not even being farmed this summer. We have situations where actually the landlord is paying the renter to put a crop in and farm the land this year. That's how bad it is, Mr. Chair, in the province of Saskatchewan. And the Premier sits there and smugly says, we're doing all these things for agriculture. This is probably the lowest amount any government in this province has put into agriculture in the last 15, 20 years — especially the last 15 under the NDP's leadership.

Another thing that they've done to help farmers in the province of Saskatchewan, they just put up pasture fees on Crown land — 38 per cent. Boy, that really helped the farmers out there who haven't even got over the BSE problem out there with low prices for their cows, bulls, and calves. Calves have returned a bit, but already the provincial government's jacking up pasture fees.

Will the Premier stand tonight in his place and do the right thing and fund the CAIS program and tell us some other thing that he's got good news for farmers in the province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I was not able to be present in committee when the estimates of the Department of Agriculture were being debated and discussed. But I'm told that there were very, very few questions by that member or any other member over there about the CAIS program when the Minister of Agriculture was available and all of the officials were here to discuss it. They didn't even want to talk about it, Mr. Chair. Now what is this? Is this principle or is this politic? I'll tell you that, Mr. Chair, for the most part, it's politic.

Now the member full well knows, he's been told — he's asked the question in question period and in other forums — that CAIS this year is fully funded. We made the announcement last year. I made the announcement last year. The money was in last year's budget. That's where the money is. He can see it. He knows it.

You know, Mr. Chair, the applications for CAIS will not be coming in till January or even delayed, the Minister of Agriculture tells me, into . . .

An Hon. Member: — They start coming in January.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — They start coming in January 2007. Meantime we're working with the national government to build a better program.

CAIS is fully funded for this year. He knows that. But he wants to try and make out as if it isn't, Mr. Chair.

So now let me just, let me just observe on this. He claims that he went to Ottawa and came back with a billion five. Now this is, this is a fine and dandy thing. Now we've found out that what we need to do is send the member from Saltcoats down to Ottawa.

Maybe he can get our labour market money back too. That's about 100 million. Maybe the member from Saltcoats can go to Ottawa and do something about putting the Kelowna accord back in place. Maybe the member from Saltcoats can run down to Ottawa and get a child care deal that we knew we had and now seems to be disappearing. Maybe the member from Saltcoats can go to Ottawa and get the fair equalization deal that Saskatchewan families and Saskatchewan people deserve.

If he's so successful in his last trip, I hope he goes next week and brings home a few more things.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Chair, the fact of the matter is the member of Saltcoats, I believe the member of Kelvington, I know the Leader of the Opposition, went to Ottawa for one purpose. It was to raise money for the Saskatchewan Party. That's why they went to Ottawa. They had a fundraiser in Ottawa for the Saskatchewan Party. They put the big ads right there on their website, you see. They go now . . . They used to always just . . .

The Deputy Chair: — Order. Order, order. I'd ask the member from Wood River to please refrain from yelling across the floor. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — So we all know that what the point of the trip to Ottawa was, was to raise money for the Saskatchewan Party. It's right on their website. They ran the ads and everything else. They used to just go to conservative Calgary, now they go to conservative Ottawa to collect money.

So but, you know, if the member from Saltcoats is convinced that he went to Ottawa and brought home a billion five, well I hope he goes next week and brings another billion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. And I'm glad the Premier recognizes accomplishment when he sees it.

Mr. Chair, this is the budget that I read, that that Finance minister put forth when he brought the budget in. And the Premier just said to the public of Saskatchewan that they're fully funding CAIS for this year. What I read in this budget book is \$98,776,000 for the CAIS program. Will the Premier explain to me how \$98 million is going to fully fund the CAIS program?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the member opposite I think knows something about the CAIS program. I wonder if he would just inform the Chair and all members of the House, when do the 2006 applications start coming? When do the applications start coming for CAIS 2006?

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Chair, I'd like to ask the Premier then right back, when is he going to fund the program? When do you fund it? Do you fund it every couple of years, you put in two years? How do you fund it? Because it's not in this budget year. Where are you going to get that money? Where are you going to show it?

If you come to the last minute next December and have to put it in as you've done in the last number of years, where do you get the money from? Where does that come out of this budget? Are you going to wait until you have another deficit budget and blame farmers? Where is it going to show up in your budget in this budget year?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well now, Mr. Chair, we have some, I think we have some room for some discussion and debate. He talks about when is our next deficit budget. The next deficit budget for the province of Saskatchewan would be on that unfortunate day that that group ever got back to the Treasury Board. That would be when we'd have the next deficit. We're not going to run deficits. We're running balanced budgets.

Now the question to the member is, when do the applications for the 2006 CAIS year come in? Well the answer is, if he doesn't know, they come in beginning next January, next January.

CAIS 2005 is fully funded. We made that decision. It was in the budget. Now he complains it was in last year's budget. Well fair enough I guess if we wanted to show it in this year's budget.

The reality is the dollars are there, and they are moving to the hands of producing families in Saskatchewan. That's the reality. The reality is, we are going to work through this year with the national government to seek as best as we can to make improvements to that program. I believe in this budget alone there's \$98 million base funding for CAIS.

There is no doubt about this fact, Mr. Chair. On a per capita basis, this province through its government provides support through its taxpayers, through government to the farming families of Saskatchewan at a rate which is considerably higher per capita than any other jurisdiction in Canada, and we're proud to do it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Chair, the Premier doesn't seem to fully understand how the program works, how it's funded. And we've got to give up at that point I guess because what they're going to do is, at the last minute they're going to put their money in. And should gas — maybe — and should gas and oil prices drop . . . You know what? The Premier knows what a deficit budget is; he ran three or four of them the first time, the first years he was Premier of this province.

He can spin any little myth he wants. That's exactly . . . The debt of the province of Saskatchewan went up; I don't know what you'd call it if you don't call it a deficit. And if we were in that situation again, the additional money that has to go into the CAIS program would have to also increase the debt of the province. And that's the point I'm trying to get through to him. And at a time when he could actually help farmers out there, when they go talk to their banker, these guys won't even get to the table.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to also talk about something we didn't get the opportunity because we didn't have the chance to talk to SaskWater [Saskatchewan Water Corporation] people or possibly even, I'm not sure if it's under municipal. But, Mr. Premier, we have calls coming in now from our villages in the province. And the problem is out there in the villages is, we have the new water rules put in place where a group comes out from municipal government — I believe I'm not sure, it could be SaskWater — does an assessment on their water systems . . . I've got two villages where the population is 50, 60 people, and they've been handed bills to the tune of 36, \$3,700.

Mr. Premier, I don't know if you're aware of this, but if you are and being that we're coming to the close of the legislature, would you please look into this. Because what you're going to do in essence with these bills is totally decimate our little villages and small towns in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the member raises some very specific questions about SaskWater. I anticipate he would have asked these questions when the estimates of SaskWater were here. I do not know the detail. I commit to the member we will get the detail. I thank him for raising the issue. I commit that I'll work with SaskWater and its ministry and we'll get a clear response to him as soon as possible.

[20:30]

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Deputy Chair, the government has grown fond, and we've talked about it earlier, of the phrase that no one will be left behind. The Throne Speech that opened the second session of the twenty-fifth legislature says the "... province where no one is left behind on the path [on the path] to opportunity, a province with an unbreakable social fabric ...". And then, and then we see it again, the path to opportunity, and the 2006 spring session begins. And we see a reference to the Premier's commitment that no one would be left behind.

Were it only true, Mr. Deputy Chair. Were it only true. The fact of the matter is that under his leadership there are many, many individuals and many, many groups, many sectors of Saskatchewan who are precisely being left behind by this, by this particular government.

We raised a number of them, Mr. Deputy Chair. And I would argue during the session, I would argue, Mr. Deputy Chair, that Val Paterson didn't feel as though she was the one the Premier was talking to when he said he wasn't going to leave anyone behind. I would argue that Paige Hansen and her family didn't really much care for the hollow words from the Premier, that he wasn't going to leave anybody behind. I would imagine that the cases we brought forward, I would imagine that the terminal cancer patient, Linda Stonehouse, who had to drive to get oxygen from emergency, from emergency, from this NDP health care system, didn't much care for the sentiments and the platitudes of the Premier when he says that no one will be left behind.

And, Mr. Deputy Chair, Mr. Deputy Chair, if may say, I would expect that two individuals in particular, representing unfortunately many more who have, who have cancer right now and who would like to be able to access, with the government's help, Avastin — and we're told by this government that they would not be helping them in any way, no copayment and certainly no full payment by this NDP government — I think frankly they felt precisely the opposite. I think they felt left behind by that Premier and by that government.

And not moments ago in these Executive Council estimates, the Premier stood up and said, what? He talked about a public health care system. You remember? I think members will remember that. It was only a few minutes ago. And he talked about his vision for health care where the kind of care you get, you can receive in the province of Saskatchewan, doesn't depend on how much money you have. That's what he said.

But in this case, with respect to this drug Avastin, with respect to this government's refusal even to provide a copayment, to look at any option, we know that that is precisely the opposite of what is happening. We see — under this Premier's leadership — we see two-tier health care, NDP-style, presided over by that Premier. And I would ask him this question right now in estimates. If he was being truthful when he said, when he said that his vision for health care was one where it doesn't matter about whether or not you can afford it or not, you can get the

care that you need in the province of Saskatchewan, if he meant when he said that, what is his explanation to Mr. Loeppky, Bob Loeppky in Swift Current, Terry Rak in Saskatoon, and the many other cancer patients who would like at least a little help with the drug Avastin?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now, Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition is adept, adept at twisting words, even printed words from a Throne Speech — even printed words from a Throne Speech. Now I happen to have the Throne Speech here. And what the Throne Speech said, what Her Honour read as the vision and the goal of this government and this party that I am proud to lead, the vision and the goal, "... my government dreams of a province where no one is left behind on the ... [pathway] to opportunity ...".

Have we reached that dream? Have we reached that goal? Of course we have not. But the difference is this is a government and this is a political party that dreams great dreams, that dreams no little dreams, that dreams visions, that sets goals to the future. No, we have not achieved all of our dreams nor all of our goals. Of course we have not.

But the difference is that group of men and women have no bold vision, no bold goals for the people of Saskatchewan. They've only got vision for their own political future, and we see that day after day after day. That's the only vision they bring to this legislature, is politics over principle. And the people of Saskatchewan see through it.

Yes, we're proud to set out bold visions. We are proud to dream of a province where no one is being left behind on the path of opportunity. You bet we're proud to dream that. And we're labouring to see it become reality, more reality for more people. And this budget, Mr. Chair, this budget takes us considerably at a distance in reaching that dream and that goal.

The member speaks of this very, very difficult choice that faces this government, that faces every provincial government in Canada, Mr. Chair, on the level of funding we are able to provide for new medical treatment, in this case a new cancer treatment that would extend life. It's not a curative product. These are some of the most challenging decisions that must be made by government. There is not a province in Canada, Mr. Chair, not a province in Canada who has found it able to provide full funding for the cancer treatment drug Avastin — not a government in Canada.

We know, Mr. Chair, that there may well be 100 more new drugs coming. It takes consideration of the resources available, where those resources can best be used, Mr. Chair. Now is the Leader of the Opposition arguing that each product, each product that is brought forward through new technology, through new pharmaceuticals, is the opposition leader arguing that every product should be approved? We have today in Saskatchewan the most comprehensive drug coverage of any province in Canada when it comes to cancer-treating drugs, the most comprehensive coverage of any province in Canada when it comes to cancer-related pharmaceutical products.

Is it the position ... [inaudible interjection] ... Well get up and

say that on your feet. Mr. Chair, is it the position of the Leader of the Opposition that each new product that comes along should automatically be funded? I'd like to know that, Mr. Chair. I'd like to know what his plan is for pharmaceutical products to health care.

In fact I think there's a goodly number of people in this province who'd like to know his vision for health. They'd like to know what plan he has. He stands today in the rotunda and says to the journalists, no, no, I'm not going to tell you anything about my plan until I'm into an election campaign. That's politic above principle. There's an opportunity tonight for the Leader of the Opposition to talk about his plan.

