The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Mr. Goohsen**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to present petitions on behalf of the people of south-west Saskatchewan. I'll read the prayer:

> Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to allocate adequate funding dedicated towards the double-laning of Highway No. 1; and further, that the Government of Saskatchewan direct any monies available from the federal infrastructure program towards double-laning Highway No. 1 rather than allocating these funds towards capital construction projections in the province.
>
> And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And I'm happy to table these today, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people from across south-west Saskatchewan.

**Mr. D'Autremont**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present today. They come from the Carlyle, Manor, Wawota, and Neudorf part of the province. The petition prayer reads:

> Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to support Bill 31, An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code (Property Rights) which will benefit all property owners in Saskatchewan, and specifically firearms owners, in order to halt the federal Liberal government from infringing upon the rights of Saskatchewan people.
>
> And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

## READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Clerk**: — According to order, the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received:

> Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to allocate funding toward the double-laning of Highway No. 1.
>
> And of citizens petitioning the Assembly to oppose changes to federal legislation regarding firearm ownership.
>
> And of citizens petitioning the Assembly to cause the Minister of Health to examine the proposal to close the emergency unit and cardiac care unit at the Saskatoon City Hospital.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Pringle**: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, two special guests in your gallery. I would ask them to stand — my son Dean and his girlfriend Paula.

Paula has just finished her last exam and Dean's got a day off and they're down here to visit. And I know all the members here are really happy when their families can make it down because we don't see them as often as we would like to and they make great sacrifices. And I know all members will join me in wishing them a nice day and it's good to see them.

**Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kluz**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My wife is seated in your gallery today. She's been introduced here many times and asked me not to introduce her today, so I won't. But she's accompanied with someone, so I'd like to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to all members of the Assembly, our son Jordan who is in Regina to get some dental work. And I'm hopeful that his experience here in the Assembly will be more enjoyable than at the dentist's office. So I'd like all members to welcome him here today.

**Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Flooding in North-east Saskatchewan

**Mr. Upshall**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you know, the last week has seen several reports of drastic flooding throughout the north-east of the province. Farmers that were drought stricken just a few years ago are now under water. Many towns have had to evacuate and sandbag. In the true tradition of the Saskatchewan spirit, people have pulled together to face the problem. All across Saskatchewan, farmers, townspeople, RMs (rural municipalities), and government officials, are cooperating to quickly implement this disaster relief program.

Today, Mr. Speaker, MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from the heart of the flood area are showing the Premier firsthand the disaster created by the flood waters.

I am proud to say that this afternoon the Premier will announce details of such a program. The new financial stability of our province enables us to deliver a program that effectively helps those affected by floods recover.

Mr. Speaker, though the floods are drastic, I think it's important to note that they have not yet been tragic, at least in terms of loss of human life. I credit the quick actions of emergency relief

workers and the ingenuity of farmers and farm families.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all the people in Saskatchewan communities pulling together — people helping people; courage predominant over harsh weather. That's the Saskatchewan way, and I'm very proud of it.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

### New Business in Radville

**Ms. Bradley**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Whoever said the economy is stagnating in rural Saskatchewan forgot to talk to the people in three communities in my riding. Recently the grand reopening of TWC Financial Corp. in Calibaba Enterprises complex took place in the town of Radville.

This business is Saskatchewan's largest mutual fund dealer, licensed to do business right across western Canada. This business not only provides important services and jobs to area residents, but it is having an impact in the local community through donations and grants.

This business, along with Dynamic Mutual Funds, contributed $7,500 towards community projects and worthwhile causes, including donations to disabled children in the area.

I extend my congratulations to the Calibaba family, and to the staff of TWC Financial Corp. and Calibaba Enterprises for their commitment to the community.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the grand opening of the new Bengough Co-Op service station took place on April 5. Congratulations to general manager Dennis Mazenc and president Lorraine Jensen. And on April 7, the grand opening ceremony of Ogema Agencies was held. I'd like to congratulate Carol Strueby and Carol Peterson who are the proprietors of this business.

Mr. Speaker, these business people who are investing in their local communities are providing proof that the economic upswing in Saskatchewan is being felt in many rural communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

### Broadview Recycling Innovation

**Mr. Scott**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While the build-up of waste is not as drastic as flooding, it is an ongoing problem that could eventually have severe repercussions. Today I want to mention a group of people who have pulled together to overcome a problem.

For some time the citizens of Broadview in my constituency had wanted to expand their recycling capabilities beyond the SARCAN depot. Unfortunately they found the expense of shipping recyclable materials to Regina to be prohibitive.
Through a great deal of networking, the Broadview people found a local merchant who travelled to Regina each week with an empty 3-ton truck. However, the container used for shipping recyclable materials to Regina was too large, meaning the merchant could not bring home his own load. The townspeople responded by designing a 64 cubic foot box that could collapse down to 16 cubic feet, leaving plenty of room for the merchant's supplies.

Mr. Speaker, this simple yet clever innovation means that Broadview is now fully able to collect and ship its recycled paper. Thanks to this design, the rising prices of paper, and the expansion of the program to include milk cartons, Broadview may eventually turn a small profit.

For their ingenuity and for their ongoing efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle, I wish to congratulate the town of Broadview and the RM (rural municipality) of Elcapo as theirs is another example of Saskatchewan people working together to help our environment. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

### School Safety Patrol Week in Saskatchewan

**Mrs. Bergman**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week is School Safety Patrol Week in Saskatchewan. In the city of Regina, there are 56 schools participating in a school safety patrol program this year. I want to single out one of those schools today for special mention.

At W.S. Hawrylak School, 34 young people monitor three traffic sites adjacent to the school. As members can appreciate, this job involves many hours of standing in the cold, wet, and heat, while other children are off playing and having fun. It is truly a mark of dedication by these young people that they learn to give of themselves so selflessly at such a young age. These children typically become leaders among their peers and provide excellent role models to other children.

The principal of Hawrylak School, Don McDougall, is also Chair of the school pedestrian traffic safety committee. He says that the school patrollers at his school will be rewarded for their efforts next week at a submarine sandwich lunch. His school also presents monogrammed backpacks to a safety patroller of the month every month, to further reward these young volunteers.

Today I want to thank all of the province's young school safety patrollers, and as well the city police department and the many teachers who help to coordinate this program and keep our children safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

### Green Certificate Program

**Mr. Jess**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In these days of high technology and new advances in many sectors of our economy, it comes as no surprise that there is a constant need to model our training programs to the future, especially in agriculture.

Saskatchewan is forging ahead in this area with the green certificate program, which is designed to better prepare young people for a future in farming. Work on this program is just in

the preliminary stages.

The objective of this program is to train prospective farmers and provide them with a certificate that shows that they have achieved a level of proficiency in agriculture, and at the same time offer a well-trained workforce. Experienced farmers will be teaming up with new farmers to share the valuable lessons they have learned by making a living on the farm.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot overstate the importance of this program because each year in Saskatchewan there's more and more evidence of how diversification is playing a major role in agriculture. The green certificate program will help ensure that our young farmers can keep up with many of the changes they face in agriculture. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

### Wynyard Rodeo Week

**Mr. Flavel**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster mentioned a rodeo in her constituency. In those parts of the province above water, I guess the rodeo season is upon us and I want to mention another equally exciting event taking place this weekend in Wynyard, and even during the week.

The Wynyard Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring Rodeo Week with a host of events during the week, with the weekend rodeo being the principal attraction. As mentioned yesterday, top rodeo stock and top rodeo cowboys will be on hand to thrill the audience on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

The Wynyard co-ops have already had a pancake breakfast and tonight for those of us who like good old-time fiddling, there's a fiddlers' jamboree in the civic centre. And, Mr. Speaker, there'll be free rides for the kids, a hot dog sale, and on Friday, a chance to have your friends thrown in jail for a worthy cause and bail collected to free the accused will be donated to a worthy cause. On Saturday night, there will be a family dance with live entertainment.

As the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster said yesterday, these community events are for fun, and they're also opportunities for people to raise funds for necessary services. All in all, this is a good weekend for those who enjoy rodeos and I invite all that are not in Lloydminster to come to Wynyard for some good old-time rodeo fun. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**The Speaker**: — Why is the member on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington**: — With leave, if we're finished with members' statements, leave to return to introduction of guests.

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Shillington**: — Mr. Speaker, in your gallery we are joined today by Mr. Paul Hill. I'm not going to take a long time in introducing Mr. Hill. I think he's known to most of the members here.

I do think all members will want to join with me in acknowledging not only Mr. Hill's presence, but the very positive role that Crown Life is playing in the economy of Saskatchewan and in this province. And I invite all members to welcome him here.

**Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Mrs. Bergman**: — Permission to introduce guests?

Leave granted.

**Mrs. Bergman**: — On behalf of the third party, we'd also like to welcome Mr. Hill, Mr. Speaker. So I'd again ask the members to join me in welcoming him here today.

**Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Mr. Devine**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to take the opportunity to welcome Mr. Hill here to the legislature, particularly as a result of all the work associated with Crown Life.

And I want to take this opportunity, being 13 years ago today that we formed government in the province of Saskatchewan, to congratulate Premier Gary Filmon for his third term, Mr. Speaker.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Treatment for Hepatitis C Victims

**Mr. Boyd**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions this afternoon are for the Minister of Health or a designate from the government.

Mr. Minister, in February, Justice Horace Krever of the Krever blood commission recommended that those infected with hepatitis C through blood transfusions should be compensated. Your reaction to Mr. Krever's recommendation was to state that instead of compensating hepatitis C sufferers in Saskatchewan that your government's focus would be, and I quote: it would be on treatment and prevention, taken from the *Leader-Post*, February 25, 1995.

Mr. Minister, what specific steps have been taken by your government to provide treatment and prevention services to those suffering from hepatitis C?

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter**: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Health, what I would like to say to the legislature is that this is obviously a very important issue and one that there has been ongoing discussion between provinces and the federal government. And while the member raises a very interesting point and one that we respect, I think the way this should be

resolved, and will be resolved at the end of the day, is by the ministers of Health, both at the provincial level and along with their colleagues in the Health department at the federal level.

The Liberal Government of Canada, I believe, has a major responsibility in coming forward with options, and a decision will surely be made that will deal in a proper fashion with this most important issue.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Mr. Boyd**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you claim your government is committed to treating hepatitis C through treatment and prevention. Yet as of April 20, Mr. Minister, Vicki Lissel has been cut off of interferon coverage, the only drug that is proven to help her condition. The only reason she received help in the first place was because we brought her case up in the legislature last year.

Now you aren't even helping her cover the cost of her drugs. Mr. Minister, it's completely unfair that your government refuses to compensate hepatitis C sufferers and their families in the first place, but how can you now possibly justify cutting them off from drug coverage?

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter**: — Mr. Speaker, I would very much like if the member opposite would share with me the information that he refers to. I actually didn't catch the name of the individual, and if you would — he says, Vicki Lissel — if you would send me the information, I would get it to the Department of Health, and we would deal with it in an appropriate manner.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Mr. Boyd**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, we certainly would hope that your government would do something on this. And Vicki Lissel is hoping that finally your government will listen.

Your government seems to be able to find money for all kinds of things. It can find money to cover 100 per cent of all government employees' prescription drugs as well as optometric care and even hairpieces.

Your government can afford to put on a million dollar birthday party. Your government can afford to lay on million dollar pensions for members of the front bench right there. But you claim you can't afford to compensate hepatitis C victims, and worse, that you can't afford to cover the drug costs from hepatitis C victims. Where's the fairness in this, Mr. Minister?

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter**: — The member opposite raises an issue that the Leader of the Liberal Party raised last week, and that is the issue of a union-negotiated contract with the public employees of Saskatchewan. And at the time the Liberal leader introduced this subject, she said even hairpieces are covered for civil servants — not mentioning . . . and untruthfully trying to give the image that any civil servant could go in and get a hairpiece when in fact this is for patients who have received chemotherapy for cancer treatment and have lost their hair and under doctor's instruction are allowed hairpieces.

Now it was an embarrassment when the Leader of the Liberal Party raised it in this Assembly, and I'm surprised and dismayed that the Leader of the Conservative Party, who I thought would know better, would stoop to that level in his approach to attacking the civil service in Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

## Casino Expansion

**Mr. Swenson**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Swenson**: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the gambling minister today. Madam Minister, more Saskatchewan people are coming out in opposition to your massive gambling expansion plans. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business surveyed its members, and by a 3:1 margin business owners oppose the idea of casinos springing up all over Saskatchewan.

Madam Minister, you have tried to spread the myth that casinos are going to stimulate the economy and create jobs, but small-business owners know better. They know that casinos are a net drain on the economy and will take money and jobs out of Saskatchewan's economy.

Madam Minister, when are you going to start listening? When will you listen to the people who create the jobs in this province and cancel your casino expansion plans now?

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter**: — To set the record straight, what Mr. Dale Botting . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I happen to be the minister in charge of the casino corporation, so it might be appropriate if I would answer the question about casinos.

But I want to say to the members opposite that you're absolutely, first of all, on the wrong track when you say that the casino that is being constructed in Regina, the renovations that are going on at the Union Station, are not supported by the business community. That is absolutely not true.

But I want to say as well, here again I'm surprised that the members of the Conservative caucus are following the Liberals in Manitoba, who tried to make casinos and VLTs (video lottery terminal) an issue in the election that went on yesterday. And what happened? Mr. Filmon explained to the public of Manitoba that gaming, casinos, and VLTs, were a fact of life. In a very matter-of-fact way he went out and explained to the people of the province that this was the case.

Here today we have the members opposite, still in their routine way like the Liberals from Manitoba, harping about a proposed casino for Regina. As Mr. Filmon said — your colleague in

Winnipeg, who won the election yesterday in Manitoba — said casinos and gaming are a fact of life.

There are problems with casinos, with gaming, but obviously you deal with that by having the best programs for helping people who are addicted to gaming, in the process. And so I say to you, you should realize that you are on the wrong track here; that there is widespread support for the government's gaming policy, and get on to the real issues like jobs, like deficit reduction, and like the economy.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Mr. Swenson**: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you haven't won the election yet, so don't prejudge the people. Don't prejudge what Saskatchewan people are thinking. And I would hope that you would stick around in the interim supply estimates that will come later, after this, and answer some questions about your casino downtown, because your seat mate doesn't seem to want to.

Anyway, Mr. Minister, Dale Botting said the government has been quite persuasive in arguing about the economic spin-offs, but his members are more concerned about gambling addiction and poverty. Isn't that something? Business people are concerned about poverty and gambling addiction caused by the NDP (New Democratic Party).

Now, Mr. Minister, if small business says that casinos are a net drain on the economy and an independent study in Manitoba says that casinos are a net drain on the economy, why do you try and perpetuate the myth that somehow casinos are good for our economy?

Saskatchewan people want real jobs, Minister, that you have not delivered. They don't need the false hope of gambling. Where is the study? Why don't you settle the issue once and for all? Where is the study that shows casinos will be a net benefit to the economy and job creation when your own seat mate says the one downtown won't make a profit for four years?

