

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
April 2, 1993

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my great pleasure today to introduce and through you to other members of the Legislative Assembly some 17 SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) adult education program students seated in the west gallery. I will be meeting with this group after question period in the members' dining room. It will be tough to tear myself away from this Assembly to fill that duty, but I very much look forward to it.

With the group is Ms. Dagenais and Mr. Danforth. I ask all members to join me in welcoming this group from SIAST.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly 14 Grade 11 and 12 students from St. Isidore-de-Bellevue School in my constituency. Mr. Speaker, they are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Euclid Gareau, who is the principal of the school, Mrs. Andrea Gareau, and Mrs. Jennie Beaudais, who is a parent accompanying the group.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce in particular this group because my children also attend this particular educational facility. Mr. Speaker, this is a French education school in Bellevue, and certainly we welcome them here to Regina.

M. le président, je voudrais présenter à toi et à travers de toi tous mes homologues dans la Chambre ici aujourd'hui 14 élèves dans les 11ème et 12ème grades de l'école de St. Isidore-de-Bellevue. M. le président, ils sont ici avec deux, enseignant et enseignante, M. Euclid Gareau, Mme. Andrea Gareau, et aussi un parent, Mme. Jennie Baudais.

Je vous dire que c'est un grand plaisir pour moi de les recevoir ici dans la Chambre aujourd'hui parce que mes enfants sont aussi inscrits dans cette école à Bellevue. L'école de Bellevue est une école en français et certainement c'est important de réaliser que des écoles comme Bellevue sont importantes pour garder notre culture et notre langue dans la Saskatchewan. Je veux les accueillir chaleureusement ici à la Chambre aujourd'hui. Et je les souhaite une bonne journée ici à Regina. Merci M. le président.

(Translation: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to all my colleagues in the Assembly here today 14 students in grades 11 and 12 at St. Isidore School in Bellevue. Mr. Speaker, they are here with two teachers, Mr. Euclid Gareau, Mrs. Andrea Gareau, and one parent as well, Mrs. Jennie Baudais.

It's a great pleasure to welcome them in the House today because my own children also attend this school in Bellevue. The school in Bellevue is a French language school, and certainly it's important to recognize schools like Bellevue are important to maintain our culture and language in Saskatchewan. I welcome them warmly here to the House today. And I hope you have a good day in Regina today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Purchase of VLTs

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in the House the minister responsible for the Gaming Commission displayed an appalling level of arrogance not seen from a member and a minister in this Assembly since the former minister of Agriculture from Rosetown demonstrated that here last year. We are well aware of what happened to that member, Mr. Minister.

Like the member from Rosetown, sir, you cannot hide behind your insolence and arrogance. You are hiding behind your suggestion to apply through the freedom of information for information that you should be supplying freely to this House and this Assembly here on behalf of the government to the people of the province of Saskatchewan who are paying your salary, Mr. Minister.

You are the minister responsible for the Gaming Commission. I ask that you fulfil this responsibility, and will you provide this information: on what date was the original proposal or tender called for suppliers of video lottery terminals in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd be pleased to respond once again to the member from Morse's question with respect to the process.

I firstly want to deal with the freedom of information and the process that is available to the member. He clearly knows what the application form looks like. We sent one across. He knows that there is a commissioner in this province to whom this process can apply. He knows quite clearly that the Department of Justice has indicated that they don't believe that it would be appropriate for this information to be released. He knows that gaming associations in other jurisdictions who have provided information to Mr. Egan with which to do his investigation have asked that the information that they have provided remain confidential. He knows that there have been enforcement agencies in other jurisdictions who have asked that the information provided to Mr. Egan be confidential.

I've provided him with a freedom of information application form. I would ask him one more time to apply to the chairman of the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission for a release of the document that he refers to on a daily basis, and if he's not willing to go through that process, if he's not willing to understand that process that is available to him or any other member of this legislature or . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for the Gaming Commission says that I cannot get the information through the freedom of information commissioner. You said yourself the other day, and you said today again, I cannot get the information from that source. You have the gall to come here and tell us that we should go through that process just to be stymied like we are in this Assembly every time we ask a question. There are 187 questions on the order paper that you haven't answered.

