



THIRD 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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
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Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornrud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
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Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
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Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Hon. Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kerpan, Allan	SP	Carrot River Valley
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Kowalsky, Hon. P. Myron	NDP	Prince Albert Carlton
Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lautermilch, Hon. Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, Hon. Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Ted	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Morgan, Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, Hon. John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Prebble, Peter	NDP	Saskatoon Greystone
Quennell, Hon. Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Serby, Hon. Clay	NDP	Yorkton
Sonntag, Hon. Maynard	NDP	Meadow Lake
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Hon. Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Before routine proceedings, I would like to table the 2006 annual report from the Children's Advocate office entitled *Children and Youth First . . . The Right Focus*.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure again today to present a number of petitions on behalf of residents from the Broadview and surrounding areas regarding the need for a dialysis unit in the area. And I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement a strategy that will see a dialysis unit placed in Broadview Union Hospital.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitions I present today are signed by folks from the communities of Broadview; Swift Current; Whitewood; Cowessess; Regina; Grenfell; Saskatoon; and Kipling, I believe; Lethbridge, Alberta actually; and Preeceville, Saskatchewan. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have yet another petition signed by people who want the government to maintain full service of the SaskPower office in Rosetown. Mr. Speaker, they are concerned that the Rosetown SaskPower office currently supplies personal service for SaskEnergy, SaskTel customers, making it a one-stop office for payments of all three Crown utilities. The prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to keep the SaskPower office in Rosetown open to provide full service to the community and surrounding areas.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from the communities of Rosetown and Kindersley, and I am pleased to present it on their behalf.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the dangerous practice of transferring patients from one ambulance to another on the highway. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to cease the transfer of patients from one ambulance to another while on route.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals all from the city of Moose Jaw. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents of mine who have grave concerns about the future of the Estevan campus of the Southeast Regional College. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that basic education classes continue to be offered at the Estevan campus of the Southeast Regional College.

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

And this is signed by citizens of Estevan. I so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to present another petition today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately address the concerns of all individuals affected by this project and pay 100 per cent of the costs involved to rectify the disruptions to water supplies, produce an environment assessment study encompassing a large area outside the scope of the project, disclose the project's long-term effects on these areas, and consider alternative sources of water for the project.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Vanscoy, Grandora, Saskatoon, and North Battleford. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present yet another petition on behalf of the 600 children under six years of age in the Saskatoon Silver Springs constituency regarding a much needed elementary school in the Arbor Creek

and Willowgrove area of Saskatoon. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources to build an elementary school in Arbor Creek and Willowgrove.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signators come from the northeast part of Saskatoon, Wickenden Crescent, Bentham Crescent, and Peters Cove. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise with a petition from the citizens of the South that are very, very concerned about the lab services and the undue hardships it would cause residents, particularly seniors, if lab services were withdrawn from the Lafleche and District Health Centre. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that lab services are continued at the Lafleche and District Health Centre.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by good citizens of Lafleche and Gravelbourg. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition — actually a lot of petitions — signed by citizens of my constituency that are concerned with the health care system and the potentially dangerous situation that's looming in that area regarding the recruitment and retention of physicians. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to improve timely access to medical treatment.

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

Mr. Speaker, signatures to this petition are from Canwood, Leask, Shell Lake, Spruce Home, Spiritwood, Holbein, and Parkside.

I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here

with citizens opposed to possible reduction of services to Davidson Health Centre:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Davidson Health Centre be maintained at its current level of service at a minimum of 24-hour acute care, emergency, and doctor services available as well as lab, public health, home care, and long-term care services available to users from the Davidson area and beyond.

As in duty bound, your petitioners pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from the town of Davidson. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and present petitions calling on the government to fund the cancer drug Avastin. And I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions today are signed by people from Weyburn, Coronach, Moose Jaw, Willow Bunch, Fife Lake, and Assiniboia. And I so present on their behalf.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — According to order the petitions received at the last sitting have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 15(7) are hereby read and received.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy is recognized.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 45, The Agricultural Societies Repeal Act, without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 45 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Ag and Food has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole for

Bill 45. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 45 — The Agricultural Societies Repeal Act

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture and Food that Bill No. 45 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 52, The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2007 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 52 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Environment has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole for Bill 52. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 52 — The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2007/ Loi de 2007 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la faune

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of the

Environment that Bill No. 52 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy is recognized.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have been instructed by the committee to report Bill No 53, the miscellaneous environmental statutes amendment Act, 2007 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 53 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Environment has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole for Bill 53. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 53 — The Miscellaneous Environment Statutes (Inspections and Investigations) Amendment Act, 2007

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of the Environment that Bill No. 53 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy is recognized.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 46, The Crown Minerals Amendment Act, 2007 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 46 be heard in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Industry and Resources has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole for Bill 46. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall Bill 46 be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 46 — The Crown Minerals Amendment Act, 2007

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Industry and Resources that Bill No. 46 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy is recognized.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed to report Bill No. 48, The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Amendment Act, 2007 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 48 be heard in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Industry and Resources has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill 48.

Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall Bill 48 be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 48 — The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Amendment Act, 2007

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Industry and Resources that Bill No. 48 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy is recognized.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 66, the occupational health and safety amendment Act, 2007 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 66 be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Labour has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole for Bill 66.

Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall Bill 66 be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Labour.

THIRD READINGS**Bill No. 66 — The Occupational Health and Safety (Harassment Prevention) Amendment Act, 2007**

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Labour that Bill 66 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy is recognized.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've been instructed to table the eighth report of the Standing Committee on the Economy. And, Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the member from Biggar:

That the eighth report of the standing committee be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Dewdney, seconded by the member for Biggar:

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

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services is recognized.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I've been instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 31, The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2) with amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 31 be considered in

Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health has requested leave to waive consideration of Bill 31 in Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall the amendment be read a first time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS**Bill No. 31 — The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)**

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health has moved that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First and second reading of the amendments.

[13:45]

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

THIRD READINGS**Bill No. 31 — The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)**

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — By leave, Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The minister has moved that Bill 31 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of

this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services is recognized.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its 10th report. I move, seconded by the member from Cypress Hills:

That the report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Eastview, seconded by the member for Cypress Hills:

That the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be now concurred in.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to welcome Jill Collins, president of Breast Cancer Action Saskatchewan, along with Tia Lutz, the executive director of Breast Cancer Action Saskatchewan.

Breast cancer has touched the lives, Mr. Speaker, of many of us, and I'm pleased that Tia and Jill can join us today as the Legislative Building turns pink in support of breast cancer. Breast Cancer Action Saskatchewan works to empower and educate people affected by breast cancer. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering and educating people affected by breast cancer.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members today to join me in welcoming Jill and Tia here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to join with the minister and welcome Jill and Tia here today to their Legislative Assembly and thank them for all the great work that they do in this area. It has had an impact. There's much more work to be done. And I'm certain that that work will be completed.

But on this day I would like to welcome them to their Assembly and thank them for the work that they've done on behalf of the opposition.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce three guests in your gallery — Betty Anne Stevenson, director of communications for the Children's Advocate's office; Glenda Cooney, deputy advocate; and of course, Mr. Marvin Bernstein, the Children's Advocate.

I would just like to take a moment to thank him for this wonderful report that he has submitted today, outlining a vision that puts children first in this province. I know that a lot of the work he does is frustrating and sometimes difficult to do. But on a personal note, I want to congratulate him for what he does on behalf of the children of this province.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Athabasca, the minister of Community Services.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join my colleague and all members of the Assembly to also welcome the office staff of the Children's Advocate as well the Children's Advocate himself, Mr. Bernstein. And obviously the report that he's presented, we've looked at it. And we'll continue working hard together for the best interests of the Saskatchewan children, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina South.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm really happy today that we're joined by a group of 55 grade 5 and 6 students from St. Matthew School in Whitmore Park here in Regina. The group is seated in the west gallery. And they're accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Kot and Mrs. Weafer today. As well they've got chaperones — Mrs. Banadaga and Mrs. Kuster — who are here.

We'll be having an opportunity to get a photo taken. And I understand they're going to do a bit of a tour around the building. And then we'll have an opportunity to answer some questions about legislative process and what we actually do here later on in the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] visit.

So I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming these students from St. Matthew School here in Regina.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the members of the legislature, sitting in your gallery, I would like to introduce my sister, Diane Murfitt — just give a little wave there — up for a little bit of visiting and shopping and possibly a little bit of rest from my two nephews, Cole and Clay. I hope you will enjoy the proceedings. I think today you'll find them quite interesting. You picked a good day to come up and view it, with the Premier's estimates coming up. I hope you enjoy your stay here at your legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Meadow Lake.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly three summer students that are seated in your gallery. Mr. Speaker, in the Speaker's gallery are Louise Bigeagle — Louise, give us a little wave there — is from the Ocean Man First Nation. She's attending currently the First Nations University. Her studies currently focus on Aboriginal justice. She's working with the deputy minister's office, attending a variety of meetings and doing research as has been requested.

Also is Jessica Greyeyes. Jessica is from the Muskeg Lake First Nation and is currently working in the lands and resource branch. She's also working on a degree in business administration. Her interests, I'm told, include sewing, gardening, and computers. And lastly is Katryna Smith. Katryna is currently working with the policy and operations branch, specifically on the anti-racism file, which is of interest to her.

These three summer students are all, as I said, working in the Department of First Nations and Métis Relations and wanted to come today to see a little bit of what the proceedings in the Assembly look like. So I'd ask all of my colleagues to please join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you, nine students, grades 6 to 9 from Swanson Christian School. They're seated in the east gallery. Accompanying them are eight chaperones and also teachers, Miss Marie Dueck and Miss Susanne Ginther. And we will also have a photo later and a visit. On behalf of the opposition leader we say:

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

Please join me in welcoming these students from Swanson Christian School.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my distinct pleasure to introduce to you and to all members

of the Legislative Assembly a group of students and teachers that have travelled to Regina to attend the legislature but also to provide a presentation at the University of Regina in a college of Education class. Mr. Speaker, these students are here as part of their leadership, human rights, and diversity field trip. These students are from both Aden Bowman and Evan Hardy Collegiate.

From the Aden Bowman Gay-Straight Alliance are 25 students accompanied by three of their teachers, Cathy Lacey, Bob Birtles, and Al Lowen. And from Evan Hardy Collegiate we have three students from the Evan Hardy Gay-Straight Alliance and they're accompanied by their chaperone, Ms. Verone Charington.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to meeting with these students and their teachers this afternoon. I understand they have a number of tough questions as to where the province stands on a number of human rights issues. I look forward to meeting with the students later, and I'm sure we will have a vigorous and most fruitful discussion. So I would ask all members of the legislature to welcome these future Saskatchewan leaders to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the other member who's welcomed the Children's Advocate here today. In the 18 months that I've been a minister, I've been able to meet with him and have conversations and also share a meal as well.

But I did want to share one humorous story. When Mr. Bernstein moved here, his spouse remained back at his original . . . where they were living previously, so he was actually living here by himself for a while. And last summer our church took the youth group, 20 teenagers, to the Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan, and his wife had just joined him that day or a day previously. So we ran into him at the Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan. So he was a very happy man that day, and I was very happy because I was surrounded by a bunch of teenagers. So I just wanted to share that story and welcome him for the good work that he does for the children of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House eight men and women who are in your gallery, Mr. Speaker — eight men and women who in the days to come will be spending a great deal more time in this building and in this Chamber. They are each newly nominated candidates for the New Democratic Party, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — So if I may, let me first introduce, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gord Bedient who is an electrician and a small-business owner and who will be the next member of the legislature for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And then, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cam Broten from Saskatoon. He works health policy with the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the next member of the legislature for Saskatoon Massey Place.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, from the community of Biggar . . . or farming near Langham, operates the family farm, former elementary school teacher and principal, Mr. Ken Crush, the next member for Biggar.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, Ms. Brenda Curtis, minister of the United Church of Canada in Humboldt and the next member for Humboldt.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Larry Hall, mayor of Buena Vista, former teacher, next member for Thunder Creek.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chad Nilson, a young man who is currently completing his Ph.D. He currently teaches at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] and conducts research through the University of Saskatchewan, the next member for Prince Albert Carlton.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, Ms. Corinne Pauliuk who owns her own licensed personal care home and works as a human rights investigator, workplace mediator. Ms. Corinne Pauliuk, the next member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And finally, Mr. Speaker, today finally, Ms. Jane Wollenberg who is a teacher by trade, who is currently doing some tutoring, and she will be the next MLA from Saskatoon Southeast. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cumberland.

SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards of Excellence

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, my colleague, Minister Higgins, and I had the honour of attending the ninth annual

SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards of Excellence Friday in Saskatoon. It was an evening of excitement and pride with more than 300 family and friends gathered to honour the 54 First Nations and Métis youth nominated for 10 different categories.

Mr. Speaker, the winners of this year's SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards of Excellence are for fine arts and performing arts, Chantel Redman of the Standing Buffalo First Nation; technology and science, Jordan Bear, Muskoday First Nation; leadership, Jessica BigEagle, Regina; in sport, Shasta Bear of Chacachas First Nation; community service, Stacey Houghton, Moose Jaw; recreation, Vern Martell, Waterhen First Nation; in education, Brennan Beatty, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Deschambault Lake; culture, Nicole Waskewitch, Onion Lake First Nation; the Spirit Award, Howard (Hal) Cameron, Beady's Okemasis First Nation; and for outstanding achievement, Jordan Mahalicz in Beauval.

Mr. Speaker, special thanks is extended to the organizing committee chaired by Colleen Cameron for putting on a fantastic event to recognize the many achievements of First Nations and Métis youth of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Pink Day at the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is pink day at the Legislative Assembly, a day on which we wear ribbons and other pink garments to show our support for thousands and thousands of women who are diagnosed with breast cancer every year in this province and indeed this nation.

With one in nine women diagnosed with breast cancer, there is a strong likelihood that every one of us knows someone who has been affected by this disease. In fact many of us have women in our families, our groups of friends, and colleagues who have fought or are currently fighting breast cancer.

Mr. Speaker, in the last few decades, great strides have been made in terms of early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. Women who are diagnosed today have an excellent chance of beating the disease. We know that early detection is the key. A recent Canadian study shows that one of the main reasons more women are beating breast cancer today is because of early mammographies. I ask all members and everyone watching today to encourage all women you know to have regular, comprehensive screenings especially if they are over 40 years old.

Mr. Speaker, not only do we wear these ribbons in honour of all women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer; we wear them to recognize their families, friends, and colleagues who provide these women with love and support. And we wear them to show our appreciation for all the volunteers, doctors, nurses, and other health professionals and researchers who are committed to the cause of finding a cure for breast cancer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Athabasca.

Accomplished Pinehouse Athlete Prepares for Summer Games

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Special Olympics athletes' oath says, "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to tell you about a remarkable young man from my constituency, Aaron Misponas from Pinehouse, Saskatchewan. Aaron is a new Special Olympics Saskatchewan athlete. And already, Mr. Speaker, this young man has achieved three gold medals at the Kinsmen Indoor Track Meet in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, although he is new to the Special Olympics Saskatchewan, Aaron has been running long distance for a number of years. In fact, Mr. Speaker, Aaron is fortunate enough to have the support of his many friends, his family, and the Pinehouse community to cheer him on. Aaron is well known in his community because he is frequently seen running. In fact, Mr. Speaker, he's training twice a day and running twice a day.

Aaron will soon be attending the Special Olympics Saskatchewan Summer Sports Camp and will compete in a track meet between Team Saskatchewan and Team Manitoba. All of this preparation is for the Western Canadian Summer Games in Strathcona, Alberta in August of this year. At the Western Canadian Summer Games, Aaron will be competing in the 100 metre, the 200 metre, the running, long jump, and possibly the relay. Aaron also enjoys competing in the 400 metre, the 800 metre, the 1,500 metre, and the high jump.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in offering sincere congratulations and very best wishes to Aaron Misponas of Pinehouse for his many accomplishments — past, present, and the future. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Medal of Valour

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a constituent of mine, Derek Prohar from Avonlea, who received the Medal of Valour this past February in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, Derek Prohar was assigned as a liaison officer with the United States armed forces during the battle of Sperwan Ghar in Afghanistan. Captain Prohar acted as a rear machine gunner operating on the battalion commander's vehicle. Captain Prohar was wounded during an ambush but continued to return fire, assisting the commander with the control of the attack, which resulted in the seizing of key terrain. Because of his courageous actions, he earned himself and the Canadian Armed Forces much respect among the allied

soldiers of the United States Special Forces.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, Medal of Valour decorations are national honours awarded to recognize acts of valour, self-sacrifice, or devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy. The decorations were put in place in 1993, but this is one of the few times that it has been awarded.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members of the Assembly to join me in congratulating Derek Prohar on his courageous acts and outstanding performance for this country, Canada. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Multicultural Celebration

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I attended the Multicultural Celebration hosted by the Confederation Park Community School in my constituency of Saskatoon Fairview. It was kind of a mini-Folk Fest, Mr. Speaker, aimed at showcasing the wide variety of cultures represented in school and community.