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter**: — Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear to the members opposite that when the debate has been going on here in the province and in Manitoba and with Mr. Ralph Klein in Alberta, who's planning a grand-scale casino for Calgary or Edmonton, and when the issue is raised in the House, the Liberals there say, why doesn't Mr. Klein follow the Saskatchewan formula for doing gaming in Alberta? You're way off track when you believe that we don't have a gaming policy that is acceptable to the majority of people.

Now that's not to say that there aren't problems with gaming. Obviously there are. There are problems with many of the issues that you raise in the Assembly. There's problem with liquor in the province of Saskatchewan. Some people are addicted to the consumption of alcohol. Many accidents are caused by alcohol. What do you do about it? Do you bring back in those days when you take out the liquor from the province and try to control what people do? It doesn't work.

The fact of life, as Mr. Filmon said, is that gaming is here and has to be dealt with. You can do one of two things: hide your head in the sand the way you are today, with all of the repercussions that will come from that; or you can deal with the fundamental issue that you can gamble on Internet based on a casino in the South somewhere; or you can go to Las Vegas, or you can go to Conservative Manitoba and game, or you'll be able to go to the big casino in Calgary. And you folks sit here and say: ignore all that, hide your head in the sand.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Mr. Swenson**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, there's a fair solution to the problem. You say that a vast majority of Saskatchewan people wish to have gaming. We have just raised a number of concerns that people bring to this Assembly in a fair and democratic manner. So the choice is obvious, Mr. Minister, the choice is obvious. New Democrats have always told us that Saskatchewan's unique; we have to do things here a little bit differently.

Well why don't we be a little bit different than Manitoba or Alberta, and simply put it on the ballot, Mr. Minister. Let's be fair. Let's put the issue before the people and say: do you approve of gaming or don't you? And let the people decide. Let the people be fair. You be fair to the people, Mr. Minister, and we'll see if Mr. Botting's right; we'll see if you're right. What are you afraid of, Minister? Why is fairness so wrong in this province?

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter**: — Mr. Speaker, I think there was a ballot on gaming in Manitoba last night, but more than gaming — it dealt with balanced budgets, it dealt with jobs and taxes. And what the public said to Mr. Filmon is that he was on the right track. And they said to the New Democrats that they were on the right track as well.

What they said was, to the Liberals, it was a disaster and they are going nowhere. In fact the saying is today: do you know what three plus three is? Two Liberal caucuses. That's what they're saying around the province today.

But seriously to the member opposite, while he advocates and advocates the idea of American-style politics — that is that on every issue you go to the people and find out what they think — it's not surprising that the Liberals and Tories opposite want American-style medicare, American-style politics.

I say to you we will deal with medicare, with gaming, with balanced budgets, the Saskatchewan way, and I think the people will buy our ideas and our concepts far before they'll go for your American-style medicare and American-style politics.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

## Poverty Levels

**Mrs. Bergman**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government

must take the responsibility for the state of affairs in our province under its management. Today I want to draw the attention of members to the recent report released by the National Council on Welfare. It states that the number of seniors living below the poverty line in Saskatchewan has increased substantially since the NDP were elected in 1991. Indeed there has been an increase of 50 per cent in the number of senior men who have fallen below the poverty line.

My question is to the Minister of Social Services. What has your government done to cushion the blow for the elderly poor who are victims of the huge increases in costs your government has offloaded to people with fixed incomes?

**Hon. Mr. Pringle**: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this question really surprises me, especially from that member. As the Minister responsible for Seniors, I have been all over this province, including out to Kipling last night, speaking to many seniors. You know who seniors are concerned about? Seniors are concerned about the federal Liberal Party, Mr. Speaker — that's who they're concerned about.

They're concerned about the future of their pensions. Seniors are concerned about the future of medicare under that federal Liberal government. They're concerned about the future of education for their grandchildren. I suggest that you pick up the phone — you call Mr. Martin and Mr. Axworthy. Use your influence in Ottawa, if you have any, and tell them that seniors here want that policy revisited. And the seniors, that report also said, which you neglected to mention, that report said that the seniors in Saskatchewan have the lowest level of poverty in all of Canada.

That isn't good enough. We're going to continue working — but the federal Liberals aren't helping us — and be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Mrs. Bergman**: — Mr. Speaker, it may be hard for some of the members opposite, who can look forward to their privileged pensions, to understand what poverty is all about. They won't have to worry about making choices between food and medical prescriptions because they will have million-dollar pensions to depend on.

The fact is that under this NDP government more and more seniors are falling below the poverty line, at the same time as the NDP reduced the Saskatchewan Pension Plan payments and virtually eliminated the prescription drug plan.

My question is to the Deputy Premier. If you and your colleagues had the foresight to look after yourself in luxury after retirement, why have your policies failed to address the plight of the elderly poor?

**Hon. Mr. Pringle**: — Well, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member isn't aware of this, but it has come to my attention that the federal Liberal government has just cut drug benefits to veterans. Now I think you need to look in your own back yard. They've just cut . . . they've just announced they're reducing drug benefits for veterans, war veterans, while they're celebrating the big cross-Canada celebration with regard to celebrating about veterans — Canada Remembers.

Mr. Speaker, why did that member two years ago vote against an increase to the seniors' income plan? You voted against that — your leader voted against that. Okay, you weren't here, but your leader voted against that.

Now you're also not being . . . I'm not saying you're misleading the public, but seniors recognize that we're cleaning up the Tory mess and they appreciate the special drug support program. And if you read the last paper from the Sask Seniors Association, you'll see there — and I'll send you over the article — they compliment the Government of Saskatchewan on their latest budget. Look that up; the seniors are happy with us.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Mrs. Bergman**: — I'd like to remind the minister that I wasn't here two years ago. I didn't vote on that Bill.

Mr. Speaker, our welfare rolls are ballooning; taxes have skyrocketed. Any increase in the cost of living has been directly imposed by this government's policies. There are more hungry children today than there were when the NDP promised to eliminate the problem in 1991. Not only do the pioneers of this province have to line up for long-term care and medical treatment, but now as a group they are falling more and more below the poverty line.

My question to the Deputy Premier: if the unemployed, the working poor, the hungry children, and the plight of seniors in Saskatchewan are not your responsibility, just what is the priority of your government?

**Hon. Mr. Pringle**: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I have talked to this member personally about a situation. You know that back in January of this year, I had a trip planned to Ottawa which I cancelled four hours before I left. I was going to sign an agreement with Mr. Axworthy on a family poverty strategy. Who pulled out? The federal government pulled out. They pulled out of that agreement.

The letter of agreement was negotiated and agreed to, and so far they have not given any money for their day care strategy, their so-called red book, day care strategy which low income, single-parent families are still waiting for.

You talk to Mr. Axworthy about putting the money back on the table to deal with family poverty if you're really interested in it.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

## Firearms Legislation

**Mr. D'Autremont**: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, on Monday you made a flowery announcement that you were going to ask the federal government to allow Saskatchewan to opt out of the gun registry. Well your federal counterpart

appears to have shot you down in flames before you even got a chance to take off. You'll excuse me from saying, I told you so.

Your resolution isn't going to make a whiff of difference in the gun debate, because Sergeant Rock isn't going to listen to talk; he isn't going to respond to requests or resolutions or anything else but firm action.

Mr. Minister, can you tell us if you have anything else planned other than this trip to Ottawa which is already being neutered?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington**: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's apparent that Liberals in Ottawa don't listen very well. It doesn't seem that they listened very well in Manitoba and it doesn't seem that they're much better at it in Saskatchewan.

Let me say though, with respect to the committee going to Ottawa, this shouldn't be discounted. The committee is going to speak . . . the all-party committee is going to speak to the federal parliamentary committee. Mr. Rock has said he will pay heed to that all-parliamentary committee.

That should be allowed to play itself out and should be given every opportunity to work before we go to something else.

**Mr. D'Autremont**: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can certainly understand why the Minister of Justice would not rise and respond after Allan Rock blew his tail feathers off.

But, Mr. Minister, I would hope you will excuse the analogy, but you're out of ammunition — even blanks. You fail to take into account the fact that the Liberals don't care about Saskatchewan and they don't want to listen to our regional concerns.

The opting-out strategy has been rejected. This Liberal Justice Committee hearing is being set up to be a whitewash, a PR (public relations) effort only.

Mr. Minister, why not negotiate from a position of strength? Why not entrench property rights and invoke the notwithstanding clause and then go to Ottawa and stick that in the Liberals' face. Why not put your partisan opposition to property rights aside and do the right thing for Saskatchewan? Will you do that today, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington**: — This has indeed been a difficult relationship with the Liberal Party. We have had discussions with them on a variety of issues, none of which have been terribly successful. We tried to talk to them about the Crow rate; they did it anyway. We have talked to them about health care; we have expressed our concern about the Americanization of the health care system and they seem to be proceeding in any event.

With respect to gun control, we are in the process of attempting to talk to Liberals, as difficult as that has proven to be. They do have thick skulls on this issue. They have thick skulls on other issues. All we can do is do our best.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

## Social Assistance Benefits

**Mr. Neudorf**: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to direct my attention to the Minister of Social Services.

Mr. Minister, yesterday I brought forward to you the case of Elmer Sawatzky from Hague and you made a commitment that you would look into it and do something if at all possible. I hear rumours now that you are inclined to look upon his and the community of Hague's situation favourably, and I thought I would get up now in question period and give you an opportunity to respond to that, please.

**Hon. Mr. Pringle**: — Well thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. And for the hon. member, I want to clarify as clearly as I can, Mr. Speaker, that the money that was raised by the community of Hague — and I give them a tremendous amount of credit for having community spirit — will be used for the purpose of which it was intended, that is to supplement medical expenses. It will not be used, it will not be used for basic social assistance expenditures for this family.

Now that family — to clarify — that family had not been cut off from basic social assistance. There was just some question around what this money was. That was all. They had not been cut off, as a matter of clarification.

My deputy minister met this morning with the family in their home and they are very satisfied. And their request is — they like the social worker — they would like this to be dealt with not in the national news or across Saskatchewan, but between the social worker and them, because they're under a lot of stress.

And my blessings and prayers go out to Mr. Sawatzky and I wish the family well and I consider the case closed.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Mr. Neudorf**: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to at first blush here, say to the minister that I take your assurance very seriously, and on behalf . . . and we will hold you to that. But on behalf of the Sawatzky family and the community of Hague, I want to thank you for recognizing that the endeavours of the community of Hague have not gone to waste, that they will be used for the purposes intended.

And your commitment, Mr. Minister, that that will actually come to pass is accepted, and I want to thank you for that. And I say to you that if this is the case and continues to be so, I just want to say to you, Mr. Minister, good job.

**Hon. Mr. Pringle**: — Well thank you very much. I appreciate that. What I would . . . Obviously members can ask any questions they want to of the ministers; that's what the question period is about.

What I would say though is, in the future, I would really appreciate if members would have their community assistants — which usually happens — contact the regional directors. And

certainly most people prefer to have their matters dealt with in private. The Sawatzkys were not aware this was coming up, and I think that I appreciate your comments, but in future this can be sorted out by going through the proper channels, and I would really respect that in the future.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**The Speaker**: — Order, order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Will the members please come to order. Order. Order. Will the members please come to order.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 61 — An Act respecting the University of Saskatchewan

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson**: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill respecting the University of Saskatchewan be now introduced and read the first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

## TABLING OF REPORTS

**The Speaker**: — Before orders of the day, I would like to table two reports. One is a report that I believe has been already distributed to members, and that is the report of the *Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, (Saskatchewan Branch)*. I lay that on the Table now.

Also pursuant to section 14 of The Provincial Auditor Act, I would like to table the *Report of the Provincial Auditor,* of the 1994 financial statements of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) subsidiary Crown corporations.

(1415)

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### Motions for Interim Supply

**Mr. Swenson**: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was waiting for you to introduce people, but I guess it's the same folks that were around the other day except for the minister so we all know who she is so we can proceed.

Madam Minister, we had a fairly lengthy discussion with, I guess he's your Associate Minister of Finance, the other night and he wasn't informed about a lot of things so I guess it's appropriate that you're here today so that we can discuss some issues.

We looked over the interim supply and we asked the minister about what the . . . the Premier, I understand, is off in Kamsack today making a major announcement dealing with funds pertaining to the flooding situation on the east side of the province.

And we asked the member from Churchill Downs where this was coming from and was it in here, and we had some suggestions for him. And he didn't know where the money was going to come from, that it would simply be found. And I understand this money is going to be on the table today at 3 o'clock in Kamsack.

So I'm wondering if you could tell us where the money is coming from that the Premier is going to spread around rural Saskatchewan as of 3 o'clock this afternoon?

**The Chair**: — Order. Could I have the cooperation of the members and ask them to take their seats or take their conversation out of the room . . . (inaudible) . . . impose on the members, but again I ask them to take their seats or take their conversation out of the room.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I thank you to the member opposite for that question. The announcement has not formally been made. It will be made later on today.

What I can tell the member opposite is that the money will be found internally by repriorizing departmental budgets. But beyond that, I think we should wait for the formal announcement.

**Mr. Swenson**: — So what you're saying then, Madam Minister, is that these very departments that you've brought before the Assembly for funding for the next two months, will have their budgets readjusted. And you'll take from various ones of these and adjust that over to the announcement being made at 3 o'clock this afternoon.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — What we basically said to the departments is we understand the need and we understand that circumstances occur in any government that aren't anticipated, and you have to always be in a position to respond to those circumstances.

So therefore, we are responding to those circumstances, but we've also asked the departments for strategies to repriorize other commitments in order to ensure that the financing is revenue neutral to the overall budget.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Madam Minister, if the committee is still sitting at that time, would you be prepared to tell this Assembly what the Premier is going to give away up in Kamsack at 3 o'clock?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Yes, if we're still sitting. I have no problem going through what information will be released at that time.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well I appreciate that, Madam Minister. I think it would be important for members of the Assembly here to understand what is happening. It's of importance to the entire province. And it's unfortunate the Premier couldn't have made the announcement a little bit earlier and then we could have

talked about it from the very beginning.

See, Madam Minister, there's a great concern out there and this goes back to the history of your government the last few years. For instance, in agriculture we had a situation where farmers in this province had signed a contract and they believed that that contract was valid and binding on the parties. And then your government came along and you broke that contract. And you said, well we're breaking it because of a number of reasons and we'll use the Legislative Assembly to validate the breaking of the contract.

And then you said, we're going to use this money for such and such. We would never use that money to balance the budget. And I remember that question being asked in 1992 of your seat mate there when he was the minister of Agriculture before he destroyed the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program), and he said no, never would we ever do that.

And along comes 1995, and we're getting really close to an election, and in all your wisdom you go and you take that GRIP surplus and you balance your budget with it and you give the federal Liberals $317 million so they can walk out of this province with it, instead of putting it into our economy. And farmers and their families and rural communities say whoa, what happened here? It disappeared.

And on top of that, there's another $115 million in dunners out there. And we've asked the Minister of Agriculture about that, and he says, well don't worry about it this year. Don't worry about it. There's no interest on it; nobody's going to go after it. It's not due and payable until '96, conveniently, after hopefully we're re-elected.

Now when we've asked him specifically if any of those dunners are going to be collected, he says, well I can't categorically assure you that there won't be 50 cents an acre or a dollar an acre or some such figure with some of these so-called GRIP overpayments.