Will you provide us the detail report, table it today, for the people of the province of Saskatchewan to see what you have directly done as trying to mislead the people of the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I think we're at the point where it's clear that the member doesn't want to understand. I've indicated to him that Justice has indicated that it is in their opinion that this information would not be available. Now I have tabled that information for him. He knows the process. He understands quite clearly. I've indicated to him the role of the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission in that they are a quasi-judicial board that is set up to regulate and to control gaming in this province. He understands that. He knows what the process is with respect to freedom of information. And my question is to the member from Morse: why will he not follow the process and at least apply for the information so that he will know what the commissioner's decision will be? Why won't he do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Well, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, you've told me twice already that the commissioner would not provide it, nor would the Gaming Commission provide it. Therefore I'm asking you, on what date was that tender let?

You should answer in this Assembly the questions that we are asking. What day was the tender let?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I have indicated to the member in previous questioning in here that two days after I was sworn in as the minister in charge of the Gaming Commission I brought to cabinet an information item from the Gaming Commission that indicated that they had short-listed two companies from the original short list of four and that they were

going to sit down and negotiate . . . attempt to negotiate a contract to supply the VLTs (video lottery terminals) to the province of . . . or to the Gaming Commission and to the people of Saskatchewan through the Gaming Commission.

You know that. You know all that quite clearly. As I believe the cabinet shuffle was two weeks from yesterday, so that would put it roughly Thursday, Monday — or Friday, Monday, the date that I presented that to cabinet. But I can get that specific information for him with respect to the date and I will pass that on to him either during question period or later today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, there are some very important facts for the minister to consider here. One, he has not read the report himself. He has told us that at least two times. He has not in any way described for the people of the province of Saskatchewan how he's going to spend the 20 million.

On Friday, March 25 he decided that he was going to prepare a document for the press to see and the people of the province of Saskatchewan to see, that he had supplied the contract to two companies, and yet he is not prepared to provide the information to this Assembly. Why can't he provide the information to this Assembly? Is there a problem in the front row? Is that the reason why you can't provide the information to the Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go through this all again. First of all, he needs to understand that there has not been a contract signed; we're negotiating that. And I can't . . . I don't know how I can be any clearer than that.

He knows the process by which he can obtain information through the freedom of information legislation that pertains to all of the people of this province, all of the members of this legislature, including the media. I indicated to him that Justice . . . was their opinion that because of the intricacies and the discussions with other gaming jurisdictions and other law enforcement agencies who had asked that the information that they gave to Mr. Egan be kept on a confidential basis, they believed that the commissioner wouldn't allow this information to be released.

I don't know how much more precise I can be, but I can and I've had information brought to me by my staff that the date the member is asking for, the request for proposal, was on July 27 of 1992.

Mr. Martens: — Well, Mr. Minister, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, we're starting to make some progress. Are you going to now say that in July of 1992 the proposal was presented to the Gaming Commission on . . . and when was the short list described to one of the members of the cabinet for providing information

from the Gaming Commission to the cabinet? When was that done?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well the questions are becoming not terribly coherent, and it's kind of difficult to understand what he's actually trying to get at here. But let me go back to . . . The Gaming Commission issued requests for proposals on July 27, 1992 where they invited people to make proposals to the Gaming Commission with respect to the equipment and the supplying of equipment. And so the date — so you will understand I'll repeat it again — was July 27, 1992 when the requests for proposals were issued by the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission. And I'm hoping that answers the member's question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, will the minister tell me on what date the security report was initiated and when did you receive it?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — I have indicated, and I'll repeat this again to the minister, I have not received the security report. I have not read it nor do I intend to read it. That is the business of the Saskatchewan Gaming Commission. I have no reason to read it other than I have had assurance from Mr. Egan, the former chief superintendent of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) in Saskatchewan, who is responsible for criminal investigations, that there are no problems with entering into negotiations to finalize, if they can, a contract with these two companies. And I'm hoping that that once again answers the member's question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, in this paper that you gave me the other day, there is information from South Dakota, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Alberta, Atlantic, Manitoba, western Canadian lotteries, West Virginia, New Jersey state. I'd like to know whether you inquired from the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) in the United States about some of the investigations that they're going on.

And surely you should be able to take into consideration that you are closing hospitals in the province of Saskatchewan and you're investing \$20 million in lotteries in people that have sordid reputations all over the United States, and you're asking this Assembly to approve it. That's the question the people of the province are asking and that's the question I'm asking you. Why don't you show us that you legitimately have done your due diligence in relation to awarding these contracts to these people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, again I'll respond, much of the information was obtained from the jurisdictions that the member opposite has referred to — information that was asked to be used in a confidential basis, and I think for obvious reasons.