It seemed like the entire school and community were involved in the celebration, and they really did it up right, Mr. Speaker. There were classroom pavilions, heritage fair projects, and ongoing multicultural entertainment featuring Pushpanjall from the India School of Dance, Confederation Park students and the Dance Morena Latin Dance Academy, Métis jigging by Courtney Anaquod, Buffalo Boy Productions, Donny Spiedel, the First Nations Dance and Drumming Group, the Lastwika Ukrainian Youth Choir, and the Vesniaka Academy of Ukrainian Dance. Other countries and cultures represented included Sudan, Bosnia, China, Germany, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Laos.

Mr. Speaker, it really was an impressive and extraordinary event with fantastic food and great entertainment and provided an excellent showcase of the city and the community's diverse makeup.

I want to convey a huge thank you to Principal Dr. Jayne Hudson and the parents, staff, and students of Confederation Park Community School. In particular I want to acknowledge Ann Longmuir, president of the school association, and the community coordinator, Cec Chambul. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Provincial High School Curling Champions

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the Assembly today and recognize this year's provincial high school girls' championship curling team. The Weyburn Comprehensive Eagles girls' rink — made up of skip

Melissa Hoffman, third Brittni Maurer, second Calli Tracey, and lead Jessica Pyett — won gold earlier this year.

And they didn't get there the easy way, Mr. Speaker. After dropping to the C bracket with a two and two record, the girls ran the table, defeating Strasbourg, Tisdale, Whitewood, and Gull Lake. And in the championship game, the girls got out to an early lead and didn't look back on their way to an 8 to 2 victory over Kelliher. This year's championship, Mr. Speaker, marks the third gold medal in curling for the Weyburn Comp since 2000.

Mr. Speaker, it's been a very busy year for these girls as they have spent a lot of time together on the ice, as shown not only in their gold at provincials but also with being recently awarded the Team Award of the Year by the South East Saskatchewan Association for Culture, Recreation & Sport.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my congratulations to Melissa, Brittni, Calli, Jessica, and to their coach Mel Hoffman and assistant coach Danette Tracey on a very successful season. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Saskatchewan Party Policies

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, why doesn't the Saskatchewan Party want to talk about policy this session? Because they know that the people of Saskatchewan do not agree with the policies of the Saskatchewan Party. For example Crown corporations — they continue to hide their privatization agenda. This is why the member from Humboldt has to make claims that the Sask Party has never called for privatization of STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company]. She said, quote:

I would like a copy of *Hansard* where anyone in the legislature has said that STC should be sold, dismantled, got rid of. Because I've been elected since 1999. I've extensively gone through past *Hansard* in preparation for today.

She didn't look very happy when my colleague, the Minister of Highways and Transportation, provided a list of the many, many times that the Sask Party MLAs have called for the privatization of STC, both in and of the House.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party can't talk about policy, and they can't talk about ethics — not when they continue to hide their true policies. But don't worry, Mr. Speaker, an election is coming. And to quote Mark Twain: "When a man is buying a basket of strawberries it can profit him to know that the bottom half of it is rotten."

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

Children's Advocate Recommendations

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Children's Advocate said an action plan based on the children and youth first principles he has outlined is needed immediately to address the needs of children in the government's care. The advocate said that situations like Oyate and Four Directions are a wake-up call and the government needs to act and take action now.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit today to developing an action plan based on all the recommendations of the Children's Advocate, especially the children and youth first strategy, and if so, when can we expect this action plan?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the minister of Community Services.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. When this government set up the Office of the Children's Advocate in 1994, I believe is the right year, we intended to afford the office as much respect and certainly as much collaboration and communication as possible.

What's important for the people of Saskatchewan to know is that we take that role seriously for the advocate to come forward and give us some recommendations, to give us some advice. We will certainly value that advice and will do our darndest to work towards achieving the recommendations and the aspirations that he has. What's important is this government respects the office and the role of the Children's Advocate. We'll continue working with him and his staff to try and achieve what is in the best interests of all Saskatchewan children. That is paramount to our thinking, to his thinking, and many people's thinking, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, the minister seems to be more concerned about process and jurisdiction than other issues when the main concern needs to be the safety of the children in his care. The minister is responsible for well over 4,100 children in this province, and Saskatchewan has the second highest mortality rate for children in the country.

The Children's Advocate says in order to protect children, a shift is needed in government policy, in practice, in legislation, and in attitude. Mr. Speaker, will the minister take the advice of the Children's Advocate and commit to truly putting the safety of children first before all other considerations?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, absolutely.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then maybe he will answer when he'll implement this, which was in the first question.

The reason the Children's Advocate has outlined several principles, including that all children are entitled to equal standards of care, protection, and services, is because that's not the case right now. Children are being left at risk. Children are being returned too soon to abusive situations. Too many parents are given too many chances and the safety of children is not the first priority when decisions are being made.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit that his department will stop making decisions based on restrictive, family-centred policies and programs and instead change the entire focus to a child-centred program?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've indicated, that we plan on working very closely with the Children's Advocate. And as I mentioned, since we established the office it's important that we also respect the office, Mr. Speaker. I want to point out that much of the work has continued. And although we sometimes disagree with the advocate on the timelines, we can tell people that we do intend to move forward on some of the recommendations as quickly as we can, and to work our way through many of the points that he's raised.

I would point out that it is our first priority to ensure that the safety of children is paramount in our thinking. And we recognize, Mr. Speaker, that it's always not possible to keep the families together. But always, as I mentioned at the outcome, Mr. Speaker, we will work with his office. We will not try and politicize the process. We will try and make sure there is good plans, there's progress, and there's good processes in place to ensure that there's respect afforded to as many groups as we can to try and achieve the best interests and the safety of all our children in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, when the minister talks of timelines . . . If it hadn't been for the Children's Advocate bringing forward Oyate and Four Directions, nobody would have known about it.

Mr. Speaker, the Children's Advocate agrees that an independent review of the entire child welfare system would help. He has been told that there won't be any legislation changes until 2009, and no child-first emphasis until at least 2008. The Children's Advocate says that these changes are needed so that we don't fail or continue to fail and fall into patterns that don't work.

Mr. Speaker, child-first principles are not contentious, so why should we take so long in implementing them? Would the minister commit to undertaking the child-first policies,

practices, and legislation long before 2009, and will the minister have an independent review of the current child welfare system?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, this government's role in respecting the advocate's office, the Children's Advocate office, and working with them, is to make sure that we not interfere with his independence. Mr. Speaker, the Children's Advocate is independent. And he has on many occasions given us advice, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to hear that advice and listen to that advice.

And I should point out to that member that when we have questions of this nature from that party opposite, they proposed a \$50 million cut to the department of community budget, the Social Services budget, Mr. Speaker. So how is it, Mr. Speaker, that they on one hand want to talk about children first and trying to move the agenda forward, and on the other hand they say, well we're going to cut \$50 million because we think that's a waste of money?

Mr. Speaker, on this side we're going to take the pragmatic approach. We're going to provide leadership. We're going to work with as many people as we can to make sure that the best interests of our children, it's first and foremost in all of our minds, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, the minister continues to talk about jurisdiction and policies and political. You know, Mr. Speaker, a child's a child's a child. It's his responsibility as a parent to that child to do his job. Simple question: why won't he implement this process of a child-first strategy immediately?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as I've indicated at the outset, our timelines with the Children's Advocate is somewhat different. He obviously wants to see some of the progress made immediately. And our department, certainly from my perspective, agree that we have our processes to go through. There's a lot of consultation, there's a lot of discussion. There are many parties we have to talk to. But we do, and we have begun that work, Mr. Speaker. We have begun that work but it's going to take us some time to get there. And we certainly want to encourage the advocate to continue his prodding because that's his independent way and we continue to respect that, Mr. Speaker.

But it's also very surprising coming from across the way again, Mr. Speaker — \$50 million cut. And you know what? When he

mentioned a child's a child's a child, all they have ever brought up in this Assembly is some of the negative challenges that many First Nations people have and nothing else and nothing more, Mr. Speaker. So again I would say perhaps it's time to park their politics, get out of the way. We will lead this file, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Supply of Health Care Professionals

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find myself once again rising in the Assembly to question why the people of Kamsack are such a low priority for this Minister of Health and this NDP [New Democratic Party] government.

With unwanted regularity, local officials have had to reduce or temporarily eliminate services because of shortages of medical professionals. And once again I find that starting today through until 8 a.m. Friday, there will be no evening and night service at the Kamsack Hospital because of a shortage of doctors.

Mr. Speaker, the people of my area, the people all across rural Saskatchewan deserve better. Why has the minister allowed health care in rural Saskatchewan to deteriorate so significantly?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to answer the question again. As the member opposite in phrasing his question has indicated, it is again a temporary closure for a couple of evenings to ensure that the physicians that are serving the Kamsack Hospital can do the things that they need to do there.

The regional health authority makes decisions with regards to temporary closures, Mr. Speaker, to ensure and assure the safety of individuals within the region. Mr. Speaker, the regional health authority has indicated that the emergency room is open in Canora and it's open in Yorkton. And again the regional health authority is urging people with emergency circumstances to call 911 and the ambulance services.

The regional health authority is doing all that it can to support the safety of the individuals there. And, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, here's a letter from the town of Kamsack to the Minister of Health, and it's dated May 2, 2007. And I quote:

Your Government must become more pro-active in the field of physician recruitment . . .

We have many questions that are just not being answered and all we see are an increasing number of days that our hospital is on bypass. Your immediate attention to this matter is imperative.

Mr. Speaker, from the Human Services Committee on April 11, when I asked the minister the question as to how many days the Kamsack Hospital had been on bypass in the previous fiscal year, this was his response: "In Kamsack we had a closure duration of 47 days." Mr. Speaker, 47 days. Those aren't my figures. Those are the minister's figures.

When will this minister begin giving this serious problem the attention that it deserves?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We've been giving this important matter our consideration for quite some time, Mr. Speaker. In fact back in 1999 we began the action plan, and in December 2005 we built the action plan for the health workforce. We've negotiated two contracts with the Saskatchewan Medical Association, Mr. Speaker, with significant components about recruitment and retention of physicians, Mr. Speaker. And the list is very long as to what we are doing.

But Mr. Speaker, compare that to what they've been doing on the opposite side. Mr. Speaker, they've been calling for the installation of new auditors, Mr. Speaker, in the health care system, Mr. Speaker, new auditors who will take a look at the system. They prefer to hire auditors, Mr. Speaker, than hire physicians. Our principles are to work with the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] to hire and recruit additional physicians.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, here's a letter from the mayor of Canora, Terry Dennis. This letter is dated May 3, 2007. And it states, and I quote:

Ongoing efforts by health regions and provincial agencies to attract local doctors seem to be proving fruitless. In the meantime, the merry-go-round of doctors in rural Saskatchewan continues.

Mr. Speaker, local people are in agreement. What this minister has done so far is inefficient. He has not solved the problem. When will the minister take steps to assure people get the medical services they require?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Regional health authorities, Saskatchewan Health, and this government are supporting initiatives that are making life better for Saskatchewan people through the health regions. Mr. Speaker, we are supporting 37,000 people within the health system. Mr. Speaker, we are providing human, we are supplying health workers to 269 facilities across this province, Mr. Speaker.

On Thursday of last week I was in Preeceville. The member opposite was in Preeceville. What did we announce? A new doctor in Preeceville, Mr. Speaker — something that the member opposite has been calling for for some time. Mr. Speaker, we have recruited to many locations across this province, Mr. Speaker, and the member opposite should stand up and congratulate us when we do a good job.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, you can bet that we will when this minister does a good job, but so far he's failed, and he's failed in all parts of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, we're seeing closures and service cuts with alarming regularity. Health care in our smaller centres is collapsing. In Saskatoon, our largest health care district, paramedics are filling in because there aren't enough nurses. In Weyburn, the birthplace of medicare, you soon won't be able to have a baby.

Mr. Speaker, this minister has failed to deal with this growing problem in recruitment and retention of health care professionals. The concerns of people from all over Saskatchewan have fallen on deaf ears. When will the minister begin taking this issue seriously?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think everyone in the province — except the members opposite — know that we have taken this issue seriously. And the only thing that the members opposite have done, Mr. Speaker, is go to where some of the most significant challenges are, and they have not acknowledged where the successes are, Mr. Speaker.

We put in place a \$25 million recruitment and retention strategy that the members opposite said was a good first step, and then said it wouldn't work. Well, Mr. Speaker, we've recruited now 141 individuals in less than a year; 84 of those are nurses, Mr. Speaker. This is 347 years of return-in-service commitment that we have generated, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the work that we've done.

All they've done across the way, Mr. Speaker, is said we need more auditors in the system to make this more difficult. Mr. Speaker, we're having success, and we will continue to have

success.

The Speaker: — Member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Building Communities Program

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, when Human Services considered estimates from Culture, Youth and Recreation, we discussed the building communities program. As opposition we were surprised to learn there were no applications for funding received last year under this program because there was none available. But we were also surprised to learn there was fourteen and a half million dollars given out.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister responsible tell me how it's possible to hand out in excess of fourteen and a half million dollars when there's no applications for funding under the program?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Culture, Youth and Recreation.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, when the building communities program was designed, it was intended to support for the people of Saskatchewan facilities for sports, culture, and recreation that will serve regional needs for a long time into the future. Mr. Speaker, there are some projects that were in progress or had been recently completed that the communities went ahead and served regionally. They achieved the entire objectives of the building communities program and did that having requested the province for assistance and not being able to get any because there was no program.

Mr. Speaker, it was decided to assist those projects in the cities of Swift Current, Lloydminster, Yorkton, and the Wanuskewin project, all of whom, Mr. Speaker, had requested funds. We're meeting all of the objectives of the building communities program. If the hon. member, if the hon. member wants to lean over and ask her seatmate from Swift Current if he thinks that's a bad idea, then she should just let him speak for himself.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, to the minister: I'll speak for the number of communities who didn't have an opportunity to put an application in.

Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of thing that drives people crazy. Culture, Youth and Recreation spent more than \$14 million on the building communities project. There was no applications received. There was no clear criteria. Yet the minister magically picked four programs to support, and out of those programs, two of them had completed construction and one where construction was in progress. At the same time the town of Nipawin was advised not to apply because their project was

completed.

The minister had told us during estimates, projects would be dealt with on the basis of their own merit, and there would be a possibility of projects that were already under way. So why on one hand were projects given money, on the other hand people weren't even allowed to apply? How is that fair?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, in the centennial there is the centennial facilities program, which provided up to four and a half million dollars for smaller projects. In 2006 there was the community shares program, which provided capital monies to communities to use for their priorities. Then, Mr. Speaker, came the building communities program to enhance capacity in sports, culture, and recreation.

Mr. Speaker, there were four large projects, all of which were well over \$10 million in size and all of which had caused the communities to assume a fair amount of deficit in order to achieve them, even though they're meeting regional needs — which is the objective of the building communities program.

If the hon. member thinks that that doesn't make sense, then let the member for Lloydminster, let the member for Swift Current stand up and say that they don't believe that those monies were well spent to serve the people not only of their communities but the surrounding region.

Mr. Speaker, it's an investment in the future for the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to suggest that the minister ask whether the mayor of Eston or the mayor of Nipawin thinks it makes sense. Their projects weren't even looked at. Mr. Speaker, the NDP's handling of the building communities project has angered civic leaders all across this province.

Mayor Al Heron of Eston writes his community is trying to reduce the energy costs through solar heating of the local pool and improvements to the ice plant. When building communities project was announced, hundreds of communities thought they'd get as much as \$50 per capita for qualifying projects. Then they learned, after the fact, that any community planning to spend less than \$1 million wouldn't even qualify.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, how is that fair? How is this a building program in all of Saskatchewan? Is this anything more than the minister's personal slush fund?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Culture,

Youth and Recreation.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Interesting concept, Mr. Speaker. The Swift Current slush fund, the Lloydminster slush fund, she suggests. Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the program is . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Minister of Culture . . . Order please. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, the program is designed to support regional enhancement of community facilities for sports, culture, and recreation. And community and regions can work together, including rural municipalities with urban municipalities. Mr. Speaker, it is intended to enhance capacity for significant projects and has a threshold of \$1 million.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to note that their Conservative cousins in Ottawa, their Conservative cousins in Ottawa, in order to qualify under the MRIF [Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund] program, to have funds from the federal government to support sports, culture, and recreation facilities, has a threshold of \$25 million — \$25 million. And I ask the hon. member, has she lobbied her Conservative cousins from the country of Canada to support the projects across the province of Saskatchewan to build the regional facilities that Saskatchewan people want and need and deserve?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

Severance for Former Caucus Employee and Police Documents

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for two weeks now the Premier has refused to stand in his place and answer what I think is a very simple question: why is Jim Fodey entitled to severance if he resigned? The rules of the Legislative Assembly clearly state that if you resign, you don't get severance. So either Jim Fodey resigned and is not entitled to severance, or Jim Fodey is entitled to severance because he didn't really resign. Which one is it?

