

The Coffee Row Handbook 2008



What's being said about Brad Wall's Saskatchewan Party Government?

"... train wreck... extravagant... failed ... ham-handed... incompetent... egregious... unforgivable... lost track... bamboozle... risking interests of Sask... turned their back on the province... sycophancy... pandering... environment of intimidation... facade... blinded... hypocrites?... massive waste of money... wrong... inefficient... stupid... distrust...misguided belief... destroy trust... regressive... shocking... aggressive... unacceptable..."

Complete quotes and much more inside.

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My Friends,
As Saskatchewan New Democrats embark on our new role as the Official Opposition, I look forward to the future and the chance to reconnect with the people of our great province.

I have always maintained that NDP values are, at the core, Saskatchewan values as well. Co-operation, compassion, and a strong social fabric built this province and have provided it with the unique identity of which we can be so proud.

On behalf of the entire NDP Caucus, I invite you to browse through the Fall 2008 edition of Coffee Row. I trust that it will be a helpful tool in championing the NDP message.

I look forward to meeting with you and hearing from you soon!

Lorne Calvert
Leader of the Official Opposition

Friends,

As the NDP Caucus gears up for the Fall 2008 Session of the Legislature, we can reflect on the many successes we have had as the Official Opposition and mark the already dismal record of the Sask Party government.

In under a year, it has become clear that while New Democrats are standing up for the people of Saskatchewan, the Sask Party has mismanaged our economic boom. Hard working Saskatchewan people continue to feel the affordability of everything from food to gasoline to housing slipping ever further out of reach.



The NDP Official Opposition's energetic and committed team will continue to stand up for the best interests of the people of our province. I hope that you will find this edition of Coffee Row a useful reminder that the NDP Caucus is working for you and towards a better future for all the people of Saskatchewan.

Frank Quennell
NDP Caucus Chair

“the NDP... has run a competent, prudent, effective government and has an excellent record of achievement to run on.”

That’s how Dr. Ken Rasmussen, Director of the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Regina, characterized the NDP record in the lead up to the last election. Dr. Rasmussen then went on to say, **“sometimes, however, your record is not enough to win elections.”**

We move into Opposition with heads held high:

We made the hard choices needed to edge the province back from the brink of bankruptcy.

We balanced the budget and rehabilitated the province’s credit rating.

We turned around the provinces faltering population and job numbers.

We fostered a vibrant, strong and diverse economy.

“Rather than appear to be competent managers of the public purse, Premier Brad Wall's team has been extravagant in its spending, ham-handed in its communications strategy and incompetent in its delivery.” - SP 29/03/08.

This Sask Party government doesn’t consult, won’t answer questions, attempts to side-step issues, and tells Saskatchewan people whatever story happens to suit them at the time. A vigilant and effective opposition is critically important to keeping this arrogant and untrustworthy Sask Party government accountable and in check.

Sask Party ideology is a simple-minded throw back to the “trickle down” theory of the American right, a theory that allows them to help themselves and their friends while doing nothing to help those who need it most.

“...we have Saskatchewan Party members who are... fervently convinced that an election win and a cabinet plaque on the door elevates them to genius status wherein they are no longer required to listen to anyone.”

- LP 30/04/08

Holding the Sask Party government accountable is only one part of our job in Opposition.

We must also offer alternative policies, alternative ideas, and looking ahead to November 7, 2011, an alternative vision for the future of this province.

In Opposition we are doing our job:

We’ve caught the Sask Party trying to pass legislation allowing them to spend hundreds of thousands of taxpayer’s dollars at a time without oversight.

Our tactics forced the Sask Party to take the extreme measure of changing the rules of the Assembly to pass their anti-labour legislation.

We shamed them into a transparent hiring process to replace the fired LRB vice-chair after they ignored proper practice and appointed a political crony to sit as LRB chair.

We shone a light on their mean-spirited cuts to valuable social programs.