We wrestle with these difficult decisions. We are taking the resources available to us and trying to provide the best possible health care we can to the largest number of people, focusing of course on the most crucial issues. I invite the Leader of the Opposition tonight now to share a little of his plan for health before the election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chair, the Premier says that his government dreams big dreams, that he dreams big dreams for the province. What are they? He calls this the wee province, coming back from an interprovincial premiers' meeting. We're the wee province, w-e-e.

When we first gained have province status, as the *Leader-Post* reported, he said, well we're always going to be, here's the quote, "... 'in and out' of equalization." We're always going to rely on federal fiscal welfare from time to time according to this. That's his big dream. That's his big dream.

Members on that side of the House talk about 900,000 population from their seats. That's a big dream. One of the members on that side of the House on the issue of population growth said, it's statistically impossible for this province to grow even at the meagre national average of 1 per cent. That's not much of a big dream, Mr. Deputy Chair.

By any fair measure, precisely the opposite is the problem with this government. There are no goals, and their plan is one for mediocrity. And sadly for the people and the potential of this province, it's coming true under that NDP government. Their plan for mediocrity is being realized unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Chair.

So he can stand up and say that he dreams big dreams, but the fact of the matter is when he is outside of this Assembly or not needing answers in estimates, he calls us the wee province. And I know people that just hate that, and they're not necessarily partisan supporters of any particular party. And I count myself among that number because it doesn't describe my Saskatchewan. It does not describe my Saskatchewan. It doesn't describe the Saskatchewan of the people of this province, and that's why there's such a disconnect with this government.

That's why the people of Saskatchewan are so disconnected with this government. It's not the people's fault. It's how badly that Premier and that NDP Party have lost touch with the dreams and aspirations of Saskatchewan people.

But I would bet this in terms of who's dreaming big dreams. It's all very relative, Mr. Deputy Chair. I think Bob Loeppky is dreaming big dreams, and his dreams are probably not nearly as big as those that we would dream fortunately in this Assembly from the perspective of good health. I think Bob Loeppky is dreaming them, and I think Terry Rak is dreaming big dreams. Something like maybe 150 more sunrises, or five more months with the quality of life, and who knows what can happen in five months with respect to other possible treatments for that, for the cancer that they have. That's their dream.

And here they listen, they listen to the Premier if they are watching tonight. They would listen in his speeches he'll talk about Tommy Douglas. He'll evoke the memory of Tommy Douglas and say, you know, he believes in a Saskatchewan where your wallet shouldn't dictate the kind of health care you get, except that it is. It is in the province of Saskatchewan. It does for Terry Rak. It does for Bob Loeppky and the others that they represent that were here at this Legislative Assembly.

So I ask the Premier this: how can he with a straight face, how can he with a straight face talk about Tommy Douglas, promise a health care system where your wallet doesn't dictate the kind of health care you get, and then give an answer as he has given on Avastin? How can he say to the people of Consul, Saskatchewan, who if they need cancer treatment and have to spend a long time in Regina for example to get it at the Blair centre, they're going to have to pay? They will have to pay extra to get that treatment here in Regina from the very qualified front line from the cancer centre here in Regina. The truth of the matter is, if you happen to live here in this great city, in the capital city, you don't have that same cost. So some pay and some do not.

And I would like this Premier for once, for once, to put away the Tommy Douglas rhetoric and have an honest and frank discussion about the state of two-tier medicine that he presides over in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we just heard from the Leader of the Opposition the same little speech that he goes around making to the business community. I've heard it a dozen times. And it's just wearing very thin because there's nothing new in what he says. There's absolutely nothing new in what this Leader of the Opposition says. At least when the member from Rosetown-Elrose was in the leadership of that party, there was something new in what he was saying. There was some meat in what he was saying. All we hear from that leader in this House and on the platforms outside this House is this same tirade of rhetoric. I'm tired of it. In fact I'm told the business community is getting tired of it. The province is tired of it. They want to hear something more substantive.

I asked the Leader of the Opposition to stand up tonight in estimates, share something of his vision, his plan. Not a word, Mr. Chair, not a word emanates from his lips about an alternative or a plan.

Now it wasn't this Premier, Mr. Chair, it wasn't any member on this side of the House that invoked the name of Mr. Douglas tonight in this debate. But if he wants to debate Mr. Douglas

and what Mr. Douglas thinks of the politics of that kind of a conservative party, that kind of a right wing party, we can sure debate that.

On the very question of drugs, it was that leader of this province, it was Mr. Douglas who proposed many, many years ago that if we are going to meet the challenges of pharmaceuticals, if we are going to meet the very kind of challenge we have with Avastin and other new drugs, the only conceivable way we can do it is nationally, with a national drug plan.

I worked to promote a national drug plan with the former government. I will begin to work that same work with the new government. No success with the Liberals; maybe we'll have success with the Conservatives. We are not going to be able to meet as Canadians the rising costs of pharmaceutical products in this nation without a national drug plan. We won't be able to do it, Mr. Chair. Mr. Douglas knew that. He knew that when he occupied this desk and said it.

Now if the Leader of the Opposition wants to debate the principles of medicare between the Conservative Party and the right wing party that he represents and the New Democrats and the social democrats of Saskatchewan, we'll go on any platform any day and debate the principles of medicare. I'll do that for sure.

Now, Mr. Chair, I think if that leader and that party want to have a modicum of credibility on health care or on any other subject, it's about time they started sharing with the people of Saskatchewan in a genuine way, in a specific way, what are their plans, what are their ideas. What are their ideas? They can identify the problem quick enough. We recognize problems. But what are their solutions? What are their plans? And I tell you, when you go in the rotunda and say to a journalist, I'm not telling you my plan until I'm forced into an election, that's not good enough. And it's not credible.

Again I invite the Leader of the Opposition, can he share one plan for health care? Can he answer one question about health care? Well can he even discuss the one thing that he's talked about, this value-for-money audit? Who is it, Mr. Chair, that he would propose should conduct a value-for-money audit of the health care workers of Saskatchewan? Maybe he'd be willing to at least answer that one specific question.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chair, there's no answer there. So I expect we'll continue to hear more speeches about how this Premier has a vision for health care where the size of your wallet doesn't dictate the kind of care you get, when precisely the opposite is happening on his watch.

There's two-tier health care with respect to geography, where you happen to live in Saskatchewan. There's two tiers with respect to cancer drugs in the province of Saskatchewan, drugs that the cancer agency says should be funded. So what the Premier will give Mr. Loepky and Mr. Rak, he will tell them that his vision is that he doesn't want to leave them behind, but then he'll do precisely nothing to back up those words with respect to their particular concerns.

[20:45]

Mr. Deputy Chair, there are another group of people that are currently being left behind by the Premier in the NDP's plan for child care in the province of Saskatchewan unless we can get some positive answers to questions here today. The Saskatchewan Party supported the previous child care and early learning agreement with the federal government but so too do we recognize that again in Saskatchewan, especially in smaller urban centres, especially in rural Saskatchewan the availability of public spaces even under the former federal-provincial plan are simply not going to be there.

And so in smaller urban centres and in rural Saskatchewan, as was the case for our family at home, for Tami and me, we were going to go out and do all the due diligence we need to do and find a child care provider that we would believe in and trust and feel comfortable with the care of our kids. And we took it very seriously, and we did that, and we found someone who did an excellent job, who our kids love today though they've been out of child care for some time. It's not an institutional child care service, not a public space, but a provider nonetheless and an excellent provider if you talk to the many, many parents who benefited from her service.

And there are so many others across the province in our ridings who are providing similar service. There are grandparents that are providing that kind of service, and there are parents who have one of the spouse, husband or wife, stay at home and obviously provide that daily child care.

So what does the Premier have against the federal plan that would also recognize the fact that we are a rural and urban province, that there needs to be choice with respect to child care? What does he have against it? And more to the point, Mr. Deputy Chair, why did the Premier vote against our amendment during the debate in this Legislative Assembly that recognized:

. . . parents are the best judge of quality child care [these are quotes] for their children [and] . . . urge the [provincial] government not to discriminate against parents who choose to stay at home with their children when negotiating agreements with the federal government or when implementing provincial child care initiatives . . .

Why would he vote against that initiative? And why does he oppose any balance in the system that also includes choice as well as interprovincial, federal-provincial agreements for child care?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Again, Mr. Chair, I think what we're beginning to hear more and more on a daily basis is the apologists of the national government right across here in this Chamber.

Now I want to bring to this discussion a number of facts. We have supported, significantly supported child care opportunities both in urban and in rural Saskatchewan. In fact the statistics that I have before me indicate that in urban Saskatchewan you will find 124 centres; in rural Saskatchewan, 41 centres. In urban Saskatchewan child care homes, 234; in rural

Saskatchewan, 53. Corresponding in some ways to population, the number of spaces total in the centres across Saskatchewan, 5,970; in homes, 2,364.

If the Leader of the Opposition cared to research a little or had better research over there, he would know that in the arrangement that we were negotiating with the federal government, where we had achieved a one-year agreement anticipating future years, that a goodly bit of that negotiation was to provide more home-based day care to meet the needs in both rural and northern Saskatchewan.

Now along comes the new government. And I have said very publicly it is quite within the right of the new national government to provide the \$1,200 payment for families with — I've supported it, I've supported it publicly — that it is completely within the right of the new national government to provide that kind of support to families with children six and under. That's completely within their right. But I tell you what's not within their right is to rip up agreements across this country that were signed, duly signed after many, many months of work between the child care communities, between the provinces, and between the federal government for the ongoing program that we had all agreed to.

If a new government wants to place additional funds into child care in a new program, nobody disputes that, and I have supported it. What we cannot support is the ripping up of agreements made with child care providers, made with parents, made with provinces across the country.

Now this group over here seems to think that's just fine. They seem to think this just fine. When the Leader of the Opposition was in Ottawa collecting money for his political party I wonder, Mr. Chair, did in fact he raise this issue? Did he raise this issue of the need to preserve those child care agreements for Canadian families, for Saskatchewan families, for child care providers, for the children of Canada? Did he raise this issue with the Prime Minister? Or did he just say aye, aye captain; I'll go home to Saskatchewan and explain everything you want me to explain and support everything you want me to support?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Now, Mr. Deputy Chair, truthfully I don't think that Premier should be lecturing anybody, anywhere, anytime about ripping up agreements. He sat in the cabinet of the previous NDP premier, of the NDP government that did what to farmers when they could least afford it? They tore it up. Unilaterally they ripped up those signed contracts like it was nothing. And do you know what, Mr. Deputy Chair? It wasn't with another level of government, those contracts, those were with farm families in the province of Saskatchewan. So he ought to be careful before he lectures anybody about ripping up agreements.

I would also challenge the Premier, then in these estimates to explain this to the people of the province, explain why only 250 jobs have been created with the 40 plus million received from the federal government, with the child care money? When we asked written questions on this issue, the answer was pretty clear. It appears that the government has spent less than 20 per cent of the 21.7 million received from the federal government

for child care last year on child care.

Unless they've done it indirectly through some other means, it appears that they were happy to take the money from the federal government for this agreement, this agreement that now he laments its end. But according to our figures — and if we're wrong, I hope he takes the opportunity to explain it — according to the answer they gave in written questions, the government spent less than 20 per cent of the 21.7 million that the federal government gave them for child care on child care. On behalf of parents and children in the province, where's the rest of the money?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well again, Mr. Chair, this is an interesting circumstance when the Minister of Learning was here, who is responsible and has oversight of child care, not a question was asked about this very issue in those estimates. Now isn't that interesting, Mr. Chair? Is this politic or is it principle? It's politic, Mr. Chair.