Will the Premier stand up today and explain to the Saskatchewan taxpayers why is Jim Fodey getting severance if he did indeed resign?

The Speaker: — Order please. I wish to advise the Assembly that the question is out of order. I will only allow a response if it's voluntary. The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, we've already indicated to the public that it's our intention to follow the rules of the Legislative Assembly. But I will say this. Why is it that the Saskatchewan Party continues to try and deflect from the fact that the Leader of the Opposition and his chief of staff had illegally obtained or stolen documents from the city of Regina

police in their position for well over a year? And why is it that they allowed two of their critics to go out in the rotunda and mislead the public that they'd only been in possession of these stolen documents since the beginning of this session, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, we know what this is all about. It's a deflection of the fact that the members opposite had stolen police documents in their possession for well over a year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the rules of the Legislative Assembly clearly state, they clearly state that severance is provided at the direction of caucus and the Premier is the leader of that NDP caucus. Yet he refuses to act like a leader by refusing to answer this very simple question.

The good news is he cannot run and hide forever because today, later today, the Saskatchewan Party will ask this question again in the Premier's estimates. And the Premier will have to stand up and he will have to answer that question. So why doesn't he just save us all some time and why he doesn't he act like a leader for once, and why doesn't he get up and answer a question? Why is Jim Fodey getting a taxpayer-funded severance if he resigned?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about leadership. And I have a question, and I quote; and this is from the Leader of the Opposition's scrum on May 8: "You also want to bring it forward at a time when it's going to capture the attention of the people of the province of Saskatchewan so that they understand."

Well, Mr. Speaker, they kept a stolen document in their possession for over a year so that, quote, the people would "understand" why the big Leader of the Opposition secret . . . And then he says, "I just don't think people are interested in the nature of who got the documents or when the documents were received." On May 8, 2007, he says this.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that there are some people who want to know how long they got the document, where they got the documents from, and the people who want to know are the city of Regina police.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government

I'll be tabling responses to written questions 1,480 through 1,484 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Order. Responses to questions 1,480 to 1,484 have been submitted. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave of the House to introduce a motion related to a sitting calendar in future years for the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to introduce a motion regarding the sitting calendar. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

Rules and Practices of the Legislative Assembly

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, as we will all be aware, the House during this session has been abiding by the newly developed calendar which provides for 25 sitting days in the fall and 40 sitting days in the spring. And both the government and the opposition have had some reflections on how that has effectively served our tasks and the schedule by which we operate here.

We've come to a common conclusion, Mr. Speaker — and I'm going to move a motion in just a moment that is seconded by the Opposition House Leader — we've come to a common conclusion that it would serve the House just as well and the purposes of the members, particularly in their own constituencies, to make a slight alteration in the sitting schedules.

And therefore I have a fairly, unfortunately, lengthy and somewhat complicated motion, the objective of which is to change the spring sitting days to still remain at 40 days, but compared to the current calendar to start two days earlier and then provide a five-day sitting break for the week following Easter Sunday. And part of the motion then, Mr. Speaker, puts in place the consequential notice of motion requirements in order to achieve that and to permit the House to continue to operate in a regularized kind of way.

So therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Opposition House Leader, by leave of the Assembly:

That rules 6(3), 21(4), 22(4), 23(2), and 60 of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* be replaced with the following:

6(3) The Assembly shall not meet on the following designated days: New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, the week after Easter, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Saskatchewan Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day.

[Rule] 21(4) Notices of priority items of business designated under this rule is to be provided in writing and tabled no later than 2:30 p.m. each Tuesday. When the Assembly does not sit on a Tuesday, the terms of this rule shall be applied on the preceding sitting day.

[Rule] 22(4) Notice of motion may be given orally in the Legislative Assembly under routine proceedings on the preceding Tuesday, and the written notice shall be tabled no later than 2:30 p.m. on the preceding Tuesday. When the Assembly does not sit on a Tuesday, the terms of this rule shall be applied on the preceding sitting day. Notwithstanding anything else herein contained, notice of the debate may be waived with unanimous consent.

[Rule] 23(2) Notices for private members' motions shall be tabled no later than 2:30 p.m. on the Tuesday preceding the Thursday on which the motion is to be debated and, where more than one notice is tabled, government and opposition notices shall be listed alternatively on the order paper. When the Assembly does not sit on a Tuesday, the terms of this rule shall be applied on the preceding sitting day.

[And finally rule] 60 Two sitting days notice shall be given of a motion for first reading of a Bill, a motion for a resolution, order, or address, or for the appointment of any committee; but this shall not apply to public Bills, after their introduction, or to private Bills, or to the times of meeting or adjournment of the Assembly, or to notice provisions otherwise specified by the rules. Such notice shall be laid on the Table and be printed in the *Votes and Proceedings* of that day.

And further, Mr. Speaker:

That the amendments to the rules and practices of the Legislative Assembly, as specified by this motion, be adopted and brought into force effective immediately.

Seconded by the Opposition House Leader, I so move.

The Speaker: — On the motion moved by the member for Moose Jaw North and seconded by the member for Melfort, will the members please take it as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Will take it as read. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Committee of

Finance.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Executive Council Vote 10

Subvote (EX01)

The Chair: — Before this committee is Executive Council estimates, found on page 63 of your Estimates booklet. I would invite the Premier to introduce — are all the officials present? — to introduce officials that are now present and to make any introductory comments when officials arrive.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, the officials have not quite arrived. We'll start as soon as they get here.

The Chair: — Thank you very much.

Thank you. As I mentioned the matter appropriately before the committee is the estimates for Executive Council found on page 63 of your Estimates book. And I would ask the Premier to introduce his officials and any comment he would like to make before beginning the deliberations.

[14:45]

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm very pleased that we're joined this afternoon by Mr. Dan Perrins who is the deputy minister to the Premier. We are joined as well by Ms. Lois Thacyk, chief of staff to the Premier. We're joined by Mr. John McLean, director of senior management services, and Ms. Bonita Cairns, director of corporate services, Madam Chair.

As you know, Madam Chair, the estimates of Executive Council, sometimes described as the Premier's estimates, provide an opportunity to look at broad ranging issues across government as well as the more specific issues attached to the Department of Executive Council.

And I'm hopeful this afternoon in the next two hours that we will be able to engage in some debate and some discussion about some of the important public policy issues that face the people of Saskatchewan as we seek, as a government, to build a better life for Saskatchewan families in this province, to build a better future for our youth here, as we intend to keep on doing that through strengthening our economy, strengthening the social programs of our province, and strengthening the environmental foundation of sustainability that will carry us forward, Madam Chair. And therefore I'm very much looking forward to this discussion of public policy that we can engage in this afternoon over the next couple of hours.

The Chair: — In subvote (EX01) central management and services, is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Swift Current.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to join with the Premier in welcoming his officials to the Assembly today. We're also looking forward to a discussion of a number of issues that are very important to the province today and into the near-, medium-, and long-term future of Saskatchewan.

I would like to begin, if I may, Madam Chair, in the issue of health care. We have spent some time over this current sitting of this session back to last fall and years previous — in fact every year since I've been elected in 1999 — talking about one particular issue in health care, and that is the human resource issue in the province of Saskatchewan or the shortages of both nurses and doctors.

Madam Chair, when we have raised those questions in the past, often the answer from the Health minister and maybe at times from the Premier — I don't recall — has been, well this is a problem that the entire country faces. And it is true to an extent that there is a shortage of nurses and a shortage of doctors in jurisdictions other than our own province of Saskatchewan.

But what is different it seems when you look at the national evidence, when you look at what has happened in other provinces, is that other governments — who like this government cut training seats for nurses, for example in the early 1990s — much more quickly recognized the mistake they made and started to make adjustments in training seats, started to come together with stakeholders to develop a recruitment and retention strategy.

And while those challenges still exist in other provinces, I would argue, Madam Chair, and more importantly groups with much more credibility than any politician — groups like SUN, the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, and others on the front lines of health care in the province — would argue that because of the fact that our own government, the NDP government, has not recognized the problems they caused when they cut those training seats, when they failed to present recruitment and retention strategy that was the product of stakeholder consultation, that our problem in Saskatchewan now is more acute than it ought to be and more acute relative to what we're seeing in other provinces.

It was interesting, Madam Chair, to go over some of the warnings that came to this government when the current Premier was first the associate minister of Health in 1992, later appointed the minister of Health in 1995. Consider that the Canadian Nurses Association were long ago predicting the problem that we would face in Canada today, that we're now facing in the province today, if there wasn't adequate training in the province, if there wasn't a plan to deal with recruitment and retention.

Consider the headlines from 1996 with respect to shortage: "Plight of rural doctors needs addressing says College of Physicians and Surgeons." In 1998, "Health care workers frustrated with the system." Just a little bit later on, P.A. [Prince Albert] *Daily Herald*: "Nurse shortage forces operating room closures"; "Canadian Nurses Association said the degree program today does not graduate anywhere near the number of

nurses that were graduated in total in 1991."

There were warnings that obviously other governments heeded including the NDP government in Manitoba — I would point out to be fair and non-partisan about it. This Premier today, when he was the Health minister, ignored the warning lights that were going off in the dashboard, Madam Chair. And this Premier today presides over a budget and a government that still has no plan. And again you don't have to take our word for it, Madam Chair. The nurses have weighed in pretty unequivocally on it. You can see the billboards all over the province of Saskatchewan that point to this, the commercials on TV that point to this.

And believe it or not, Madam Chair, but the budget this year was an opportunity obviously for the government to fix the mess that it had created and not addressed over the decades. And what was in there in terms of training seats for nurses? Eighteen, eighteen. What was in there for training seats for doctors — and we heard earlier today we have an acute shortage of doctors — four new seats. We'll be up to 60. Manitoba is at 100.

The question to the Premier is this: why would anyone believe now that he has a plan to deal with the most important issue in health care, the shortage issue — when he ignored the warning lights as the associate minister of Health, when he ignored the warnings when he was the Health minister in the mid '90s and since when he's become the Premier, the problem's gotten worse.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, the Leader of the Opposition wants to review events of the 1990s, early 1990s when I did have the privilege to be serving as associate minister of Health, and I worked a great deal with the health care providers, health care workers at that time. Madam Chair, I think the Leader of the Opposition has fresh memories in his own mind of those days since he was in this building right up until those days or thereabouts, and he knows what this province was dealing with at that time.

He knows the debt and the deficits that we were dealing with at that time. He knows because he was part of the government that gave us those debts and deficits, Mr. Speaker. And was there reductions? Was there reductions? There were, Madam Speaker. There were, Madam Chair. There were some very significant difficult choices that had to be made at that time.

Now at the very same time, Madam Chair, this government was leading the nation, leading the nation in health care reform in looking at new approaches to health care in building a model of wellness, investing not only in acute care but investing in opportunities to keep people well and out of the system. It was visionary, Madam Chair, and it has carried us to this day up and to and including the health care plan that now exists that's carrying us forward, again internationally and nationally recognized.

Now it's one thing for the Leader of the Opposition to raise concerns, and that's fair enough. It's part of his role. It's part of their role over there to raise concerns. And it is government's

responsibility of course to act, and that's what we've been doing, Madam Chair.

And I just want to review with you and the House the number of actions that have been taken in just these very short few months past and in the past few years. In just these past few months, Madam Chair, we have provided recruitment grants to 141 individuals, recruiting people to serve in our health care system. And, Madam Chair, 84 per cent of those, 84 of them or 60 per cent of those recruits are nurses, nurses serving in our province.

With these recruitment grants of course we ask for a guarantee of return-in-service commitments. Of those who have very recently been recruited, we now have 347 years — 347 years — of return-in-service commitments. Now this represents from this government a cost \$1.78 million. And interestingly, Madam Chair, 40 per cent of these new recruits are coming from the province of Alberta. That's in terms of recruitment just in the past few months under the leadership of the current Minister of Health.

But equally important, Madam Chair, is the matter of retention. Retaining those valuable health care workers, whether they be nurses or LPNs [licensed practical nurse] or workers in services in the health care industry or physicians, retention is equally important, and we're very committed to retaining our current workforce.

And we fully recognize, Madam Chair, that there are a number of on-the-job pressures facing our nurses and other health care providers. We're addressing them by the following. We've committed, Madam Chair, over \$6 million, \$6 million over the next three years for wage increases to remain competitive and provide good, good, good wages for our health care workers. We've added RN [registered nurse] seats this year. We now have a total, Madam Chair, of 466 training seats for RNs in this province. We're adding LPN seats.

We've launched a new program for the training of our young Aboriginal people in the Aboriginal community. And you heard the minister from the North talk about this recently in the House this week.

It takes us to training, Madam Chair. Since 2003 — note this — since 2003 this government has increased RN seats by 55 per cent, since 2003 a 55 per cent increase in training seats in this province for RNs. That brings us to the total of 466 this year. In terms of LPNs, licensed practical nurses, we've increased the total by 70 per cent since 2003 for a total of 210. And as I indicated, we're supporting 360 new and continuing return in service bursaries to retain our graduates, Madam Chair.

This is a government, Madam Chair, that is at work, that is at work with the health care providers in Saskatchewan, with the Department of Health, with our health regions to tackle the challenge which is a challenge facing virtually every jurisdiction not only in Canada but in North America, Madam Chair.

Now in this debate, in this debate we should be hearing from the Leader of the Opposition. What is his plan? What is his plan for retention and recruitment? What is his plan, Madam Chair,

as he seeks to become the Premier of the province?

Well all that we've heard from that Leader of the Opposition and that opposition is a plan to audit health care expenditures in this province — not to add nurses, not to add doctors, but to add auditors to the system to audit the system. And, Madam Chair, I say to the health care workers of Saskatchewan, you ought to beware of the auditors that that party would put in place if they're ever in government, Madam Chair. They're not auditors who are worried about the health care of Saskatchewan people or Saskatchewan families or Saskatchewan children. They're auditors worried about the bottom line.

This is the party that went into the last election saying they're going to keep the rate of expenditures in health care at only the cost of inflation, only the rate of inflation. That's what they said in the last campaign which means, Madam Chair, had they been elected to government in the last election — you know what? — the health care budget today would be \$200 million less than the budget that we're now debating, \$200 million less.

So would the Leader of the Opposition please explain to this House and to the people of Saskatchewan how he would take \$200 million out of the health care budget and at the same time build, build the numbers of health care workers providing . . . build retention, build recruitment? And how does he intend to do that with a bunch of auditors running around our hospitals?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — You know, Madam Chair, sometimes we on this side of the House wonder if the Premier even knows what's happening inside of his own government because we know that Sun Country health district is currently undertaking an audit, a service delivery audit. I think Deloitte's the firm that's been hired. Those are the auditors that this government has hired presumably, or its regions have hired presumably to find out if there are efficiencies to ensure that we can focus resources on the front line instead of getting them caught up in administration and governments.

We understand that there are two other, maybe three other audits going on in health care regions right now. His Minister of Health is sitting right behind him. He ought to have whispered it to him before he got up and went on his hire-more-auditors rant that we actually hear from the minister. Their regions today are doing these audits. My question to him is pretty blunt: does he think that's a good thing or a bad thing to do?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, this of course is the normal course of business within the regions. Of course this is the normal course of business. This is quite a different approach, quite a different approach, Madam Chair, than what has been recommended by the party opposite. Now we first interestingly had this idea . . . it's not a new idea. It's not a new idea.

I heard in this House once upon a time from what was then the leader of the Liberal Party. You'd bring in these auditors to look at value-for-money audit. That's the difference, Madam Chair. These people talk about value-for-money audit. That's

the kind of thing they're interested in.

[15:00]

Now I ask again the Leader of the Opposition, I ask again the Leader of the Opposition, he proposed and his party proposed in the last election to maintain the levels of health care expenditure in this province only at the rate of inflation. That was what they said — only at the rate of inflation. And somehow they would find, quote, “efficiencies.” They would find cuts in the health care provision in Saskatchewan to maintain expenditures at the rate of inflation. Well by our calculation, anybody's calculation, that would mean we'd have \$200 million less in health care today than we would have if they'd been elected, Madam Chair.

So we're not here talking about this value-for-money audit that they talk about. We're not talking about freezing health care at the rate of inflation. We're talking about providing real health care services, real nurses, real doctors, real LPNs, real caregivers in our hospitals, in our nursing homes, in our communities. That's what we're talking about, Madam Chair. We're talking about real health care services for real people.

Meanwhile they talk about value-for-money audits, and they talk about freezing the health care budget. I'd like the Leader of the Opposition to explain to this House and explain to the people of Saskatchewan how it is that he intends to provide for the recruitment and retention of health care workers by freezing the health care budget at the rate of inflation.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Madam Chair, we've already established very early on in Executive Council estimates that the Premier's unaware that his own government is doing these audits on a rotating basis. It happens in every region, presumably to find, to improve the delivery of service, to delivery of health care for Saskatchewan people.