The Sask Party in Action: 6 Inmates Escape From Regina Correctional Facility - August 2008

“The best measure of a government is not necessarily how smoothly it conducts daily business but in how well it manages a crisis. Under unexpected pressure, character reveals itself. **The train wreck that was Corrections Minister Hickie demonstrates this principle in action.**” - SP 30/08/08

“There were three basic things we should have expected our elected officials to do...

- alert the public as soon as possible...
- provide the public with as much information as possible...
- honestly acknowledge there is a problem related to gangs...

Hickie failed on all three counts. He may have failed more miserably than any Saskatchewan cabinet minister in recent memory”

- LP 29/08/08

“egregious... damning... unforgivable...”

The Leader Post describing the Wall government’s performance in its first big test.

- LP 29/08/08

*It also took Hickie to task for “...attempt(ing) to **bamboozle** reporters with this **nonsense** that there’s no gang problem in Saskatchewan jails... **something that speaks either to the honesty or the competence of the Minister.**”*

*The Sask Party denies the failure. The 15 hours it took Hickie to alert the public is characterized by Randy Weekes as “**the quick action taken by Minister Hickie.**” - Biggar Independent 15/09/08*

"Was it just lies, Brad Wall?"

- PA Herald 3/12/07

"It's part of the plan here, sadly, to try to convey misinformation... truth and accuracy are being sacrificed." - LP Sept 16/08

So said one federal politician after getting his first taste of the misinformation tactics that have been part of Brad Wall's political tool kit for years.

"Energy critic [Wall] disingenuous" - SP 7/07/01

"Facts and reality had no place in the SaskParty side of the debate. Swift Current's own MLA Brad Wall led the charge with a daily rant in the Legislature quoting irrelevant numbers from irrelevant analysts about irrelevant comparisons between Alberta and Saskatchewan." - The Herbert Herald 19/06/01

"In this case, it's all about history, beginning with what has become the annoying, disrespectful and sometimes downright dangerous habit of the Saskatchewan Party of implying scandal, fraud and corruption from within the safety of the legislative assembly when they have had virtually no evidence thereof." - LP 24/03/06

"Forget that Wall was wrong on June 5 about the \$5.56 price he was tossing about in the legislature because he failed to include several costs, including delivery charges, that make the price considerably higher in Saskatchewan. Ignore that he's again conveniently leaving out these costs in citing a \$4.61 price that applies only in Alberta." - SP 7/07/01

"Contrary to Wall's near-hysterical press release Wednesday forewarning Premier Lorne Calvert of another looming National Energy Program... no one has actually called for another NEP." - LP 2/09/05

In 2003 Wall falsified a quote attributed to Maynard Sonntag prompting this from the Star Phoenix: "Not only did the Opposition completely distort Sonntag's statement, but it did so to make the point that there needed to be a special legislative investigation of him for 'lying to the legislature.' **That's not just irresponsible. It's contemptible.**"

- SP 26/02/03

Brad Wall: The Puppet Premier

“Premier risking interests of Sask. for partisan gain” – SP 20/09/08

Brad Wall has consistently sided with Stephen Harper and the federal Tories against the best interests of Saskatchewan people. Brad Wall's allegiance to ideology and partisan politics trumps his responsibility to the people of this province every time.

A scathing Star Phoenix editorial on the subject refers to:

"...the continued **sycofancy** and **pan-dering** by Premier Brad Wall to the whims and wishes of Prime Minister Stephen Harper."

and says, "...Mr. Wall seems to have lost track of the fact that... as premier, his responsibility is to represent the interests of the entire province."

and "... Mr. Wall and his ministers... turned their back on the province... by dropping the challenge they promised over the federal Conservatives breaking an equalization promise to Saskatchewan." - SP 20/09/08

"...after Wall's handling of the equalization file, most Saskatchewan voters are likely well aware that the Saskatchewan Party government's independence from the influences of the federal Conservatives is pretty much a facade." - LP 26/07/08

Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall has been overtly partisan by supporting the Conservatives... - Globe and Mail 2/10/08

"to suggest, as Mr. Wall has, that the offer by Mr. Harper to contribute a minuscule share in the expensive experiment to find a way to separate and sequester carbon dioxide is a gift to the province rather than what it is -- a huge risk with associated costs -- makes it appear the premier's political allegiances have blinded him to the welfare of the province he has sworn to represent." - SP 20/09/08

THE SASK PARTY: Flip-Flops and Broken Promises

“In opposition... I could say just about anything I wanted, and did on a lot of occasions for 12 years.” - Bob Bjonerud Scrum 30/04/08

Before the election, the Sask Party routinely criticized the NDP’s Fiscal Stabilization Fund as a “mountain of money” and said they would do away with what they called “political slush funds.” **After the election**, the Sask Party created its own Fiscal Stabilization Fund but did give it a new name.

During the election campaign, Prince Albert Sask Party candidate Darryl Hickie declared, “a vote for Darryl is a vote for the mill open and people working.” **After the election** the Sask Party ripped up a memorandum of understanding between the provincial government and Domtar and the people of Prince Albert have yet to see their mill open.

Before the election, the Sask Party promised to keep schools open and said ‘Schools of Necessity’ would guard against children spending too much time on the bus. **They now admit** the \$1 million budgeted to prevent school closures won’t be enough to keep Schools of Opportunity open. The idea of “Schools of Necessity” has disappeared altogether.

Before the election, the Sask Party assured voters there was no need for essential services legislation. **After the election**, the Sask Party introduced so-called “essential services” legislation that had less to do with protecting public safety than it did with fulfilling their promise to “go to war” on labour.

Before the election, Brad Wall stood with Premier Calvert and the NDP in demanding a fair equalization deal from Ottawa. **Wall has given up** the fight for a fair deal, at least while Conservatives are in power, but has refused to release the legal opinions of the Equalization Court Challenge. Wall declared they may be useful in pressuring future non-Conservative governments on the same issue.

“Hypocrites?”

- Leader Post Headline prompted by the Sask Party firing civil servants 26/01/08

*The Sask Party has drawn criticism from all sides for terminating career civil servants without cause and for their **complete disregard** for the resulting damage to the individuals involved and to the public service itself.*

“Krawetz doesn't get that firing anyone without cause is a massive waste of money...”

“Nor does Krawetz seem to grasp the simple concept that it's wrong, inefficient and stupid to fire nonpartisan career civil servants...”

“He doesn't get that a true professional career civil servant absolutely shouldn't be ‘sharing the political view’ of the government of the day.”

- LP 23/08/08

...distrust between the government and its employees may not be new. But what's evident is that this distrust has grown since the election of the Saskatchewan Party and the arrival of its transition team that seemed to be under the misguided belief it could fire whomever it pleased.

- LP Aug 30/08

*An article in the **Sask Law Review** **condemning** the firing of 3 members of the Labour Relations Board came directly on the heels of a **scathing indictment of the Sask Party** by the Public Service Commission over the termination of career civil servants after the provincial election. In its ruling, the Commission stated that the **Sask Party's dismissals in the civil service “destroy trust and engender a lasting environment of intimidation.”***

The Sask Party's Mean Spirited Cuts

The Sask Party's Bill 29 makes it easier to force children with disabilities out of regular classrooms and into segregated classes and facilities. The Saskatchewan Association of Community Living calls it, “regressive... shocking... unacceptable.”

They callously clawed back **8 million dollars** the previous NDP government had put in place to fund the community-led **Station 20 West** project designed to improve quality of life for Saskatoon's inner-city residents.

Brad Wall and the Saskatchewan Party have not only refused to provide any relief to Saskatchewan people whose wallets are being squeezed by the very boom that is fattening government coffers, but they have also engaged in a series of mean-spirited attacks on some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the province.

They cut the Northern Skills and Training Program even though unemployment rates are much higher in the North than in the rest of the province.

They cut the Saskatchewan Worker's Health Benefit that provided low-income workers with better access to prescription drugs, eye exams and chiropractic services.