So what I'm saying is, if the member from Morse would quit playing politics and if he would understand that there are, in fact, some issues that enforcement agencies would want to have remain confidential . . . I mean, he brings before this House two-year-old information, half-truths, and innuendo. And I want to say to the member from Morse one more time, the credibility problem here, sir, is with the past performance of you and the front-benchers here and the record that you have left over the last 10 years in this province. That's the problem.

People have faith in Mr. Egan and they have faith in the people of this . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister. The problem that we see in this case is as evident to us as it is to the people of Saskatchewan, as is evident to the people who are doing the investigations in every one of those jurisdictions that I mentioned.

And what we're asking you is to provide a detailed analysis, and that in that report we're suspecting that that report has information that could incriminate the people down there, and that's why it's being held back. That's the kind of thing that we're asking you to show us and the people in the province of Saskatchewan, why you don't have the freedom to provide that information.

Why is the Department of Justice saying no, you can't have that information? Is there incriminating evidence provided to you from those jurisdictions that is going to seriously jeopardize the decision and the function of the very fact of the mandate these people were given to investigate, that they would provide an embarrassment and reflect poorly on the government? That's the question. And is it going to reflect poorly on the people of the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how I'm ever going to get this member to understand that, first of all, Justice did not say that the information couldn't be released. It was their opinion that the information . . . that the commissioner would not release the information because of the jurisdictions who had asked, the enforcement agencies who had asked that the information remain confidential. And that was the opinion of Justice.

I want to say to the member from Morse one more time, that the people who we put in place to scrutinize the operations and the activities and the ability to perform in terms of delivering these VLTs to the people of Saskatchewan was a very lengthy process; it was an in-depth process. Mr. Egan indicated to the then chair of the Gaming Commission that he felt that it was appropriate to enter into negotiations, and the end result of which would be hopefully a contract to

deliver these VLTs, that there would be no problem with that.

I don't know how many times or how many more times I can explain to the member from Morse that that was the process. If he's interested . . . And I ask you one more time: have you applied under the freedom of information Act? Have you applied? My guess is — and I asked the press if you've applied — my guess is you haven't even applied.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, what better forum for the people of the province of Saskatchewan to see than in this Assembly you providing the information to the people of Saskatchewan?

My question to you: if you haven't read it, why are you relying on the opinion of the Justice department of the province of Saskatchewan in relation to this, for not tabling the document here in this Assembly?

The people in the States, all through the United States, have over and over and over again said to you and to us that there is legitimate reason for concern for improprieties south of the border — all over the place. That is a fact, Mr. Minister, and we are concerned that there may be improprieties here too. Can you give us the assurance that there are not?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the member from Morse: I guess in part I'm relying on the judgement of the Gaming Commission in Alberta who is dealing with the same companies. I guess I'm relying on the integrity of the Gaming Commission in Manitoba who is dealing with the same companies. I guess I'm relying on the integrity of the Western Canada Lottery foundation who has dealt with GTECH for 10 years.

But I say ultimately, Mr. Speaker, I'm relying on the integrity of Mr. Egan and the people who did the inspection and the investigation — Mr. Egan, who has a reputation that I believe is unparalleled with respect to law enforcement officers who have been in this province with the RCMP, who have been in the past and who will be in the future.

And I want to say to the member opposite: why don't you understand the process? And if you're interested in the FOI (freedom of information), why don't you apply for it? You haven't even applied for it, would be my guess.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hospital Closures

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is going to be to the minister responsible for the death of rural health care in this province, the Minister of Health.

Madam Minister, last Saturday 300 people gathered in Prince Albert to rally against your government's forced closure of the Holy Family Hospital in that city. And, Madam Minister, those same 300 people saw the member from Prince Albert Carlton turn their back on them. In fact I saw that too. It was a clip on the TV showing him turn his back. They saw him turn his back on their concerns about their hospital and their health care system.

Now, Madam Minister, my question is a very simple one. Are you going to also turn your back on the people of Prince Albert? Will the family of the Holy Family Hospital be another casualty of your so-called wellness plan? Yes or no, Madam Minister, do you plan to close that facility?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I don't think I should be answering this question, Mr. Speaker, since he didn't address it to the proper individual.