Now the problem we have, Madam Minister, you're going to go looking for money. The budget surplus that you projected is already wrong because the Minister of Highways can't do his homework, so those numbers are changing.

You're now going to pass out what we assume is a fairly significant amount of cash at 3 o'clock this afternoon — it isn't mentioned in here anywhere. You're saying departments are going to have to come up with the extra. There is a terrible fear in rural Saskatchewan that that $115 million is a good place for you to go digging for some extra cash.

And maybe it is only a buck an acre or two bucks an acre. But you can go out and raise several millions and tens of millions of dollars simply by changing the way that you address those dunners, and then they end up paying for your Premier's flood assistance. Or they could end up paying for the minister of casinos to build his downtown casino.

There's that terrible fear, Madam Minister. And we have no assurance from the Minister of Agriculture, from the Associate Minister of Finance, that that money is not coming out of, for instance, the so-called GRIP surplus, which you've already plundered a couple of times and would not hesitate, I doubt, after the next election if you're returned, to plunder once more.

So I think it's important that we understand where you're going to get this money from that the Premier is now handing out in Kamsack at 3 o'clock.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — I would say to the member opposite that I think he should wait till the announcement to see the sums involved. And also to say to the member opposite as well, that the GRIP surplus is a completely separate issue. Without rehashing the GRIP debate, I'd be interested to see two years from now how many governments in Canada are still committed to the initial GRIP program. I think that this government, in saying that there was a problem with that program, was in the forefront of what is going to happen with our Tory neighbours.

And as far as the surplus, we need to clarify for the record that the farmers' share of the surplus was returned to farmers. The surplus occurred because the circumstances in the province were better than expected, and so we had good news relative to what we've had in the past.

And so therefore the GRIP surplus — the farmers' portion — was returned to them, as it duly should have been. The other part of the surplus, which came from the Saskatchewan taxpayers, was returned to the Saskatchewan taxpayers, and has been dealt with. It is part of the surplus for 1994-95 and the books in that sense are closed on that. So there's no capacity to do any altering of that.

So what I would really suggest to the member is that we wait and see what is announced, and then I think we've got a better perspective on this debate. And I would also point out to the member is, what we're talking about is interim supply, and so perhaps we should focus on that as well.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the minister has talked quite freely about agriculture and I think I will talk quite freely about agriculture, because it's the very answer that the minister just gave that makes people so afraid. I mean, Madam Minister, that's totally fictitious and you know it — you know it.

The program was always designed to have a three-year review at the end of the three years. You know, Madam Minister, that the surpluses were paid out in the other provinces. The fed money was paid out to the individuals — you know that — every dime. And at the end of the contract the option was always there to renegotiate the contract or terminate the program. And you know that.

(1430)

And you try and tell this Assembly a different story. That's why they don't trust you — that's why they don't trust you. And that's why, Madam Minister, we need some assurance that that $115 million in dunners that you've got sitting out there will not be

used to pay for things like the announcement that the Premier is making in Kamsack today. And that's why you should tell us where in this interim supply Bill that money's coming from. You should name the departments, and you should go through it, and you should tell us where he's taking the money from to put out in Kamsack today. I think that's only fair and credible. I think it's only fair and credible when there are people out there that fear the actions of your government, particularly in rural Saskatchewan, because of what you've done in the past.

The farmers in Manitoba and Alberta, Madam Minister, got the surplus paid out, and that was federal money, provincial money, and the insurance contract holders' money. And at the end of the program period there was always the option to renegotiate the program or terminate it. And you full well know that, and yet you told this Assembly something else.

Madam Minister, where is the money coming from that the Premier is announcing today? Is it coming out of Agriculture?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, I would say to the member opposite what I said before. I think we need to wait for any announcement, so we know the sums involved — okay? We know the sums involved. No, I'm not about to pre-empt the Premier in making his announcement. He's decided that he's going to go, and he's going to look at the situation, and he's going to make his announcement and he will make it when he deems appropriate.

We need to look at the sums involved, and then we need to look at the fact that the departments have said they have a capacity to repriorize. And that's what will occur.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Madam Minister, why don't you then give us a range of departments. We'd clearly like to understand, in the financing of the province over the next couple of months, where we could expect to see monies taken from.

Any time you take money, Madam Minister, from a budget, that means that that budget is going to be affected, and somebody down the line has to pay the price. And there's a whole lot of groups in this province that are tired of paying your price. They're tired of having their rates jacked up, their utility rates jacked up, their taxes jacked up, their transfer payments cut back. And I would suggest to you that somebody will have to pay the price.

So why don't you just give us a range of where you perhaps will go looking for the money, and then we can have a discussion about that vis-a-vis your interim supply Bill.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — I think the member opposite . . . again I'm not prepared to pre-empt what the Premier is going to announce. But I think the member opposite would be helped by knowing that the two departments involved are Municipal Government and Highways. The Department of Agriculture is not involved in this issue. They do not do any funding of the sort that the municipalities are discussing.

So certainly those departments have said to us that they have a capacity to repriorize funding within their departments because we're at the beginning of a year. Things change throughout the course of the year, so that's certainly is where the process would likely begin, most reasonably begin, seeing as those are the departments involved.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well thank you, Madam Minister, that gives us some things to talk about then. Those budgets clearly are ones that, in recent history, have not had a lot of latitude.

One only has to drive around rural Saskatchewan and take a drive on most of our highways to understand the shape that they're in and that our highways had deteriorated to the point, I believe it was back in 1993, when your seat mate was talking about tearing up the asphalt and returning those roads to gravel because they couldn't do the maintenance on them. Municipal Government, this year . . . I mean they've been cut year after year after year. And I know when you went to SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) you got an earful. You got an earful about certain issues.

So, Madam Minister, if it is Highways and Municipal Government that are going to pony up the cash, can you tell us what sectors in those two departments are probably going to feel the pinch in order to come through with this flood money that the Premier's going to announce here in 25 minutes.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — I would remind the member opposite, what we're talking about is interim supply, the next two months. This money will not probably be able to be expended until much later on in the year.

Just with respect to his comments about Municipal Government and Highways, I would remind the member opposite that in 1994-95 in fact Municipal Government came in $2 million under budget.

And I guess the last comment I make would be a more general one. The members opposite have talked about cutting government spending by 5 per cent. And yet every time we get into a particular department or area, it's clear that that's not where they're going to do the cutting.

They're not going to cut Agriculture; they've made that clear. Now they're saying they would never cut Highways, or they find no savings in Municipal Government or Highways. I don't know what the conclusion can be here except that departments like Health are going to take huge cuts under their 5 per cent reduction scenario.

Seems it looks like every other department that they wander into, they find it problematic that we have found any savings in these areas.

So I would say to the member opposite, this money will not be expended, cannot probably realistically, logistically, be expended for another couple of months. And by that time the picture should become a lot clearer in terms of some of the questions he's asking.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Madam Minister, as I watch the TV, I see the water running over the roads and tearing out the culverts

and wrecking the bridges and inundating the towns, and people buying sandbags, and communities all over the place spending money like crazy.

Now, Madam Minister, those communities are going to be asking for some back-stopping, and that means that somebody's going to have to do that. Now maybe there's deductibles involved here; there usually is in disaster assistance. And I'm hoping you're going to come forward with those details here in twenty-two and a half minutes for us.

So there's a whole lot of things surrounding this, Madam Minister, that are going to mean that the expenditure of money is going to occur, and it's going to occur within the two months that we're talking about. And it's certainly going to have ramifications on both of those budgets — both of those budgets.

And I would hope, if I were a municipal leader in this province, or someone who's very concerned about highways . . . and goodness knows, we've seen how many thousands of names coming into this Assembly on petitions every sitting day that this Assembly's been in session. You have had highway petitions, petitions laid on the Table.

I don't know if Madam Minister has taken the opportunity to look at the stack, but I'll bet you if you went back into the Clerk's office, it's about this high right now. And there are literally tens of thousands of names suggesting to you, Madam Minister, and your government, that there's a serious problem to be addressed in highways. And it's not just from one area. It's just not Maple Creek, it's all over the place.

And those very highways that people are complaining about before are now all ripped to pieces. They need major reconstruction in places; they need a lot of work. You're going to have to expend money. How in the world could you tell this Assembly that nobody's going to spend any money in the next two months? Is rural Saskatchewan on the east side of this province just going to drop off the edge of the earth and go away until you get your election over with, or whatever you've got on your mind? No.

The mess has to be cleaned up, the money has to be spent, the earth-moving equipment has to be moved in, the culverts have to be put back in, the storm sewer systems in the towns and the water supplies have to be fixed. And you have to spend money. You're going to have to treat with alum in many cases in order to clean up the water supply. You're going to have to chlorinate.

There are all sorts of things, Madam Minister, that necessitate the spending of money. And if it's Highways and Municipal Government that take the hit, then we need to understand what they're going to do. And it's ridiculous for you to say that there won't be any money expended in the next two months.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, I would remind the member opposite that we're into interim supply. But seeing as he's ventured off into this broader territory, I would bring him back to the broader picture. This government had a plan to balance the books of the province, and we did it because we were consistent across the piece; that is, we didn't speak out of one side of our mouth one day and another side of our mouth the other day.

I would have to remind the member opposite what his party has on the books as of now. They have a balanced budget Act, which will see the debt of the province eliminated in 25 years. Cost of that, about $500 million a year that they're going to find somewhere.

They also have on the record outside the legislature, and their leader's commitments, about $150 million in tax cuts so far. And if you'd like me to itemize that, it's $80 million in a sales tax cut and $100 million in a deficit surtax cut. I've actually been generous; it's about $180 million in tax cuts.

So they've racked up about $680 million a year that they've got to find somewhere. Then they've said they're going to cut spending of the government by 5 per cent, which might get them about $250 million. They're only $400 million short — $400 million short after having cut spending by 5 per cent.

Now when we're onto a specific area, like Highways, they're standing up and saying, well we've got to spend more money. I mean surely there has to be a measure of reasonableness and consistency.

I say to the member opposite, none of this adds up. And it's all very nice politics to stand up in the House and say boy, would we ever be spending more money on highways. But never mind the fact that everything else that we have out there, all the other promises that we've made to the electorate, all the goodies that we've laid out — get rid of the debt in 25 years; cut your taxes — leaves them $400 million short.

So I say to the member opposite, this is about interim supply and I'd be quite willing to go back to talk about interim supply. But if we're going to get onto the bigger issues, I'm going to keep him on some of the other bigger issues as well.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Mr. Chairman, it's very unfortunate that the minister has this propensity to mislead, because that isn't what I asked, Madam Minister. I said there is going to be money expended. You said to the Assembly that no one was going to spend any money. And I just say to you quite honestly, that isn't correct.

You can't tell me that all of those communities and all those RMs on the east side of the province aren't going to have to spend money. Otherwise we wouldn't have a disaster, I guess. What the heck's the Premier going to Kamsack to make the big announcement for? I mean if people didn't need money and weren't going to have to expend money, there's no point in him trooping off there, is there, spending some of the taxpayers' money. I didn't say anything about spending more.

I simply asked you . . . you named two departments. I said I wanted to know where in those departments, now that you've made the trade-off, you're saying I'm cutting here, here, and here. And I'm not going to spend any more of my budget. Fair. I want to know where in there somebody is taking the hit. I didn't

say anything about spending more.

You were the one that told the Assembly that no one was going to spend any money. Well they're spending it by the hour up there in many cases in order to save their communities. They have to spend the money. They're going to have to chlorinate the water. They're going to have to replace the culvert. They have to buy the sandbag. They have to spend the money.

Now you're saying we're going to take from Peter to pay for the program the Premier announces in Kamsack. Fair ball. Nobody's talking about spending any more, Madam Minister. All I want to understand is . . . you brought some requests here. And you say, give me the money; my budget isn't passed yet. The money has to flow to pay for those things. That's reasonable.
(1445)

Nobody's talking about spending more, Madam Minister. I want to know who, in the current budget, is coming up short because you've decided to move the money around. I didn't say anything about 3 or $400 million. I can get into that topic and Crown corporations and the percentage of money that comes before this Assembly, and what doesn't come before this Assembly, and where I could achieve some savings. And we could probably talk about mutual discussions that you've had about selling SaskTel and SaskEnergy, and a few other issues.

We can have that discussion, and we will, a little later on. But all I asked you, Madam Minister, is where are you moving the current budgets around in order to pay for the announcement the Premier's making at 3 o'clock this afternoon?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — What I'm saying to the member opposite is this. We will have to spend some money because of the emergency situation. What I'm saying to the member opposite is that we will be saying to the departments involved and to other agencies of government, we expect to find that money through efficiencies, through repriorizing of spending.

But you've got to — and as I say — wait till we get some more precise details. The budget of the province is over $4 billion. If you do as we do — and we manage every penny as carefully as we possibly can — it means in the course of the year something that you had planned to spend money on, or had hoped or had thought you may have had to spend money on, may very well not occur. And so we will be vigilant in ensuring that that's the way we've spent the money.

I can assure the member opposite, he's not going to see us saying, oh well, we're taking this particular item out of the budget. But what this is, it's what a government that knows how to manage the finances of the province does on a regular basis.

We look at every possible penny, every possible thing that perhaps we thought we had to spend money on, but when we come to think of it, we don't have to spend either the money or all of the money. So that's what will occur. But I think what I would really urge the member opposite to do is — we can discuss these things in interim supply — I think the key thing is to ensure that all of the agencies out there which are relying on the government to come up with the money they require to finance their operations, have their money on a timely basis.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Madam Minister, I can appreciate your want not to do this — that you'd rather go do something else.

But this is important and it clearly is topical because there are going to be expenditures made. You've just broadened it, in your words, from Municipal Government and Highways to other agencies. Okay? And that's different than what you told me 10 or 15 minutes ago — other agencies. Perhaps you could give us some indication of what other agencies beyond Highways and Municipal Government you're talking about.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, what I want to clarify first of all is what I'm saying to you is this is interim supply. If you want to wait till we get into the estimates, we can go on with this.

What I am saying on the other issue is, in the course . . . when you do a budget, you assume all sorts of things are going to occur. Every single year, certain things that cost money occur that you hadn't planned on occurring. Certain things that you thought might cost X dollars don't in fact cost that amount of money.

**An Hon. Member**: — Like a drought or something like that.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — And yes, okay, so sound management means that you are constantly scrutinizing the areas where we thought we were going to spend X dollars there, and that's not going to be required. And then you take that money, and you redirect it to the thing that did happen that is going to cost money that you hadn't anticipated.

And that's how you manage within a budget — no different than in your household budget. You know, you set aside a certain amount of money for car repairs, but the car repairs didn't cost as much as you thought. You've got two choices. You can take the money. Go blow it. Go to a movie, or have a holiday or whatever. Or else you can set the money aside and say, but maybe my basement is going to flood, and the insurance isn't going to cover the whole cost of it, so I'm going to use the money that I'd set aside for the car repairs, that isn't as great as turned out, for my basement.