They cancelled the Children's Dental Sealant Program, a pilot program for children in grades 1 and 7 in community schools designed to help prevent cavities and promote better dental health for children who don't have access to preventative therapies or dental services.

The Sask Party in Action: Scrapping the Neighbourhood Home Ownership Program

Quality, affordable housing is increasingly difficult to access for Saskatchewan's low-income earners and yet the Sask Party has scrapped a housing program that provided the poorest of the poor the opportunity to own their own homes.

Over the last nine years the Neighbourhood Home Ownership Program (NHOP) allowed 110 Saskatoon Homes to be purchased, up-graded, and turned over to co-operatives of low-income earners who, over time, assumed the mortgages themselves.

With the recent housing boom the program's \$60,000 maximum purchase price became too low to allow for further home purchases. Instead of making changes to the program to allow it to remain effective, the Saskatchewan Party simply let the program die. **The Sask Party has neither the political will nor the ideas needed to help those who need it most.**

“the poorest of the poor are now falling through the cracks.” - SP 25/07/08

“(It's) very, very difficult to come up with a program that's going to work well in the market that Saskatoon is right now... **it's very difficult to come up with a program to accommodate the poorest of the poor.**” - Donna Harpauer SP 25/07/08

“She (Harpauer) said the government will try to interest the private sector in building homes affordable to the poorest families, but it will be a tall order.”
- SP 25/07/08

Saskatchewan Party ideology and abilities are falling far short of what is needed to meet today's challenges. Governing is “difficult” and Brad Wall and the Sask Party are proving incapable of doing the job they were elected to do.

Bills 5 and 6: The Sask Party Attack on Labour

“... your union leader friends who are job killers.” - SP MLA Randy Weekes

Brad Wall was clear about what working people could expect from a Saskatchewan Party government:

“... going to war is the way to phrase it. We’re going to defend our position very aggressively and actually go on the offensive...”

Brad Wall CJME Radio Interview 2005

Labour is Fighting Back:

“We are asking the courts to strike down both Bills 5 and 6 as unconstitutional.”

- SFL President Larry Hubich - SP 30/07/08

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses has issued a separate Charter challenge to Bill 5 saying:

“... there has not been true consultation with stakeholders...”

“... such broad legislative changes are unnecessary...”

“... the legislation effectively removes the right of SUN members to bargain freely...” - SUN Media Advisory 15/09/08

CUPE calls Bills 5 and 6, “the most aggressive assault on the labour rights of Saskatchewan working people this province has ever seen.”

Wall’s senseless attack is destabilizing Saskatchewan’s labour environment. It is a poor choice to make given the province’s labour shortage and on-going issues with recruitment and retention of health care workers, a sector that is profoundly affected by this legislation.

“...the union hostility that Essential Services legislation has now stirred up is about the last thing the Saskatchewan government needs when it's trying to attract health professionals like nurses.” - LP 28/04/08

“...we have a totally different political climate in the Saskatchewan government - one in which labour might now have perfectly legitimate reasons to be fearful.” - LP 28/04/08

Tory Times are Tough Times - Unless You're A Tory

Brad Wall has done nothing to help Saskatchewan people ease the financial burden many are facing... but he's doing plenty to help his friends. After being sworn in he paused only long enough to characterize the province's finances as "stark" before he began handing out taxpayer's dollars like candy to his cronies.

Wall's long time friend Reg Downs began life in the new administration as Wall's Chief of Staff with a beginning **monthly salary of \$13,693**. He was soon demoted but his salary remained the same.

Kathy Young and Brad Wall also go way back. Both are seen in the now infamous 1991 Debate Night video when they were staffers together on Divine's campaign team. Wall made Young his Director of Communications at **\$9,600 a month**.

Iain Harry and Brad Wall worked together as ministerial assistants in the bad old days of the Divine government. Harry had been working for the Harper Tories before Wall appointed him to be his "special advisor" which really means "**special pal**" and rewarded him with a **monthly salary of \$12,500**.

James Saunders, a former Sask Party Caucus Employee became a Senior Policy Advisor at **\$8,155 a month**. Less than one year later he got a **\$10,000 a year raise**.