Now the fact of the matter is if the Leader of the Opposition had cared to do a little research before he came in here or if he had his critic inquire of the minister — which she's here with all of her officials — he would know that this money is being rolled out over time. You build capacity. You can't take it all one day and spend it the next. Even though that's how they operate, I know. You get any money, they'll spend it the next day, just like that. We're building capacity, Mr. Chair.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition again, does he support the agreement that was signed between this province and the national government, in fact between all provinces and the national government? Does he support that agreement? Will he stand with us in battling to ensure that agreement remains in place? And did he raise this issue when he was in Ottawa raising money for the Saskatchewan Party?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Premier . . .

The Deputy Chair: — Just before I . . .

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Chair . . .

The Deputy Chair: — Excuse me. I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition. But just before I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, I want to ask members on both sides of the House to please keep the volume of their remarks down. The Leader of the Opposition is being interrupted by government members during his comments. The Premier is being interrupted by members of the opposition during his comments. This is a lengthy evening, and both men have to be on their feet a lot. And I would ask you to ensure that both can be heard and that we keep the volume in the House down. And I recognize the Leader of the Opposition. Thank you.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Chair, the truth of the matter is that this Premier has received money for child care and less than 20 per cent of it is finding its way to child care. And so the Premier talks about a rollout or whatever other spin he wants to put on it

today. The fact of the matter is the money is gone . . . where? Is it in general revenue? Where is it? This was money for child care.

We voted on this side of the House in favour of the motion supporting the previous agreement. The Premier was here; he knows that's the case. The issue is two-fold. One, why does the Premier seem . . . why did he oppose our amendment that recognizes the importance of choice, that recognizes the importance of different kinds of child care that need to be provided in different parts of the province because we have a rural and urban dynamic in Saskatchewan? Why did he vote against that?

And secondly, where is the money? Where's the money the federal government did give him for child care? Did it go to the General Revenue Fund, and so therefore is it being spent on the Minister of Finance's ads just even today? Did it go into some other account at the government? Where is it? How is it going to rolled out? How can the people and parents of the province expect to see the full amount provided for child care by the government actually delivered for child care in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . There we've just heard another Conservative line from Ottawa being delivered by the member of Cannington.

Mr. Chair, first of all, apparently the Leader of the Opposition didn't learn when he was working upstairs here during the Devine administration — I think he should have learned it when he was at this Grant Devine school of economics — he should have learned when he worked in this building that in fact every dollar that will flow into Saskatchewan from the national government will flow into the General Revenue Fund. It is the proper way, publicly, to account for the expenditures of government. If he's suggesting that dollars should flow into government and not go through the General Revenue Fund, I invite him to stand and make the case for that because he will be much afoul of the auditor just as he got much afoul of the auditor, him and his party, when they were in government before. So of course the money flows through the General Revenue Fund.

The child care money flows to a variety of programs, a variety of programs. It's unfortunate he didn't take the opportunity when he had the Minister of Learning here and all of the officials who could speak with great detail about each of these programs. It will flow into workers. It will flow into direct subsidies. It will flow into dollars for child care centres and the capital work, and so on. It flows into a variety of places . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Early learning spaces, I'm reminded by the minister. He had an opportunity when the minister and her officials were here. We could give him every detail of every cent being spent on child care.

The money, Madam Chair, that we are taking from Ottawa, receiving from Ottawa, is going into child care. It's going into Saskatchewan's children. It goes through the General Revenue Fund as it should.

Again I ask the member, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party, when he was in Ottawa raising money for his political cause, did he take that opportunity to speak to the Prime Minister of Canada in defence of the agreement that was made between the national government, this province, and every province in Canada? Did he take the opportunity to lobby that government to honour those agreements? Did he use that opportunity to lobby that government on behalf of child care workers, child care providers, the children and families of Saskatchewan? Did he do that, Madam Chair?

Mr. Wall: — You know, the Premier says well, why didn't you come and ask questions in estimates on this issue? We asked a written question. We're quoting from an answer that we got from his minister, the fact that they've confirmed they haven't spent the child care money they got from Ottawa. Less than 20 per cent of it has gone to child care. That's his answer, not ours. I'm asking him to explain it.

The point of this is, his goal he says, is that no one will be left behind. And the fact of the matter is we've already discussed health care patients that are left behind on the longest waiting list in the country. Now we're talking currently about those who need child care, parents and the kids themselves, who have been left behind from a government prepared to grab that federal government money and not provide it for the ends it was intended.

Madam Deputy Chair, there is another group. If the Premier believes, if the Premier believes that he is going to set out and achieve this goal that he says, that no one is left behind, I wonder if he will turn his attention to social assistance recipients in the province of Saskatchewan who may need support to travel for medical care. In the province of Saskatchewan, if a social assistance recipient needs to travel for medical care, they are given a travel allowance, a kilometre allowance of 13 cents a kilometre. That's if they're driven by a family. That's if they're driven by a family. If they need to be driven by a non-relative, they do get bumped up to 19 cents.

Now, Madam Deputy Chair, the critic for this file, for DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment], has asked this question. We have asked this question of the former minister responsible, I think it was two years ago. Her response at that time was well, it's something we'll monitor and if these . . . This was two years ago, mind you, Madam Chair. She said this: if the high price of gas continues, then we're going to have to do something about it.

Well it's two years later and I'm not sure who fills up the Premier's car but whoever it is can tell him that the price of gasoline hasn't gone down since then. It has gone up significantly. So in his effort to make sure no one is left behind, what will he say then to social assistance recipients who need to travel for medical attention and are getting 13 cents a kilometre and 19 cents a kilometre depending who drives them?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, I've requested some of the detail around the actual travel subsidy, but let me say this generally about the budget that this opposition is voting against,

has voted against, and I expect will vote against again tomorrow. This budget contains the largest single increase for our most vulnerable citizens, increase in social assistance rate, the largest single increase not in a decade but in a generation, Madam Chair. That's what's contained in this budget.

[21:00]

This budget contains new resources for housing and the support for housing and the provision of housing. This budget lifts our neighbours in need in a fashion that has not occurred for a generation, Madam Chair. We're able to do this, we're able to do this because we have a prosperous and a growing economy. And it's our belief that some of that prosperity needs to be shared with the most vulnerable among us.

In addition, Madam Chair, we have developed programs. This government has developed programs that have moved significant numbers of our citizens from a situation of dependence on social assistance to a circumstance of employment and independence. We have developed programs — the transition employment allowance, the social assistance program — that have lifted people from dependence to independence. These are accomplishments of which we are very, very proud, Madam Chair.

And again can you believe an opposition that will stand in its place and plead the case for the most vulnerable and then turn around and vote against, vote against the most substantive increases in social services in a generation? Can you believe, can you believe they will stand and vote against it, Madam Chair?

Mr. Wall: — You know, Madam Chair, when the Premier was just about to answer I think it was the member for Prince Albert Northcote — the minister that got caught up in the SPUDCO scandal — who shouted from his seat, well you're doing casework again, Brad, I think is what he said. Absolutely, Madam Chair. Absolutely. That's what we've been doing in this session. That's what we'll continue to do.

That's what the member for Humboldt will do for the Hansens when they call about baby Paige who is screaming in pain and can't get any attention from the health care system. That's what we'll do with respect to Emily Morley who was waiting to meet with an oncologist and can't get an appointment. You bet. He says, casework again. It is casework. For that minister it's casework. For this party, it's the people of this province, the people of this province who pay your way and expect results. That's what it's about.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — And so if the minister wants to make that point, I'll admit . . . You bet I've got someone in mind when I'm asking questions about the ability for this government to provide travel assistance for social assistance recipients. His name is Ted. Ted Andreas is his name and he does require every once in a while unfortunately to travel for medical attention. And when he does, his family is asked to obviously drive him and they do so willingly. But then they are given by this government that says they leave no one left behind, they're given an allowance at about 13 cents a kilometre. The question

to the Premier is, it's he that has said that's his goal that no one would be left behind. What would he say to Ted? What would he say to social assistance recipients who need to travel for medical attention?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, if the member opposite, the leader or the critic opposite, had bothered to address some of these questions when they had opportunity with the ministers in their estimates, when the officials of the department were here . . . I don't know why they wouldn't raise these questions — if they're important questions; I believe they are — why they wouldn't be raised when the minister and the department were here. Fair enough. They want to play politic. Fair enough.

Now here's the fact of the matter. I am just informed by the minister and the department concerning travel rates which — fair enough — the last increase was in 1997. 1997. In a matter of days this minister will be announcing to the stakeholders that there will be an immediate increase in travel rates of 4 cents a kilometre in the South from 17 cents, or from 13 to 17; or with a driver, 22 cents a kilometre. There will be a 6-cent kilometre raise in the North to 19 cents, or 24 cents with a driver.

That's in this budget. That's in this budget — a significant increase in the travel support for people on social assistance. And mark my words, that member will get up and vote against it tomorrow. Imagine — pleading the cause tonight, voting against a solution tomorrow.

And here's the difference, Madam Chair. This government sees that . . . We see the problems. We see the issues that face the citizens of Saskatchewan. We take action. We make change. And we will defend our plans and our goals. The difference is that leader has no plan. What is his plan for social assistance? Have we heard anything from that leader or that party about a plan for social assistance, about a plan for the most vulnerable?

Well you know what they say? Cut the taxes. They say cut the taxes. Well I want to remind members across the way that those who are receiving social assistance tonight in our province are not paying taxes. They're not paying taxes. And your great plan to cut their taxes will mean zero, zero to the most vulnerable in our society.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — What we do, Madam Chair, is to work with those individuals, work with their families. We are working with the agencies who are on a daily basis serving those individuals. You'll recall, Madam Deputy Chair, you'll recall . . . Members will recall the response to the budget the day of the budget when Mr. Peter Gilmer of the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry said this was a very good budget for the most vulnerable people in our province; when Mr. Bob Pringle indicated — as his work takes him into contact with the most vulnerable through the food bank — as Mr. Bob Pringle indicated, this budget took a lot of thought. It's a good budget for the most vulnerable in our province.

Tonight the minister informs me that travel rates will be increasing for those on social assistance by 4 cents, from 13 to

17 cents per kilometre, or 22 cents if you have a driver; from 6 cents to 19 cents in the North, 24 cents if you have a driver.

Madam Chair, I ask the Leader of the Opposition again, will he support this? Will he support this kind of . . . Having raised it tonight, will he support this extremely significant improvement in travel rates? And if he won't support it in the budget, why not? Why not? And while he's on his feet, let's hear a little from the Leader of the Opposition about his plan for the most vulnerable in our society.

Let's hear a little more from the Leader of the Opposition than he . . . He doesn't want to talk about health. He doesn't want to talk about the economy. He tells the journalists, you have to wait for the election. Well maybe he doesn't need to wait to an election to talk about the most vulnerable, our neighbours in need. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to take his place, tell us about his plans.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — The member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Hear, hear. Thank you, Madam Chair. To the Premier. I don't think anybody would deny the importance of post-secondary education to a strong and growing economy. And one of the hallmarks of this government has been an abdication of responsibility in that area until just recently.

We've heard complaints from students across the province over the years that Saskatchewan's tuition rates are the highest in Western Canada. In fact I think the university student unions in both the U of R [University of Regina] and the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] claimed that we had the third highest tuition rates in the whole country.

So it comes as no surprise that this government would respond to that in the typical fashion of a reply, an approach that fits into the hallmark of this government. When it's forced to do something it responds with an exercise that fits into the goal of getting itself re-elected. And that really appears to be the case once again with the government's most recently announced review of post-secondary education.

Now, Madam Chair, the Premier's made it clear that it was his decision and his alone to reject the option of holding an external review of post-secondary education, and to appoint the member from Elphinstone to head this review.

Madam Chair, I would ask the Premier why he would have taken this extraordinary step, especially when it's so contrary to the previous practice in this province of appointing independent and external reviews of the system, such as the DesRosiers report and the MacKay report. Could it be, Madam Chair, that the Premier doesn't want another Boughen Commission on his hands right before the next election? Could it be that he doesn't want another review that he couldn't control, another review whose recommendations he wouldn't be able to cherry pick?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well let's start with the member's final comments. Madam Chair, I was unable to hear his first

comments. The member from Saskatoon Northwest was hollering so I could not hear the member's first comments. But I did hear his latter comments and I will respond to them in order.