What I'm saying to you about this government and why we have a record with financial agencies and with the public out there of managing the finances soundly is, when the car repair bill isn't as high as we thought, we don't say gee, we found money; let's find out a place to spend it. We set it aside, and we tell departments they have to be prepared to have that repriorized to where the problem occurred that we didn't anticipate. That's what I'm saying to the member opposite.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well I do clearly understand how a house runs, Madam Minister, and I think most of us do. But I can tell you that I also understand that what you just referred to is one of the — and I have to hand it to you — one of the most politically well-crafted shell games that I've ever witnessed in my time in politics, which you've pulled over the wool of the

eyes of people in the last four years, the way you've driven deficits up and taken them down and used the Crown corporations. I mean, Madam Minister, it's not laughable. It's almost pathetic.

Madam Minister, you talk . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Chairman, if the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster would like to ask her own minister some questions, I'd be happy to release my seat here and see if she could ask anything intelligent. And if she doesn't want to, that's fine too.

But, Madam Minister, to say that after I've cancelled . . . I mean I cancelled the GRIP program and I cancelled the Saskatchewan Pension Plan and I took away the drug plan. And I mean I broke damn near every contract that I can possibly find. And then I've taxed every year and I've raised every utility rate every three months to six months. And after I've done all of this, at the end of the day there's some kind of magic about me managing my household. Madam Minister, please, I don't need the exercise, okay?

I mean it isn't difficult to come up with your household solution when you can break all of the rules. And if you can tax it at liberty and willy-nilly, there isn't a whole lot of magic here. You've done it. I hand it to you. It has been one of the best-crafted pieces of political manipulation that I have ever seen in 20 years of being involved in politics.

And my hands off to you; I give you a standing ovation for the craftiness with which you've done it. I mean you put the expectation level of the public at one place and then you took it another. And it's incredible, Madam Minister. So let's forget about how crafty you are at your political business and get on with the business of studying the budget and the Premier's announcement and the money that is getting expended. And you're coming here and you want another two months of money to do various things.

And we've simply come here and asked you some legitimate questions about the Premier handing out cash today, and about what's going to happen to some departments. And I asked the minister some questions surrounding the building of casinos. These are not difficult questions, Madam Minister. Why do we have to play the hide-and-seek game instead of just laying out what's going on?

Nobody's talking about raising any more money here. I just want to understand where you're moving the money around and what you're going to do with it.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, I can't resist when I have the former premier mentioning the auditor. The annals of the history of this province will burn when the record of his administration in the management of the finances of this province are written, and when the comments that the Provincial Auditor made about the accountability or lack thereof, are put on the record.

As I say — as a historian — the record will burn. The history books will be smoking.

Now getting back to the very reasonable question that the member opposite has asked, I think I've given you as much information as I can, and I want to clarify that it's 5 o'clock that the announcement is going to made. I said 5 o'clock initially. What I say . . .

**An Hon. Member**: — Well we'll wait till then.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Yes, no problem. What I said to the member opposite is that if there is an unexpected expenditure, there are also unexpected savings, and that's where the money is coming from. So you're simply not going to see us saying this part of the budget is now no longer part of the budget. That won't occur.

And I think one of the things that our public service should be given more credit for is their incredible success in the last three years at managing the finances in this way so that they have been able, last year for example, to deal with a $40 million increase in interest rates which was unexpected. They have been able to deal with offloading from the federal government which was unexpected. So there is a capacity in the system to deal with these issues.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Madam Minister, when you talked about Municipal Government, Highways, and other agencies, is there a chance that the $60 million that you projected from CIC and then pulled back when you had other revenue, the GRIP money, to balance with, is that a possibility that that $60 million in CIC could re-enter the budgetary process to pay for the program that the Premier's announcing today? Is that a reasonable conclusion about “other agencies”?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — To the member opposite, I would just remind him that that's last year's budget. That budget has been closed. There's no capacity to change anything associated with last year's budget.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Madam Minister, until a few weeks ago your Highways minister and your Ag minister wanted to move money from last year's budget into this year, and they were all upset when the Assembly didn't grant them the permission.

I mean on one hand you won't talk about what happened last year, and on the other hand you got ministers that are trying to move cash from last year to this year. Why is it okay for those two ministers to move it around, and you can't? You're the Minister of Finance.

And that brings up another topic, Madam Minister. There was 20 million bucks that your Minister of Highways put on the table here, and he said if I don't get her spent by the end of the budget year, I got terrible problems, and I can't get money from the feds, and I can't do this. But I want to move it from last year's budget into this year's budget.

And I asked the associate minister the other day about it, and he didn't seem to know a whole lot where that money was or where it was going or what the future plans . . . Is the $20 million, Madam Minister, that the Highways minister had in '94-95, now available for '95-96. Is that possibly what the Premier's going to

use to make the announcement in Kamsack? And it's very unfortunate that he would stage that for 5 o'clock instead of allowing this Assembly to discuss what he's doing up in Kamsack this afternoon. Is that a possibility?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — To give the member opposite a short answer, no. The Highways money will not be reintroduced in any way — the money that you're talking about.

But I would remind the member opposite that what we're talking about here is interim supply and we're talking about funding to groups like schools, hospitals, and other agencies who need their money. And why they don't have it is important. This province introduced its budget earlier than any other province in Canada — February 16. The idea behind introducing an early budget was to give the legislature lots of time to debate the budget and to have it passed by the year end, March 31. If in fact the budget was passed by March 31, we would not be here doing this process.

But because the legislature has not passed the budget, money provided for in that budget, for agencies like schools and hospitals and other organizations, has to be expended. We have to give them their money. And so therefore we have this process of interim supply. And as I say, I think the key thing is that we ensure that these people do get their money on time.

These other questions are questions that I think are more appropriately discussed in estimates.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry that I have to remind Madam Minister, but her colleague, her Associate Minister of Finance, was very, very pointed on this topic. And I'll quote that minister, from May 10, 1991, that minister — and this was dealing, I believe, with the second interim supply Bill which was asking for two-twelfths:

> It is the tradition, Mr. Chairman, that this House and all houses have grievance before supply. We're entitled to ask questions. It may be that the minister does not have the information with him, in which case he usually says so. But questions on government expenditures have traditionally been in order in this forum.

So, Madam Minister, when the Premier of the province is going out making a significant off-budgetary announcement involving a number — and you're the one that said that — a number of departments and agencies who are going to have their budgets changed because the Premier is making the announcement, is it not in the interest of the forum that we're in, which is the House, discussing finance monies, that we not have grievance before supply?

And I would think it would be maybe prudent for you to tell us more about that. I don't think that I should have to go and read it in the newspaper the next day simply to meet the Premier's timetable. I was sent here by my constituents to ask questions about the business of the province, and I'm asking them today on behalf of the constituents of Thunder Creek. And I want to understand what you're doing with the money and how you're moving it. And that's not unreasonable. And the member from Churchill Downs agrees with me.

(1500)

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — The problem is the member will not accept the answer. It's sort of like, I'm going to keep asking this question until I get the answer that I want, not the answer that's the truth.

The answer that is the truth . . . and I would understand why the former premier is sitting there questioning this because it is about sound financial management and how you manage the province's finances in order to balance the books . . .

**An Hon. Member**: — Tax, tax, tax, tax, tax, tax, tax, tax, tax.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Yes, yes. Not running 10 years of deficits.

And the way you run the finances of the province so that you actually do balance the books is you ensure that if there are savings in an area, money that is not required or is not required to the same extent, they're directed to areas where there is expenses that you hadn't anticipated.

And that is all that I can tell the member, and that is all that I will be able to tell the member after the announcement is made. That is what will occur. That is, the government is committed, as we find areas where, yes, that estimate of expenses was higher than was required, that this money will be redirected to an area where there was expenses required that we hadn't anticipated.

So there is . . . we can go over this again and again, but after you see every particular detail about this announcement, that answer is going to be the same answer. And it's going to be the same answer because what's compelling about it is it's the truth.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Mr. Chairman, you see, that's the problem; the minister doesn't want to impart the truth on us. We'd just like to know what the truth is. We'd like to know what he's doing and who is going to have to readjust their life. And Madam Minister doesn't want to tell us that. She says it's none of our business. We're only legislators.

I don't know why we're even going through this process, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister says, I should come in, I should get interim supply, and you people should just . . . There's a word I'd like to use but it's unparliamentary, Mr. Chairman, and I can't use it. But she'd like me to just off, you know? Just go away. Don't ask questions. Well that's not the way it works in here.

And if Madam Minister's a little piqued because I have the affront to ask questions from my seat, I remind her that I have won three elections, and I have earned the right to have my seat, and I've had the right to ask the question. And maybe after you've won three elections, you'll also understand why we go through this process.

I know lots of members here prior to 1991 understand. They

used interim supply to its fullest extent, and they asked many questions for many days about many topics over and over and over again.

Today, I have an announcement before me. You have come to the Assembly without your budget passed. You have asked for two more months. If you'd simply come for one month, it would have been a much simpler operation, Madam Minister. But you have asked for two more months.

That places us way to the end of June. I suspect that places us even beyond the next election campaign. And to have the freedom to operate in the lead-up to that election, and during that election, is something that I suggest you probably want.

And therefore we are going to ask you a lot of questions about how you are moving money around, because if we're having an election campaign, it is very important that we understand the parameters beforehand. Because, Madam Minister, I'm no longer the member from Thunder Creek. The day the Premier drops the writ, it's all over and done with. I'm no longer a member; nobody's a member.

But you're still a cabinet minister. You still will sit in cabinet. You will still sign OCs (order in council). You will still spend money. And the rest of us are toast. Okay? And that's why we clearly have to understand. Now if you can stand up here today and tell us we're not going to have an election, then maybe that differs my views a little. And I don't have to ask so many questions because I'll know that we'll have ample opportunity in the future.

But I don't think you're going to tell me that today. You're saying give me two-twelfths and get me through to the end of June. Well, Madam Minister, I need to understand how you're moving the money around.

So once again, perhaps you could inform this Assembly and the members in it and the public, about how you're going to move the money around. Because you can't tell me you're not going to spend money in the next two months. You obviously went to cabinet and you said, I believe that there's enough savings occurring here. And maybe you picked on Agriculture, maybe you picked Executive Council. Goodness knows there's lots of folks floating around Executive Council, you could come up with a few hundred thousand dollars. I heard you hired my friend Rod Laporte from Moose Jaw the other day and gave him 44 grand a year.

I know the kind of savings, Madam Minister, that you were lecturing me about that could . . . and what was your statement? You said we manage every penny as carefully as we can. That was your statement to the House. Madam Minister, $44,000 times a hundred is what? Your deputy minister of Finance has got a great mathematical head there. What's 44,000 times a hundred? That would give us how many pennies that you're managing in Rod Laporte's pocket. That's an interesting figure.

And I'm sure, Madam Minister, when we get down to managing every penny for you here, that we'll find lots of pennies for you to help you . . . you know, the Premier could have loaded a boat load up with pennies and taken it up to Kamsack today and showed the folks up there how well you're managing. And you could do away with people like Rod Laporte and I'm sure they'd have cheered him right down Main Street — right down Main Street.

So, Madam Minister, the question is: where have you identified the savings in the item that you took to cabinet that gives you the assurance to tell the Premier to march off to Kamsack and make the announcement that he wouldn't make while the House was in session?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, I will try to keep explaining this to the member opposite. And I really don't know what to say beyond what is going to occur; that is, we're at the beginning, close to the beginning, of the fiscal year. Because if you're going to budget well and meet your targets, you're cautious in your budgeting.

That is, you do put in your budget — if you compare it to a household — a certain allowance for car repairs, because it is possible that your car is going to break down. And you do put into your budget a certain allowance for some unexpected other family costs. But just as in your family budget, not all of those things occur. Your car doesn't break down, or if it does break down the cost is not as great as anticipated.

And so what I'm saying to the member opposite is, because we believe that the budget that we have laid before the people of the province is a prudent budget which is cautious, that has put in place provisions that will allow us in some areas to not have the breakdown in our car or else not to have the cost of the breakdown as great, that money will be redirected. And that is what will occur. And that's what will occur over the course of a year. That's what will occur.

So we can go through this again and again, but that is the simple truth of what will occur. And waiting till the Premier makes an announcement is not going to change this.

Now with respect to the twelfths, what we're asking for this time is two-twelfths, and this is standard practice. When the members opposite were in government, we went through one-twelfth in the first interim supply and then two-twelfths in the second.

So what we're doing here is nothing out of the ordinary, and it's a process that is in place to ensure that people who depend on the government for their money actually get their money when they need it.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Madam Minister, I'm going to switch gears here a little bit, because there was something came up the other day that I found very interesting and your minister, your associate minister, had no answers.

Now you've just given us — and Madam Minister obviously was a lecturer at some point in her previous career . . . about how we manage our budgets and how we count our pennies. So I asked the minister there the other day about the casino that's downtown and what's going on and was any of this money in interim supply going in to that casino. Because obviously

there's a lot of money being expended.

I even took the opportunity to drive down there to take a look and make sure that I wasn't imagining something or somebody was telling me fabrications. So I went down and I looked. And sure enough, there's a guy down there and he's digging piles in the ground. And they had a picture on TV last night of all the toilets being ordered that were all lined up down there to be installed. So we know there's a bunch of money.

So I said to the minister, I said, how come you don't have anything in here. Before, when the government wanted to go buy a bunch of gambling machines, you came to the Assembly. It was Finance had to buy the stuff, okay. You had to give . . . you've got to go out and get the money. And he says, oh no, no, not any more. The minister can go inside the Crown corporation now and he can finance all of this stuff on his own. He doesn't have to come back to Finance at all.

And I thought, wow, things have really changed here because I heard you definitively say that you do the borrowing for the Crowns. That when the Crowns need money for capital expenditures or the Crowns need money for various things, it is up to the Department of Finance and the officials to go out and negotiate and set the bond rates and have the right mix of short, medium, and long, and all that. And you handle that. Well your associate minister tells me that's not the truth any more.

The minister there from Elphinstone is off on his own little kick and he simply goes and he spends out of the cash flow of the Gaming Corporation to do whatever he darn well feels like. And I found that rather strange, Madam Minister.

Could you tell me about why this Crown is different than other Crowns which have to come to you and you borrow for them rather than them being out on their own doing whatever they want, operating and building out of cash flow? Because that's not the way it's done, Madam Minister. So I need you to explain that to me and see how this works.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, I would say to the member opposite, first of all, this is different than a lot of other operations of the government in that it is an operation that can be self-financing, that it is something that is going to be profitable. So what will happen is that the private sector will finance the operations, understanding of course that the government will be in a position to lease the facilities from the private sector.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, that one took a long stretch. You drew the string way back. I mean to say that any of the Crowns aren't self-financing is bizarre. They're commercial Crowns. They're monopolies. Whatever rate they set, I got to pay, and they take it. Most of them are showing massive profits over a long period of time. I mean you've got it stockpiled up in there, Madam Minister. What a bizarre statement to say to this Assembly and to the people out there. I mean we're not stupid, please.

Now you as the Finance minister go out and borrow the money for the Crowns. The Crowns have to come through CIC with capital budgets which they present and say I got to go build a power plant. I got to plough in some telephone line. I got to build some natural gas pipeline. I've got to build an irrigation project on Lake Diefenbaker. And they come, and they say I need X amount of dollars.