Madam Chair, one idea that the Saskatchewan Party has promoted, one option, one alternative that we have quite freely offered — and when the Premier limits it to just one point, he's obviously not paying attention because certainly our Health critic has talked about it and I have talked about it around the province; more importantly, the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses and other stakeholders in this whole nursing shortage issue have quite clearly pointed out to all of us — an idea, an alternative is for this government to show some leadership to ensure that our regions are offering full-time, permanent positions.

In region after region, if you listen to the nurses — and we have been — they will tell you, they will tell you, Madam Chair, that that's not happening. Too often casual, part-time positions are being offered to nurses. And then what happens in the regions — and it happens in mine; it's happened in the Southwest; it happens all over — is they pay huge amounts of overtime because of course they have to fully staff with these casual, part-time workers.

Now, Madam Chair, if you are a nursing graduate and you had a significant student loan — as you're apt to have coming out of an intensive four-year degree program — and you had a choice to make between a jurisdiction that offered you full-time,

permanent work with some assurances and some surety and Saskatchewan under the NDP that offers all too often casual, part-time work, which would you choose?

The question to the Premier is this: why has his government not shown leadership in this regard? Why are regions under his watch continuing to go down the road of casual, part-time positions and then wondering why nurses choose other jurisdictions after they graduate?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Madam Chair, the Leader of the Opposition may want to rethink what he just said. The fact of the matter is, the fact of the matter is that of the graduates recent in Saskatchewan in nursing, 90 per cent of them are practising in the province. They're not leaving the province, Madam Chair; they're staying in the province.

Now that's due to some very good work that's been going on in the Department of Health and, if I may say, been going on in the regions. Now our regions are charged with the management, the day-to-day management of the health care system in our province. Now perhaps the, perhaps the Leader of the Opposition wants to change that. I don't know; he hasn't said but he might.

But today the regions in Saskatchewan are in charge of the day-to-day. They have to deal with issues like maternity leave, parental leave, vacation, and so on. The Minister of Health has just informed me that where the regions find it possible to provide full-time employment, they are providing and they're offering full-time employment. And the fact of the matter is again, Madam Chair, that 90 per cent of the graduates in nursing in this province are now working in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Madam Chair, there you have it. The Premier doesn't think it's important, this issue of full-time, permanent positions because certainly if he did think it was important, this government would have acted. His Minister of Health would have acted on the advice that they are getting, same advice we're getting. Obviously SUN will talk to any legislator on any side of the House and tell them what are the issues, how do we deal with this shortage.

Training seats is key. The government's failed — 18 seats in the budget when the problem is about 500 nurses short right now in the province and with succession that's coming — retirements and required succession planning — up to 1000 vacancies, Madam Chair. Training seats, absolutely key. This government failed on that count miserably in this last provincial budget.

And on the issue of full-time, permanent positions . . . which would help immeasurably in terms of not just attracting but then retaining nurses because remember, there's two parts to the formula. The other part to this formula is that once we have successfully — and we congratulate the recruiters in the health regions for their work to date — but once we have successfully recruited those nurses to work, to stay in the province of

Saskatchewan or to come to Saskatchewan, then retention is key. And which province, under which government, has the worst retention rate in the country? Right here in the province, under the NDP.

We have an issue. It relates to full-time, permanent positions, Madam Chair. It relates very, very clearly to full-time, permanent positions, and it relates to the number, to our training capacity in the province. And until the Premier is going to address those, until his government's going to do something about that, why would he expect SUN or, most importantly, the people who need the health care system to have any faith at all in the health care system that he's providing?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, I and I believe the vast majority of Saskatchewan people have a great deal of faith in the health care system in this province, a great deal of faith in those who provide our health care services on a daily basis. I want to remind the Leader of the Opposition again — I know the Minister of Health pointed this out to him in the House just this week — that there are today in Saskatchewan 1,500 individuals in training seats for nursing in this province, 1,500.

Are we encouraging more? Yes, we are, Madam Chair. Are we developing more capacity? Yes, we are. And we're developing that capacity across the province. We're developing the capacity now to educate young people in the North for service in the North. We've got programs of bursary support to ensure. And we're seeing the track record, Madam Chair, of graduates choosing to live and work in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now in the area of overtime, yes, we're working with the regions to try and provide more full-time opportunities. Of course we are. But there will always be the mix in the system to account for various issues that will arise, maternity leaves and so on. There will always be the mix in the system. We're encouraging, we're working with the regions to see more full-time employment but the record is a record of accomplishment. There are more people training for nursing in this province today. There is better recruitment and retention efforts.

And this is because, Madam Chair, this is because of the budgeting of the province of Saskatchewan. We are the funder for health care in this province, Madam Chair. We have a budget with a record health care expenditure, a budget that's at least \$200 million more than the party opposite would have if they were in government — a budget, Madam Chair, that they will vote against and have voted against.

Now I don't know how this works, Madam Chair. The Leader of the Opposition gets up and says there should be more full time, there should be more retention programs, there should be more recruitment programs, but then he also says but we should cut the budget for the Department of Health. We should cut the Department of Health's budget. That's what they ran on. On inflation in the Department of Health would be frozen at the . . . the period of expenditure would be frozen at inflation.

Well, Madam Chair, you can't have it both ways. You can't stand in the House and say spend more and more and more, and at the same time not vote for the budget and at the same time go out and tell the people of Saskatchewan, well you can hold the

health care budget at the rate of inflation. It just doesn't work, Madam Chair, and the Leader of the Opposition should just come clean on this and say it can't work.

Mr. Wall: — Madam Chair, Madam Chair, I wonder does the Premier have any thoughts at all on what might be saved in the system if we put a priority on full-time, permanent nurses instead of paying overtime? Has the Premier even had the interest to direct his Minister of Health to ask the question? Or will he just sort of continue to — when it's convenient for them — you know, put it on the health region? Say, well that's up to the health region to deal with that and we'll gently . . . we can gently nudge them, and basically use those regions as human shields for any sort of criticism that comes with respect to health care policy.

Under this government the health care system apparently is set up to pay more overtime, while we are unable to do the best job we could possibly be doing of recruiting and then retaining nurses. There are other recruiting and retention issues that remain unaddressed by this government. Again if they were listening to stakeholders, if they were listening to SUN, maybe even if they listened to the Saskatchewan Party who has been listening to those folks, that they could move on and it would help the situation especially with respect to retention.

We've heard nurses tell us over and over again that the lack of a mentoring initiative within the health care system is a problem in terms of retention. We have heard pretty compelling stories of a brand new nursing graduate who on her first shift is left to deal with 27 patients by herself, and the next day, surprisingly, isn't very interested in coming back to work. These are issues in the workplace.

The system under this government, under that minister and the Premier, lacks mentoring. It lacks — as the nurses have advocated — a more staged process for brand new graduates so we're not putting them into the highest stress possible role of the nursing profession, but rather that they would have the opportunity to work with more experienced nurses and move into those other areas of health care.

Is there absolutely anything offered by this government, by that minister or by this Premier, in terms of leadership on that count? The answer is no. And so again there's another idea. The Premier keeps saying, well what would the Sask Party do? There's another idea. Is the Premier prepared to act on that? Will he start listening to SUN?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, again to remind members of what is happening today in the health care system, in health care delivery in this province. With the \$6 million that we have allocated to retention initiatives, the Minister of Health just informs me that we now have 30 applications in place from the workplaces of Saskatchewan to address just some of the very same issues that the Leader of the Opposition is talking about.

Madam Chair, if there's a full-time position available in this province, of course we'll offer it. Where the positions can be full-time, of course they'll be full-time. As I've said before, the Department of Health and the regional health authorities are

working together to try and build the full-time positions. But there will be the mix. Is the Leader of the Opposition saying that he will eliminate overtime in the health care system? Is that what he's arguing, Madam Chair?

Madam Chair, we have put in place a \$25 million fund for the recruitment and retention of health care workers. We are working with a broad range of health care providers, their associations, their unions, Madam Chair, and we are seeing the positive results, Madam Chair, and that's just the fact.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, for 10 years — and I could go through the quotes again — for 10 years nurses, doctors, and others, more importantly the patients who need the health care system, have been calling on this government for action. The Premier at the outset of this topic said, well the government was facing some fiscal difficulties early on in its term. There's no arguing that at all.

Madam Chair, that same fiscal crisis was being faced in every single province in Canada because, Madam Chair, because, Madam Chair, in the 1980s provincial governments of every stripe, including Bob Rae Ontario, including the government in Alberta, the Conservative government in Alberta, including the Conservative government in Saskatchewan, racked up huge debts — deficits and debts. So other governments, other governments made some cutbacks in training seats for nurses. It's true. The Premier's right. But then those governments recognized that mistake early on in the mid-'90s, in the mid- to late -'90s at the very latest, and they started to act. They started to act. But not our government. Not the social democrats here in the birthplace of medicare, Madam Chair.

So here's the question. Here's the question to the Premier. My last question was on another alternative that he would hear if he met with SUN, if he met with the stakeholders, that he would hear if he was listening to the members on this side of the House, and that is the need for mentoring. That is the need on the part of especially new nursing graduates to ease into some of the higher stress areas of their work. What leadership is he providing, is his government providing in the area of workplace mentorship and ensuring that nurses don't want to leave only days after they start because they've been thrown into too stressful a situation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, again to reflect on the Leader of the Opposition's comments. He wants to go back again and talk about the 1990s. Fair enough, we'll talk about the 1990s. And he makes this assertion that somehow in the 1990s Saskatchewan was really no different than any other province in Canada, that every other province had deficits, debt. Well, Madam Chair, everybody in Canada and everybody in Saskatchewan knows that was simply not the case.

The fact of the matter is in 1991 this province had the highest debt per capita ratio anywhere in Canada. We had members of that government at that time standing in this House, right here, standing in this House saying the province is on the very verge of bankruptcy. That party that he was a part of and that

government that he was a part of brought this province to the verge of bankruptcy. And let's not forget it. And the people of Saskatchewan don't forget it, and no sugar-coating by discussing other provinces and their fiscal problems come anywhere close to what the people of Saskatchewan faced in the 1990s. And let's not forget it.

[15:15]

Now in terms of, Madam Chair, the circumstance today, the circumstance today, I've just been provided some information, some figures about the realities. The realities are that in 2005 — these figures are from 2005 — in our province, 54.8 per cent of RNs are employed full time compared to 54.4 in the Canadian RN workforce. 54.8 of our RNs are at full time compared across the country, Madam Chair, across the country with 54.4, so marginally higher — marginally higher — full time in Saskatchewan than is across the country.

And if you use the ratio in terms of casual hours, the rate of RNs working casual hours in Saskatchewan today is 11.4, which is comparable, marginally higher, than the Canadian rate of 11.1. So the fact of the matter is the RN positions in Saskatchewan are comparable with RN positions across the country and casual is comparable with RNs casual across the country.

Does this mean we are seeking . . . not seeking further full time? Of course it does not. That's just what we're doing. That's just what the regions are doing.

And, Madam Chair, to encourage the retention of our workers, we are putting substantial financial dollars, I've just reported \$6 million, into . . . [inaudible] . . . initiatives. I've just reported . . . The Minister of Health tells me there's already been 30 applicants for this support, and those are significant dollars, Madam Chair, to those applicants — significant dollars.

Now that's what happens, Madam Chair, when you sit down and you work with health care providers as the Minister of Health has done, both with the regions, the professional associations, and with a variety of the unions. They are working with Minister of Health. They are working with him to build this retention and recruitment strategy to meet our needs, not just for today but for tomorrow.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well there you have it, Madam Chair. I'm sure SUN is going to be interested in this, the other stakeholders in health care. The Premier just doesn't think it's a problem, doesn't think it's an issue, says we're doing just fine.

I'll take the word, we'll take the word of SUN every single day over the word of this government because the evidence of course is hospital closures. That's the evidence of a nursing shortage in the province of Saskatchewan. The evidence of a nursing shortage is the fact that this government's going to be in the position of actually posting temporary openings of health care facilities rather than when they're closed. Those are the facts.

The Premier has not come anywhere near the other alternative,

the other suggestion on the issue of mentoring, on the other workplace issues that nurses have raised.

No wonder they're sick and tired of this government, of the Premier, and especially of the minister. No wonder they've been left to have to erect billboards on the highway and take out television ads. The nursing situation is so well in hand by this government that the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses are advertising on television, and they're putting up billboards all over the province to draw public attention to the terrible and dismal record of this NDP government, Madam Chair.

The other shortage that we face in Saskatchewan — again long ago predicted when that Premier was the minister of Health — is the doctor shortage. Listen to what Dennis Kendal, the registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, said in 1996 when he was speaking about the burden of work for doctors in rural Saskatchewan in particular:

We'll have to sit down, and that includes the health districts and the government and the professions, to discuss this. We will all have to be part of the solution.

So there you have it. In 1996 the College of Physicians and Surgeons have identified a problem with respect to doctors, the number of doctors we have in rural Saskatchewan. They've identified the fact that this government needs to — and that Premier was the minister of Health, mind you, at the time — that this government needs to sit down and earnestly work with the stakeholders to ensure we can deal with the situation.

And what is the situation, Madam Chair, today? Today well we obviously have a doctor shortage. Day after day in this Assembly members of the opposition have brought forward cases from their constituency that highlight the fact that we have yet another ... that we have doctor shortages in Saskatchewan.

In Manitoba, NDP Manitoba, what have they done about it? I'm sure they have issues with respect to doctor recruitment and retention in rural Saskatchewan. But long ago, unlike this current government, they must have seen something coming. They must have listened to their health care providers in their province because in Manitoba they train 100 ... there's 100 seats, 100 training seats for doctors. A comparable province, about the same size, same fiscal capacity when you throw in the equalization they get, and, Madam Chair, in the province of Saskatchewan with the whopping four seats — with the whopping four seats that we get in this budget — we're up to 60 training seats.

Madam Chair, to the Premier. He was the minister of Health when the College of Physicians and Surgeons warned this government, when the SMA warned this government that a doctor shortage was coming. He did nothing then. He's the Premier now. He's doing nothing about it now other than to add four seats, bring the total to 60 when Manitoba has 100. Why, Madam Chair?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, in this budget which this opposition is going to vote against, has voted against, and I

suspect will vote against when it comes time. The fact of the matter is we are adding, adding 24 seats in the College of Medicine. That includes 12 seats in the undergraduate program and 12 seats in residency. We're adding, Madam Chair, 24 seats. Now why in the world would an opposition vote against that? Why would an opposition vote against that? But mark my words, come the end of the day, they'll vote against it.

Madam Chair, we have worked very closely with the Saskatchewan Medical Association. We've negotiated with them. We've established successful contracts, and as part of the contract negotiations, are significant components for the training and recruitment of new doctors. The new physician agreement with the medical association will strengthen those retention and recruitment efforts. That means fee increases. It means programs to give doctors time off.

And this year, Madam Chair, again in the budget that they — I expect — will vote against at the end of the day, we've committed 29 million more dollars to fund an array of programs aimed at recruiting and retaining physicians. Madam Chair, it's one thing to just offer criticisms; it's another thing to get the job done. And we're getting the job done.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well, Madam Chair, I'd like to know the Premier's definition of getting the job done. I think the people of Spiritwood would like to know the same thing because of course their hospital's closed. I think the people of Big River would like to know what the Premier means when he says, we're getting the job done, or the people of Shellbrook or Preeceville or Canora or Kamsack or Arcola or Bengough or Coronach or Broadview or Central Butte or Vanguard, Madam Chair. I think they'd be very interested in the definition of the Premier when he says he is getting the job done, Madam Chair, because the doctor shortage, the nurses shortage is having a real impact on health care in the province of Saskatchewan.

It's interesting to note, Madam Chair, that we have the smallest College of Medicine in the country, Madam Chair, in terms of its training capacity. This Premier was the minister in 1996 when the warnings came loud and clear, not from politicians, not from politicians, but from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, from the SMA. They told this government back then that they ought to do something.

Those same groups in their respective provinces told their respective governments of all different stripes. It appears that almost every other government listened except for the NDP in the birthplace of medicare. Madam Chair, we know that in terms of training capacity in this budget, notwithstanding the numbers the Premier wants to talk about, he's adding four seats. That's what he's adding, to take us to 64 when Manitoba has 100. How in the world is that getting the job done?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, I repeat, this budget — which they have voted against and will likely vote against again — adds the capacity for 12 more undergraduate positions and 12 more residencies through the College of Medicine. But I remind the Leader of the Opposition, not only have we done

that in this budget, not only have we placed \$29 million in recruitment and retention, Madam Chair; this government has placed in trust with the University of Saskatchewan \$100 million for the construction of a new health sciences building in the province of Saskatchewan.

Madam Chair, that's what we're doing. That's what we're doing. And we're planning for that with the College of Medicine, with the College of Nursing to build, to build, Madam Chair, a state-of-the-art, a state-of-the-art health sciences complex for the people of Saskatchewan, and we put \$100 million in trust.