He speaks, at the end of the day in his comment, about the role of MLAs and whether it is my intention somehow through this process to direct this MLA. Well I'll tell you what, Madam Chair, I want to assure the people of Saskatchewan that's not how this government caucus works. It's not like the caucus over there, where a member has to resign her seat — has to resign her seat — giving us an unnecessary and expensive by-election in Weyburn. A member has to resign her seat because she says she cannot represent the will of her constituents in that party — that she cannot voice, she cannot voice — the concerns of her constituents in that party. She is so muzzled by that leader and that party that she has to resign her seat. The Leader of the Opposition is running an organization there which the former member of Weyburn says always puts politics above principle.

Now I want to assure the member of Maple Creek that that's not how it works over here. That may be his experience in that caucus, that they are muzzled, controlled by the leader. That for sure is not the process over here.

And so, Madam Chair, I have appointed the member of Elphinstone — Elphinstone — to conduct with our institutions, with students, with the student representative bodies, to consider recommendations to improve accessibility, particularly financial accessibility for students.

Madam Chair, we have taken the forward-looking step in this budget of putting a freeze on undergraduate tuition fees at our post-secondary universities. We've taken this step. We took it last year; we've taken it again. We're going to utilize it this time to work with students, we're going to work with our institutions, we're going to work with families, we're going to work with employers in this province looking at the whole question of accessibility to university, accessibility to post-secondary education. And I can think of no better individual in the province of Saskatchewan to lead that consideration and lead that review than the current member of Elphinstone — the current member of Elphinstone.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now, the member of Maple Creek — and I'll come to the member from Swift Current in a moment, the Leader of the Opposition — the member of Maple Creek says we should have a royal commission. We should have royal American commission.

I'll tell you what, Madam Chair. You know what? If I would have chosen to appoint a major review through a commission — something like the Bob Rae commission was appointed in Ontario — you know what that leader would be saying and that member would be saying and all those people would be saying over there? What, more study they'd say. We don't need more study. We need action. I agree. I agree. And I have put in place a member of this legislature — an able member of this legislature — who will bring about action on this file by working with students, by working with institutions. We're very clear about where we're going with post-secondary education.

We're very clear about what's in this budget in regard to post-secondary education.

So again I ask . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well if the critic wants to, but the Leader of the Opposition's now chirping away from his seat. He ought to read that book. It would be good information for him. The Leader of the Opposition, chirping away from his seat, might want to get on his feet now and tell us about some of his policy position on post-secondary education. Does he have a policy on the training of young people in our province? Does he have a policy on post-secondary education?

He says to the media, I'm not going to talk about . . . This is today in the rotunda. He says to the media, I am not going to talk about policy and health care. I'm not going to talk about policy in education and employment. He won't talk about policy in social services, one of the most vulnerable. Will he stand up tonight and talk about some of his policy when it comes to post-secondary education? Do they have an idea? Do they have a thought? Well now is the time. Now is the hour. If he wants to gain a little bit of credibility with the Saskatchewan public, he ought to stand up and talk about his position on post-secondary education. What is his position there?

Mr. Elhard: — Well, Mr. Premier, with the number of questions that have come from your side of the House, I would say the role reversal is really taking effect here. The fact of the matter is, with all the people working in the Premier's office, I'm sure that one lowly researcher would have been able to go to our website and look at our policy section and determine for himself or herself and for the Premier's benefit exactly what the policy on post-secondary education is on behalf of the official opposition. It would seem to me that there's enough staff in that office to accomplish that meagre task.

In fact, Madam Chair, there doesn't appear to be any other reason than to maintain political control for appointing a backbench MLA to head a review that will conveniently present its final report on the eve of when the next provincial election is expected. So can the Premier tell us why he personally made the decision to reject the recommendations of his own civil servants and choose a review option that is so obviously and clearly political in its nature?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well I respect very much the work that's done by the public service. And I respect the many options that are brought to my attention. But at the end of the day, I, the cabinet, and the caucus of the government will make decisions. And we've made a decision here. We've made a decision to appointment a member of this legislature to do this review.

Now this is not unique. This is not the first time. I've invited members of this legislature — private members and government benches — to do work before. I have invited a member to do work in terms of sustainable energy, conservation, in this province. I invited a member to do work on immigration, invited a member to do work on ethanol. Each and every one of these initiatives has provided significant public policy initiatives and real, tangible benefits.

[21:15]

Now the member from Maple Creek and the member from Swift Current — the Leader of the Opposition — sits in his chair chirping away now. He says, we want to know something about their post-secondary education policy. We should tune in to their website because it's all there. Well if it's there, why don't they share it with us tonight? Why don't they have the commitment to stand in a legislature and talk about their policies? Are they so ashamed of their policies that they won't talk about them publicly?

Now I have tuned up, you know, members, I have tuned up to the Sask Party website. I have on occasion gone there looking. I went there looking one night to see about the biography of the current Leader of the Opposition. And what did I find when I went looking for the biography of the current Leader of the Opposition? Well I find out he was born in Swift Current. Then somehow he got back to Swift Current. But you know what? You know what, members? There are seven missing years, seven missing years on the Sask Party website concerning the biography of the current Leader of the Opposition.

Now I don't know why they would choose to remove seven years from the Leader of the Opposition's life in terms of his biography on the website. But when you do your own research outside of that website, you find out those were the very seven years the Leader of the Opposition was working in this building for the then Devine, Grant Devine government, when he worked for a series of three ministers in that government — three ministers in that government.

Now why is it you would want to erase that bit of history from your biography? Why is that? Maybe the Leader of the Opposition would like to explain to this House tonight why it is that he does not want people of Saskatchewan to know what he was doing in that period of time, those seven years. Perhaps he'd like to tell the people of Saskatchewan tonight after he's explained his policy on health care, on the economy, on the most vulnerable, on post-secondary education. Let's not wait for the website. Let's have the debate here in the legislature, talk about your policy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Elhard: — Well as I mentioned earlier, the questions back and forth are almost at an equal number. I thought this was the Premier's estimates where he would answer our questions. Instead he has more questions for us and fewer answers all the time.

For those who are watching via the television or on streaming video on the Internet, those who are interested maybe on the government side, I'll give you the address for the Saskatchewan Party website: [www.skcaucus](http://www.skcaucus.com) — that's c-a-u-c-u-s — .ca. Now if the Premier really wants the answers, he can look for himself or have one of the many staff people in his office check that website out. And they can report back to him, and he'll know all about our post-secondary policy. It's clear and concise and there for everybody to view.

Madam Chair . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Dot-com?

An Hon. Member: — You can say it all again.

Mr. Elhard: — I will: w-w-w-dot-s-k-c-a-u-c-u-s-dot-com. Sorry.

Now having said that, I've heard the Premier talk quite a bit tonight about the tasks that he gave his backbenchers and all the recommendations they brought forward. We've had some representation on the issues like ethanol and crystal meth, and I think somebody did a report on immigration and so forth. But the fact is, Mr. Premier, all of these appointments really only go to prove my point, that on crucial issues like drug addictions and now post-secondary education, this government has opted to put NDP politics and the re-election of this government ahead of the people of Saskatchewan.

The Premier talks about Project Hope and the work of the current Minister of Healthy Living. But as the Premier knows full well, his government would never have got to the point of appointing that member if it hadn't been for the pressure applied in this House on that issue. The Saskatchewan Party led the fight to bring crystal meth to the forefront in this House. How else could one explain the Premier's new-found interest in the addictions crisis that we're experiencing in this province, other than the fact that he realized that his government's continued inaction had become a political liability.

Madam Chair, let me remind the Premier of a couple of facts. In 1993 it was that Premier who, as associate minister of Health, closed SADAC [Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission]. In 1996 it was that Premier who was part of the cabinet that closed the Whitespruce youth addiction treatment centre in Yorkton.

The commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada has stated that 70 per cent of offenders nationwide have an identifiable problem with drugs, alcohol, or both. So is it any surprise that Saskatchewan has reached the dubious distinction of the country's crime capital?

So my question to the Premier now is, how can that Premier possibly claim that his government-led reviews aren't simply crass politics when the new youth treatment centre promised by the Premier in Project Hope will not be operational until 2007? And his post-secondary review will not be reported on until the fall of 2007. And now the member for Regina Rosemont's review of Saskatchewan's music industry won't report until June 2007, conveniently the year of the next election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Chair, you know, the Leader of the Opposition doesn't seem to want to talk about some of these other issues. He's putting up his critics. Well that's fair enough.

Now the member of Maple Creek and the Leader of the Opposition, and others over there are shouting that you know what we should do members, what we should do is tune into their website and all will be revealed. Everything is on the website. All you need to do, all you need to do is get on their website and all will be revealed.

Well I tell you what. I've been on the website, I have a copy right here. I have a copy right here. And you know what, Madam Chair, they talk about a growth agenda. They say the

have a growth agenda. You go on their website and you type in their search engine, you type growth agenda. What do you get? Blank. Blank. No results. Nada results.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — That's what you get. You go on the Sask Party website and you type in on their search engine, growth agenda, and what do you get, Madam Chair? Blank. Zero. They have no ideas. They have no policy. They won't stand in this legislature and talk about a policy.

He will not — the Leader of the Opposition — he will not talk about policy in health care. He will not talk about policy in the economy. He will not talk about policy for the most vulnerable in our society. They won't talk about policy on post-secondary education. And then, they have the gall, the gall, when good public policy is being delivered, for instance in immigration — I've never heard the words hardly immigration out of their lips — when there is good public policy being delivered, then they say it was our idea. It was our idea. They got a website where you go on there for their growth agenda and it says zero results. Zero results.

Well the people of Saskatchewan know you put them in government, you'll get zero results. No, no you won't get zero results, you get bad results because we got the record of the '80s. We know.

Now in terms of Project Hope, in terms of Project Hope . . . The member asks about Project Hope and says, I believe, although it's hard to hear over the member from Wood River, I believe the member said that nothing has been done, and nothing has been accomplished as a result of the work of the then legislative secretary, now Minister of Healthy Living Services, who did this work of extremely important public policy work and entitled it Project Hope.

The member just stood in his place and said that nothing has resulted.

An Hon. Member: — I didn't say that.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well what did you say? What did you say? You see, isn't this an interesting thing, Madam Chair, isn't this an interesting thing. They say one thing when they're sitting down and quite a different thing when they're standing up, one thing when they're sitting down and quite a different thing when they're standing up. I won't repeat what I heard the member of Kelvington say tonight from her seat. They say one thing sitting down and another standing up.

Stand on your feet, member, and say what you've said. You said that nothing has been accomplished. Well I want to say, I want to say, some of that which has been accomplished, I want to share some of that which has been accomplished. And again we're talking fact; we're not talking about the misleading activities of the Saskatchewan Party.

Madam Chair, the partnership has been established with Saskatchewan Health and the Prince Albert Grand Council to develop a 15-bed facility in Prince Albert. The temporary positions, the temporary beds are now in place or soon will be.

The beds in Prince Albert, the temporary beds, are now in place. Maybe if I could ask the Minister of Healthy Living Services to bring me the sheet of paper with all the exact numbers because you're going to hear, you're going to hear the exact numbers. You're going to hear the exact numbers as opposed to, as opposed to the kind of rhetoric we're getting from the Leader of the Opposition and from the critic. Mr. Chair, I'm going to wait the exact numbers because I do not want to misinform this House. I'm going to wait till the exact numbers are brought to me, and I'm going to share those exact numbers with this House.

In the meantime, in the meantime, perhaps this critic or the Leader of the Opposition, who seems to want his critics to take these questions, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to stand, that would be good.