Now your minister over here, your campaign manager, seems to have his own little personal fiefdom to play in. Okay. Now this Crown is different, Madam Minister tells me, and the money inside it can be played with without touching the Department of Finance. I wonder how that sits with your officials, Madam Minister? Do they find . . . is that acceptable? Because that's not the way the Finance officials that I knew liked to operate. They wanted to have their thumb on the pulse. Is it proper that this minister can do this without your Finance officials being involved in whatever he's doing over there?

(1515)

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — To the member opposite, I think it's important to clarify two different things: that is, the casino itself, which is being built and developed by a private developer, and the Gaming Corporation, which will lease, from the developer, the facility. So in that sense, it's quite different than any other Crown.

I would point out there's no budgetary expenses here for other Crowns either because of the fact they are self-financing. What I said is different than many aspects of government operations, different than a line department.

But I think it's important to keep that distinction, that the private developer will be responsible for developing the casino. The Gaming Corporation, as part of its expenses in running, the Gaming Corporation will lease the facility. The cost for leasing the facility will be offset by the revenue.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Madam Minister, I'm glad you retracted yourself and said that it isn't different than any other Crown. You quickly made the determination that yes, between line departments and Crowns, there is a difference. I understand the difference, Madam Minister.

And naturally the developer will build into the lease enough money to get back whatever . . . You think some developer is going to build you a building in downtown Regina and not get enough money back out of it to pay for the cost of developing it? No. He's going to build it into the lease fee. And the province of Saskatchewan is going to run the building — right?

The minister, the other day, says, well we don't expect it to maybe make any profit for at least four years. So that tells me, Madam Minister, if it's in the red, this careful penny management stuff that you were lecturing us about a little while ago, means that you'll have to draw income from the liquor and gaming commission, which in turn pays dividends to the taxpayer, to the Consolidated Fund. And the associate minister says it's probably not going to make a profit for four years.

Now . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well he said it, Madam Minister; read the *Hansard*. Read *Hansard*.

So now we've got the Gaming minister here, or the guy that runs the buildings anyway and cuts the deals and works with the developers, and he's got his own little operation down there where he's obviously going to finance this thing out of cash flow of the liquor and gaming commission from the machines that the taxpayer paid for. And you came to this House and you wanted 20 million one time or 25 million once, and another 20 million, and you bought all the machines. And that money that's being generated, he's got over there to play with.

And the Minister of Finance and the people there, they don't do the borrowing for that. He just plays with that and he does whatever he wants with it. That's what you're telling me when you know full well that Crown corporations should go through the Minister of Finance for every thin dime or the pennies that you talk about.

You explain to me why that minister should be able to go over there and do that and lease that building and do those things, and it might not make a profit for years and years and years, but that's okay. I don't understand how that works, Madam Minister. And there's people all over this city are asking that question.

Why in the world can this take place this way and nobody else in Crown land does that?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Let me go through with the member opposite one basic fact. What the associate Finance minister said, which is absolutely accurate, is that in our four-year budgeting we have not put in place any revenue from casinos. And we did it for a very simple reason. Because if you are going to manage the province's finances in a sound way, you only put in your budget money that you know potentially is going to be there. And at the time when we put together this budget, it wasn't clear that this casino project was even going to be up and running. The final decisions had not been made.

So it would not be prudent to put in your budget money coming from documents, flowing from documents that had not been properly signed. Because what would happen if in fact the documents were not duly signed and the casino corporation did not proceed, you would be doing what occurred in the 1980s. You would be spending money you didn't have.

Now what I really want to emphasize here — because you're not portraying accurately what the associate Finance minister said, because he was dead right — he said that we haven't budgeted for the money. He did in no way say that we do not expect there to be revenue. We do expect there to be revenue. All of the studies that we did showed that a casino built in the city of Regina will be profitable. When that occurs, that money will flow back into the treasury of Saskatchewan through the regular channel of a dividend, the same as it does for other gaming profits.

So I really want to emphasize that he said we didn't budget for the money because we weren't certain that the agreement was going to be proceeded with because it hadn't been signed. But we do anticipate that there will be profits and we do anticipate that those profits will come to the General Revenue Fund through the channels approved by the auditor and everybody else involved in overseeing the way that the government accounts for its money. And I can assure the member opposite that that will occur.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Madam Minister, you raised so many questions I don't know where to lead off and where to end. I mean you just laid out a ton of them here.

You're saying that that minister, the NDP campaign manager, can go and join up with a developer in downtown Regina and he can pay for the lease and the operation of and the decorating of and the . . . the whole shebang out of the cash flow, out of the cash flow of the Gaming Corporation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes you did. You said he's going to operate out of cash flow. The associate minister said he's going to operate out of cash flow. Okay? And he can do that over the next four years because you haven't projected any profit; you expect it to be profitable but you haven't projected any. So you can operate this nice little enterprise there in downtown Regina out of the cash flow of the liquor and gaming corporation ad infinitum — ad infinitum — and get away with it, because he doesn't have to go back through the regular channels.

Madam Minister, why in the world would you build a casino in downtown Regina if it wasn't going to be profitable? Did you do it because you wanted to save a heritage building? Did you do it because your five or six previous Gaming ministers were all so stubborn about it that they were backed into a corner? Or what? I mean, Madam Minister, why did you build a casino then if you didn't think it was going to be profitable?

Tell us that story then, why we're going through this exercise if it isn't to be profitable.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, I really have to say to the member opposite again, you're twisting what I'm saying. What I'm saying is . . . I'll try to be as clear as possible. Obviously we expected the casino corporation to be profitable. Studies were done that said a casino built in the city of Regina will be profitable. That's one of the reasons why other partners are involved and interested in the project, and why the business community in the city is enthusiastic about the project. This is going to be a profitable venture.

But what I have to say to the member is, when the budget was being prepared — and we're putting in the budget all the money that we expect to come in in the course of this year — the documents to set up this corporation had not been signed. That is, it was not clear that this agreement was going to go forward. So it's not responsible to put in our budget money that maybe, if the deal did go through, would be there, but if for some reason or other the documents were not signed, the deal didn't go through, the money wouldn't be there. That's how you get into trouble; you start spending money you don't have.

So it was a very simple matter of the timing of the transaction and the timing of the budget. That there is simply nobody on this side of the House that has ever said that we do not expect the casino to be profitable. Every piece of evidence and every word uttered in this legislature from this side of the House has

said quite the contrary — it will be profitable.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Madam Minister, I can't help what your member said in discussion. But he said in fact, and I believe it was this way: it's set up so it doesn't have to make a profit for the next four years — so to that effect — I mean that's what he told the Assembly.

But you still haven't answered, Madam Minister, my other question: how is it, how is it in this particular entity that the minister in control can go out and get a hold of the cash flow of the corporation to do his little project down there and not have it come through Finance and report to this Assembly?

Now your associate minister gave me some weak-kneed excuse about Crown Corporations Committee. Well, Madam Minister, Crown Corporations, right now, Committee, is at '93-94 — '93-94. That's already two years behind. Before we ever get down to the minister's own private little play-pen down here on Saskatchewan Drive, those things are going to be old, old, old news.

And I don't think it's appropriate, Madam Minister, that you can have that minister building this thing out of cash flow and operating it out of cash flow when the other Crowns don't operate that way. And I'd like you to explain to me why that minister should be allowed to do that. Why in the world can the Gaming . . . or the casino corporation be different that everybody else?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — What I'd like to clarify with the member opposite is that the minister responsible for the Gaming Corporation is being given no special latitude at all. This is a Treasury Board Crown. Its spending, its activities, will be scrutinized by the Treasury Board in the same way that other Treasury Board agencies are scrutinized. So it will be very carefully scrutinized.

What surprises me a little bit about the member's line of questioning is, I would have thought with his free enterprise bias he would have liked the idea of a private developer actually doing the building of the casino and being responsible for all of that, and the government being in the situation of being the lessee. Surely he's not saying to me that he wishes that we would go out and establish a Crown corporation which would do everything, including the building of the casino. I would have thought that the involvement of the private sector was something that he would welcome.

But that aside, what really needs to be emphasized is it's a Treasury Board Crown that will be scrutinized by the Treasury Board. Its expenditures will be scrutinized very carefully. So there will be no latitude here that you're talking about. It will be treated exactly the same as other agencies.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the minister brought it up so I expect I can give my views on how the thing should be run because she said she expected me to do it one way. And I tell her no, categorically the opposite. Madam Minister, I have believed from the very beginning that this is wrong.

And yes, I believe in free enterprise. And I believe that it should be run by free enterprise with the government as the regulator. And the government can tax it and the government can set the fees and the government can determine the labour conditions or the employees working in it, and the government can do all sorts of things.

But, Madam Minister, I do not believe the government should be building a casino in downtown Regina, nor do I believe that I as a taxpayer should have to dig into hip national to pay for all of the one-armed bandits that you're going to put in it, nor should I pay for the extravagances of the minister responsible.

No, I don't believe in that, Madam Minister. I wish the government were the regulator, the policeman, the guy that protected the interests of everyone, instead of being the guy that now encourages the poor in our community to go gamble away their welfare cheque.

I wish the government weren't doing that. I wish the government weren't the person that was promoting gambling because the government needed money to balance their budget, so they would take it out of the pockets and on the backs of poor people. I wish the government weren't doing that.

(1530)

It would be much easier, Madam Minister, if the government taxed somebody else and taxed them prohibitively if they were abusing society. Yes, that would make sense to me — that the government was the impartial one, the government was the person that could take an objective view instead of the government being the one that's so deep in the muck that they have no objectivity left. They have no objectivity left and they simply want to rush pell-mell into the building of a casino so Madam Minister can make her budget numbers balance out at the end of the day.

Yes, Madam Minister, I wish it were different. I wish it were different. And I think your experience after a few years of this, after you have contributed directly to poor people losing their welfare cheques and people becoming addicted to your one-armed bandits, that you will wish you had done something otherwise too.

But the simple fact is what we're discussing here is the fact that this minister and this Crown will be using those proceeds of poor people out of cash flow to manage and pay for the downtown casino rather than going through the Department of Finance. And I don't understand that. I do not understand why there are not borrowings which are tracked and followed and that Crown and that member and that minister subjected to the same rules as other Crowns. And I've been led to believe that it's different. And you haven't done anything to say otherwise.

And that reason, Madam Minister, I believe that it should be brought to heel and governed like everyone else.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Well what I can say to the member opposite is to go through the structure again.

Say the casino itself is going to built by a private developer. We will then have the relationship of being a lessee. The affairs of the Gaming Corporation are the affairs that are scrutinized by the Treasury Board. So that particular corporation — the lease it pays, the lease costs it pays — all their aspects of its operations, will be scrutinized because it is a Treasury Board Crown, and it will be carefully scrutinized. So there is no particular latitude being allowed here.

What is different or unusual is the fact that it is a private developer actually building the facility and us leasing it. But I think the member opposite doesn't have a problem with that concept.

The one that he does seem to have a problem with, I can't do more except continue to assure him. As a Treasury Board Crown . . . a Treasury Board Crown is scrutinized by the Treasury Board and very carefully scrutinized. And that will occur. And if there is a problem, the Treasury Board will pick it up and that the revenue flow will go through the channels outlined by our accounting practices and approved by the auditor.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Madam Minister, is the minister responsible for the Gaming Corporation on the Treasury Board?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — No. To the member opposite, no, and I'm not sure that I understand why that matters. But no, he is not a Treasury Board minister.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Madam Minister, Treasury Board isn't some mythical entity out there. Treasury Board's made up of cabinet ministers who have Finance and other bureaucrats come to talk to them at Treasury Board, and they go over the various departments and agencies and line departments. And they review the budgets and their spending. That's what it is. It's cabinet ministers like you, New Democrats like you — okay? — politicians like you, people with a vested political interest in their own hides, especially in the spring of 1995.

I mean is Madam Minister going to stand up here and tell us that she doesn't want to be re-elected, that she isn't the best thing that ever happened to the economy of the province of Saskatchewan? Of course not. Madam Minister is a politician. She's the current Finance minister. The Treasury Board is made up of other politicians like her.

Now, Madam Minister, it is unusual to say the least. I mean if this were the case, Madam Minister, then you would just let our friend Jack Messer over at SaskPower who's got a self-financing Crown go off and do his own borrowing to build a power plant, wouldn't you? But no, you don't do that. You say to Jack Messer, you got to come through Finance. You can't go borrow money in New York or Toronto or London or Zürich or Tokyo and go do what you want to do because we don't do it that way. Right?

But now the NDP campaign manager, the member from Elphinstone, he can run off and spend out of cash flow on a capital project. I don't understand why he is different. I don't know why this casino in downtown Regina is different.

Madam Minister, it is a profit-making capital expenditure of the Government of Saskatchewan, the same as a power plant is, as a gas line is, as all sorts of things are. Why is it different? It is a capital expenditure by a Crown Corporation. Why is this one so different?

Or are you simply going to turn the whole herd loose and let them do what they want — you, the Finance minister, that manages the pennies. That's what you told this House and the people. You're the one that watches the pennies. Well I want to know who's watching the minister responsible for building the casino besides a bunch of NDP politicians.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, that is a reasonably cynical view of Treasury Board because the Treasury Board ministers make decisions, but they don't just sit there, and say, well I wonder what we should do. They get information and analysis in written form from people like the deputy minister of Finance, Bill Jones, who has been in this government since the '70s and is a career civil servant and who gives us independent, sound financial advice.

So what I'm saying is that there is no special treatment being accorded the Gaming Corporation because they will be forced to come before the Treasury Board, say here's where we're spending our money, and this is the rationale behind it. Civil servants like Bill Jones and people in the Department of Finance will analyse this in a totally professional way and say, these look like legitimate expenses or — for whatever reason — these don't. And that will form the basis of the Treasury Board ministers' decisions. And it's a very important check in the process, and this particular Crown has been treated just like other Treasury Board agencies and will be subject to that very significant and serious process.

I think one step you're missing when you talk about the six Treasury Board ministers is you're forgetting about the professional civil service we have and about how they put on paper their advice, and then we have to, on paper, respond that we, yes, are following their professional advice for these reasons, or we're not. And I can tell you that this government believes in a professional civil service, and almost all of the time, if the advice is as sound as it has been to date, they follow the professional advice.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Madam Minister, there was certainly no affront to the people in the Department of Finance. I know many of your officials. They're fine people. They do an admirable job. They're probably some of the best money managers that this country has to offer. I mean they faced incredibly difficult times in the 1980s when we were in the middle of droughts and other things and they had to come up with cash, and they had to do it in a hurry. And they had to balance it out with the needs of a lot of things. They're excellent people, okay.

But, Madam Minister, you and I are both politicians — both politicians — and you're in an election year. And I've been under that pressure three times, three times — once in cabinet. I mean, Madam Minister, you've got people working for you in the bureaucracy now that at one time were political hacks. They've made the transition. That's fair. I don't question that,

but don't, don't lecture me. And you have wont to do that. Don't lecture me, Madam Minister. I spent my time in the classroom and I don't need to spend it here with you. We're having a political discussion about political issues, and I understand that.