In any case, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the P.A. (Prince Albert) situation . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Let the minister answer the question. Order, order. The question period, if the government doesn't wish to answer the question, they don't have to answer it. But if a minister gets up to answer, then I think she has an obligation to answer the question.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Prince Albert situation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Will you keep quiet and let me answer the question. You don't even get the first sentence out and they start chirping from their seats.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Prince Albert situation, the Prince Albert board has had a review and study done of where they want to move in the direction of health care services in their area. Like Moose Jaw, they have determined that they are going to move from two acute care facilities to one acute care facility. They have done a study that indicates, according to them, that Victoria Union Hospital is the best place to have the acute care services. They are now looking at alternatives and how the Catholic community and Holy Family can be involved in the delivery of health care services in that area.

The P.A. district board is having further consultations to determine, with the community, exactly what health care services will look like in that community. They will be having discussions with the Catholic community and Holy Family, and it's my understanding that some time in the near future there will be further conclusions coming out of their process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, I was not asking a question

about Moose Jaw, I was asking a question about Prince Albert. And that warm applause that your colleagues are giving you in support of that — from that stand — I'm going to suggest to you I don't think that you are getting that kind of warm reception in the communities all over this province, Madam Minister. And that's why you're ducking and that's why you're hiding.

I don't think, for example, Madam Minister, that you would have gotten that warm reception in Eatonia yesterday where over 500 people from that one community came out to take a look and discuss their concerns. They had a lot of questions for you, Madam Minister, but you ducked. You did not show up. The member from Kindersley invited you, and when the people of Eatonia heard that you were refusing his invitation they faxed you, yesterday afternoon, a special invitation: Madam Minister, will you attend? So, Madam Minister, you didn't attend, not one government official attended that meeting of 500 people. Madam Minister, I ask you this question: do you intend to close the hospital in Eatonia?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the invitation they're referring to came to me at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon. And on this invitation they also indicated this: I realize that this is rather late notice but we would be pleased to have you attend if you could.

This is the first invitation I got other than from the member from Kindersley and there's nowhere that I'm going to go that he's asking me to go. And the fact of the matter is this came in at 4 o'clock to my office. And they recognize it's late. And the lateness of this invitation, which almost makes it impossible for us to get an official out there, makes me wonder with respect to what is going on and who's organizing it.

Also, Mr. Speaker, my information from that meeting is that the member from Kindersley was out there trying to whip up the forces, spreading all kinds of misinformation about massive closures of hospitals throughout the province. It's the old KOD (Keep Our Doctors), Mr. Speaker, out there trying to scare people using scare tactics, spreading misinformation.

And I want to bring to the member's attention, Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the member's attention the fact that there are places in this province — and I'm not going to name names nor am I going to name localities because I'm concerned about the tactics they're using over there — there are communities . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — You gave us false information, Madam Minister. John Brock, your axeman, was given an invitation over a week ago and you decided not to have any department official there. If you're accusing the member of Kindersley of spreading misinformation, why are you not out there defending your ill-informed program, Madam Minister? Why

were you not there?

And I'm going to make a suggestion to you, Madam Minister. On Monday, on Monday, there is a meeting in Brock. You are being invited to attend that meeting. On Tuesday, there's a meeting in Weyburn. You have already got official invitation to attend that meeting. Will you be there, Madam Minister?

On Tuesday in Eston, on the 13th, there is another meeting that the citizens are orchestrating. Will you be there? On the 21st — is this enough notice for you? — there's another meeting in Kindersley on the same concern, Madam Minister. You are invited to be there. Will you take the time to be at those meetings, Madam Minister?

That is the question that I'm going to be asking, and I want you to answer that now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I was saying in the conclusion of my last answer that there are communities in this province that are looking at role changes for their facilities and are . . . and these individuals are pointing to the fact that they are undergoing a role change that is resulting in some very positive programming for their community.

Some of the workers are telling us, for example, that a chiropodist has been invited to their facility; that the board is looking at implementing CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and first aid; that public health will be asked to provide a monthly or bimonthly service.

They are exploring options. They are exploring expanded programs. They are looking at ways that they can make the role change of their facility a positive for their community, where health care needs will be met and there will be expanded health care promotion and prevention services in their communities. That's what they're looking at.