Now what about their vision? What about their vision? What about their plan for addicted youth in our province? What is their plan? What is their . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member from Saskatoon says he'd like to answer, perhaps he could stand and answer. Some policy discussion, let's have some policy discussion. Let's have some policy debate. They complain about what's being done, but they do not offer viable alternative. I invite the critic, I invite particularly the Leader of the Opposition, come to your feet, talk about policy. And when I get the detail, the exact numbers, I'll share those with you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Elhard: — Well, Madam Chair, I accept the challenge from the Premier, but we're going to address that another time. I want to tell him though, I want to tell him that the Saskatchewan Party's vision for the economy is so great no website will contain it.

Madam Chair, I'd like to raise another issue here this evening. I'd like to raise once again the workplace incident that recently occurred at the Department of Community Resources. A Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* headline read, "Government workers protest conditions." The article goes on to talk about 70 workers who were protesting what they saw as harassment from management. I'd like to quote from the article that appeared in the paper, Madam Chair. It says here:

. . . management has made the workplace a "toxic environment". "It's beyond dysfunctional" . . . "If you stand up and challenge this employer you're black-balled, blacklisted" . . . "You will not get any future opportunities or promotions".

Madam Chair, these quotes are just a symptom of a much larger problem.

In the 2005 Saskatchewan public service employees survey less than half of those surveyed responded favourably to the following statement, and it said: "All in all my Department is effectively managed and well-run."

Well, Madam Chair, the question to the Premier is, what is he doing to ensure that government workers are being treated fairly and with respect? What is he doing to ensure workers' concerns are heard and acted upon? What is he doing to provide real

leadership for the public service in this province?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — No website — what did he say? — no website large enough to hold the Saskatchewan Party plan. No credible website would host it.

I want to share, Madam Chair, in a serious way, I want to share with members activities that have occurred already under the leadership of the Minister of Healthy Services under Project Hope. It was on February 10 of this year, 2006, that six interim youth stabilization beds in Saskatoon were announced, and they were made available for use on February 13. We're hoping that the permanent facility will be in place much earlier than the target date.

'06 in Prince Albert in the Parkland RHA [regional health authority], the six interim beds have been put in place until the permanent facility is finalized, and we are working with the Prince Albert Grand Council. Regina Qu'Appelle Regional Health Authority continues to do work on two major projects in the South — the drug treatment court and a brief detox homelessness shelter.

We have put in place the prevention and education directorate that was put in place on October 31, 2005. And the primary focus of the past three months was to put together the national conference — which the minister and Saskatchewan hosted — a national conference in best practices in addiction treatment and prevention. That Moving Forward conference brought people from right across the nation, right across the nation. I was pleased to be part of that conference. It was held in Saskatoon, January 30 to February 1. It was a sold-out conference and brought people from right across the country. Very well received.

We committed in 2005, in December, we announced our addictions research Chair as committed by Project Hope. We announced our addictions research Chair at the University of Saskatchewan. The university is currently doing the recruiting for that position.

[21:30]

A number, a large number of the health promotion and prevention positions that Project Hope is sponsoring, given to each health region, they're now in place. This creates a network of quality, qualified individuals across the province dedicated to the prevention of substance abuse, promotion of mental health.

We have just been joined in the Department of Health under the auspices of Project Hope with a team of five implementation consultants who have recently joined the department. Over the next two years these consultants, at the centre of government, will work with each of our RHAs to ensure that all of the Project Hope initiatives are fully, fully implemented. One of those of consultants is now our provincial coordinator and that is in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse to promote local, multi-sectoral drug strategies in and across the province.

We have, as members in this legislature will well know, we have now passed The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Act, passed in the fall of 2005 and now

implemented. And the permanent location for secure beds for youth detained under this Act will be built into the new unit in Saskatoon, the new stabilization unit. The exact number of those beds, this information tells me, has not been determined. The interim six-bed facility in Regina at the Paul Dojack Centre opened on April 1, 2006, the very same day the Act was proclaimed. The day the Act was proclaimed the facility was available.

Let me talk about the budget, Madam Chair. Let me talk about the budget for Project Hope and for addictions treatment that these people are voting against, that the opposition is voting against. In this budget, the contribution to Project Hope is \$13.3 million from the Department of Health, with an additional 1.5 million being contributed by other departments, in addition to the \$3.1 million in support of The Youth Detoxification and Stabilization Act. That is a significant commitment of public resources to the young people of our province, to those who are struggling with addictions.

Funding in 2005 included 10 million of new annual funding to the 4.7 million increase in the 2005-06 budget. Madam Chair, this represents a 60 per cent increase in substance abuse prevention and treatment funding — a 60 per cent increase.

Now I want to go back, I want to go back to May 1 in 2005. As a result of the interim report of the then legislative secretary, now Minister of Healthy Living Services effective May 1, a year ago, Saskatchewan Health enhanced the HealthLine. That's a confidential health information telephone advice line managed by the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, providing specialized addictions counselling on a 24-hour basis for families and for abusers. You will recall there was a print and radio publicity campaign that accompanied the event.

Last year Saskatchewan Learning developed, distributed addiction information packages right throughout the school system across Saskatchewan, information on Sask Learning's website.

Last year the Meth Watch program, aimed at preventing the use of the common household products and the cold medicines, was put in place in partnership with the pharmacies. We were able, Madam Chair, to raise this issue with other premiers — the tracking of crystal meth — we did it at the Western Premiers' Conference. We hosted the Western leaders here in the province. We hosted that meeting here that brought people from across Western Canada and from the great state of North Dakota. We shared best practices; we learned from each other.

Madam Chair, significant work has already been accomplished in a very, very short period of time. And the need is now. We've recognized it — the need is now. When we look at the implication of addictions on our communities, on our families, on our young people, we understand the importance of the work that the Minister of Healthy Living Services is doing, that the work that Project Hope is doing. But perhaps even more importantly, the work that citizens across Saskatchewan are doing in their communities with their people in programs — the counsellors, the trained people, the volunteers — people who are pulling together to tackle this very, very significant issue as it affects our communities and affects our young people.

Project Hope is under way. We are very proud of the budgeted amounts that we are able to put to this work. Those dollars are in this budget. Will the opposition vote against those dollars as well when a vote comes tomorrow?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Elhard: — Madam Chair, that's a tremendous conversion speech from the man who closed the Whitespruce youth addiction treatment centre as part of the cabinet in 1996. And three years earlier was the associate minister of Health who closed ADAC [alcohol and drug abuse commission]. I am amazed at the conversion. But not a word was said about the public service. I wonder why, Madam Chair.

You know, the fact of the matter is that he wouldn't want to address the issues related to the public service because this government gets a badly failing grade in the most recent survey of the public service that was published this spring.

In fact, under leadership and direction, the best mark that the government got was 45 per cent. And that was in answer to the question: "All in all, my Department is effectively managed and well-run."

Madam Chair, it goes downhill from there — 42 per cent for having strategic goals, 26 per cent for "My Department will act on many of the issues identified . . . [in the] survey." The public service has no confidence in this Premier or this government. And even less people responded favourably to the suggestion that "My Department . . . [acted] on concerns identified . . . [in] the last employee survey in 2003."

Will the Premier tell us what he's done to address the glaring problems revealed in this survey among public servants in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I'm aware that some of these issues were discussed, particularly the situation in Saskatoon that the member referred to in his earlier question. I apologize; I took my place before dealing with this issue.

I understand that some of these issues were raised with the minister of Social Services. I am informed that there are processes in place, including the grievance process, and processes in place in the Saskatoon circumstances of Social Services to deal with the stress that is raised in that situation.

I am also aware that we have initiated this process of consulting with our public servants through this survey process to understand what they're seeing and feeling. Each of the deputy ministers have been charged to work with their departments, to work with their public servants in trying to find remedies where there are issues that require remedy because we take very seriously the very important work that the public service does in this province.

We are very proud of our public servants in this province. And we have worked, I would argue, very well with the public service of Saskatchewan. We've never taken a position, as your party did, of establishing hit lists and that sort of thing. We've

negotiated always in good faith with our public servants. We've respected their rights under contractual agreements. We respect the rights of our most senior public servants. When senior public servants and others are criticized on an almost daily basis by members of your caucus, we will stand behind the integrity and the professionalism of our public servants.

When we find there are issues in the workplace that are required to be dealt with, with the leadership of my deputy, the senior deputies, with other levels of management, we are endeavouring to find a solution to those issues. The Minister of the Public Service Commission, responsible for the public service, takes these issues very, very seriously. When there are specific issues in a given work site, we adhere very closely to the processes, whether it be under contract or other processes established.

Appreciate the question. Appreciate that there are issues that we need to improve with our public service as they do. Overall we have a very high-quality public service in this province, and we're very, very proud of them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Chair, I'm really pleased that the Premier had just mentioned people that were left behind and people that they were dealing with in this province because I'm going to talk about some children that were very vulnerable, that we talked about a number of years ago in a public policy meeting, something that was very important, a committee that was set up to go across the province and talk about children who were vulnerable. And there was a report made that had 49 recommendations in it. And I've tried through estimates this session to talk about this report in a number of committees.

The one that I thought was most obvious that we should talk about it in is Healthy Living because this report is talking about the sexual exploitation and abuse of children in the sex trade. And I felt strongly that this government would feel this is an issue that was very important to a government that deals with children and who continues to say that no one is left behind.

Well I was very disappointed, Mr. Premier, through you, Madam Chairman, to find out that this government has now left this whole issue with the Department of Justice. What this book was doing, what the people on the committee were talking about, that when we're talking about children who are in the sex trade, they are there not because they want to be there. They are there because they are forced to from a lifestyle.

And we had a number of committee members go across the province, and in 2002 we had 49 recommendations brought forward. I believe the Minister of Justice told me in estimates the other day that out of those 49 recommendations, the government has dealt with 42 of them. So I've looked at these, and I've talked to people who were witnesses during the committee meetings. And we looked at it very in-depth in the last while and thought how could they actually say that 42 of these recommendations had been dealt with when there are at least 29 of them that people are still bemoaning the fact that we haven't dealt with it as a committee and as a government.

Recommendations like minimum mandatory fines, like new provincial legislation that would be protecting children from johns and pimps. The recommendation no. 6 that would cause the Government of Saskatchewan to publish the names and pictures of all those convicted of offences involving the sexual abuse and/or exploitation of a child.

How about the one where the police services within the province would take a zero tolerance approach and fully apply all municipal, provincial, and federal laws? How about the recommendation that the Attorney General would create a five-member, special police unit reporting directly to the Attorney General? Then we have the recommendations no. 14 and 15 that talk about contacting and requesting the federal government to amend the Criminal Code to increase the age of consent from 14 to 16 years.

And yet when I asked the Minister of Justice the other night in the House about this, asked him if he would approve that, if he would agree with that, his feet were firmly on both of the fence, Mr. Premier. There was no answer. In order to have said you dealt with that issue, that the government dealt with this issue, means he would have had to correspond with the federal government and say, yes I do agree that the age of consent should be raised to 16 years. And yet the Minister of Justice would not say that he would deal with that.

At the same time this committee recommended that the Government of Saskatchewan would amend the Criminal Code to ensure that persons convicted of sexual offences would receive minimum mandatory sentences. And this is not said. We have not heard that being said.

The committee recommended that every child on the street at risk of being sexually abused should be guaranteed the right to services in a timely manner. We should talk about providing resources to fully address the education and social needs of children not in school. And then we have talked about the province-wide tracking attendance to monitor and facilitate school attendance for kids of 16 years in age and under.

I'm going to stop there for a minute, Madam Speaker, because I think that there's some information that the government needs to know and maybe that the people in the province need to know. Did you know that 15.9 per cent of sexually abused children drop out of school, 55.2 per cent of sexually abused children are truant, 45.5 per cent of child victims of the sex trade drop out of school, and 77 per cent of child victims of the sex trade are truant?

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, when we're talking about a tracking system to ensure that our children are in school, it has to raise red flags. That if we've got 1,500 kids out of school in the city of Saskatoon alone, you have to wonder if there's concerns. It's not just an education issue, it's a social issue.

We're wondering what's happening to those kids at home. And I don't think this government is fully aware that we are leaving a whole pile of children behind. The most vulnerable children in our society are being left behind by a government who says they are going to accept these recommendations.