*Brad Wall also jacked up salaries for his friends getting jobs in Ministers' offices. Chief of Staff salaries under the NDP averaged 70K a year. Under Wall, of the 17 **Sask Party Chiefs of Staff**, none make less than \$90,000 and 8 are making \$125,000 a year, a whopping **80% jump over average NDP Chief of Staff salaries**.*

*Ken Love, a **Brad Wall crony** and big financial supporter got himself appointed to replace the Chair of the Labour Relations Board who the Sask Party inappropriately fired. The previous Chair had 10 years of experience on the board and made \$121,000 a year. Love has **no experience** on the LRB, but his starting salary is **\$180,000 a year**. For Ken Love, **being a friend of Brad's pays off with a job and a \$60,000 salary bump**.*

Wall is doing nothing to help those who need help now.

Wall is doing nothing to help with rising housing costs.

Wall is doing nothing to help with rising gas prices.

Wall is doing nothing to help with rising utility costs.

“given the financial position that the province is in and the financial surplus that we’re dealing with, ... I’m quite concerned that there isn’t more of a social agenda being put forward.”

“what we really would have liked to have seen today is a significant commitment to quality affordable housing issues, addressing the issue of both affordability and availability of housing for low income families

“I don’t think that this budget deals seriously with the question of poverty in Saskatchewan”

- Peter Gilmer, Regina AntiPoverty Ministry
Commenting on the Sask Party Budget

03/19/08

Brad Wall and the Saskatchewan Party have inherited a booming economy unprecedented in Saskatchewan history. Resource revenues are filling the public coffers to overflowing. Despite these riches, Brad Wall has done nothing to help Saskatchewan people with affordability issues even though many are feeling financially squeezed because of the very boom that is creating his government’s wealth.

People all across this province are being hit with high housing costs, high food costs and skyrocketing gas and utility prices.

What has Brad Wall done to help Saskatchewan people struggling with these rising costs?

Assured oil and gas companies that he would not raise their royalty rates while doing **nothing to help Saskatchewan people with their steadily increasing gas and utility costs.**

Abandoned the equalization fight with Ottawa, calling it the “elephant in the room” in talks with Ottawa. Which it was... and it just sat there reminding Steven Harper and Saskatchewan’s conservative MPs of the 800 million dollar promise they made to the people of this province and then broke without explanation or apology.

The inaction, incompetence and mean-spirited cuts of the Brad Wall government have already resulted in this boom helping far too few and creating hardship for far too many.

Wall’s favouring of “haves” over “have-nots” and his outdated, simplistic notion that market forces are all that’s needed to solve complex social, environmental and economic problems spells serious trouble for this province.

Saskatchewan New Democrats believe that governing is about people not profits. Our job now is to hold Wall and his government accountable and prepare to form government following the next election.

New Democrat values, ideas and experience helped Saskatchewan become the great province it is today and we will be there to help all Saskatchewan people meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead.

The Coffee Row Hand Book 2008

Brad Wall and the Sask Party promised a plan to address the issues facing this province. It turns out their only plan was to get themselves elected. In government they've proven to be untrustworthy, mean spirited, and incompetent, and making far too many decisions based on what benefits themselves and their friends rather than what's good for the province as a whole.



The Sask Party government record:

- Blatantly lied about the state of the province's finances
- Huge salary increases for political cronies at tax payer's expense
- Done nothing to help families being squeezed by the same boom that is fattening Sask Party government coffers
- Callous program cuts hurt some of the province's most vulnerable people
- Introduced the "Unaccountability Bill" which would have allowed them to spend up to 350 K at a time without scrutiny
- Adopted our green house gas emission reduction targets but cut the 320 million dollar Green Future Fund that made it possible to meet them
- Fired career civil servants without cause or good reason
- Consistently sided with Harper Tories against the interests of Saskatchewan people
- Proved to be incompetent and untrustworthy in their handling of the escape of 6 inmates from the Regina Correctional Centre
- Went to war on labour

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