The associate minister, on April 24, talked about . . . and he got right down to . . . I was going to give you the page number here about . . . he was talking about the fixtures, Madam Minister. I mean he was right down to the tables and the light fixtures and the whole bit. I think it's on page 1735, Mr. Chairman, on April 24, '95. And he talked about the things that the minister responsible was going to be buying out of cash flow, okay?

Now I'm wondering, can you in all honesty tell me that that kind of stuff has come before your Treasury Board. Have you discussed the kind of things that the minister was talking about there? I mean he wasn't quite down to the toilet seat, but he was close. Can you tell me if that's gone through Treasury Board yet? Would that proposal and your Finance officials have put the old check mark on it?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — I can't find what the member opposite is talking about in terms of the transcript. But what I would go back to is that we will not be responsible for building the facility. What we will be responsible for is leasing the facility. And so that of course will be an expense of the corporation which will be reviewed by the Treasury Board process, the same as other government expenses of other Treasury Board agencies are reviewed.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Are you telling me, Madam Minister, that that facility will not be paid for? I mean you've hooked up with a developer to build it, but I mean he's going to want to get paid, right? Are you not paying for the facility, or is the developer in on the cash flow too? Can you tell me who's paying for it, Madam Minister? The building isn't going to appear out of thin air.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — I would say to the member opposite, what we're talking about here is a standard practice; that is, the developer builds and develops the building but does so on the understanding that we will lease the building from the developer. And that's how the developer will repay the cost of building the building. And it's not unusual, it's not as if this is an unusual practice; this is a standard practice.

**Mr. Swenson**: — No, I understand the practice, Madam Minister. You condemned it roundly while in opposition. There's a couple of buildings in downtown Regina which you thought were just horrific because the private sector had built them and then they'd leased part of it to government. I understand, Madam Minister.

And the correct page number, Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry, it is 1737 on April 24, 1995, where the associate minister talks about the outlay of tax dollars, the tables and equipment, the furniture, the fixtures, the building, all of that being purchased through the Gaming Corporation and the cash flow of the Gaming Corporation, okay — so that we clearly understand what the minister said.

And I find that difficult, Madam Minister, and you haven't answered my question. I'm saying, did all of that stuff come through Treasury Board and did your Treasury Board officials put the . . . did they review that stuff, to allow that minister to do that through the cash flow of the liquor and gaming commission?

Because it's important, Madam Minister. You have projected income coming back into the Consolidated Fund from the liquor and gaming commission, and I didn't see anything with an asterisk beside it saying, subject to the expenditures of the minister responsible for the downtown casino and whether he wants silver bathroom fixtures or gold bathroom fixtures. There was no asterisk there, Madam Minister, that said that the minister responsible is putting in the fixtures and the furniture and everything else out of the cash flow of the Gaming Corporation. Now did your Treasury Board people tell you that it's done and it's okay? I don't understand that.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Yes, you're right. Because initially you said 1735. Okay, that's good. You corrected it — 1737. He's answering there two different questions. Because you're talking about . . . in your question to him you make reference to the purchase of VLTs, right? So he's saying the VLTs were bought at an earlier time; they were purchased at an earlier period in a different fashion. They were bought by the government and owned by the government, that's true. That's past. That's history.

What he's saying, though, is that under this agreement, or this relationship, the casino, the whole casino and everything in it, will be put in place by the developer and then we will pay a lease fee to the developer.

So this is why, in the second part of his answer he's able to say all of those things will occur without any cost to the government, because it's true they will occur without any cost to the government. Because unlike in the past, the government is not involved in purchasing these things. That was the past.

Under this agreement, the developer will do all of those purchases. So therefore there's no budgetary items here; there's no expenses. The relationship will be one of lease.

(1545)

**Mr. Swenson**: — Okay. What was wrong, Madam Minister, previously when you bought gaming machines and you came in this Assembly and we clearly understood that you were spending 40 million bucks plus on VLTs and slot machines.

And now you're telling me that that's past, that that isn't going to work any more. You don't want to come to the Assembly and spend that kind of money on gambling any more; that it's problematic for you to come to the Assembly and ask for that kind of money.

Madam Minister, what is wrong with the Department of Finance tracking the expenditures vis-a-vis gaming like we've had in the past? I don't find it repulsive at all. Because I was able to watch what you were doing. What you're saying now is

we're going to cover it all off with the lease. Madam Minister, do the people in Finance go in and see what the developer is doing vis-a-vis whether he's got brand A or brand B or quality A or quality B? I suggest not. You know what? That minister and whoever he's working with are going to determine that.

And if you're telling me that that's all coming to Treasury Board, I'd love to hear it. I would love to hear you tell me, Madam Minister, and then maybe you could table with us some of that information. That would be a really interesting process.

So is that what you're telling me? You don't like coming to the Assembly any more to buy stuff involved with gaming because it raises the public's ire; therefore you've shifted it over to this Gaming Corporation and to this casino corporation and they've taken all of that stuff to Treasury Board. Is that what you're trying to tell us?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — What I would say to the member opposite is again we're getting some way from interim supply. Interim supply, we're asking for money for the next two months. I can assure the member that there's no money going to the Gaming Corporation from this interim supply.

I can also assure the member opposite that whence this money is in the system and being expended, you will have an opportunity to review it when . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, what the deputy minister tells me is when we come in here with our revenue estimates we will have to . . .

Once we are aware . . . you know, from this year on we will know the Gaming Corporation is going to have a casino, that those agreements have been signed, they are in place, and by next year there definitely will be revenue. So you will have the opportunity to go through that in this legislature. And we will do that in the Treasury Board. So you will have the opportunity to go through this information.

Plus, I should point out, there will be a report, an annual report provided by the Gaming Corporation which again, they will give to you and to the other people in the province of Saskatchewan the information.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Madam Minister, you have already told us, your Associate Minister of Finance has told us you haven't built any revenue into this thing for up to four years. And then you gave us all sorts of excuses. But you've said it; you said it publicly — there may not be any revenue for four years. We didn't put any expectation on it.

Madam Minister, by the time you see a revenue statement, all of that that takes place down there is going to be done. You're saying the thing is going to be up and running and way down the road till it hits a positive revenue stream before you're going to ask . . . you can ask me all the questions you want about my revenue.

Do you know how far away that is? The issue before the folks today and what's going on is why this minister can do these things different than any other Crown and he can spend that kind of money. Because, you say, well it's different; he's hooked up with a private developer. Therefore you shouldn't ask those questions; we'll simply pay the lease.

Nonsense. The lease and all of the stuff that goes along with it, right down to the bathroom fixtures, Madam Minister, are going to have to be paid out of the cash flow of the liquor and gaming corporation. They will be. So that cash flow and its ability to create a dividend or its ability to finance the machines or finance lots of things is determined on how these expenditures go.

You tell me that it's going before Treasury Board. You yet have answered me of whether that process has taken place or not. Have these plans and all the things that the Associate Minister of Finance outlined the other day, have they gone before Treasury Board?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — With respect to what has gone through Treasury Board, is approval to lease the building. Now as you can imagine, there aren't other details because the building isn't even built yet.

But I want to really emphasize and go back and clarify what the situation is with respect to revenue because what the member said was not an accurate reflection of what I said.

What I said about revenue is this. When we put together the budget for 1995-96, it was not at that time clear that this agreement was necessarily going to proceed. So therefore we didn't put it in our four-year plan, because we wouldn't put it in our four-year plan until we know that the agreement is going to proceed and we're going to have the money.

Each and every year, including the budget for 1996-97, when the budget comes in, the four-year plan is revised as circumstances change. And they always will. Every year something is going to have changed. Beginning in '96-97, we will revise the four-year plan and put in that plan now the anticipated revenue from the casino.

So you will have an opportunity; you will have a revenue estimate which you can ask questions about.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Madam Minister, the way I understand it, because they can finance this stuff all internally, they don't have to go to your officials like every other Crown does for capital stuff, that they can fool around internally in there, how are you ever going to really determine what the revenue stream is?

And I knew I wasn't hearing things, Madam Minister, and I'll refer you to page 1738. This is what the member from Regina Churchill Downs said:

> There are no revenue . . . no revenue is . . . no revenue from casinos has been assumed as part of this budget or as part of the next cycle — the next four years. There is no revenue assumed to be obtained from casinos; it's not part of this budget.

Okay? So we're off building a casino. And your colleague says

there is no revenue, but that the minister is going to finance the project from internal revenue. Okay? The minister says no revenue, but he's financing from internal revenue. That means that the revenue has to come from some place else, Madam Minister. These aren't my words, these are the minister's words.

So the revenue has to come from somewhere else in the liquor and gaming corporation to finance the no-revenue scenario outlined by your colleague. And as yet you have not told me if those expenditures have gone through Treasury Board yet — the expenditures that the minister talked about that were right down to the fixtures.

You haven't told me that yet. So I think you should tell the taxpayers of this province if that has taken place, and you should explain why that member, a long-serving member, the Associate Minister of Finance, holder of many portfolios, says:

> There are no revenue . . . no revenue is . . . no revenue from casinos has been assumed as part of this budget or as part of the next cycle — (for) the next four years. There is no revenue assumed to be obtained from casinos.

Period.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, I don't know how many times I have to go over this. What the Associate Minister of Finance said is absolutely right. When the budget was being put together, we put in the budget a four-year cycle, budget numbers for four years out. When that budget was being prepared, the final documents for the casino had not been signed and it wasn't clear that the casino would proceed. So therefore, when this budget was being prepared, the minister . . . what he says is absolutely right. There was no revenue estimates for the casino put into this budget and this budget covers a four-year period.

What it does mean is that next year, when the next budget comes out and we revise our four-year plan, the casino agreement is in place, it is proceeding, the revenue will be there and the revenue will be put in the budget.

But what you're saying, you're taking what the associate minister said and twisting it. He said, because of the logistical issue of timing — that is, the documents weren't signed, the legal entity of the casino did not exist when this budget was prepared — we didn't put the estimates in. But they will be in there next year.

The casino will have revenue; it will make money. We know that. And they're separate issues. And I don't know how many times I have to go over the fact that it's just a matter of timing.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Madam Minister, I guess we'll have to leave it up to the public watching today to see who's twisting what. But I've got a casino going up in downtown Regina; I went down and I looked. The piles are being dug. The expectation is it'll be done for Grey Cup. And the revenue to do all of that has got to come from somewhere, okay.

The minister said clearly it's financed out of cash flow. Cash flow of what? Cash flow of the casino? Cash flow of the VLTs? Cash flow of the Liquor Board? Cash flow of what is he financing this thing out of? Cash flow of what?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — What I'm saying to the member opposite is that once we . . . the developer is building the casino so you see all of this activity occurring. This is being financed by the developer; the developer is doing this because he knows that the minute it is up and running, he will have us paying him a lease payment. Then we will have the expense of paying the lease, but as soon as we have the expense of paying the lease, we'll have a cash flow. That is, we'll be getting money from the casino. So that's what he means when he talks about cash flow. But our expenses will begin when the casino is up and running.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Okay, then tell us what the revenue projection is for the casino. You've made some assumptions already. You've said, based on X, there will be a revenue flow that you can internally cash flow the operations and the ongoing capital expenditures of the casino from X. Tell us what that is, Madam Minister, and maybe we can have an enlightened discussion here. What is the revenue stream that you predict for this particular entity so that we understand which revenue, which cash flow, the minister is spending?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Well what I say to the member opposite is that when the casino is up and running, we will certainly provide that information. What the cash flow is going to be this year depends on when the casino is completed. And what I can say to the member opposite is if you go through the timing — you mentioned Grey Cup — we have a mid-year financial statement in early November. I'm sure all of the information will be readily available then.

But to know what the cash flow is going to be this year depends on factors such as when it is up and running.

(1600)

**Mr. Swenson**: — Madam Minister, you've got it all figured out already. You wouldn't have signed the agreement, you wouldn't have gone with a developer, you wouldn't have got down to the fixtures, as the minister says, unless you had some idea of what your revenue stream is. Either that or you're saying it doesn't matter what the revenue stream is; I'll just pluck money out of the liquor and gaming commission to prop the darn thing up because it could be a dog.

Give me a break. You've made some predictions about your revenue stream. Either that or you're subsidizing it from some place else. It won't work any other way. You got a lease payment to pay. You got the ongoing upkeep of the capital plan, and you're expecting certain things. What is that revenue stream? And then maybe we can have an intelligent discussion about what's going on here.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — What I would say to the member opposite is, when the casino is up and running, when we have the revenue coming in, you will get all of the information. And you don't have to wait for a new budget because we have one of

the reforms that we put in place in this government, is a mid-year financial statement, so that halfway through the year you can go through these sorts of issues.

But I would bring us back to the fact that this is interim supply requesting two-twelfths of the budget, and none of this is going to the casino corporation or to the Gaming Corporation. So that this is not really a pertinent issue to be discussing at this time.

**Mr. Devine**: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just to follow up with the minister and follow with my colleague's questions from Thunder Creek. To summarize, Madam Minister, are you saying that in interim supply you are unable or will not tell the people of Saskatchewan where you're going to be getting your money for the announcement on flood protection and rehabilitation and/or the development of casinos?

You're essentially saying, and I believe that this is accurate, that you'll find it some place from some departments or from gambling or from Liquor Board or from various departments, but you're not quite sure where. And you can't really tell the public any more than that. That if you . . . the announcement today is $10 million or $20 million or $30 million or more, trust you. That this money will come from various departments. You won't tell us which ones.

And similarly with respect to gambling and the development of casinos, you financed the VLTs and you financed the equipment and they're on their own. And you won't necessarily tell us how much and you won't tell us what the cash flow is and you won't give us financial projections. Is that an accurate statement?

You just can't tell us any of that but you want us to give you the go-ahead in interim supply, with two significant economic and political projects under way — one to be announced today, one under way — and you can't tell us anything about where the money's going to come from other than, well it'll come from departments. Is that accurate?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — With respect to the Gaming Corporation, what I have said to the legislature is I have said I have talked about the structure whereby the casino will be built, what the relationship will be with the Gaming Corporation. I have told the members opposite that it will be scrutinized by the Treasury Board. The legislature will have an opportunity to look at the revenue and look at the expenses associated with it, and that we will in the mid-year financial statement, assuming the casino is up and running by that time, be giving an interim report to the people of Saskatchewan. So all of the accountability will be in place.

With respect to the money that the Premier will be announcing today, what I have said is that the government's departments manage within their budgets, and that they will continue to do that. And that because there is an unexpected situation which has occurred, there will be money directed toward that, but that the money will come from anticipated expenses throughout the year that do not occur.

And as I would say to the member opposite, what you have to look at is the scale of the budget. When you've got a budget of over $4 billion, the capacity to have in there things, estimates, that are not required, monies that you thought, well we have to spend, which you don't have to spend, occur. And so we have every confidence that the departments will be able to live up to their mandates, and they have every confidence that that will occur as well.

**Mr. Devine**: — Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, that's part of the problem. We know, and those of us that have been experienced on the treasury benches and in cabinet positions know, that you have the capacity to transfer money from department to department and from Crowns to department. What we're trying to get at is which department you're going to transfer from and to whom, as you're putting together your interim supply.

Madam Minister, what you have just said is the reason that the auditor is concerned with the way that you're operating. He says about 40 per cent of the budget of the province of Saskatchewan is unaccounted for in your financial statements. The summary statements do it, but, he says, watch the transfers.

What we're asking for is the kind of information the auditor has pointed out to the general public that we should ask questions about — the transfers between Crown corporations and departments, general revenue between departments. And we've been asking for over an hour and a half what kind of transfers would you expect. Not, oh well, there'll be some surpluses some place and there'll be some deficits in others and we'll work it all out. We know that.

That's what's frightening and that's what bothers the auditor. He says there are some very large transfers; watch the transfers. And up to 40 per cent of your budget is unaccounted for. That's what he says. And if he's saying that, then grievance before supply says, Madam Finance Minister, is your government hiding something? I think that's the headlines that we saw in the paper as a result of the auditor's statement.

The Provincial Auditor has been lobbying the government to use summary financial statements, which provide a complete picture of government operations, including Crown corporations, as a basis for budget making. And the headline is: Is the government hiding something?

The public wants to know and MLAs, duly elected by the people, want to know: where are you getting the money, at this time of interim supply, for your flood assistance — department by department?

And you say, well there'll be some surprises here; there'll be some surpluses here and we'll . . . We want to know, where do you plan to get the surpluses? Out of the Agriculture budget? Out of the Liquor Board? Where do you see the excesses? Out of Crop Insurance?

See, we've watched you do this too many times, Madam Minister, not to know that there is a great deal of capacity — discretionary capacity — in the departments. And particularly as my colleague here, the member from Thunder Creek, points

out, the NDP campaign manager has even more discretion because he doesn't have to report back until about half a year from now.

So in the event that the NDP campaign manager has at his discretion several millions of dollars which he can spend . . . You funded the gaming, you funded the VLTs, you funded the casinos and he doesn't have to come in with a budget. You've forecasted financing — it's supposed to pay for itself out of cash flow. He'll have access to that cash flow in the next few weeks, in the next few months, and you won't tell us about it. You won't give us financial projections on what he's going to do, and you won't give us the departments where you believe there will be enough money to pay for the flood program.

And the auditor comes back and says, the kind of information we've been receiving in the province of Saskatchewan, which has the largest group of Crown corporations, and your officials know that, the largest group that are self-financing . . . and as the auditor's financial statements, summary statements, point out, I think it's fair to say, $600 million net profit to the province of Saskatchewan in 1994 — this is the report of the Provincial Auditor — $600 million.

And the auditor points out and he says well, that isn't even part of your budget. And watch the transfers. Madam Minister, if the auditor says watch the transfers, and the general public are saying, and agree with the auditor, that they're concerned about transfers, whether it's between Crown corporations or departments, don't you think that you sound a little bit weak when you say, I can't tell you where we're going to fund a flood program?

We're just going to find the money, we're going to collect it in various departments. It'll be transferred from A to B to C to D. And you can't tell us, you can't tell the public, even the departments that you're going to select from. Is it Agriculture? Can you tell us that? Is it Highways? Is it Rural Development? Is it health care? Is it Social Services? Or is it the Liquor Board? Can't the minister tell the public which departments she thinks will have capacity to fund these two programs?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, I'm sure people reading this or watching it on television or in the galleries would be some amused to have the former premier of this province giving this government financial advice. The premier that took this province through the worst period in its history, a self-inflicted wound, added a billion dollars a year, on average, to the debt of this province, and left my children and your children and our grandchildren saddled forever with his legacy. For him to be up here giving us financial advice is incredible.

Now to get down to some of the facts. He still doesn't understand finances because he has quite misunderstood what the auditor has said. What the auditor has said about the way we account for our money is this: he has said that we went in this province from having the weakest and least useful financial statements — this was when the members opposite were in government — the weakest and least useful financial statements to right now where we have among the very best financial statements in the country. So what the auditor is saying is that he would like to see us budgeting on a different basis even though we budget the same way as the vast majority of provinces do.

But in terms of our accountability to the public, our putting before the public the complete finances of the province, how we spend our money, where we get it from, we have gone from the weakest financial statements, when the member opposite was the premier, to amongst the very finest.

(1615)

**Mr. Devine**: — Madam Chairman, we adopted Blakeney's financial records and reporting mechanism, and it's the auditor, Madam Minister, it's the auditor that says 40 per cent of your budget is unaccounted for — 40 per cent of your budget. And that's what the public is concerned about, and the public believes the auditor.

Madam Minister, if in fact the Crown corporations . . . from the auditor . . . the financial statements of the Crown corporations say that all of those Crowns and those projects that you're concerned about, something like $6 billion worth of investments that you called debt, returns $600 million in 1994 net to your financial statements. And you stand there and criticize me for asking questions, grievance before supply, when you come for interim supply.

You've raised taxes. You've raised utilities. You broke every promise that you made in 1991 that you would never raise taxes. But you did. And as a result of the utilities and the projects that we put together, you now have $600 million net coming to your pockets that the auditor wants you to describe and be careful with, because he says 40 per cent of the financial picture is not put forward by you in front of the Legislative Assembly.

And you're quick to criticize that side of the ledger, the Crown corporations and the projects, those that are privatized, those utilities that you've cranked up the rates. You won't acknowledge that they're making $600 million net, according to the financial statements, the summary financial statements, which is a fairly big help, which pays for the debt, Madam Minister.

Those investments in power projects and water projects, economic development projects, and those very same projects that you talk about when you go to New York. How's the paper mill doing, Madam Minister? How's Wascana Energy doing? How is the fertilizer plant doing, Madam Minister?

**An Hon. Member**: — Not all that well.

**Mr. Devine**: — The member from Swift Current says, not that well. Record profits for the fertilizer plant — record profits. And the Madam Minister says, oh well, it wasn't a terrible legacy that we invest in fertilizer in a province like Saskatchewan that's got surplus of natural gas. We have 43 per cent of all the farm land in Canada, and NDP government never did have the capacity to help build a fertilizer plant or indeed a paper mill or upgraders, or invite the Japanese here, or many

others.

And now they're contributing in the neighbourhood of $600 million net to the province of Saskatchewan. And the minister stands on her feet and she says, but I shouldn't talk about that.

Well this is interim supply, and I'm asking questions. Where do you think you're going to get the money? Are you going to raise taxes? Are you taking it from departments? Are you going to take it from the Crowns? Are you taking it from gambling? My colleague here from Thunder Creek, he asked question after question, and you just wouldn't respond. You said, well we'll just get a little bit here and a little bit there. What kind of an answer is that?

Can't you give the public the departments that the money is going to come from? If it's going to come from Crown corporations, tell us. If it's going to come from Agriculture or Highways, tell us. Can't you give the financial projections for the casinos? Tell us. You must have projections. Where are we getting the money to deal with interim supply that you're asking for? It's only a fair question. My colleague here has asked them nicely, politely, which departments you're getting for, how are you going to finance the casinos, and how are you going to finance this flood protection program? And you're saying well, it's just kind of out of the . . . magic. We have — what did you say? — 4 or $5 billion budget, and there'll be enough there to kind of do it.

Well the auditor said that isn't enough. The public . . . Do you think that's all interim supply is? You just come here and say, well it'll be there, thank you very much; you can all take your seats. I don't know of any legislatures that operate like that.

Where do you think you can get off not answering questions? Why bother having interim supply, Mr. Chairman, if you can't have grievance before supply? Where are you getting the money? And you say it'll come from departments. Which departments? It's only fair we ask you which departments.

You took from Crop Insurance when you said you never would. You campaigned as if you would just protect the farmer; for Heaven's sakes, you've gutted the program. People don't trust you out there as a result of what you did: taking money from farmers, taking money from pensioners, taking money from single parents, taking money from seniors. You taxed and took and taxed and took, and you said, oh, it'll be okay; interim supply is no big deal. I won't tell you where I'm going to get the money. You took from your utilities. You took from their farms. You took from their hospitals. You took and took and took and took, and you sit there and brag about the fact that you broke all these promises and say look, I have enough money now to balance the budget and look at how good the people were.

Well, Madam Minister, there's balanced budgets on either side of you, in Manitoba and Alberta, with Conservatives, and they did it by cutting taxes and cutting spending. You taxed like nobody . . . we haven't seen anybody tax like this in Canada, unless it's the NDP in Ontario. And Bob Rae's running a poor third.

Madam Minister, if you've taxed like you have with a record of taxing . . . And you've raised utility rates, and you've cut pension plans, and you've cut agriculture plans, and you've taken the GRIP program, and you have hurt individuals, low income people. You've got record folks on welfare. Where are you getting the money on this interim supply Bill that you have before us? Where are you going to get the money, from which department?

You've got to be able to tell us — department by department or some idea of your projections — in which department it's going to come from, or else there's no point for interim supply. What do we do here? Just say, well it will come from $5 billion fuzzy somewhere? That's not good enough, Madam Minister.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, I have answered those questions and the record will reflect my answers.

I would make one final appeal to the member opposite. This is about interim supply. I'm quite prepared to address the issues associated with the interim supply. However if the member opposite prefers to do as he has done and wander into other areas, I welcome that opportunity as well.

And don't you ever ask why we hurt the people of Saskatchewan. You hurt the people of Saskatchewan when you added a billion dollars — each and every year — to this province's debt. Somebody had to pay the bills some day, and they're paying the bills that you racked up, and you should be ashamed of yourself.

**Some Hon. Members**: Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — I have some tolerance for the other members of the Tory caucus because, considering the way the books of the province were kept in the 1980s, it's quite feasible that many of those people sincerely did not understand the magnitude of the problem. I believe that. But the person who was the premier of the province of Saskatchewan, in a decade in which each and every year he spent money wildly that he knew he didn't have, must bear the ultimate responsibility for what happened in this province. And you do.

**Mr. Devine**: — Well, Madam Minister, it's shameful. It's shameful the way you won't answer questions after you've taxed the living daylights out of Saskatchewan people. You promised you wouldn't raise taxes. You said enough was enough. Madam Minister, you told the people falsehoods when you said we won't raise taxes.

Let me just go through the tax increases and why we're worried in interim supply where you're going to get your money. Just look at this: SaskPower, February 5, 1992 — you raised the rates 4 per cent. December 29, 1992 — same year — you raised it 4.9 per cent. March 30, 1994 — you raised it 3.8 per cent . . . and over a hundred million dollars in monopoly profits in SaskPower to help pay for your programs.

And this one is even worse, Mr. Chairman. February 20, 1992

the NDP raised the rates for energy — that is natural gas — 4 per cent. On December 29, 1992 they raised it another 2 per cent. December 21, 1993, you raised it 9.5 per cent. And February 8, 1995 — this last February — you raised it another 6.5 per cent. That's 20 per cent increases in natural gas rates, Madam Minister, and utilities and an other $100 million in profits.

SaskTel, March 1, 1992 — the increase in rates was 3 to 5 per cent. Some service and rental rates up 60 per cent. July 5, 1993 — line rental went up 15 per cent. SaskTel unlisted numbers' rates up 33 per cent in July '93. And on January 1, 1994, operator-handled calls increased by 33 per cent — another $100 million in profits in Crown corporations. And SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) went up 10 per cent, 4.75 per cent. And in '93 registration fees went up another 7.6 per cent. Madam Minister, you promised not to raise taxes, and you've raised taxes and you raised . . .

**An Hon. Member**: — Those aren't taxes.

**Mr. Devine**: — The member from Swift Current hollers from his seat and says, those aren't taxes. No, these are monopolies, and you have no choice. If you don't pay your power bill, they cut you off. That's why the NDP always like monopolies. That's why they were against the privatization of these utilities and Crown corporations because you have the people, the poorest poor . . . the poorest poor pay high power rates. And you got them because they have no place to go except to move to Alberta. That's the lowest kind of taxation . . . is take a public utility, a natural monopoly, and squeeze the people, squeeze them and squeeze them and squeeze them.

Only an NDPer will do it. We've seen other Crown corporations and other governments across Canada, and they'll put it out to the people. They'll offer shares. Even the Wheat Pool has figured it out. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool said, let's let the people participate. But not the NDP, not the NDP.

**An Hon. Member**: — Now you're really stretching it.

**Mr. Devine**: — I'm not stretching it. Those monopoly rates are a fact of life. And the NDP like to hang on to monopolies, and the NDP don't like it when they're called taxes. Utility rates on monopolies are taxes; make no mistake about it. If you raise the rates on SaskPower, that's taxes. When you raise the rates on SaskTel . . . what are you going to do? Pull your telephone out? That's taxes.

Madam Minister, you promised you wouldn't tax the people. And people are worried about the fact that in the last four years you have raised utility rates over and over again. You have raised income tax, the sales tax.

You have raised fees and hikes of every description. You've taken the prescription drug program, and you've gutted it — which is a tax. You've developed a two-tiered system for health. If you've got money, you go to the United States or Alberta. If you don't have any money, you stay in Saskatchewan, and you wait, and you wait, and you wait. And you finally just pay. So, Madam Minister, if you want to get into talking about your record and treating the people of Saskatchewan, you just got in on taxes.

And I can say, Madam Minister, if you would've promised during your campaigns before and said, look it, here are all the tax increases we're going to impose on you to balance the budget . . . because the people passed a plebiscite to have balanced budget legislation, and you still don't have the courage to pass it. Here you are, weeks before an election, and you haven't passed it. Because you know why? Because we initiated it . . .

**An Hon. Member**: — Oh, come on.

**Mr. Devine**: — Exactly. The members say, oh, come on. We initiated it and it passed; 80 per cent of the public passed that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Listen to them holler, eh? Listen to them cackle. Mr. Chairman, isn't it interesting? You can tell when you get the NDP's attention because when you hit something that's right on the button, they start to squeal and holler and giggle.

Well you didn't have the courage to pass balanced budget legislation when the people voted for it overwhelmingly. Like, 80 per cent of the population voted for balanced budget legislation, but you wouldn't pass it.

You raised taxes over and over and over and over again, and the public knows that that isn't what you promised. So rural people, senior citizens, those that pay utilities, those that had their pensions taken away, those that lost their drug program, those that believe that the NDP would actually cut taxes and look after them — whether they're in rural or they're in low income — found out the truth, Madam Minister. You just got in by taxing, taxing, taxing, taxing. And that's why in interim supply . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . tax, tax, tax, right. That's why in interim supply they want to know where are you going to get your money. Are you going to raise utility rates? Are you going to raise taxes? Are you going to take from departments?

So, Madam Minister, if you don't want to tell us, if you're not going to raise taxes, at least you could tell us, department by department, where you're going to get the money. Well, Madam Minister, we can't just let you say that interim supply is just standing in the legislature and saying, oh well, it'll come from some place. We'll ask the minister one more time. We'll keep asking the minister, can you tell us which departments you're going to get the money for, or are you going to raise taxes, or are you going to get the money from Crown corporations?

(1630)

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, I've already told the member opposite what the answer is to that question.

I have to . . . to be quite honest, what I'm concerned about here is, in a sense, the dignity of this legislature. We have a process in place whereby we come in and we discuss the budget. We discuss interim supply, and we discuss estimates. What the member opposite has turned this legislature into is a rant. And what concerns me is there are people out there watching this on

television or reading it in *Hansard* or in this room who would like to see the business of the government done here, instead of a rant about the 1991 election and this and this and this.