One of the recommendations that I feel very strongly about is

the fact that we needed to have a safe place for children who are being exploited that maybe didn't feel at the time that they wanted to go into a safe house. We did this. Last year this government did pass a law about children who needed involuntary treatment. They agreed it was fine for children who had an addiction, but we're not saying it's okay for kids who have been abused on the street through the sex trade.

We've got two different sets of laws going on here, Madam Deputy Speaker. There are recommendation after recommendation that have not been dealt with by this government, and when we . . . I dare to say that there are a large number of vulnerable children in this province left behind. How can this government say that they've implemented 42 out of 49 of the recommendations when there is obviously at least 29 of them hasn't been dealt with?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[21:45]

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Madam Chair. And I thank the member for raising this very, very important issue. And I know that she has had discussions about this issue with I think the Minister of Justice, the Attorney General; and the Minister of DCRE; and Health as well.

And therefore to her very early point in her presentation when she says that she is concerned that the Department of Justice may be taking the lead, I think she does understand that some department has to take the lead. If everybody's in charge, no one is. Some department has to take the lead. But obviously because of her questioning of these other departments, the other departments are very much involved.

I'm also told that in the Standing Committee on Human Services, both the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Community Resources has agreed to provide to committee and to the member a report of all of the actions taken, a detailed report of all of the actions taken in response of the 49 recommendations that were made by the special committee.

I am pleased to report tonight to the House that significant actions have been taken, that in fact through work of I think essentially the Department of Community Resources, there have in fact been significantly enhanced outreach, prevention, and crisis intervention services including safe houses that are being operated by First Nations both in Saskatoon and in Regina. I'm informed tonight that now 41 spaces in the specialized residential and group home programs are now being prioritized for the sexually exploited young people who will find their way off the streets.

Regional forums have been created. And I think this is such an extremely important, valuable thing to do. Regional forums have been created to enhance service coordination for sexually exploited youth in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. What in essence this means is that we're bringing teams of people together, teams of people to deal with that young individual who is trying to escape the streets. That is such an important thing, to bring people together. Not to take the young person and tell them they need to find all these various routes and services, but to bring the team together, to work together with

that young person. I think it's so important.

Of course there are, through Justice, new police investigative tools, and there are extremely strengthened protocols when it comes to prosecution. We've developed new offender intervention programs in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, including what I think is a very effective program, the Vehicle Impoundment against Sexual Exploitation, the VISE, and the Johns school programs.

In addition, of course, we've passed a very significant legislation, The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act. We can shut down some of these places if they're being used for illegal activities, whether it's in the drug trade or the sex trade.

We've been conducting a very significant province-wide education campaign. And we're doing all that baseline research that's essential if you're going to plan and develop programs, in addition to all the work of course we're doing through Project Hope and trying to deal with some of the addictions.

The member raises the issue that's been discussed recently in this legislature, the issue of the tracking of those students who are not in school. Very, very significant work has been completed by the ministry of Learning in putting that system together. And on this the member and I, I think, can come to a real agreement here.

The children who are not in school, whatever the reason, be it family circumstance, be it the nature of the educational opportunity that doesn't work for them or they don't work for it, whatever the reason that children are not in school, spells trouble — trouble for that child, trouble for the family, trouble for the neighbourhood, trouble for the future.

The more that we can do to engage and encourage all of our children to be part of a learning experience, to be regularly in school will benefit not only that child, it will benefit our province to the future. On this the member and I couldn't be more in agreement.

Significant work has been done, I know in my own city of Saskatoon, towards understanding the tracking and finding the children and following them. That system, I think — I'm informed by the Minister of Learning — is virtually ready to become a province-wide system. We heard that the other day in the question period.

But on the point that the member makes, this is a very significant point. It is of deep concern. It should be of deep concern to we in government, to all legislators, when we have this number of children regularly not in school.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Premier. Mr. Premier, the problem with being in this legislature and getting answers from the people that, when we ask the question, the people give us the answers and then . . . [inaudible] . . . is that we don't always get the answers that we need to hear. We get the answers we want to hear. It's sort of like the emperor with no clothes scenario.

But the people on the committee that I've been talking to, the ones that were witnesses at that time in 2002, are saying that there is not a big difference. There is much work needed to be done. The First Nations people that I have talked to said that there is not a large improvement.

My question to you, it's the same question that's going to be given to you in the next short while by the Women's Commission of the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations]. Will your government reconvene this committee and find out what is really happening to the children on the streets? And find out if there's really any improvement or if it's just hearing what we want to hear and not what the children are learning when they're living their lives out on the street.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, I know the standing committee of this legislature has had this discussion. The standing committee of this legislature has indicated to the member . . . The ministers in the company of that committee has indicated to that member and to the committee that they would be bringing back a full report, a full report to that committee of the detailed work that has occurred in relationship to the recommendations of that earlier work.

I'm not about to start ordering up any other committees while that process is in place. The member asks for that in estimates. The ministers are more than willing to do just that. Let us review the work that has been completed. That report will come to the committee and it will then become, I think, a matter of debate in the committee if other things need to be done.

I wish the member would at least give the ministers the opportunity when they've agreed to do this, to bring the full report. Because without question, Mr. Chair, there is substantive work that has been done. I don't know if the member wants to present the notion that nothing has been done. Substantive work has been done.

And I'm speaking to law enforcement officers, and they tell me that the trade of youth sex trade on the streets in our own city of Saskatoon is considerably diminished. They're seeing some real activity change as a result of the work that's being done here.

So let's have the ministers report to the committee. Let's have the member have a good dialogue. And let's not suggest, let's not imply that nothing's being done. Very significant work is being done.

Is there more? Fair enough, there may well be more that needs to be done. But let's not imply that nothing's being done. Substantive work is being done and there has been dramatic — I would argue — very dramatic result on the streets and in the lives of young people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I have some questions for the Premier with respect to his commitment that no one should be left behind. Mr. Deputy Chair, it's interesting that under this Premier's economic policies, or lack thereof, the province itself, our economy is being left behind.

Here's a good example, here's a good example. The provinces of British Columbia and Alberta in 2003 . . . In 2003 the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta recognizing the huge opportunity of regional co-operation within Canada, recognizing the shift in political and economic influence that is happening in our country from Central Canada to Western Canada, recognizing the fact that those two provinces are significant suppliers of energy in all of its forms to an energy-starved continent and an energy-starved world, recognizing that they had more in common than separated them, recognizing that there was great synergy for their two economies and the opportunity to reduce barriers to growth and create jobs for their people, did what, Mr. Deputy Chair? They began to meet to talk about the possibility of an interprovincial trade agreement.

Now if you, if you want, Mr. Deputy Chair, to measure a government's understanding of how you might create a growth agenda, how you might foster growth and encouragement, I think one test would be whether that government understands the potential and the power of interprovincial co-operation because of all the synergies I've just listed.

Here we are in the province, the great producer of energy, non-renewable and renewable sources, that we are right now . . . in its raw form, unfortunately in the case of uranium. Here we are with the oil that we have, the second most in the Dominion of Canada — the Premier does the same list that I use — third most natural gas, third of the world's supply of uranium. The list goes on and on and on . . . And a real chance for this province to take a leadership role within the new West, a significant chance in 2003 for the province to do that, were they only to join with Alberta and BC.

Now the Premier has said amazingly, well he didn't know anything about it. Well is he listening at all at the Western Premiers' Conference table? Is he actually at the table? Is he aware from his minister responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs? Are his officials with respect to Intergovernmental Affairs completely unaware that this is going on? That these discussions have been happening since 2003? I don't think they were unaware. I have more faith in that Premier's officials I guess than he does. I think they knew full well what was going on in Alberta and BC.

And you know why I think that, Mr. Deputy Chair? Because if you ask the Premier of Alberta, if you ask the officials in those provinces, they're happy to tell you. And they're happy to say, isn't it a bad thing that the province of Saskatchewan with all that it has going for it has made no attempt to come to that table? That's what they say.

You can find it out. If the opposition can find it out with obviously fewer resources than the entire Government of Saskatchewan that these discussions are happening, and further that Saskatchewan would be welcomed at the table to come and start discussing these things, if we can find it out, surely the

Premier, surely the Premier or someone in the cabinet, someone in the government could find that out. But they did not.

And so what did we miss out on, Mr. Deputy Chair? Well the announcement happened about three weeks ago. They talk about the creation of a 7.5 million-person marketplace in the second largest economic region in Canada created by the accord that the premiers of Alberta and British Columbia signed.

The Conference Board of Canada says the deal will create 78,000 new jobs in BC alone. The Conference Board of Canada says there is a potential for an increase of \$4.8 billion in real GDP [gross domestic product]. They're working to harmonize standards. They're working to reduce barriers to growth. Different professional associations have weighed in on the issue and said this is a positive thing. Obviously those in the economies have weighed in and believe it's a positive thing as well.

So the question to the Premier is this: why did he miss out on this opportunity? How could he miss out on this opportunity for Saskatchewan to be a leading role? And there is a big dream — and one that's achievable if he's serious about that — to be a leading partner in a brand new West.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I appreciate that the Leader of the Opposition has been very, very supportive of officials in Intergovernmental Affairs here. Because I'm going to share with him exactly the information that these officials provided to me. But I'm going to begin by saying this, he wants to know if I'm at the Western Premiers' Conference table.

Well I spent a very good bit of time this afternoon in conversation with the Premier of Alberta, in conversation with Ralph Klein about the Western premiers' meeting upcoming in Gimli. I'm not sure the last time that the Leader of the Opposition spoke to any of the other Western premiers where he, I'm sure, has regular contact with the Premier of Manitoba, the Premier of Alberta, the Premier of British Columbia, the Premier of the Territories. I'm sure he has. He speaks with such authority in this House.

Now the fact of the matter is, did we . . . are we aware of what Alberta and British Columbia have been doing in terms of interprovincial trade? You bet. Because it was the Council of the Federation, premiers gathered together, that asked these two provinces to do this very work. It was all of the premiers in Canada who got together.

Well, the member shakes his head. On what authority does he understand this is not the case? It was the Council of the Federation that invited the premiers of Alberta and British Columbia to lead this discussion. That is the fact of the matter.

Now I will read for the Leader of the Opposition, since he is very supportive of the officials, he indicates he . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh now he's shouting from his seat that he's angry. Well let him get on his feet and be angry all he wants. Because it won't change the facts of matter.

Now I will read for the Leader of the Opposition the advice

from the officials of the department of Saskatchewan. Perhaps if the Leader of the Opposition is interested in the answer to this question, he could be quiet for a moment. Now thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I will now share with the Leader of the Opposition, who puts good trust in our officials as I do, the following notes about the Alberta-British Columbia trade issue.

[22:00]

In 2004 the Council of the Federation directed internal trade ministers to conduct a comprehensive two-year review and renovation of the Agreement on Internal Trade or AIT. As part of that council process, internal trade ministers asked Alberta and British Columbia to come forward with two models for addressing the gaps and exemptions in the current coverage of the AIT. We asked Alberta to do this work with British Columbia. Alberta and BC [British Columbia] have chosen to go public with one of the models, the preferred model they recommend, approach, before tabling both models with the internal trade ministers and ultimately with the premiers and the Council of the Federation.

Now we're going to Gimli as Western leaders. We are going to be discussing this plan as Western leaders. It was very intentional on the part of Alberta and British Columbia not to involve the engagement of our officials, our departments, as they worked through this. We're going to Gimli to discuss this issue. I do not know why the Leader of the Opposition does not trust the officials of Saskatchewan, does not understand that the Council of the Federation asked for this work to be done. That work will be reported in Gimli. We will be all discussing it in Gimli, and ultimately we will be discussing it at the Council of the Federation.