Those communities, Mr. Speaker, are positive. They're taking the health reform, the opportunities in it, to benefit their citizens instead of going out and trying to scare the population and destroy what is a positive move . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Mr. Upshall: — With leave, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to introduce 14 grade 8 students from

Bruno and to help my colleague introduce 22 students from Cudworth in your gallery today, just before they rush away for their tour of the building which I'm sure they will enjoy. Their teachers, Mr. Jake Jmoeff from Bruno and Mr. Jim Bridgeman from Cudworth. I would ask all members of the Assembly to help me welcome the students here today and wish them a good trip to Regina, a good tour, and a safe trip home.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Roy: — Mr. Speaker, I ask as well to have leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

Mr. Roy: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature and I'd like to add my voice to my colleague from Humboldt, in welcoming students from Cudworth and Bruno schools, 35 grade 8 students and their teachers, Mr. Jake Jmoeff and Mr. Jim Bridgeman.

Mr. Speaker, and fellow MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly), the Cudworth School of course is right in the middle of my riding. Cudworth is a beautiful community close to Wakaw. Bruno however is in my colleague's constituency. However there is many of the students, I believe, that go to Bruno School that come from my constituency. And it's a pleasure to see young students coming to the legislature to learn a little bit more about our democratic process. And I look forward to meeting with all of them in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply

The Chair: — Order. The business before the committee is the motion moved by the Minister of Finance:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$340,881,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the twelve months ending March 31, 1994.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The government has increased the sales tax up to 9 per cent now. That's had a major impact in my constituency. And the business in my constituency would like to have some answers on how that's going to impact in their area, because they're dealing with the cross-border shopping problem into the U.S. (United States) and into Manitoba. Even though Manitoba has a sales tax about 7 per cent, what happens is when people go to Manitoba to shop, if they have the product shipped back into

Saskatchewan or . . . it works the same as mail order; they don't have to pay the provincial sales tax in the location where they were making the purchases. Even though they're supposed to make a contribution to the province's Consolidated Fund when they make those purchases, I don't believe many people do.

I'm just wondering what kind of an impact this kind of a sales tax increase will have in this one-month period that you're asking for interim supply for.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, yes, thanks for that question. We will be introducing legislation this session regarding an agreement with the federal government to begin to collect some of the provincial taxes at the border. You mentioned specifically mail-order purchases. There is an article today in *The Globe and Mail* which talks about the drastic decline in mail-order purchases.

You would also probably know that Canada Post has changed its policy with respect to those sorts of purchases and now has established a \$5 charge which should discourage purchases of that kind.

And I guess the final point I would make is that the value of the Canadian dollar is a major disincentive to cross-border shopping.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, while people are making purchases in the U.S., the exchange rate does have an impact, most definitely. But when people are making purchases in Manitoba or in the rest of Canada, the exchange rate has no impact. What kind of analysis have you done, dealing with the cross-border shopping problems from Manitoba? And if people can save 7 per cent, or 9 per cent in the case of Saskatchewan, on a product that they mail order, the \$5 charge is going to be immaterial.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, yes, thanks very much for that question. As budgets are pouring in, you will see that taxes are being increased dramatically in other provinces. I would just say to the member opposite, the Manitoba budget has yet to be received.

With respect to competitiveness, restaurant meals are not taxed in Saskatchewan. Restaurant meals are taxed in Manitoba.

As I mentioned several times to other members on the opposite side of the House, we did not do specific studies on parts of the budget. That is we didn't say, what would happen if we taxed hair cuts, what would happen if we did this. Because if we wanted to do those sorts of studies, we would have to dramatically increase the budget for the Department of Finance.

What we did is an overall framework study of the implications of this particular budget on growth in the province, on employment, inflation, etc.

And I said again and again, this government has come out with the most comprehensive plan, with more

information laid before the public than ever before in the history of Saskatchewan.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, when people are looking at the ideas of cross-border shopping and the opportunities that presents to them, or when they're looking at mail-order shopping, specifically with mail-order shopping, they're not concerned about the fact that in one province meals are taxed and in another province they aren't. If you're getting on the phone and phoning an order in some place, you're eating at home, you're not eating in that other province wherever you're phoning to, so your statement on restaurants is immaterial, Madam Minister.

I'm very disappointed in the fact that you did not do any studies on the impacts of this sales tax increase will have on cross-border shopping, because you already know that cross-border shopping is a major problem right across Canada. Not just in Saskatchewan, but right across Canada. And it's particularly bothersome along the borders.

It's a well-known fact. If you didn't know it, Madam Minister, you're failing in your duties as Finance minister in trying to gain the maximum amount of tax dollars available in this province.

Madam Minister, would you explain why you did not do any studies dealing with cross-border shopping and the impact that your sales tax increase will have.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, if I could go through this again. First of all, cross-border shopping is a declining phenomenon across Canada. Yes. So what we would be doing then is to be studying a problem that was a major problem . . . I don't know if the member from Morse wants to talk or listen to the answer.

It's a declining phenomenon. But what I said again and again, what we did in this budget was we did an assessment of the impact of the budget as a whole. We did not take individual parts, or individual parts of the budget that we rejected, and study them separately.

We said, lay it out for the people of Saskatchewan what the projections for growth are over a four-year period: laid out the projections with inflation; laid out our projections with respect to the deficit; and they have before them more information than they have ever had in the history of this province.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, you may be trying to snow them on this, but the people in my area are already seeing more vehicles going across the border again to purchase gasoline. Farmers are already phoning up the dealers across the border looking for bulk deliveries of fuel because of the tax increases that you imposed, and you didn't even bother doing a study on it.

What do you say to the bulk dealers along the U.S. border when their sales are heading south? Oh well sorry, we didn't have time to do a study. We just stuck

a tax on here but we really don't care how that affects you.

Madam Minister, will you do a study on the impacts that your sales tax increases, your fuel tax increases, will have on cross-border shopping?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, what you're talking about is illegal activity.

An Hon. Member: — It's not illegal.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — It most certainly is.

I would remind the member opposite that the President of the United States has talked about increasing taxes on energy, so it would be very interesting for us to do a study today. Would we put into the equation his increases on taxes of energy before they hit Congress, assuming they would pass Congress, or would we leave out those particular assumptions?

The members opposite are always talking about keeping control of the costs of government, yet they come back and they want us to study this and they want us to study that, and they want us to study things we did in the budget and they want us to study things that we didn't do in the budget.

What we did is what was responsible. We did an overall assessment of what the impacts of this budget would be on different parts of the economy and we've laid it out for the people of Saskatchewan. We've also laid out our projections about the deficit.

So as I say, they have more information in this province than they have ever had in the past.

(1045)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, you know very well it's not illegal to buy bulk fuel in the U.S. There are forms to fill out, the taxes are paid at the border, and it's a lot less in some cases to buy across the U.S. border than it is to buy in Saskatchewan. And that causes a great deal of harm to the bulk agents along the border.

You talked about should we include in any studies the impact that Bill Clinton has said he's going to impose taxes on energy. Well, Madam Minister, I'm sure you would ignore whatever was said across the border because you won't even do studies in Canada. So why would you include what anybody else said?

Madam Minister, will you clarify for the people of Saskatchewan whether or not it is legal or illegal to import fuel from the U.S. into Saskatchewan?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, it is legal only if all laws are obeyed at the border and taxes are paid.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, that's a big difference to what you said before. You said it was

illegal to import fuel, and that is not the case; it is legal. You go to your customs officer, your broker, and you do the forms and you pay the taxes, and it's still cheaper.

Madam Minister, is it legal or illegal to import fuel from Manitoba or Alberta?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, it's legal as long as all laws are obeyed and all taxes are paid. But your point is that there's a discrepancy in the tax level. The assumption then is that people are bringing the fuel in without paying the appropriate taxes. If the laws are obeyed and the taxes are paid, obviously it's legal.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, that was not my assumption at all. That was your assumption. I understand what's going on because I've been there. I've seen the trucks come across the border with the fuel. You hide in Regina.

Madam Minister, if all the taxes are paid, you say it's legal to import fuel from Manitoba and Alberta. What process do you have to observe that fuel to regulate it?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, the revenue division of the Department of Finance has post-audit capacities to audit, to find out if taxes have been paid, and penalties are in place if the taxes are not paid.

Mr. D'Autremont: — And how do you find out whether someone has purchased bulk fuel in another province?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, through a desk and a field audit procedure.

Mr. D'Autremont: — So your only mechanism, Madam Minister, to find out whether or not somebody has purchased fuel outside of the province is by doing an individual tax audit on every individual purchaser?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, that's correct.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, then what would you estimate would be the losses you could be suffering from importation of fuels from outside of the province?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, we obviously don't have that information. You're talking about illegal activity.

I would point out two things to the member opposite, and I would point out first of all: procedures are exactly the same as when the members opposite were in government. If they had so many different ideas about how they could have been improved, they had nine years to do so.