The Leader of the Opposition wants to know what it means to get the job done. Well let's not just look to our own opinions. Let's look to the opinions of others. Now, Madam Chair, the Conference Board of Canada, the Conference Board of Canada did a survey and has rated Saskatchewan's health care as the third best health care system in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — That's getting the job done. That's the Conference Board of Canada. More significantly, Madam Chair, perhaps, is the review of our own Health Quality Council. Our own Health Quality Council speaking to our health human resource plan, our efforts to build health care providers, our own Health Quality Council says this plan, quote, "leads the nation" — leads the nation. Madam Chair, that's getting the job done.

But perhaps most significantly of all is this, 95 per cent, Madam Chair, of Saskatchewan residents who were surveyed said their experience with the health care system in this province was good or excellent — 95 per cent, Madam Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now why is it good and why is it excellent? Well number one, Madam Chair, it's based on fundamental principle, the fundamental principle that has been carried by the New Democratic Party and by its predecessor the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation], the principle that access to health care in this province, to hospital care and doctors, Madam Chair, should not be governed by what's in your wallet, but by your health care need. That's the fundamental principle. That's why the system in this province is good and excellent according to 95 per cent of the people.

And ever since day one, ever since day one, Madam Chair, these folks have fought that principle. They've looked for ways to violate the principle. And I tell you, when we see them in government in other locations, we know when they get to government they do violate that principle.

And what do you know, Madam Chair? In this budget, the thing they don't want to talk about in this discussion about health, they sure don't want to talk about a drug plan for our seniors. They don't want to talk about that because they're voting against, and they oppose this universal provision for our seniors. They oppose it, Madam Chair. They oppose it on principle. They say it's not sustainable. They say you know, everybody should be paying more. Well we believe, Madam

Chair, as we are able to extend health care coverage to all of our citizens and we believe that the pioneers and the senior citizens of this province deserve, deserve that kind of care as we can sustain it through a growing economy, Madam Chair.

So yes, you bet we're getting the job done, and we're getting the job done according to the Conference Board of Canada. We're getting the job done according the Health Quality Council. But perhaps most importantly, we're getting the job done according to 95 per cent of the residents of Saskatchewan, Madam Chair. Is there work yet to do? Yes there is work yet to do. Have we accomplished much yet? Yes, but there is much more to accomplish. And with the leadership of this minister and this government, we intend to accomplish just that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Madam Chair, I find it interesting that the Premier is quite happy to quote the Conference Board of Canada and hold it up as a gospel with respect to health care quality when his own minister who is just glaring at me over there, the minister responsible for TILMA [Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement] or not TILMA was panning the Conference Board of Canada. In fact I've heard the members on that side of the House and their staffers basically write off the Conference Board and the work that they've done with respect to a trade agreement. But apparently the Premier clinging to something, wants to cling to the Conference Board.

We'll tell him, we'll tell him this, Madam Deputy Chair. We'll tell him that he can side with his studies. He can keep all of the studies he wants. We're going to side with the nurses. We're going to side with patients, Madam Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — And with respect, and with respect to the issue of prescription drugs for example, we're still going to side for people like Bob Loeppky, the late Bob Loeppky, and like Terry Rak who have a pretty reasonable question: won't you help us with at least some if not all of the costs of Avastin that could extend our life?

It's more than just a little bit duplicitous for the Premier to wax on about care for those who need prescription care and then say no to the Raks and say no to the late Bob Loeppky even for any help with respect to that particular drug when the cancer agency has recommended that it be funded.

Madam Chair, I have a question for the Premier with respect to long-term care. This is a very important issue for seniors in Saskatchewan and their families of course. And there's a, there's a particular example I would like to draw the Premier's attention to because I think it speaks to both the need for long-term care amongst First Nations but also the long-term care requirements off of First Nations reserves in Saskatchewan.

The Premier may know that Muskeg Lake First Nation has spent about \$2.5 million to build a care home for elders and special needs clients. And they will tell this government, they'll tell the opposition or anyone that wants to listen, it makes a lot

of sense to make sure that the cultural traditions of First Nations surround their seniors in their golden years when they need long-term care. It opened on March 1, 2007. It's a licensed personal care home, but it's having trouble meeting operating costs right now currently. Obviously if the facility closes, it would be a shame, both for the role it can play with First Nations elders from Muskeg Lake and other First Nations, but also in other communities.

[15:30]

And I'm interested to hear what the minister of Social Services has to say from his seat. He doesn't seem to like the idea of long-term care on Muskeg Lake. Now . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . well that's what he's saying. The minister of DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment] is saying, well, just talk to the feds. It's up to them. Well I got a question for him, Madam Chair. Maybe the Premier can ask him, since it's his estimates. What's he done to make this case to the federal government?

Because you know if those beds could be filled with First Nations elders who are too often and right now away from home, off of the First Nation, even though there are available beds right at home, if that change could be made, if this provincial government would be prepared to work with the federal government on that count, it would help make for vacancies in long-term care beds across this province and would ensure the Muskeg Lake long-term care facility is open.

But you know what? The minister doesn't have time for that. And neither, apparently, does the Premier. And that's my question for him on this issue. Has he or his ministers actively done anything with this file? It's truly a powerful template for the province as First Nations could be at home in their golden years, receiving eldercare, surrounded by their traditions and culture. Has he done absolutely anything about it, or is he just prepared to leave Muskeg Lake facility potentially to close?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Madam Chair, I'm not sure if the Leader of the Opposition's been to Muskeg Lake; I have. Just weeks ago I met with, and many of my colleagues met with, people from Muskeg Lake, met with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. This was one of the very issues that we discussed. And we are seeking solutions.

Now, Madam Chair . . . well now, you see? I'm going to point out there's a great deal of laughter coming from the opposition. Well let's see how much they laugh about this. We have treaty obligations that are borne by the Crown, represented by the federal Government of Canada. The Leader of the Opposition wants to know what the Minister of Community Resources was saying here moments ago. He was inviting that leader and that party to look to their friends in Ottawa, their cousins in Ottawa to say, how are we doing in terms of our treaty obligations to First Nations people in Canada? How are we doing in terms of the funding of health care?

Well I'll tell you, Madam Chair, we were doing a whole lot better before these people got elected in Ottawa. I mean every premier in Canada sat with then Prime Minister Paul Martin in Kelowna. Every premier in Canada and territorial premier and leader sat at one table. We came from every political

perspective in the country, sat at that table, and made an agreement with the national government to see substantial, substantial increases — substantial increases in the support for First Nations people whether it be in education or it be in health care, the very kind of support that should be flowing to the First Nations of Saskatchewan on-reserve for their health and education programs, Madam Chair.

Then what happened? Well I'll tell you what. This group of men and women over here and their cousins in Ottawa got together, and they won an election in Ottawa. They won an election in Ottawa. We elected 12 of them here with all of the support of the Sask Party over there. What did they do? What did they do? They tore up the Kelowna accord. They tore up the agreement between all premiers and the national government. They've disregarded it which would have provided, Madam Chair, significant, significant resources for First Nations people, for First Nations on-reserve in terms of health and education.

Now we are participating, Madam Chair, with First Nations in new ways never before seen in the province of Saskatchewan. We are partnering in new ways in terms of education, in terms of highways. I have visited a First Nations nursing home, senior citizens' home, a care home that is being funded by the province just off-reserve, Madam Chair.

We are looking for these creative solutions. We're going to look for them with, in partnership with the First Nations of Saskatchewan. But I'll tell you what we're not going to, as apparently the Leader of the Opposition is willing to do. We are not going to allow the national Government of Canada to abdicate its treaty responsibility to the First Nations of Saskatchewan. We're not going to allow it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And if the Leader of the Opposition wants to do something about seniors' care on-reserve, he should get right on the phone to his good friends in Ottawa and see what he can do to move them along because he ought not to think for a moment that we've been silent on this issue — not silent on the Kelowna accord like they've been silent and by the way, Madam Chair, not silent on other significant issues that would impact on First Nations in our province.

We are breaking the mould in Saskatchewan, Madam Chair. We are breaking the mould in our partnership and work with First Nations people. I invite you to look at the partnership we've established with the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies in terms of education. I invite you to look at the partnerships we've established in terms of transportation, the partnerships that we've established in terms of economic development, Madam Chair, because the First Nations of Saskatchewan, like this government, believe in the strength of economic development leading them forward so we can go forward together. And we're working together in health care. We're working together in youth and family services and child services.

So now the Leader of the Opposition gets up today and wants us to partner more fully on-reserve, and that's a fair enough observation. But why is it then his critic in child care is always criticizing the First Nations of Saskatchewan for what they're

doing? And why is it, why is it? Are they going to be criticizing next the First Nations for what they're doing in elder care?

Now, Madam Chair, one other point. Again I invite the Leader of the Opposition to explain — never mind, never mind to the whole people of Saskatchewan but particularly to seniors — why it is he's so opposed, why it is he is so opposed to a universal seniors' drug plan in the province. Why doesn't he get up and explain why he is so opposed and why he wants to get rid of it?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't know what the Premier is, I don't know why the Premier is refusing to answer the question with respect to Muskeg Lake.

I'd like to know specifically what the Premier's doing on this file because I think it's important. Notwithstanding the rhetoric that I'm sure I'll get into in this time — and I'm sure the rhetoric the Premier will get into; we'll both do that — but I would be personally interested in finding out what's going on with respect to the Muskeg Lake long-term care and potentially what help that we could be in opposition, if any. Because I think this is an important project and potentially a bit pioneering and trail-blazing in terms of what can happen on other First Nations.

Not that the province wants to step in and fulfill the treaty obligations of the federal government. Certainly that's not the case. But can our health regions be forces for facilitation in this regard? Can our government show some leadership? I think that they can, Madam Chair. And if that's happening today, fine. But I haven't heard it so far.

Madam Chair, I'd like to move to an area of interest to the minister the Premier was just referring to — at least I hope it's an area of interest — the minister of DCRE. And it has to do with the government's policy with respect to working with community-based organizations. We know that the government works with a number of community-based organizations, the vast majority of which do an amazing job. They do a lot of heavy lifting on social issues, arguably better than any government department could ever do regardless of who the government of the day happens to be.

And we've talked about the need for accountability in community-based organizations and we can get into that in a bit. But I'd like to ask the Premier his own personal views on the role of faith-based organizations, what role that that they can play.

Under the broadest term, of course, that's happening today. If there is a cultural or faith component from a First Nations perspective involved in some of the community-based organizations delivering service, we think that's a positive thing. The same would be true in the area of drug addictions. The same would be true in any of these social issues.

And I would wonder if the Premier would highlight for this Assembly why, in a letter to a group called Teen Challenge, which is an admittedly faith-based organization with a global success rate of 70 per cent — 70 per cent helping young people

overcome addictions — they received a letter back from the minister when they were asking for some help. And they weren't asking for operating money, mind you. They were asking for some capital help, a partnership. They got a letter back that said that "Inpatient treatment centres funded by Saskatchewan Health are non-denominational." That's the quote from the minister's letter. And I wonder how the Premier squares that.

I don't think necessarily that any faith group wants to be excluded from doing some of this powerful work — groups that can, I would say, argue, do it as effectively, maybe more effectively than secular groups. I wonder if the Premier would answer that question.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, I just want before we pass further discussion about the Muskeg Lake proposal, to engage the province in a partnership around long-term care on Muskeg Lake, I want to assure the Leader of the Opposition that in fact discussions are going on.

But I find it, I find it very peculiar, very peculiar that through all the hours of Health estimates that have gone on in this Chamber with the Minister of Health or with the Minister of Healthy Living Services, and Seniors, with the full range of health care officials here to answer the questions, not one question was asked by that Leader of the Opposition or by the Health critic about the Muskeg Lake situation — none about Muskeg Lake. Now why is that, Madam Chair, if this is now today such a concern for the Leader of the Opposition? When all of the officials were here, when all of the officials were here, the Minister of Health was not asked — who is responsible for health care services. Now how is that work, Madam Chair?

Now the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about the relationship between the provincial government and community-based organizations. And as the Leader of the Opposition knows, there is a broad, broad engagement and partnership with community-based organizations in this province, providing significant and very valuable services to the people of Saskatchewan.

But Madam Chair, that does not replace all of the other work that goes on in this province. There are a variety of agencies, faith-based and otherwise, charitable and otherwise — I was part of one of them, Madam Chair, for many years of my life — providing quality services without public funding, without asking for public funding, Madam Chair. And so we have a mix in this province, a mix of those agencies that will receive public funding, a mix that will not. In terms of public funding, some are faith-based and some are not.

But, Madam Chair, the fact of the matter is there are limitations to the provincial budget. That seems to be unknown to the opposition, but there are some limitations to a provincial budget, and choices must be made. Madam Chair, we simply cannot fund every request that comes to government. And some very serious work is done before choices are made. But the fact of the matter remains, Madam Chair, there are valuable community-based services that are being funded by government. There are valuable community-based services that are not being funded by government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Madam Chair, the Saskatchewan Party believes it's important to provide this funding based on results, period — based on results — what's helping kids, young people, others who face addictions.

It's interesting in the minister's letter . . . We're not asking the question why they didn't receive any funding. I'm asking the question about a quote from that, from his minister's letter that says: "Inpatient treatment centres funded by Saskatchewan Health are non-denominational." I wonder then if the Premier, or maybe if the minister would whisper in the Premier's ear, what denomination is Teen Challenge?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, I understand that the Leader of the Opposition is lobbying for funding for Teen Challenge. I understand that. And I've now been handed by the minister a copy of the letter to which the Leader of the Opposition refers, and it does say, "Inpatient treatment centres funded by Saskatchewan Health are non-denominational," which means non-faith-based. The inpatient treatment services, as I understand from the minister, are non-faith-based, Madam Chair.

Now does this mean, does this mean that the work that's being done by Teen Challenge or other faith-based organizations is not valuable work? It doesn't mean it at all. I've just said we're going to have a mix in this province. Not every community-based service, not every faith-based service is going to receive public funding. That's just the fact of the matter.

Is it the position of the opposition then that any faith-based organization who approaches government will automatically be given funding? Is that the position of the Leader of the Opposition? Or is it any organization that comes? The member from Wood River says, well it's picking winners and losers. Yes, I'm afraid that's the responsibility of government, lost on an opposition here. We have to make choices, Madam Chair. You have to make choices. It's been a policy decision as indicated by the minister in his letter that "Inpatient treatment centres funded by Saskatchewan Health are non-denominational," non-faith-based.

Now there are a variety of faith-based projects and programs that are funded by public dollars, but in this specific case a public policy decision has been made. Is it the position of the Leader of the Opposition that every faith-based program that comes along should be automatically receiving funding? It is his position, I guess, that Teen Challenge should be. But I can tell the Leader of the Opposition there are many other important faith-based programs out there providing very significant service to Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan young people that are not receiving public funding.

[15:45]

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Madam Chair, it's the position of the Saskatchewan Party that in government — should we, should we have that opportunity — we will fund those projects which get results for families, for young people addicted to drugs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — And it doesn't matter if they're faith-based or community-based or if they're provided by the government.

It's interesting. This particular government, I know that the minister's department — the minister of DCRE — I believe his department is currently, certainly was working with another group called . . . I think the name is Door of Hope Ministries in Meadow Lake, which is a food bank. But they also offer training to adults who need that training. They offer employment training. The government's made a decision that this particular group is providing good results for the community of Meadow Lake, for the clients of the Door of Hope Ministries in that particular community. And I'd say to the government that they've done the right thing in that regard.

So why then is his Minister of Healthy Living off on another tangent, ruling out helping out those who, by performance, might be one of the better ways to deliver addictions treatment in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, the Leader of the Opposition, by some implication, would suggest that programs that are existing today are not meeting the needs of families. Well they are meeting the needs of families. And they are meeting the needs of children, Madam Chair.

Now I'd like to know this. Under the Project Hope — by which we've been recognized, Madam Chair, by the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse as taking leadership position — we have been, we have been, Madam Chair, seeking to provide new services, particularly for in-patient treatment: one in Prince Albert, one in the Saskatoon region, a new Calder with youth beds.

Now, Madam Chair, we just had some very distressing news this morning that the RM [rural municipality] of Corman Park, I'm told, has turned down the health region's request to build the new Calder Centre just outside of Saskatoon. And I understand the opposition; some of it was coming from members over there.

Now isn't this interesting, Madam Chair? We call for the government to provide these new beds. We provide the money. We trust the professionals to put them in place. And when they're about to start the work, the opposition comes from over there. Now how does this work, Madam Chair? How does this work?

So now the fact of the matter is, as the minister has indicated in his letter, in-patient services are provided in non-denominational facilities. That means non-faith-based. That does not change the fact that we participate, in partnership, in other valuable social programs, with faith-based organizations, whether it's in Meadow Lake or elsewhere.

But let me also say this, Madam Chair. There are a variety of work that goes on in our province, a variety of programs that are faith-based that do not receive public funding, that do not receive public funding. I know them well, Madam Chair. I was

part of some of them. Do not receive public funding. We are going to continue to have a mix of those community-based organizations in Saskatchewan that receive public funding and those community-based organizations who are doing valuable work who may not receive public funding.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — You know, it's not either/or for the opposition, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. Certainly that wasn't my position that I just said. The Premier's misrepresented it. I'm not sure what's going on over there because this could be a substantive discussion about social services delivery and he wants to put words into our mouth about what we would support or wouldn't support. We do not believe it's either/or public service delivery or picking community-based or faith-based organizations one over the other. The option is results.

Well the minister's chirping from his seat. He's the one that wrote a letter to Teen Challenge and said that the money's only available to non-denominational organizations. Teen Challenge in their proposal said clearly, clearly, that they're not a denomination, that they're providing a service, that they are faith-based but they're providing a service. So the difference is clear. What we're talking about here is a need to look again at social policy delivery, social service delivery in the province of Saskatchewan and ask this question: where do we get the best results? Is it in some cases the public sector? I'm sure it is. Is it in some cases the community-based organization sector? I'm sure it is, including faith-based organizations, but results must be the measure, not some predisposed bias against some particular faith-based organization or community-based organization.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — I'd like to move on to the environment if I may, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. I'm sure that the Minister of Environment's officials have looked at some provincial legislation that has come into effect on the whole issue of climate change. And perhaps they've even looked at the Alberta model which certainly may be imperfect but has some interesting components here and I think it's worth discussing with the Premier.

We've been waiting for the strategy to come out. I think it continues to be delayed. It was originally going to be on Earth Day and it keeps getting delayed, notwithstanding the green plan that was announced and turned out to be not much of a plan at all and widely panned by most people who heard it.

But the Climate Change and Emissions Management Amendment Act has an accompanying regulation for specified gas emitters that states that companies that emit more than 100,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases a year must reduce their emissions intensity by 12 per cent starting July 1. Starting July 1. That's in the province of Alberta.

Now we could argue about that target. It could be perhaps higher. Maybe some would argue that it could be lower. Penalties are \$15 a tonne over the 12 per cent limit. And at the July 1 deadline, Mr. Deputy Chair, Alberta emitters have three

options for compliance. And this is important. One, they can make the necessary changes to meet emissions reduction targets. They can buy offset credits from other Alberta companies, or they can contribute to an Alberta green fund that will in turn fund research and development of reduction technology, carbon capture and management, that sort of thing in the province of Alberta.

It is a made-in-Alberta plan. In other words, all of these offsets, all of the penalties, the carbon credits are paid into an Alberta fund, they stay in the province of Alberta. They're reinvested in important environmental technologies, in tech transfer and R&D [research and development] with respect to the environment. They are meant to benefit also green-friendly programs, other initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases. Again it may not be perfect, but directionally this is key, I think, Mr. Deputy Chair. And in order for it to work in Alberta, they're going to need the federal government's agreement that the federal legislation won't trump provincial legislation.

Question to the Premier is this: is our current government considering this kind of initiative — something that we believe is important for the province of Saskatchewan — but are they ensuring that the federal government understands that when we move in this direction we want that reinvestment for our province from the perspective of penalties and carbon credits and not to be trumped by any federal initiative?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition and I may not agree on everything, but on this we are in agreement. And we are working very hard to ensure that this is in fact the case.

I just want to go back again over some of Leader of the Opposition's comments. Number one, on the Saskatchewan green plan recently announced, one of the broadest environmental and sustainability strategies that I'm aware of anywhere in Canada . . . and that's not just my opinion, Mr. Chair; that's the opinion of the United Nations. Just last week in the Dag Hammarskjöld Theater in the United Nations in New York, the Saskatchewan green plan was discussed and was praised, Mr. Chair — this green plan, this broad plan for sustainability in our environment, a plan, Mr. Chair, that was not built by government alone but build through two if not more years of consultation and work with Saskatchewan people, with Saskatchewan communities, with Saskatchewan organizations, all of whom with a deep passion and concern for our environment.

So the Leader of the Opposition may want to make light of Saskatchewan's green plan. When he's doing that, he's making light of literally dozens and dozens of communities and groups and hundreds and thousands of people in our province who came together to forge that plan, recognized, as I say, last week in the United Nations and praised, Mr. Chair.

On the matter then of a climate change strategy for this province, a sustainable energy strategy for this province to tackle what is very likely the most significant environmental, if not the most significant issue facing our province, our nation, and our globe at this point in our history, perhaps the most significant issue facing the future of our children and the children of earth — on this matter, Mr. Chair, we are building a

green, an energy sustainability, a climate change strategy for announcement later this spring.

We have listened carefully to the plan announced by the national government. We are observing carefully the plan in Alberta and other plans across Canada. Mr. Chair, I can report to the House today we are not using the same technique of measurement that's being used by the Government of Canada or the Government of Alberta, this intensity target. We're not going to use that measure. We think there are more significant and more appropriate measures. That'll be our view.

We are sending a team, Mr. Chair. We are sending a team of people to Ottawa next week to spend — not one, not two, but three days — three days with the federal officials to fully understand what the federal government intends to do. They are going with the clear understanding — and it's the clear understanding of our cabinet and our caucus — that whether it be the research and development fund, the technology fund, or offset funds, that those dollars contributed, either by industry or by our own Crown corporations or by individuals or business for that matter, from Saskatchewan should not leave the province of Saskatchewan. They should be retained within the province of Saskatchewan to provide that fundamental pool of dollars which we will need, Mr. Chair, which we will need to make the kind of change to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in our own province.

That is a fundamental principle I believe the Leader of the Opposition and I can agree on this, a fundamental principle. We may not agree on intensity. We may not agree on targets. We may not agree on some of the strategies. But I'll tell you on this principle, I believe we're in agreement that those dollars that are going to be contributed — whether it's to the technology fund, whether it's the R&D fund, or whether it's in some offset funds — they should not be leaving the province of Saskatchewan.

And so if our companies that are involved in resource development, whether it be in the oil and gas industry, whether it be in the potash industry, or in the uranium industry, in the mining industries, whether it be in transportation or whether it be through the generation of electricity in our province . . . if there are requirements for offsets or payments, until we can bring our greenhouse gas emissions down, those offsets and payments should be left in the province of Saskatchewan for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan.

Now this is exactly the same principle, if I may say, Mr. Chair, that motivates us around the fight we're having with Ottawa concerning a fair equalization deal. The principle is the same. These revenues, these resources should be retained for the people of Saskatchewan to build our future.

Interestingly enough, Mr. Chair, as we debate in this legislature this afternoon, there's going to be a vote in the House of Commons tonight, a vote in the House of Commons tonight where the federal MPs [Member of Parliament] are going to be asked to finally provide legislative approval for the federal budget, this budget that broke its promise, that broke the Conservative promise to the people of Saskatchewan.

And just today, Mr. Chair, I have called again on our 12

Saskatchewan Conservative Party MPs to stand up for the people of Saskatchewan and vote against that budget — vote against this legislation, stop this budget. Because you know what we see? We see Peter MacKay, we see Peter MacKay from . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh yes, as soon as I start on this subject, they get chirping over there. We see Peter MacKay from the province of Nova Scotia and the two MPs from Nova Scotia standing up on behalf of the people of Nova Scotia lobbying for a better deal. It's reported in the national press. That's what's going on there. Where are the 12 from Saskatchewan?

And what has the opposition and its opposition leader done today to encourage those 12 MPs to stand up today in the House of Commons, vote against that budget? Because the principle is the same. These resource revenues or revenues paid into environmental trust or research and development that are taken from the people of Saskatchewan are taken from the resources of the people of Saskatchewan, should be retained for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well I too am frustrated with federal politicians who aren't talking about Saskatchewan issues, including the Premier's federal leader who's more concerned, frankly, about who the captain of the national team is for the country in a hockey tournament that just happened. That is a little bit frustrating. We do agree on this issue. And I don't think it's a small point.

But I remember, at the beginning of this spring sitting, I remember doing interviews with the media because the Premier had held a press conference and said the session will be about the environment. And I think there was an implication there, a bit of a forecast, that something like what we've seen in Alberta — though our government would have its own plan — would be coming forward to this legislature. In Alberta I think it's Bill 3 is now passed. I believe it's passed their spring sitting.

And I'm a little bit concerned about the sincerity of this government right now moving on these initiatives with respect to our own plan for greenhouse gases and making the case to the feds — that the Premier and I do agree on — that the money should stay here. Because if they were concerned about it, we could quite rightly ask the question, where's the Bill? Where is the legislation? What happened? It was forecast to be coming on Earth Day and then a couple of weeks later and a couple of weeks later. What's going on over there that they can't agree on what we need to be proceeding with?

Because it could well be — and we'll get into this a bit later on; the Premier knows better than I do — but it could well be that we don't meet again in this Assembly. And so whatever initiative the government brings forward, if it needs legislative support — I expect it would — is irrelevant because of course the session will have been over. So I'm a little bit concerned about the sincerity, I think, of the government because other provinces have moved and acted and now can work with the federal government aggressively to ensure their areas of jurisdiction are protected. We don't have anything to build on because we have no, no tangible plan even produced in this legislature or in the province of Saskatchewan with respect to

climate change.

[16:00]

The other thing I would like to ask the Premier on this point, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, is on the matter of intensity because I would caution the members opposite and the Premier that we ought not to just ignore the intensity factor or waiting that is part and parcel of the federal initiative because, Mr. Deputy Chair, it's not just a part of what the federal government's doing. Across North America, and significantly in the statehouse in California, they're looking very much at the banning of synthetic fuels because the intensity rating — in other words the energy to produce that barrel of synthetic fuel — is too high, is beyond some arbitrary, not arbitrary, but some predetermined number.

The intensity factor is very important for our province, not just with respect to our potential as an oil sands leader in North America and the world. And we believe, in the Saskatchewan Party, that there is that opportunity. But it's also important from conventional oil recovery in the province of Saskatchewan depending on what that intensity level becomes. And so we must then lead in research, development, and technology to ensure that the intensity rating declared by other jurisdictions, significantly the state of California, doesn't ban the final product from the province or preclude our oil and gas.

And on that point, nuclear power — and we'll get into that in a minute — may hold specific opportunity, especially as small-reactor technology is moving forward in the world. You hear about the pebble bed reactor technology. That's four or five years away ... [inaudible interjection] ... Well the minister for Government Services, for intergovernment relations, wants to talk a little bit about it. He should do some research. He should know that MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] believes we're four or five years away from commercial application, the small-reactor technology, that Japan may well be with there — I believe it's called the C-6 — there in three or four years.

Well what we have from the members opposite, they don't even want to talk about it — the option that this holds for the province of Saskatchewan. They don't even want to talk about it. They don't believe it would happen. Even though we know a conventional nuclear facility will take 12 years in terms of commissioning — we're talking about long periods of time anyway — we're stuck with a government that doesn't even want to ask the question. Well we do want to ask the question.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — It could be, it could be the future of our energy sector, Mr. Deputy Chair. It could be the future of our conventional oil and gas, and it may well be the future of cleaning up our oil sands development and reducing greenhouse gases in the province of Saskatchewan to the benefit of the country and the planet.

So the question to the Premier is, why is he writing off this intensity factor because it's important to our economy? And what is he doing to research R&D technologies, perhaps small-reactor technology, that could well benefit the province of

Saskatchewan in the extraction — in an environmentally responsible way — of oil sands for Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Chair?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, I think it's pretty clear. It's pretty clear from the Leader of the Opposition's comments that their green plan is build a reactor. That's their green plan — build a reactor. Now let me just say this about his wide-ranging comments. In terms of putting together a very solid climate change strategy for our province, we're not going to rush; we're going to do it right.

Now we've been visited upon a new plan by the federal government. We're going to incorporate that. I just finished reporting to the House — if the members could listen — I just reported to the House we're sending a team to Ottawa to get the details.

But you see what the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition don't want to admit is that before something was called a climate change plan, this province — and more particularly this New Democratic Party government — has been leading the change, leading the change in Canada. Mr. Chair, you and members of the legislature should know this, that when I became the Premier of this province and this New Democratic Party government continued to govern, you know we didn't have one electron in this province being generated through wind capacity — not one, not one electron. Well today, Mr. Chair, we lead Canada on a per capita basis in wind-generated electricity. We lead Canada.

Long before, long before the Leader of the Opposition I think talked about anything related to the climate change, this government was at work. We've partnered, for instance, with EnCana oil, with the Department of Energy of the United States of America, with the University of Saskatchewan, with the Petroleum Technology Research Centre and departments of this government in the carbon sequestration project that is just south of the city of Regina, which by the way, Mr. Chair, is the world's largest, the world's largest demonstration project for carbon sequestration.

And just a year ago when the Minister of Industry and myself had an opportunity to visit France, to visit Paris, we visited with the International Energy Agency, the International Energy Agency, which has been doing the verification of the project here in Saskatchewan. You know what they tell us, Mr. Chair? They tell us that over 5,000 years the carbon dioxide that we are sequestering in the oil fields, only a percentage, a small percentage of 1 per cent will escape back into the atmosphere.

We are proving the technology. We're doing it in Saskatchewan. We're doing it on a world-class scale, and that's long before the Leader of the Opposition heard about climate change and started to raise the issue.

Mr. Chair, we have developed a strategy for conservation and energy efficiency. We're supporting the EnerGuide home program for homes. We've been engaged in energy efficiency appliances. We're working with low-income housing to provide that energy efficiency. We're leading in many ways in terms of

the standards for public buildings when it comes to energy efficiency. We are leading, Mr. Chair.

Long before the Leader of the Opposition said anything about climate change or his solution, which is build a reactor, long before that, Mr. Chair, we were investigating biofuels. We led the nation in the work that was conducted first by the now Minister of Agriculture in terms of ethanol development in this province.

We're the first province in Canada to mandate the use of ethanol in our gasoline, in our fuel. We've led Canada in the production of ethanol. We've seen the private sector investment in Lloydminster with our great partners in Husky. We're seeing the private sector development out at Terra Grains in Belle Plaine. We're leading the biofuels.

Mr. Chair, we're doing the research and soon to take that leadership also in biomass and biodiesel. We've got out STC buses using the biodiesel. We've got a transit system in Saskatoon using biodiesel. This is all long before the Saskatchewan Party heard that there was a climate change issue or the first time they raised it. Now they're raising it. Fair enough. I'm glad they've come aboard.

It wasn't long ago that some of their members over there were denying there was a problem at all. That's what they were doing not many years ago, denying there was even a problem. Well I'm glad to see they've come of light. They've come of age.

Now I want to speak to the potential future of energy in our province.

The Deputy Chair: — Order. I'd ask members on both sides of the House to please keep the volume down so that those who are on their feet, both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, can be heard. In the last five minutes there's been unacceptable interruption. I don't want to interrupt constantly because the flow of questions back and forwards is important. But I ask members to please come to order. And I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. Now we come to the issue of electrical generation in our province and we have some real challenges, Mr. Chair. You know that and I think all members know it and the public know it. We have some real challenges because 70 per cent today, Mr. Chair, of our electrical production is coming from coal-fired generating plants — coal-fired generating plants. Thirty per cent of our production is coming from other sources, and we've made some great progress as I said.

We've significantly improved our capacity in terms of wind generation. We've got some hydro generation. We're looking at cogeneration projects. We have celebrated the opening of a waste heat electrical generation capacity in terms of the pipeline developments in our province. But the fact is, Mr. Chair, we still have a very significant challenge with our coal-fired generation. So what are we doing? We're looking at all the options, Mr. Chair. We're looking at all of the options.

We are pioneering in some ways some of the research around clean coal technology. I have very recently met with the coal

industry and looking at some other new technologies that may in fact provide opportunities for gasification in the coal bed. We are working with partners in terms of a polygeneration capacity at Belle Plaine that will take a waste product from oil sands and turn that waste product into clean energy. That, Mr. Chair, offers significant potential for electrical generation and for the provision of hydrogen and other elements to the industries at Belle Plaine. These are real options.

We're looking at further conservation to reduce — to reduce — our demand of electrical capacity. We're looking at issues like net metering where people can generate small capacity on their farms, in their homes, provide back into the grid, and the power corporation over years has looked consistently at the opportunities around nuclear. Is there an opportunity there for this province?

Now the Leader of the Opposition stands today and indicates to the House — and I believe he's correct — that some of the small-scale reactors that would be more likely appropriate for Saskatchewan, some of those small-scale reactors, that technology is at best four and five years away, four and five years away. The only technology that exists is technology that's coming out of the 1970s. Nineteen seventies or we're looking down the road four and five years.

Well now, Mr. Chair, if you look down the road four and five years before the technology is even developed, and then if you look at the track record of approval of nuclear facilities in this country, you can be looking at a 12-year period in terms of all of the approvals, the construction before it's online. Add 12 to 4 to 5, we're almost 20 years out, Mr. Chair, almost 20 years out before that capacity could be real. It still does not answer the questions: who's capital is to provide for it? Are there electrical markets beyond our borders which could receive electricity? And significantly, Mr. Chair, in the costing of such things has anybody costed the decommissioning of that kind of a facility?

Now as I say, the power corporation has looked at these options, continues to look at these options. But, Mr. Chair, I tell you this. We cannot wait. We cannot wait 20 years for new capacity. We cannot wait 20 years. We can't keep that old coal-burning capacity going another 20 years nor should we. We can't wait 20 years.

We're exciting new technology developing right in this province, whether it's clean coal, whether it's in wind, whether it's in conservation, whether it's in polygeneration. The options of solar, the options of biomass — all of these are a wealth of options for the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Chair, I will not wait. We will not wait, and I don't believe the people of Saskatchewan will wait 20 years for a solution. We need solutions beginning today, Mr. Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well, you know, if you lack some vision, I guess you can look at this, the potential of small reactor technology as, if it's not ready to come on right away, then we'll just ignore the opportunity. You wouldn't at all then consider the chance for us to lead, the chance for our universities potentially to get involved with the technology, with the research that's currently going on around the world — whether it's in South Africa or

whether it's in Massachusetts or whether it's in Japan. If you lack vision as this government does, you wouldn't look at the other envelope with respect to our uranium resource, the rest of the envelope. You wouldn't look, you wouldn't aggressively pursue refining.

And we could talk about his trip to France. The Premier might want to talk about any particular parts of the tour that he didn't want to go on because he was worried his picture might be taken at a facility involving uranium value add. We could talk about enrichment, Mr. Deputy Chair. We could talk about recycling. We could talk about leading. We could talk about leading research, R&D, on the whole storage issue or on the recycling issue. Or you can just say, well the technology's too far away so we'll just forget about it. It's not an option for us.

Alternatively even with conventional technology from AECL [Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.], with a larger reactor we could be saying as a province, maybe it's time that we would pursue a national transmission grid for the country.

The Deputy Chair: — I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition. I would ask members on the government side to please come to order so that the Leader of the Opposition can be heard. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Another option might be, Mr. Deputy Chair, to focus some federal-provincial relations on the potential of a national grid, a national transmission grid, which may not force us to have the either-or debate that we have had in this province under the NDP. It's either gas and the combinations of hydro that we currently have, or nuclear. And that's why we really can't have a discussion about nuclear because it's either-or. Or is it? Is there an option for us to be in an export position?

We don't know the answer to that, Mr. Deputy Chair, because while the Premier has said he is supportive of nuclear power for our province if it makes sense — and that's what he said, he's on the record as saying it — his actions belie the fact. His actions certainly don't demonstrate any earnest attempt to explore the option, not just with respect to transmission, but all of the other attendant economic benefits that could come from if we were to be a global centre of excellence in terms of the uranium cycle. I think he's got a minister on the front bench who's had enough of that, frankly, and he's leaving in part for this reason.

And so again to the Premier: what is his strategy around uranium? Certainly when he is the Premier of a province that supplies a third of the world's supply of uranium at a time when it's now I think about \$120 a pound, at a time when prices are going through the roof, when world markets are talking about the potential of uranium — not just in the form that we mine it, but also in all the value add opportunities — when the whole world's talking about it, when we mine a third of the world's supply, what is our Premier's plan and vision for uranium? Does he envision a centre of excellence that looks at refining and recycling and enrichment and perhaps leading in terms of research and development on the storage issue? Though I would agree that the people of the province aren't ready for the storage debate yet. We haven't had any portions of the debate. Haven't had it. Haven't had it.

[16:15]

So the question to the Premier is: we've got a third of the world supply. What is his strategy around developing uranium to the benefit of the economy and to the benefit of the greenhouse gas situation in our country and around the world?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Chair, this is rather amazing. I want to address what the Leader of the Opposition has been saying in some fashion. I'll start in his latter comments. I don't know where the Leader of the Opposition has been in the last number of months or years, but perhaps I could acquaint him with the facts about uranium development in our province. There is more exploration happening in terms of uranium development in Saskatchewan today than in the history of the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — That's what happening in uranium and that's what happening as a result of a government that works very closely with the exploration industry and with the mining industry. There's more exploration going on today than ever in the history of the province.

Now, Mr. Chair, in terms of developing the industry, we've had a commitment. We've had a commitment to a brand new mine by AREVA in the province of Saskatchewan — a significant expansion of capacity, Mr. Chair. I don't know where the Leader of the Opposition's been for that. He says we need to be the centre of excellence. We are the centre of excellence in the globe, Mr. Chair. We are.

Now as I said, yes, we were in France, and yes, we were in Paris, and yes, we met with the president and CEO [chief executive officer] of AREVA. Yes, I did say to the Leader of the Opposition, has he done so? No, he's not.

Now, Mr. Chair, in that conversation it was very clear that Saskatchewan seeks to see an expansion of refining capacity in our province to add the value add. That's very, very clear. But does the Leader of the Opposition suggest the Government of Saskatchewan should do the refining or does he suggest that AREVA and the private sector will make their decisions? But there is no mystery in the minds of the most senior executives and executives of AREVA that Saskatchewan seeks to have the refining capacity in this province.

Now, now let's talk about disposal and storage of the waste. I have said very clearly, Mr. Chair, that we will not host the waste in our province because of some of the very significant challenges in transportation of that waste. There are some very significant challenges in the transportation and better if there's permanent disposal mechanisms to dispose the waste where it is most closely used. It's very simple.

But you know what, Mr. Chair? I think the Leader of the Opposition stood right out here in the rotunda and said, me too. I think he stood right out here in the rotunda and said, me too, we'll have no part of waste disposal in Saskatchewan. Now he says we should have a debate about it. Well which is it? Which is it? You're opposed to it or you want it. You're opposed to it or you want a debate.

You see this Leader of the Opposition and this party goes on like this all the time. They say one thing to one audience and one thing to a different audience.

Now I know what he's saying. I know what he's saying here today. His total green plan — it's all very clear now — his total green plan is build a reactor. That's it. He says we should lead the nation. We should lead the world. Well where's he been? Where has the Leader of the Opposition . . . We are leading the world in green technologies. We are leading the world at the University of Regina at the Petroleum Technology Research Centre, at the carbon dioxide sequestration work, in wind generation, in polygeneration, in biofuels. We're not just leading Canada. We're leading the world in many regards.

That's a fulsome green strategy that takes advantage of each one of our natural resources to build a better future, and at the same time we're reducing our electrical consumption and our energy demand. He apparently has one plan. He apparently has one plan — a reactor, which by his own admission, by his own admission the technology's not ready for another four or five years, and it would take 12 or more years to put it in place. Twenty years out — he calls that a vision? Twenty years out. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Chair, we have a vision that takes us long . . .

The Deputy Chair: — Order. Order. I'd ask members of the opposition to come to order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, his vision, it's a vision to build a reactor 20 years from now. We have a vision that's going to take us long past 20 years from now. We have a vision that starts today, that builds from the natural strength and the innovative technology of Saskatchewan people that will take us 10 and 20 and 50 and 100 years out. Our vision is to look at the full range, Mr. Chair, the full range of strategies that can deal with climate change in a real way, in a real way. We're not going to wait for 20 years with one idea — build a reactor. We're not going to do that, Mr. Chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well the Premier asked an interesting rhetorical question. He said, what's a vision? Twenty years? That's what his question was moments ago. Well we could start with that, Mr. Deputy Chair, because the alternative is sitting right over there where their vision does not extend past the next election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — We are talking, we better be talking about issues that are 20 years down the road. We better start talking about issues like, if states in the United States of America begin to ban synthetic fuel because the intensity rating is too high, what are we doing about it in order that we can develop potentially our oil sands on our side of the province? That's not an issue that's going to benefit any particular government, any party, anyone sitting in this legislature. It is about who will be here 20 years, 30 years, 40 years from now and what the position of this province will be and should have been for decades before, Mr. Deputy Chair. That's what the issue is about. I can't believe it. Well . . . [inaudible] . . . 20 years from now? Well we'll start there maybe, Mr. Deputy Chair. We will start there.

Well you know in this discussion of the environment, we have waited from this Premier and from his minister who foreshadowed at the beginning of the session that a greenhouse gas, a climate change plan was coming. Other provinces have done it. The province of Alberta have moved on the issue and the government can take issue with what they've done but they've looked at penalties at \$15 a tonne over the 12 per cent limit. They've looked at emission intensity at 12 per cent, starting July 1, 2007. They're working to meet emissions reductions targets by that particular time. They've set up their plan to buy offset credits in Alberta. They're contributing to an Alberta green fund with some of those penalties and offsets and will invest in research and technology in Alberta. They're not talking . . . They are talking, actually, about nuclear power as well. But that's their plan.

What has been remarkable about this particular exchange is that though this was to be the point of the session, nothing from the government, absolutely nothing. And I don't know what's going on over there but we'd better act because we do need to ensure that we're protecting the area that the Premier and I agree needs to be protected, which is the assurance that offsets and penalties will stay in the province of Saskatchewan to the benefit of technologies here, to our own green plan here in the province of Saskatchewan.

If I can move to the issue of agriculture, Mr. Deputy Chair, I have a question with respect to the crop insurance plan. Just a very basic question, Mr. Deputy Chair. Is it the Premier's belief that the crop insurance plan we're offering to our producers should at least be as strong, should at least be comparable to what is offered to Manitoba farmers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, no, no, we're not going to quite conclude this discussion about the future of our environment, not quite as easily as the opposition apparently wants to now.

You know, Mr. Chair, I heard from this Leader of the Opposition today, the first time in this session — I can't say it hasn't been raised because I'm not always able to be present in the House — but it's the first time I've heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about the environment since this legislature sat. I've heard him talk a lot about other issues but never have I heard the Leader of the Opposition until this very day in this House talk about the environment. Not once before. Which is telling, Mr. Chair. Now that he is talking about the environment, the one thing that he focuses on is the creation of a reactor to provide some electrical capacity or for export. That is his one, one green plan, Mr. Chair.

And what is also very interesting is that every reference he's made here in bulk comes from the province of Alberta. Now I know the Leader of the Opposition spends a lot of time in Alberta raising money. That's when he's not selling tickets to golf tournaments in Augusta or Atlanta, Georgia or wherever it is. Augusta, Georgia. Now he spends a lot of time in Alberta and what does he do while he's in Alberta? I guess he collects money and then he collects his green plan; he collects his environmental plan. Because that's all we've heard today is what Alberta is busy doing other than this notion that 20 years

from now we might have a reactor and that should, that should get us ahead.

That's not vision, Mr. Chair. That's not vision. Vision, Mr. Chair, is looking at the full range, the full range of opportunity . . .

The Deputy Chair: — I apologize to the Premier. I'd ask members of the Assembly to come to order please. I'm having a lot of difficulty hearing the speaker. And I would ask members to come to order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Chair, it's hardly a vision to suggest on the very final closing days of a legislature that now we should be debating the green strategy, when you've spent most of the bulk of your time in this session debating everything else under the sun except substantive policy issues. Isn't that interesting, Mr. Chair?

It is a vision to look at the challenge which is before us and look at the broad range of opportunities that exist for Saskatchewan people. I believe a broader range of opportunities than perhaps exist for any other citizens of Canada — whether it ranges from solar power to wind power to conservation and efficiencies, to building standards, to what we do as individuals in our own lives, to recycling, to the safe management of our water; whether it is looking at those large, major industrial approaches which we are looking and exploring, being polygeneration capacity. I mean, the polygeneration capacity at Belle Plaine can provide a very similar level of megawatts to our power grid as a small reactor.

We're looking at the real potential of clean coal, to use this energy resource in a clean fashion and developing the technologies in Saskatchewan. You know, we can provide those technologies to the world to heal, to heal environment globally. We're looking at opportunities of coal gasification. We're looking at all of the opportunities that come from this vast land base which is ours in terms of biofuels and biomass.

We're looking at the forest as an opportunity for agroforestry, again healing the atmosphere with that God-made invention for removing carbon dioxide from the air — the tree, the simple tree. We're looking at carbon sinks in our province. We're looking at the opportunities that may yet be explored in small-scale hydro. We're looking at small-scale generation capacity in terms of our homes and our farms and our small businesses and allowing that to come back into the grid and help meet our needs.

We're looking, Mr. Chair, at opportunities that set us in a path to take us not just to 2020, but to 2050 and to the next century. Because the choices we make today, Mr. Chair, the choices that we are making today will determine the future for our children and our grandchildren in terms of environmental sustainability of this planet, this nation, and this province.

And they have one solution — that is build a reactor in 2020, build a reactor in 2020. Well I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, that's not vision. And that's not going to meet the challenge that's before us.

Now, Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition asks about crop

insurance and the Saskatchewan crop insurance program as compared to Manitoba or other crop insurance programs. I want to say to the Leader of the Opposition, I believe that every crop insurance program in this country must be tailored to meet the needs — as best you can — of your jurisdiction. And the crop insurance program in Saskatchewan should meet the needs of Saskatchewan producers — their needs, their special requirements — as best as we possibly can.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well apparently, Mr. Deputy Chair, that the Premier thinks that the needs of Saskatchewan producers are for a program that has lower coverage and higher premiums, because that's exactly what's happening. And I'm sure he was in the Assembly on the occasions when the critic for Agriculture on the opposition side of the House presented the evidence.

It's pretty clear in this particular example, both for canola and for red spring wheat, in terms of crop premiums per acre and coverage per acre, we are significantly lagging behind even the province of Manitoba. And that's the basis for the question that I asked the Premier. Hopefully, he's going to get to answer it.

There are other issues as well that we certainly want to get to before our time is over. And significantly one of them is, I think, an issue that's important for all members of this Assembly and the province of Saskatchewan and that is, when is the next election going to be? Now the Premier knows the answer to that. It's his, under the current rules that he's unwilling to change. His government's unwilling to move to set elections. And so it's his prerogative to call the election when he sees fit. But I wonder if he wants to provide a bit of, provide a bit of expansion around this.

Well now the Minister for Public Service Commission, I said, I think I just heard her commit to a set election, which is interesting. And we'll be interested in . . .

An Hon. Member: — She's not running.

Mr. Wall: — Well the member for Saltcoats points out that's interesting because she may not in fact be contesting in the next election. But I hope that she gets her way within the debate because we need set elections in the province of Saskatchewan.

The Premier has on a number of occasions been on the public record about the need for elections, when he says on or about the four-year anniversary. Here's a quote from May 31, 1991 when he was in opposition. He said:

Here we are, Mr. Speaker, here we are in the eighth month of their fifth year of a four-year mandate. The people of Saskatchewan give governments in this province four years. [He repeats it.] Four years. That's the tradition here. That's the tradition. [And I'm still quoting, he's just repeating himself.] That's the tradition and they have violated the tradition, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They're hanging on for the last breath.

That's what he said — I would argue quite rightly — when he was on the opposition side of the House.

[16:30]

Since then he said, well on or about the four-year anniversary. But consider the last election was November of '03. And if he goes beyond November of '03, he's not going to have a Christmas election. We're very unlikely to have a winter election. So he will be into four and a half years at a minimum if he does not go on or before the four-year anniversary of the last election.

Will he commit to that, Mr. Deputy Chair? Will he commit to an election on or before the four-year anniversary of the last general election?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well this is interesting, Mr. Chair. He asked a 30-second question about crop insurance, a three-minute question about when's the next election. Rather interesting I think.

Let's just for a moment talk about crop insurance, which is a matter that does concern Saskatchewan families and producers. Now I think the Leader of the Opposition is fully aware that the crop insurance program is a federal-provincial program that's cost shared with producers. Well now you see the man from Saltcoats there. He always has opinions on crop insurance. I've heard him in debate with the Leader of the Opposition. And it's kind of woke him up — now we're on to crop insurance.

All right. It's a federal-provincial program. There are some pretty basic parameters that surround crop insurance. And one of those fundamental, basic parameters . . . And I don't think the member from Saltcoats or even the Leader of the Opposition would suggest that a crop insurance program should not be actuarially sound. And that is one of the fundamental parameters of crop insurance; it must be actuarially sound.

Now the fact of the matter is — and it's plain to see if you read the annual reports and statements — that our crop insurance program is carrying some debt. Why, Mr. Chair? Why? Because we had some very significant drawdowns on crop insurance, occasioned by several years of drought, Mr. Chair, and some very early frost in certain areas of our province. That's well known. That's well known.

Now the circumstance in Manitoba, they do not have some of these same challenges that our crop insurance has had to bear. So we've got a circumstance where the program is limited in some ways in what its capacity can be, because we're going to maintain that actuarially sound principle of crop insurance.

Now actuarially sound or financially and fiscally responsible is a concept that I know is lost on many members of the opposition, and that is so clearly demonstrated because every time they've come close to government in this province, the treasury, the treasury is lost. The treasury is lost.