Now what is behind this? Because he starts off this little spiel talking about how the economy of Saskatchewan is not prospering. How can he stand credibly on any platform in Saskatchewan, including his bench in the legislature, and say that the economy of Saskatchewan is not prospering when we have record levels of growth, when the headlines that are in the daily papers are headlines just like this one "Boom times ahead," Mr. Chair? That's the kind of headline he denies. When the headlines in the local papers are saying "Life is very good here," when the headlines in the papers are saying, Mr. Chair . . . look, note this one, "Konecranes hooks on to Sask. economy."

Let me just quote this to the Leader of the Opposition. I guess he does not agree, he does not agree with the leadership of Konecranes who recently established a presence here in Regina, here in Saskatchewan. I'm just going to quote the newspaper article that announced this very happy development:

Saskatchewan's friendly, inviting attitude and booming economy has drawn the world's largest crane service company to Regina to set up shop.

"All economic indicators are positive," said Jim Leighton, a spokesman for Konecranes . . .

All economic indicators are positive that Konecranes has chosen to come to this province because, quote, "of the booming economy" because of our "friendly, inviting attitude."

He says, the representative of Konecranes, Mr. Jim Leighton: "He said the decision to make the move to Saskatchewan had a lot to do with the healthy, booming economy in the province . . ." Note the words — healthy, booming economy in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — He said we found the people in Regina, we found the people in Saskatchewan were accommodating. "That's what Saskatchewan does . . ." he says. "It's the way all provinces should be . . ." That's what he says about Saskatchewan.

The Leader of the Opposition doesn't agree. He says this economy is not prospering. He says we've got the wrong attitude here. That's not what these leading investors are saying. Only the Saskatchewan Party, only the negative Leader of the Saskatchewan Party says this kind of thing. And he says it on platforms in the province. And worse, he says it on platforms outside of the province.

He says the economy of Saskatchewan is not prospering. I refer him again to what's happening right here with student employment in this province this summer, this summer right here at one of the student employment centres — the career centre here — the career centre which works at finding university students summer employment that suits their field of study. Get this, Mr. Chair. One youth employment centre in this province, just one of them, has more than 2,000 job postings. In one employment centre, 2,000 job postings. And the leader of that centre, Mr. Kevin Bolen says: "The job market is so hot this summer, Bolen said he'll guarantee [guarantee] that students will land a job within 24 hours of visiting the career centre." Twenty-four hours.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The Leader of the Opposition says this economy is not prospering. Does the Leader of the Opposition ever read a business page in this province? Did he read the headlines of Husky Oil's commitment to \$2.3 billion of investment in the Lloydminster Upgrader?

Now I had the opportunity, along with the Minister of Industry and Resources, to travel to Hong Kong, to travel to China, and travel to Japan. Well in Hong Kong we had the great privilege of sitting across the table from Mr. Li Ka-shing, the owner of Husky Oil. We talked about the economic potential of Saskatchewan, the energy potential of Saskatchewan. We talked about Lloydminster. We talked about Husky's investment in ethanol at Lloydminster. We talked about expansion of the upgrader and we talked about potential future other economic developments.

Several weeks later, several weeks later, Mr. Li Ka-shing, Husky Oil, Mr. John Lau, a great friend of this province, announces \$2.3 billion expansion. And the Leader of the Opposition says that the economy of Saskatchewan's not prospering, that there's no investment in Saskatchewan, that there's something wrong with the brand, he says. Well I don't know what's wrong with a brand that attracts \$2.3 billion in private sector investment.

I wonder if he reads the newspapers at all. Does he read the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* where the headline says, "Saskatoon good for business," good for business. The study has ranked Saskatoon as the number one most competitive place to set up a new enterprise, the number one place.

And the Leader of the Opposition crabs and complains at all times. But what will he not do? What will he not do? He will not talk about his own economic policies. The journalists asked him here today in the rotunda, will you talk about your policy? Would you talk about your plan? You're good at complaining; would you talk about your plan? He said, I won't. He refuses. He refuses to talk about his plan. He says you've got to wait until the next election. You've got to wait until I'm in some kind of a political campaign before I'll talk about my new plan.

Well again I invite the Leader of the Opposition tonight in this legislature — as I have time and time again tonight — come to his feet, come to his feet and talk about his plan, talk about his plan. He can criticize. He can get angry in his seat and angry on his feet. But I tell you, Mr. Chair, he will not talk about his plan. And why is that?

If he wants to be credible, if he wants to look credible as a leader of an opposition in Saskatchewan, he ought to be willing to talk about his plan, to talk about it with the journalists, to talk about it in this legislature, to talk about it on platforms. He ought to do that, Mr. Chair. He ought not say in his cavalier fashion to the voters of Saskatchewan, well just wait until the next election and I'll tell you what I have in store for you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Chair, Mr. Deputy Chair, that's an amazing answer. I mean most of it was nonsense. But it's an amazing answer when he was actually on point on the BC-Alberta accord.

If you can believe it, Mr. Deputy Chair, he highlights the process. He says the Council of the Federation requests these two provinces to do it. What he doesn't add, what he doesn't say is whether or not then he — who I assume was at the meeting of the Council of the Federation — said you know what, the province of Saskatchewan should be at that table as well. The province of Saskatchewan should be there as a part of this accord, not Johnny-come-lately, not maybe we'll get to it if we work out into a national deal that also has to find the synergy between the Newfoundland economy and the Saskatchewan economy and the BC economy and the Alberta economy. That's ridiculous. It's absolutely ridiculous.

And the Premier wants to know, what's the difference between him and myself? What's the difference between his party's economic vision and our party's economic vision? We believe this province should be leading the West. We believe we should be at this table. We believe we should be negotiating these kinds of interprovincial agreements. We believe that there is an amazing opportunity coming for Western Canada and for this province to fulfill its potential.

But not if, not if we have a Premier who thinks we're just the wee province and we're always going to be in and out of equalization. Not if we have a Premier who has this plan for

mediocrity, who has no goals, no specific goals set that he would be able to even report to his colleagues — the Premier of Alberta and the Premier of BC.

Maybe that's why he didn't want to go to the table. Maybe he was embarrassed. He's got nothing to talk about. He doesn't have a specific target for jobs. He doesn't have a specific target for population. And maybe somehow he would have to explain to those premiers why this province, so blessed as it is — more so than Manitoba, equally as blessed as any other province in the country — would trail every other Western partner.

Even the new job numbers the Premier references, I again repeat that the province of Manitoba with far fewer resources than ours created jobs at three times the rate — three times the rate — as this NDP's woeful, moribund economic plan.

And the fact that he can read the clippings that he has read, that he can talk about Husky, that he can talk about any other economic development in the province, the fact that he can do that is most assuredly happening despite his government, not because of it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — It is happening in this province, Mr. Deputy Chair, because of all of the opportunity that's here, because of the human resources we have, because we have the second most amount of oil in the province of Saskatchewan, because there wasn't war in Iraq, because natural gas prices have been strong, because other commodity prices have been strong.

They have not happened because this government toyed with most available hours legislation and sent a chill over the economy, Mr. Deputy Chair. Those events that he was pointing to have not happened because of the business communities' contention and worry that that government is prepared to interfere with labour relations in the province of Saskatchewan. It does not happen, Mr. Deputy Chair, because amazingly this Premier sat on his hands at the Council of the Federation when the single greatest economic opportunity in terms of interprovincial trade, he let it pass right by, Mr. Deputy Chair. It hasn't happened because of that leadership.

That growth is happening and we welcome it. Although we're nowhere near the potential of this province, that growth is happening, not because of that Premier but despite that Premier. It's because of the benefits and the resources of the province of Saskatchewan. And it's because of our people.

Imagine if you will, Mr. Deputy Chair, is there any more — I would say — strong or determined people in the country than the two people that we often talk about in this legislature. Saskatchewan farmers, who have to put up with that government, who have to put up with that government cutting the Agriculture budget and cutting crop insurance in the middle of an ag crisis. Talk about hardy people.

The other group are the men and the women of this province that have to create jobs, that are entrepreneurs because they're up against this group, Mr. Deputy Chair. They've been up against this group for far too long.

Well the Minister of Learning says that we're appalling, that I'm appalling. I'll tell you what's appalling, Mr. Deputy Chair. That minister, when she was the Labour minister, trying to force down the throats of universities and municipalities and business, most available hours legislation. That is what is appalling. Oh and she's nodding her head.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — She's nodding her head. Do you know why, Mr. Deputy Chair? Because they're waiting for their chance to do it again. They're waiting for their chance to bring forward that legislation.

And the member that's laughing the loudest, the member for . . . What's she the member of . . . No, in the corner, in the corner. The member for Regina Walsh Acres laughs at that, laughs at the notion that this government may well if given another chance, heaven forbid, try to bring back most available hours legislation, government-directed hours legislation. What did she do when the vote came before this House? She voted again in favour of most available hours legislation. Didn't you? Kind of forgot about that maybe before you started giggling at the back of the room.

There's the minister of Labour, the former minister of Labour again wanting to enter the debate from her chair. She'll have plenty of time to do it.

But I would say this. The fact that there is growth in this province, the fact that there is any kind of economic activity is happening despite the cold chill that blew over the economy when that minister rose at the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] convention and promised most available hours legislation, when in the election campaign, when in the election campaign that preceded it, the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan promised the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce . . .

What did they say? If you vote for us, oh just vote for us, the NDP. We're really the friends of business. And if you vote for us, they'll be no major labour changes. We promise. We promise. That's what the Premier said. And so what happened when that minister stood up at SFL? What did she do? She tried to introduce major labour changes, Mr. Deputy Chair.

Frankly, that is the kind of action we see from this NDP government. That's what we've seen. We've seen the Government of Saskatchewan compete against small-business men and women. We've seen that, Mr. Deputy Chair. We have seen them try to introduce ridiculous labour legislation in this province that would have hurt part-time workers. That sent a chill over the economy. Time after time and now most . . .

The Deputy Chair: — I apologize to the member. Order, members. The volume in the Chamber is getting too loud, and government members are interrupting the Leader of the Opposition to the point where I cannot hear him, so I would ask for order. And I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

[22:15]

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. So amazingly a

few minutes ago the Premier's answer as to why he wasn't at the table with the Premier of BC and the Premier of Alberta making sure that Saskatchewan is at the vanguard of the new West, the reason is as he said, well all of the other premiers, they asked BC and Alberta to do it. That's what he said. That's his answer. Did he stand up at that Council of the Federation meeting or since when he has found out about the progress that was being made? Did he ask those governments if he could come to the table? No he didn't.

We know that he didn't. There's been no such request made. The Premier of Alberta has confirmed that. We'll meet again. We'll meet again, and we'll find out from the officials in British Columbia whether or not the Premier now, at least after we've raised the questions, has made any effort to come to that table. I would suggest to you unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Chair, that we know the answer. We know the answer to the question.

Now well we have another point, we have another point for the Premier to ponder. The Premier's case to Ottawa with respect to equalization goes something like this. That it isn't fair . . . Goes something like this. His case to Ottawa for a better equalization deal goes something like this, and we would agree with this as well, Mr. Deputy Chair. You ought not to penalize the province of Saskatchewan for having fossil fuels, for having non-renewable resources. That's basically the case that we would make. It's the case Atlantic Canada made. It's the case that we would make as well. He's saying don't penalize Saskatchewan because we have non-renewable resources through the equalization formula.

And yet, Mr. Deputy Chair, he is prepared to do exactly and precisely that to rural Saskatchewan, to the parts of this province that are — what? — that are the sources of non-renewable resources. Because what does he ask of them, Mr. Deputy Chair? While he's saying to Ottawa treat us fairly, don't discriminate just because we have non-renewable resources, what does he do to the regions of the province like southeast Saskatchewan, like the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy who have oil and gas? He says, oh no, you have oil and gas, so you're going to have a 50 per cent property tax hike. No, no, you have oil and gas; you're going to have teacher cuts. You've got oil and gas, he says to southeast Saskatchewan, so we're going to close your schools. You've got oil and gas, so we refuse to fix your roads. You've got oil and gas. Mr. Deputy Chair, isn't that hypocrisy? Isn't that the definition of hypocrisy?