I have answered your question. I have answered it at least three times. And so the answer is on the record. But you know, the member opposite really leaves us no choice but to respond. As my colleague here said, the most taxing thing has been to listen to the member opposite go on. But he has raised the issue of taxes. And if he wants to get into history, I love it, used to teach it.

And I will remind him of the history of taxation in his own particular regime, regime that was elected in 1982 on a promise of cutting taxes — cutting taxes. And they did initially cut the gas tax, adding $600 million to the deficit and being forced to raise the gas tax again. But they weren't finished raising taxes. They also managed to put two points on the sales tax, raise the sales tax from five to seven. They managed to introduce into this province the flat tax. And by the time they were finished, they were taxing kids' clothes, books, and all services. I think the idea that a deficit was a deferred tax was something they should have taken to heart.

So if you want to talk about taxes, I'll be quite willing to stand here and talk about taxes because at least when we brought in tax increases, we had a goal in mind: to balance the books of the province. What is absolutely astonishing about the former premier's record, all he managed to do was increase taxes and still have deficits, a billion dollars a year in deficits, and huge tax increases at the same time.

Now what mystifies me is why the Tory caucus would like to stand here and debate financial management with us. This is a part of the history we're quite willing to set aside. You've got a new leader. You're trying to rebuild. Great, wonderful. But please, sir, of all the members opposite, the one that we're not prepared to have stand up in this legislature and give us lectures about financial management is the former premier because he will go down in the history of this province as the worst financial manager this province has seen.

And he can stand here and he can re-fight the '91 election again and again and again, and I'll tell you, the bottom line won't change. He lost that election, and if there was ever an election that was deserved to be lost, it was the 1991 election.

**Mr. Devine**: — Madam Minister, you see your attitude is similar to the attitude of the Blakeney administration in '82, late '70s and the early '80s. It was the arrogance of raising taxes, hurting the poor by raising utility rates, hurting rural people, not coming to their defence when there was interest rates of 20 per cent. And you know what? The Blakeney administration said — just like you — we have balanced budgets. That's what it said.

And you know what happened, Madam Minister? The public defeated the NDP. The public kicked all of you out of office but eight, including the member from Riversdale and most of you here, most of your ridings. And you know what, Madam Minister? You had a so-called balanced budget at that time. But it was your arrogance and your taxation and your selfishness and your attitude that you present today that caused your downfall. And that's what's causing it in Ontario. That's what caused it in Manitoba and in British Columbia. It was that arrogant attitude of that you know best. We don't have to tell you any answers. We don't have to explain it.

So, Madam Minister, the NDP lost miserably in 1982, so we can recall that. Let's relive 13 years ago today — today. The NDP lost every seat but eight. And here we are on the anniversary of the 1982 election, April 26, the NDP lost miserably, and do you know what? They said they had a balanced budget. They had high taxation, and they had high monopoly profits, and they were nationalizing Crown corporations, and they had land bank — and they lost.

And do you know what, Mr. Chairman? They lost again in '86 because they wouldn't stick up for farmers. They wouldn't stick up for farmers. They still hadn't learned the lesson. And do you know what happened finally by 1991? Do you know what they said? We'll cut taxes. They promised to cut taxes to get elected.

Mr. Chairman, isn't it interesting that the member from Moose Jaw doesn't like to recall all of the history, not just '91 but '86 and '82 and before that and before that. The NDP record is pretty spotty when you look at the 1980s and the 1990s. The only way that you've been able to come close to financing the things that you want to do is to tax and tax and tax. That's my only point.

And, Madam Minister, if you won't tell us where you're going to get the money, if you won't tell my colleague from Thunder Creek where you're going to get the money, from which departments, we assume you're going to continue to tax.

If the Premier today announced a $10 million project or a 40 or a 50 or $60 million project, where is he going to get the money?

You have a record of taxing people too much. That's why you lost in '82. That's why you lost in '86. That's why people are upset with the NDP across Canada today . . . is because of taxes and taxes and taxes.

And it's not fair. You have very high pensions for yourselves — very high pensions for yourself, and yet you take away the pensions of senior women. You have very high pensions for yourself, and then you take away the farm crop insurance program. You close 50-some hospitals, yet you keep the pensions for yourself. Is that fair? It's unfair.

So, Madam Minister, we're just asking you, which departments are you getting the money for to fund something . . . like it's going to be announced today, 30 or 40 or 10 or 15 or $20 million . . . not just a general answer, but specifically which departments do you expect to get the money?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, I will try one more time to give the member opposite his answer; otherwise we can continue the debate on financial management and history because, I think, that's a debate. Fine with me; I don't understand why the Tory Party of Saskatchewan would want to get into a debate right now on financial management, but if we

want to do that, that's fine.

What I said to the members opposite was this. I said, first of all, let's wait for the announcement to see the dollars involved. I said, secondly, that we would be asking the departments themselves to manage the extra expenditure, that we would go first of all to the two departments involved — Municipal Government, Highways — and that beyond that we will ask other departments to redirect savings that they have from expenditures that were not anticipated.

Now I will see where we head here, and it's really the member's choice. If he would like to add some dignity back into this process and talk about the affairs of the Government of Saskatchewan and where we're heading, I would be most pleased to answer any reasonable questions.

If we're into a history lesson and a discussion about financial management, I of course will participate in that as well. But I really do prefer to try to preserve some dignity in this institution and to try to conduct the business of the institution in a reasonable and civilized way. I would like to try that. I don't know if the members opposite are up to that.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well you know, Mr. Chairman, it's really sad. I step out of the Assembly for a few minutes, and Madam Minister's back in her lecture seat at the U of S (University of Saskatchewan), and she's busy admonishing us for all our past sins.

And you know it's unbelievable. She starts using the word arrogance and that talking-down little tone that she loves to use in this Assembly about what Tories should and should not talk about.

Well I'll tell you what, Mr. Chairman. For an hour and a half I asked Madam Minister about something that is very, very topical, you know. And all she did was dive and dance and not give us one answer at all. I asked, simply give us the projected revenue stream on your downtown casino. And you know what she says? Ask me that question about a year and a half to two years from now when I might have a revenue stream.

Now talk about . . . and she used the A-word, Mr. Chairman, the arrogance. This is the Finance minister who comes before this Assembly with an interim supply Bill for two-twelfths.

Madam Minister, answer this question. If this Assembly doesn't rise before your Premier calls an election, does that mean that this is the funds that will carry this province past, because your budget won't be passed? Maybe you'd like to start real simple and then maybe we can get back. Is that what would be the case? If this budget of yours is not passed, is this the money that would take this province through the election?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Speaker, I would say to the member opposite that I try not to engage in personal remarks with the one exception of the Premier who has a record — a record, a record. And we're talking about his record as the Premier of the province.

What I would say to the member opposite is, of course I don't know when there's going to be an election in this province. What's happening here is no different than what happens every year in this legislature. The government comes forward and asks for one-twelfth and then asks for two-twelfths.

It's especially troubling to me this year though, because the members opposite do seem to be dragging down this process in this House. I was talking to business groups today and I was pointing out, you know, we brought our budget in February 16 with the hope that this Assembly can operate in an effective way — and if you want extra hours, by the way, fine with us; we'll sit here as long as you want, 3 o'clock tonight — so that they would be able to pass the budget in a timely way. So that by March 31, the year end, the budget would be passed and would be in place and people could get their money through the regular channels.

And we did everything we could to ensure that this budget would be passed in a timely way. We brought out the first budget in Canada — early — so that you'd have lots of time to talk about it and lots of time to pass it.

So if we're here for interim supply, it's not because we haven't done everything that we can to try to get this budget through. We have worked very hard to get this budget through on a timely basis.

What we're asking for is something absolutely standard. Because the members opposite have not seen fit to debate and pass the budget, we're asking for interim supply.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Madam Minister, there's no limitation on this process in here, there never has been. Members are paid for 70 days, per diems. That's the only limitation I've ever seen that seems to spur on anything around here.

I've worked in this Assembly through at least two or three sessions prior to you ever being elected, where I didn't get any per diems. They were long sessions; they went 114 days. And you know why they went that long? Because New Democrats wanted to ask lots of questions.

Now isn't that strange, Mr. Chairman. When Tories want to ask questions about what the government's doing, Madam Minister says it's a bad thing, we shouldn't stay here, we're getting in her road. But if New Democrats want to stay in here past the 70 days and ask all kinds of questions, it's quite legitimate. That is a really strange process, Madam Minister. I don't really understand that, why it's good for New Democrats to ask lots of questions and not good for anybody else.

It really is strange . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, the member from Rosemont standing up for 10 hours on end, reading out of some book that nobody ever heard of. That was a real productive use of the Assembly.

Madam Minister, I'll give you another piece of information. We have brought an unprecedented number of Bills before this Assembly, one of which is balanced budget legislation — something I would have thought you would have taken a great deal of interest in. You're the Finance minister. There's a Bill

before the House.

Under the rules — that you control, by the way — that Bill can only be debated on Tuesdays. And the natural progression would be, if you people had any honesty about this, is that on Tuesdays we would debate private members' Bills. And we would debate that balanced budget legislation. And Madam Minister would get all kinds of opportunity to tell us why that particular piece of legislation is no good, or she could amend it, or she could bring in her own which she promised.

But do we sit Tuesday night on private members' day so that we can debate the Bills of the House? No. You know why we don't sit Tuesday night and debate the Bills of the House? Because they're Tory Bills. That's the problem, isn't it, Madam Minister? It's got nothing to do whether they're good Bills or bad Bills or Bills that need amendments. The reason the House doesn't sit and work is because they're Tory Bills. They're private members' Bills. They're brought to this House because our constituents tell us to bring legislation forward. Don't just stand here and criticize. Bring positive legislation forward to the House and debate it. But you know why we don't work, Madam Minister? Because your House Leader, the campaign manager, doesn't want us to work because you'd have to talk about Tory Bills.

(1645)

So then you stand in here, and you lecture us because we haven't worked hard enough, that we're not willing to sit in the legislature, that we're messing up your timetable. It's balderdash — absolute balderdash, Madam Minister, nothing else.

And if you would like to adjourn because you don't like this process and go on to that balanced budget Bill, I'd be more than happy — more than happy. Why don't we debate balanced budget legislation if you're not happy with interim supply?

You have not answered one question. You will not tell this Assembly what the Premier is spending up in Kamsack today or where he's getting the money from. You won't tell us about the revenue stream from the casino downtown that the minister is spending from internal funds on. You don't want to talk about taxation and how this money is going to be raised. You keep telling us it's none of our business, that this House should simply shut down so that you can get on with whatever your political agenda dictates. That isn't good enough.

Now I asked you a simple question. All I require is a simple answer. If the Premier calls an election — say about May 12 — does it mean that this interim supply Bill carries us through to the end of June? Simple, nothing hypothetical. That's the question. Any time in that time period, is this what carries the province of Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, the Bill carries us through to the end of June.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Why didn't you just say it — the answer — before? All the sidestepping.

Now legitimately, if this could be the finances of the province through an election period, the questions I've asked you about the casino corporation and the way that it will spend that money and the revenue streams that will support it and why your Finance officials treat it differently than other Crown corporations, are all valid questions.

You tell me there is a revenue stream otherwise you wouldn't have built the casino. You expect profits. You've based those profits and the legitimacy of the casino on certain figures.

All I'm asking you — and I will take it at your word that it is only an estimate, that it is not hard and fast . . . you base the rental, the construction costs, the leasing costs, the furnishings, and the staffing of that facility based on a revenue stream. And it will be funded internally from the liquor and gaming commission.

What is the revenue projection, the revenue stream, that you will internally finance from to build that facility which is under construction in downtown Regina today? Was it taken before Treasury Board?

I want to clearly understand what you have based the projections on when the associate minister said that you have not, and he repeated it over and over again . . . necessarily have a positive revenue stream from the casino itself. You obviously disagree with that. What is that positive revenue stream that you project in order to meet your lease payments and all of the construction costs and everything else?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Well what I would say to the member opposite, Mr. Chairman, is that . . . repeat what I said before in the sense that, as the revenue becomes available, we will report it to the legislature.

What the member opposite would find if he looked back at the studies that were done on casinos, that there are projections in there in the neighbourhood of $10 million-plus for revenue. So that when you start a project like a casino, you assume that it is going to make money, and the best place that I would direct him is to the various studies that exist. Beyond that, when the revenue starts to flow, we will be reporting it.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Madam Minister, was that study that you just referred to in the House, was that done by the Department of Finance, who normally would review the spending plans of Crown corporations and the borrowing of Crown corporations? Was that done by them or was it done by some other entity?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — It was a privately done study commissioned by the Gaming Commission and it was done by Candace Fox and she assessed the capacity of the province of Saskatchewan to manage casinos and she looked at the profitability of casinos. And if you looked at her estimates in there, she estimates that there is capacity for one significantly profitable casino in the province of Saskatchewan.

And that would be the most reliable place to look right now. Beyond that, when we have a revenue flow we will certainly report it to the legislature.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Well, Madam Minister, we don't have just one any more; you've got lots of them. I mean you have another agreement which is on the go besides, which means that there will be whole lot of other people in the business.

Madam Minister — and I'm intrigued by this — is it normal that an outside person like that would do the projections for the rest of your Crowns and their borrowings? Would that be a normal practice, that they would bring in an outsider for your Finance officials to base their opinions on when they go into the borrowing market in New York or London or Zürich or some place? Is that the process that you're using now for the borrowing of monies for capital expenditures?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite is not listening to what I'm saying. This is not . . . I said it's not commissioned by the Department of Finance. The purpose of the study was not to decide loan guarantees, loans, revenue. The purpose of the study was to look at the capacity of the province of Saskatchewan to handle casinos, and it was done by the Gaming Corporation. So it's separate.

And it's very common for something like a gaming corporation, looking at building a casino, to hire somebody who's an expert in the area to look at the area and to assess how that particular issue is playing out in your province. Quite common.

**Mr. Swenson**: — Was that individual's report the basis of then Treasury Board's decision? And I'm presuming that Treasury Board reviewed the decision to go ahead with the process. You still haven't told me that Treasury Board has looked at and approved the leasing arrangements and the expenditures around it and what that particular facility will look like. Because you're asking — what? — a 20-plus million dollar capital construction project, the leasing fees to be handled by the casino corporation based on the studies of this woman who came in from the outside.

Did that . . . did you use her as the vetting process through Treasury Board then to come up with the assumptions you've made vis-a-vis profitability and what the minister could spend on this casino? Because ultimately the government must have had some say on how elaborate or not elaborate the facility was going to be, you know. Was it going to have crystal chandeliers in it or was it going to have ordinary chandeliers? Was it going to have plush carpet in it or was it going to have standard carpet in it? I mean those decisions, which amount to millions of dollars in many cases, had to be vetted by somebody.

Was her report the . . . is that what you took to Treasury Board to get the okay to sign the lease to have those things put into the casino?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon**: — No.

**Hon. Mr. Shillington**: — It's been fun. It's been grand but I move we rise, report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:57 p.m.