And the most recent example of course was in the 1980s, the 1980s when they, that group . . . And the Leader of the Opposition was of course working in that government, working in this building. I mean, for goodness' sakes, Mr. Chair, the Leader of the Opposition was at work two years in this building

before I came to this building. So he's now leading the Saskatchewan Party. He worked in that Progressive Conservative government. They don't understand about actuarially sound or fiscal responsibilities. They brought this province to the verge of bankruptcy. We talked about that earlier in the day.

So there are some basic parameters. As I said, given the basic parameters the crop insurance program should be, should be working with producers, working with the federal government, working with the province to develop the best program that you can to meet the needs. And there's some very, there's been some very, very positive developments in crop insurance under the leadership of the current Minister of Agriculture. So there are new varieties being covered. We've seen changes in the premium. Mr. Chair, there's been expansion in crop insurance. Now is it everything that the Minister of Agriculture wants it to be or farmers or producers in the province want it to be? Perhaps not, Mr. Chair, but you've got parameters and they're working very hard to make the program better.

In terms of the next election, which seems to consume the thinking of the Leader of the Opposition and it seems to consume the thinking of the member from Indian Head-Milestone . . . You see, they're very, they seem very, very anxious today to know about the election. Why is that, Mr. Chair? Well I think I know why it is. I listen, I listen very carefully or read some of the reports of . . .

For instance, the member of Humboldt, the member of Humboldt was down in the Committee on the Economy, down in the Committee of the Economy not too many days ago and what is the member of Humboldt asking about down in the Committee of the Economy? Well you know what she's asking about, members? She was asking about the state of the drapes in the Legislative Assembly building. I've read some of the transcripts. She's worried about the dust in the drapes of the Legislative Assembly building.

Well apparently they think they're going to be occupying some of the offices of government soon. They think they're going to be worrying about the drapes in the Assembly building. Well you know, Mr. Chair, they should quit worrying about the drapes on the government side because it'll be a long time until they see those drapes, Mr. Chair, a long time.

I've said, and I repeat again, when I sat in opposition and the current Leader of the Opposition was working in this government, that government delayed the election to the maximum legal limit of five years. Even they added one day on. In the tradition of the CCF and the New Democratic Party of this province, we've had a long tradition of four-year elections. There is a fixed election date. It's fixed at five years by law, Mr. Chair. We've had a long tradition, a long tradition of four-year elections.

Now every election call needs to made given the circumstances at the time — early or late harvest, whether there'll be a federal election, whether there'll not be a federal election. You want to be sure, Mr. Chair, you give the maximum opportunity for the people of Saskatchewan to participate in the democratic process. And I'm hoping that as we go to an election, as we go to an election that we will have an election based on public

policy debate, public policy debate, not the kind of debate that we've seen over the course of this session from that opposition.

And anybody who has watched this House, whether it's the journalists or whether it's the public who watch this House, knows that this opposition has devoted the vast majority of its time to anything but public policy debate. And the question is why, Mr. Chair. Why do they not want to debate? Substantive issues like the seniors' drug plan — why do they not want to debate that? Why do they not want to debate a substantive issue like the graduate tax credit that we're going to provide to young people to encourage them to build their careers? Not a question about that.

You know, Mr. Chair, all they could say in this session about the current budget was two things. Number one, they said it's not sustainable. And then two, they said it was leaked. Well now I just want to share, I just want to share before I take my place on this question of sustainability of the budget which is now under debate.

I want to announce — and I want the members of the opposition to know and government members to know and the public of Saskatchewan to know — that just as I came into the House today I was handed the credit rating report from Dominion Bond Rating Service of Toronto, DBRS Toronto, which, by the way, Mr. Chair, everyone will know is perhaps the most difficult bond rating service on the continent. The toughest bond rating service on the continent, they've looked at our budget.

They asked the question of sustainability, and what does it say? What does it say? DBRS confirms the ratings of the province of Saskatchewan at AA low and R-1 middle. That's a stable report, Mr. Chair; that's the rate of the DBRS telling us that this budget is sustainable. What do they say? "The credit profile of the Province continues to slowly improve as highlighted by the ongoing declines in debt-to-GDP ratio, [the ongoing declines in debt-to-GDP ratio — get this] solid spending discipline [solid spending discipline] and increasing tax competitiveness . . ."

Well you know, Mr. Chair, I'm almost looking forward to an early election call . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — So I can go to the people of Saskatchewan with this kind of record of sustainability, of a budget that builds for the future of Saskatchewan people that has as its interest the future of Saskatchewan people, the future of Saskatchewan families, and the future of Saskatchewan young people.

Yes, Mr. Chair, there will be an election. And yes, it will fall well within the legal limits, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chair, the set election limits. And again I say it is my preference that elections should be held on or about the fourth anniversary.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Chair, Mr. Deputy Chair and now Madam Chair, we would be, I would be happy to stay a little bit longer. It's turned out I think, especially on some issues, with

respect to health care, uranium, the economy, to stay a little bit longer. The Premier's wondering why there was only the one question on crop insurance. Unfortunately we're running out of time that we both agreed to, but if we can also mutually agree to go a little bit longer, we can talk more about crop insurance.

We can talk more about school closures. I'd like to know if the Premier is happy with the process that he has seen unfold right across the province of Saskatchewan. We could talk about, we could talk about whether or not he will preside over a caucus that will break the rules of the Legislative Assembly by offering severance to somebody in his organization who has resigned. There are those kinds of matters. There are bigger issues.

So I ask the Premier today, Madam Chair, is he prepared to stay a little bit longer? Is he prepared to have our House leaders meet and agree to a time where we can talk about these issues because, frankly, we're prepared to stay for a long time tonight.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, this has been a legislative session that's consisted of how many days? Sixty-five thereabouts. But since we returned, 47 since we returned here in the spring, we've had that many question periods. And the vast majority of that time has been consumed by questions from the Leader of the Opposition on everything but matters of substantive public policy. We've introduced substantive public policy because we've introduced a budget that is under debate in this House; that's part of this process, a debate of this budget.

But isn't it interesting that the most significant, the most significant parts of the budget now under debate are not mentioned by the opposition. We do not mention this visionary program, this expansion of medicare to provide a universally accessible drug plan for seniors. They don't mention that. They don't debate or mention the most significant program for young graduates in this province, in this province that I think this province has ever offered, providing for the young graduates of Saskatchewan and, by the way, for young graduates from right across Canada an opportunity to build their careers in Saskatchewan and have \$100,000 of their income tax-free over the first five years with extensions to 10. They don't want to talk about that in question period. They don't want to talk about it in my estimates.

Well, Madam Chair, we're talking about issues like that. We're talking about issues that are going to make life better for Saskatchewan families. We're talking about issues that are going to make life better for the future of the young people of our province. And you know, Madam Chair, we're seeing the young people coming home. We're seeing the job growth, 13 consecutive months of job growth. We're seeing our population increasing. We're seeing all of the indicators of our economy increasing. They don't want to talk about that, Madam Chair.

Well again we'll have opportunity I guess over the next couple of days to talk about some of these issues. But obviously we're going to have opportunity when we leave this building, Madam Chair, opportunity to speak to our constituents, to speak to the people of Saskatchewan about issues that do matter to families in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well again I hope we're able to stay a little bit longer because there are some important issues to debate and discuss. I'm interested in the Premier's opinion as to whether or not the Manitoba crop insurance plan is actuarially sound. And if it's actuarially sound, then it's true that the Manitoba NDP government is providing significantly better coverage at a lower premium than our farmers receive in the province of Saskatchewan. That was the question. The Premier didn't come anywhere near it.

And I can tell from the banter across the way that the government opposite isn't prepared to even go another 15 minutes to discuss the issues including perhaps the prescription drug plan because there are a number of drugs that have been presented to us by pharmacists, for example, which are used significantly in large numbers by seniors — some of them we could get into specifically — that are not part of the formulary and so therefore will not be subject to the \$15 prescription program.

Those kinds of issues are exactly what we have asked in committee. We could get into that discussion now as to what the government's long-term plan is for the formulary because, Madam Deputy Chair, it's true that research, that science is going to give us new drugs. And each and every time they do, there'll be a new opportunity for seniors to receive pharmacare, but it is irrelevant, Madam Deputy Chair, if the government refuses to acknowledge the formulary. So those questions have been asked. There are no answers.

We've also asked questions around trying to get a handle on exactly the cost of this program, and it ranges by millions of dollars depending if we're being told by the deputy minister of Health, the Minister of Health, or perhaps some other government official. It's very difficult to get into a debate and get some answers from this government if they themselves don't know the answers, Madam Deputy Chair.

So just for the record, we would be very interested — I personally would be interested — in staying and discussing the school closures, not just the schools that have closed but whether or not it is appropriate now for the government to assess how the school closure system happened. I think it's reasonable that we would all want to answer the question, ask the question certainly: are we comfortable with the process that every single question was answered with respect to keeping schools open?

I think we would want to stay a little bit longer tonight and discuss the foundation operating grant because, Madam Deputy Chair, here's the interesting part. After forced amalgamation by this government, after changes to FOG, [foundation operating grant] Madam Deputy Chair, what's happened? And remember that amalgamation happened, Madam Deputy Chair, to eliminate zero grant boards. If you remember that — they wanted to eliminate zero grant boards. What's going to happen next year or the year after in the Chinook School Division? We're going to have a zero grant board again. Well what does the Minister of Learning have to say about that? The Premier's not answering any questions; maybe she would.

Well I think, on the record she said that question or I was pretty slimy; is that what you said? I think it's a reasonable question. We're talking about the foundation operating grant, Madam Minister, and Mr. Premier. And we're asking, is it reasonable now to look at some issues around whether or not assessments in certain school districts are going to ensure that those regions become zero grant boards again? And if they do, if they do, that's worth a discussion. That's worth a question or two from the opposition to the Premier that says, what's your plan to deal with that? What is the plan of the government to deal with the bias in the foundation operating grants in favour of busing because you know, Regina, the Government of Saskatchewan, Sask Learning will pay, will cover busing costs almost to 100 per cent and not so much the other ... classroom time for example or the other facets of education.

[16:45]

Is that a bias that's healthy when it's easier to bus than it is to provide an education? All of these questions are important to answer. And I don't think the minister should characterize them in the way she has characterized them, Madam Deputy Chair, because it isn't the opposition that's asking them. It's parents across the province of Saskatchewan. It's teachers across the province of Saskatchewan. It's people who expect good education. That's who's asking the questions. So maybe she has a message for them.

Madam Deputy Chair, it was interesting on March 27, 1990, the current Premier was sitting in opposition and here's what he had to say. He said:

My central point is that we have a crisis of confidence in the province of Saskatchewan, that we have a government that has been stripped of its credibility, a government that has no longer the confidence of the people [of the province of Saskatchewan], a government that no longer seems to have a vision or a clear direction. In short, Mr. Deputy Speaker, [the current Premier said back in 1990] I believe, [it is] a government that has lost the capacity to govern.

And in a democracy — I repeat — [it's him saying that, not me] in any democracy or in any nation, in any nation when a government has lost the confidence of its people, when a government is stripped of its credibility, when a government has no vision, then it is time to defeat that government and give another group of ... women the opportunity to govern.

The Premier was right then, and if he were to say those words today or if I were to say them, we would be right today. So the final question, the final question of Premier's estimates is simply this: will he commit to call a provincial election at the earliest possible opportunity so men and women and the people of the province who are waiting for vision, who are waiting for a long-term plan, who are waiting desperately for a positive change from a tired, old, four-term government can get positive change in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the change that is recommended by the Leader of the Opposition would get us

exactly to the place we were in 1990 when I stood on that side of the House and said this is a government without vision, that this is a government that has created grief for the people of Saskatchewan.

And I appreciate the Leader of the Opposition raising that quote today because I believe it to be absolutely true. It was absolutely true. And now the Leader of the Opposition, who was part of that government, who was part of that government as a staffer in that government, now recommends that the people of Saskatchewan should choose that same philosophy all over again, that same group of people. It's the same old right-wing philosophy that every time it comes near government I tell you, the treasury shudders and the people should too.

Madam Chair, this has been a very interesting session, I know, for members of government, I think for members of the opposition. It's been a very interesting session for the journalists to observe and the public to observe because obviously this opposition came into this session with an endgame, with an endgame. And the endgame was to make the prospects of the Sask Party better politically. That's their endgame and we know that and we've watched it.

I mean the Leader of the Opposition now wants to talk about school closures. He's had 40 question periods and more to talk about school closures — 40 question periods and more to talk about what he might do and finally once share something that he might do about this that would be real or tangible, 40 questions. I'm told the Whip has carried in answers to 1,400 different questions put by the opposition — lots of opportunity, lots of opportunity.

But the endgame here wasn't for information. The endgame was clearly not to discuss public policy or to expose any of your own policy. The endgame was to score political points for the Saskatchewan Party. Now they've had some success I think, Madam Chair. I believe they've had some success at that.

But now I want to tell you about the endgame, the endgame for government, the endgame for government. The endgame for government was to come into this session and make life better for Saskatchewan people. That's the endgame for government. To make Saskatchewan families see a brighter future, that's our endgame, our endgame to make a better life for our young people in this province, to build a future for the young people in this province. It's our endgame. Our endgame is to heal an environment. Our endgame is to build an environment for the future. That's our endgame. Our endgame is to improve health opportunities for our seniors, to improve opportunities for our graduates. That's our endgame.

Well they may have scored a little in their endgame on building the politics for the Saskatchewan Party but, Madam Chair, this government has built for the people of Saskatchewan in spite of them, in spite of them. And I can tell you this, Madam Chair, when that next election is called and when it is held, it will be a New Democratic Party government that continues to build for Saskatchewan people and for the future of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Chair: — The vote before the Assembly is (EX01), central management and services in the amount of 4,296,000. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Vote (EX07), Premier's office, in the amount of 553,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. (EX04), cabinet secretariat and cabinet planning unit in the amount of 1,453,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. (EX03), chief of communications office in the amount of 1,879,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. (EX08), House business and research in the amount of \$431,000, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Statutory vote (EX06), members of the Executive Council. Are there any questions?

Be it resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2008, the following sum for Executive Council, \$8,612,000.

Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Vote 10 agreed to.]

The Chair: — This concludes the matter before committee in the estimates for Executive Council. The next matter before the committee will be the appropriations. I want to thank the officials, and recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Madam Chair, just before we move on to the appropriations Bill and just before our officials leave the Chamber, I want to extend, on behalf of all members, our thanks to the officials who have joined us here from Executive Council. And because these officials work with the broad, broad cross-section of the Saskatchewan public service, because my deputy serves as deputy of deputies and is in many ways the chief civil servant, I want to express through our officials to all in the Saskatchewan public service who serve the people of Saskatchewan the deep gratitude of this government and this legislature.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thanks, Madam Deputy Chair. I'd

also like to extend our thanks to the officials who were here to provide this resource to the entire Assembly, to the Premier, but through him to the Assembly so that we can have an exchange. I'd also like to thank the Premier for his time and the debate we were able to have this afternoon.

Motions for Supply

The Chair: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I move, no. 1:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008, the sum of \$6,303,099,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

The Chair: — The question before the committee on estimates is:

Be it resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008, the sum of \$6,303,099,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Chair: — Carried on division. The Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I move, no. 2:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008, which to the extent that they remain unexpended for the fiscal year are also granted for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 2009, the sum of \$154,421,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

The Chair: — The motion before the committee, no. 2:

Be it resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008, which to the extent that they remain unexpended for the fiscal year are also granted for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009, the sum of \$154,421,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Madam Chair, I move that the committee rise and that the Chair report that the committee has agreed to certain resolutions and asks for leave to sit again.

The Chair: — The Minister of Finance has moved that the committee rise and that the Chair report that the committee has agreed to certain resolutions and asks for leave to sit again. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

The Speaker: — Order. The Chair of committees is recognized.

Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Finance has agreed to certain resolutions, has instructed me to report the same, and to ask for leave to sit again.

The Speaker: — When shall the resolutions be read the first time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I would move the resolutions be now read the first and a second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that the resolutions be now read the first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk Assistant: — First and second reading of the resolutions.

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Later this day, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Later this day. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Bill No. 69 — The Appropriation Act, 2007 (No. 3)

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly I move that Bill No. 69, The Appropriation Act, 2007 (No. 3) be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave of the Assembly to move the motion. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 69, The Appropriation Act, 2007 be now

introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk Assistant: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — In what is likely to be my last official act as the Minister of Finance for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, I would move by leave of the Assembly and under rule 69(2) that the Bill be now read a second and a third time.

The Speaker: — Leave is required. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 69, The Appropriation Act, 2007 (No. 3) be now read a second and third time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second and third reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

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

The Speaker: — It has been 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 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:01.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

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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
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Minister Responsible for Investment
Saskatchewan Inc.
Minister Responsible for Information Services
Corporation of Saskatchewan

Hon. David Forbes
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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance

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Minister Responsible for Liquor and
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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
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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