And I don't need to ascribe it to anyone, I'm not doing that. I'm asking what the members of this committee . . . what the definition of hypocrisy is? Isn't it when you have one standard for someone else, like say the federal Government of Canada with respect to equalization, but then you apply a completely different standard to the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy? Isn't that what hypocrisy is? And could that be the reason why at the Premier's fundraising dinner in Weyburn they had to cancel 48 hours before because I think they'd only sold six tickets, because the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy are fed up with that kind of double standard.

I'll tell you one other thing, Mr. Deputy Chair, we raised it with that . . . well he's not there any more. We raised it with the Minister Responsible for Highways earlier in the day. I did

myself and the member for Cypress Hills. The same is happening in southwest Saskatchewan. We see the NDP double standard. That's what we see. We see the double standard of saying well, to Ottawa, don't penalize us because we have oil and gas. But what are they saying to southwest Saskatchewan? My hon. colleague knows very well. They say you're going to look at a massive tax hike because you've got oil and gas. We're going to increase your property tax. That's what they say.

They're going to say with respect to Highway 32 between the No. 1 and Leader . . . and if you drive by it you'll see pump jacks and compressor stations as far as the eye can see, pouring royalties into this government, but you know what though, Mr. Deputy Chair, do you know what the government says? Build your own roads. They're actually asking the RM [rural municipality], they're asking the RM to build Highway 32, to throw in.

They don't mind cashing the cheques, the oil and gas royalty cheques from Weyburn, from Swift Current, from Lloydminster. They don't mind cashing the resource surcharge cheques from all of the places that have potash mines and uranium mines. They don't mind cashing the cheques from northern Saskatchewan. But what they forget is to re-invest back in those areas. They forget that the NDP double standard is just patently unfair for those areas.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Chair, it may be why they can't attract flies to their fundraising dinner in Weyburn. I think the people there have had enough. I think the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy are sick of the double standard. They're sick of the condition of Highway No. 8. I think they nicknamed it the road to Bagdad because the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy consider all the royalty cheques, all the money that's being put into the provincial coffers . . . Highway 35's another one. Highway 35 is another one.

They're fed up, Mr. Deputy Chair, and we haven't heard any answers from the Premier today. What we've heard is that there are no goals. We've heard no reasonable explanation as to why all these different groups — individual patients, health care providers like nurses, teachers, property taxpayers, children — why they're being left behind by a government that says we're not going to leave you behind. I think the people of the province would say, stop making those promises because whenever you promise something, the actual opposite happens. So maybe we should ask them actually, Mr. Deputy Chair, to promise not to call an election immediately. Maybe they would and people in the province would get the relief they so wish to . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — The Premier is going to have an opportunity, I believe soon and very soon. It's up to him when he's going to call, when he's going to call the provincial election. It's up to him. But when he calls the next election, the by-election in Weyburn-Big Muddy, he's going to have explain to the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy why he's prepared to cash all their royalty cheques, why he's happy to do that for his own budget purposes, why he's happy to cash their royalty cheques to fund

things like, oh, like an advertising campaign for the Minister of Finance, at a half million dollars. And he'll have to explain to the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy, why he has this double standard, why Ottawa shouldn't penalize us for having oil and gas, but why the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy should be so penalized.

And I think he's going to have a rough time of it, Mr. Deputy Chair. I think he's going to have a difficult time explaining a double standard. I think any politician regardless of their political stripe, regardless of their ideology, if they are so exposed in terms of having such a double standard, I think they're going to have a tough time explaining it, especially to the region, to the people where that double standard hurts the most. And it hurts the most to those areas.

You know I know what another constituent of Cypress Hills had to say to the Deputy Premier at SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], and I would offer it to the Premier as I get to my question soon and very soon, Mr. Deputy Chair. I think it was one of the councillors that said to the Deputy Premier at SUMA with respect to their approach to southwest Saskatchewan, this notion that they've cashed the oil and gas cheques, but don't even fix the roads. He said, even the, he said, the Romans pillaged and plundered, I think he said this, but at least they left behind good roads. I think that's what he said to you. I think that's what he said to you. And if you don't remember, we'll phone him up; I'm sure he's prepared to repeat it to you.

And do you know what, Mr. Deputy Chair, that's what the Premier's going to hear in Weyburn-Big Muddy. That's what the Premier's going to hear in Weyburn-Big Muddy. And so the question to the Premier, and so the question to the Premier, is how he can, how he can support having such a double standard?

How can he look the Prime Minister dead in the eye, how can he look, how can he look the Prime Minister dead in the eye, and say, don't penalize us because we have oil and gas? And yet his Minister of Finance in the budget can say the same thing to the school divisions in southeast Saskatchewan, in southwest Saskatchewan, in Sunrise School Division, in 63 of the 81 school divisions, who are saying don't penalize us because we have resources, because we have a commercial assessment. We didn't put the oil and gas there, Mr. Deputy Chair, that's what they would say.

The Premier would use that same argument in Ottawa. We didn't put the oil and gas there.

The bottom line, Mr. Deputy Chair, is this, as we get to the question. The bottom line is they have to explain to the people of the province what they're doing with respect to this double standard. Significantly, they'll also have to explain why the no-one-left-behind words that appear on every press release seem to be more about rhetoric, more about messaging than they are about action, as we have seen, as we have detailed.

I recently met with the president of the Pleasant Hill neighbourhood association in the Premier's old riding and he feels that that inner city's being left behind on important issues in terms of safety in that neighbourhood. They have specific questions. They have suggestions with respect to SCAN [safer

communities and neighbourhoods] that they think would improve the Act. But they feel that their questions of this, of their MLA, the Premier, and the Minister of Justice fall on deaf ears, Mr. Deputy Chair.

Mr. Deputy Chair, the Premier continually says that nobody is being left behind when quite the opposite is true. Farmers are being left behind. Rural property tax owners are being left behind. Teachers are being left behind. Nurses are being left behind. People like Emily Morley were left behind. Baby Paige was left behind by this government and had to flee to the Stollery Children's Hospital. It seems that the only people that aren't left behind are the members of the government caucus, Mr. Deputy Chair. They've all got jobs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — They all have jobs. They all have jobs that pay them extra money. There's no one left behind in the NDP . . . Whoa. Wait a minute. There is one. There is one MLA that has been left behind in the NDP caucus. The member for Saskatchewan Rivers . . . Well I don't want the Premier to leave. He should be here to answer questions. The member for Saskatchewan Rivers has been left behind. He's the only one that's not getting extra pay in the caucus.

So let me finally get to the question, Mr. Deputy Chair. Let me get to the question. The member for Saskatchewan Rivers hopefully is not being left behind. Let me get to the question.

In light of the fact, in light of the fact that this Premier has admitted he has no goals with respect to population, with respect to job growth, with respect to nurses, with respect to post-secondary waiting lists; in light of the fact that he's admitted he's got no goals; in light of the fact that he has said his entire reason for being the Premier is that no one would be left behind and yet we've detailed all these different groups that have been left behind; in light of the fact that his vision of Saskatchewan is that of a wee province that'll always be in and out of equalization; in light of the fact that he lacks enough vision even to get to the table with Alberta and BC and negotiate Saskatchewan's leading role in the new West; in light of all of that, in light of this double standard that he has on equalization respecting the non-renewable resources, Mr. Deputy Chair; in light of that, although he might be getting ready to call the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election, he hasn't found the courage to do it yet — and so there is still time to answer this next question properly. Will he please call a general election in the province of Saskatchewan immediately so we can get the government that we deserve? Will he do that?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, it is not lost on members of this House and I'm sure not lost on . . . and I'm sure those large numbers of people who will be watching this debate at home tonight, not lost on them either.

There's two old tricks in politics and legislative debate. I tell you if you can't make a point, you get all your members to start hollering and shouting from their seats to drown out any good debate. And the other thing you do if you're a legislative debater and you do not want . . . You see, they're yelling and

shouting from their seats . . .

The Deputy Chair: — Members of the . . . A few moments ago I called order to protect the rights of the Leader of the Opposition. And I'd ask now for members of the opposition to please calm down so that the Premier can be heard. Order. Order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — There's exactly my point, Deputy Chair. If they don't want good debate, they'll shout and holler from their seats to try and drown it out. And the other old trick is — everybody's seen it in the legislature before — if you can't make a good argument that you know will be rebutted, you speak till the clock runs out. And we've just had an example of that here tonight.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — We've reached the appointed time. When you know you can't rebut, you speak till the clock runs out. You send your House Leader over to negotiate a two-minute close of debate. Well fair enough. Because you know what? You know what? And I'd love to debate what the Leader of the Opposition was just advancing. He's advancing a theory that those regions of our province, those communities of our province that are privileged to work with oil and natural gas should get the benefits from those oil and natural gas.

I'd like the Leader of the Opposition to explain to his bench mate from Canora how it is that all the resources that come from oil and gas, none of them should flow to Canora, none of them should flow there; none of them should flow to La Ronge; none of them should flow to Moose Jaw. That's his position. Well I tell you that's not the position of this government. We believe in the whole province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The whole people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Chair, this budget speaks to the whole people of Saskatchewan and to the people of Saskatchewan's future — to the future of our young people; to the future of growth of industry and activity economic in this province; to the growth and activity among our educational institutions to provide new opportunities for our young people. This budget speaks to the most vulnerable in our society. And those men and women stand in their place and vote against it. They vote against it as a result of that kind of vote, Mr. Chair. Come that next provincial election, people in Saskatchewan will be voting against them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[22:30]

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I am proud to support the government of this budget. I am proud of the work of the Executive Council. Now before I take my chair, Mr. Chair, I want to thank, I want to thank those officials from Executive Council who have been here tonight, whose expertise we have not required to draw on too frequently tonight.

But when I thank the deputy minister to the Premier, and the senior people in Executive Council, as I thank them I am

thanking through them each and every public servant in the province of Saskatchewan, in the government side, in the Crown side, and in the community level, I am thanking those men and women who provide the public services for the people of Saskatchewan.

We are blessed in this province with a tremendous public service extending the good work of government in a real, tangible way to the people of Saskatchewan. I know the hours of work that these individuals put in in service of the public in Executive Council. I know the work that's done by management across this province and I know full well, I know full well the gift of labour that is given to the people of Saskatchewan from its public servants. In thanking the deputy to the Premier, I thank every public servant in the province of Saskatchewan and I thank the members for the debate tonight.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

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

The Deputy Chair: — The Government House Leader has moved that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: — That motion is carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of committees.

Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, I have been requested by our committee to rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting of the House. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:34.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Lorne Calvert
Premier

Hon. Graham Addley
Minister of Healthy Living Services
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. Pat Atkinson
Minister of Advanced Education and Employment
Minister Responsible for Immigration
Minister Responsible for the Public
Service Commission

Hon. Joan Beatty
Minister of Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Buckley Belanger
Minister of Community Resources
Minister Responsible for Disability Issues

Hon. Eric Cline
Minister of Industry and Resources
Minister Responsible for Investment
Saskatchewan Inc.
Minister Responsible for Information Services
Corporation of Saskatchewan

Hon. David Forbes
Minister of Labour
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Glenn Hagel
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation
Provincial Secretary
Minister Responsible for Gaming
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance

Hon. Deb Higgins
Minister of Learning
Minister Responsible for Literacy
Minister Responsible for Liquor and
Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications

Hon. Eldon Lautermilch
Minister of Highways and Transportation
Minister of Property Management
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company
Minister Responsible for the
Forestry Secretariat

Hon. John Nilson
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for the Office of
Energy Conservation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Frank Quennell
Minister of Justice and
Attorney General

Hon. Clay Serby
Deputy Premier
Minister of Regional Economic and
Co-operative Development

Hon. Maynard Sonntag
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
of Saskatchewan

Hon. Len Taylor
Minister of Health

Hon. Andrew Thomson
Minister of Finance
Minister Responsible for Information Technology
Minister Responsible for
SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Harry Van Mulligen
Minister of Government Relations

Hon. Mark Wartman
Minister of Agriculture and Food

Hon. Kevin Yates
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety