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Report filled with speculation

David Jackson's article, "NDP's financial review 'political manipulation' - think tank" focuses on the Larry Haiven's report, "The sky is falling. The sky is falling. Or is it?" released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

What the provincial NDP may or may not do in its fall budget will be of considerable interest to Nova Scotians; and it is true that the NDP may have a difficult time trying to square the circle of the balancing the budget, avoid a deficit, maintain current levels of public spending, and not raise taxes. However, Haiven's extensive analysis of the political situation 1991 in Saskatchewan, while academically interesting, is no predictor of what the NDP may do in the fall of 2009. The "sorry folks, all bets are off" scenario posited by Haiven is sheer conjecture.

Haiven's report is filled with such speculation and conjecture. For instance, Haiven questions why the NDP would have engaged Deloitte Touche to conduct a review of the government's finances, speculating that tempers between finance minister Graham Steele and his deputy, Vicki Harnish, are still frayed after their March dispute and that consequently the Ministry of Finance could not be trusted to deliver the interpretation of provincial finances that the new NDP government wanted. This, too, is simply conjecture. Similarly Haiven writes:

"As they discuss their report on the province's finances, the NDP government will no doubt refer to Tommy Douglas in Saskatchewan. They may remind people, as have countless Conservative and Liberal politicians, that Douglas insisted on balancing his province's books as one of his first priorities. But Tommy Douglas was not just about balancing budgets. To make a fetish out of this one fact disgraces the man's name."

Who says that any of this will transpire, and in this way? Haiven is way ahead of himself, erecting straw men that he then knocks down with glee. The time to form an analysis and critique of the NDP's budget will be when they actually present it.

I'd redirect Haiven's metaphor of "the sky is falling" back to the author himself.