And I would also point out to the members opposite that they obviously do not want the people of Saskatchewan to get the kind of detailed information about this budget that they require, because they were

unprepared to move into the estimates. They want to stay on interim supply, which is fine with me.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Madam Minister, yesterday a number of times we tried to move into estimates to study various departments, but it was the government members who refused to allow that to happen, not the opposition side. We were perfectly prepared to go and discuss estimates in departments. We wanted to discuss the estimates in Agriculture, but no, government members wouldn't allow it. And we did that the same for another department, and again no, the government members would not allow it.

If the minister is prepared to answer some questions, I'll ask her some questions concerning environment and resource management. We have a paper here on how much money is being asked for in this interim supply — just over \$8 million. Madam Minister, of this \$8 million for the one month that you're asking for it, is there any monies in that allocation for mitigations for wildlife depredations?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, perhaps I should clarify the procedure. What we're doing now is interim supply which is a standard procedure in the parliamentary system when a budget is before the legislature but the budget has yet to be passed, yet the people of the province want the operations of the government to continue until the budget is passed. That's what this procedure is about.

An entirely different procedure is the next one we move on to, which is estimates. And that is the time in which the opposition has the opportunity to ask the sort of detailed questions you are now asking.

So if you want to get answers to those questions, what you need to do is move through interim supply; then we will go on to estimates.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, indeed the people of Saskatchewan want to know what the government is going to spend their money on. And that is one of the duties of the official opposition, is to find out exactly what the government is spending their money on.

You wish to spend one-twelfth of the budget of Saskatchewan and yet you don't want us to ask you any questions on what you're going to spend it on. The people of Saskatchewan want to know what you're going to spend this money on.

And, Madam Minister, there's an old saying, parliamentary form: grievance before supply. Well the people of Saskatchewan, Madam Minister, have a lot of grievances with the government right now, and they want some of those grievances answered before there is supply.

Madam Minister, again I ask you: is there any money in the one-twelfth for the Department of Environment and Resource Management for wildlife mitigation, for deer depredation damages?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, to go through the procedure again. This is the second day of April. We've asked for one-twelfth of the expenditures. As you can imagine, in one day we've spent very little of that money.

If you really want more details before significant parts of that money is spent, it's very simple; it's very simple — pass interim supply and then we will get onto questions like that. And you have every right to ask the appropriate officials and the Minister of Environment exactly where the money is being spent.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, you're saying that we're only into the second day of April and that we should rush out and just pass this Bill and give you supply. And yet the other day you said you've allocated 10 days — 10 days — for this debate. So why all of a sudden the rush to get on with it? You're the one who said we have 10 days to talk about it.

Madam Minister, you're suggesting we should move to estimates to discuss this matter on the environment. So I will. I move, Mr. Chairman:

That the committee move directly to the estimates on Education, Training and Employment, vote no. 5.

The division bells rang from 10:55 a.m. until 11:05 a.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yea — 5

Swenson	D'Autremont
Devine	Goohsen
Martens t	

Nays — 27

Van Mulligen	Upshall
Wiens	Hagel
Simard	Lyons
Tchorzewski	Murray
Lingenfelter	Sonntag
Teichrob	Roy
Koskie	Scott
Solomon	McPherson
Kowalsky	Wormsbecker
Carson	Crofford
Mitchell	Knezacek
MacKinnon	Carlson
Penner	Renaud
Cunningham t	

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Question two to the minister with respect to this motion for interim supply.

I noticed, Madam Minister, that you're charging people a lot more for health care — various kinds of services in health care — funding for chiropractic care, funding for optometric care, insulin, funding for . . . although you don't include funding for abortion

procedures you're not charging for it, but children's dental care.

On the changes that you have made in charging for health care, like changes you've made in other tax increases, the associate minister yesterday told us that you have research on what tax changes rates will provide. That is the federal government collects information, other institutions collect information, and you get an analysis of this.

In other words, you get various kinds of information that will tell you, well, when we're now charging for chiropractic care, this is the kind of money we can expect to come into the province, into the coffers. If we're charging for insulin, this is the kind of money we could expect here. If we charge another 10 per cent in sales tax, this is the kind of money we could have.

Could you tell us, how much is this . . . in this motion for interim supply, how much does the motion include for funding of chiropractic care? How much money, additional money, is going to come in as a result of you charging for this service?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to correct the member opposite. My colleague, the Associate Minister of Finance, did not say that we did studies of that particular kind.

I would also like to point out to the member . . . I don't know if the member from Thunder Creek wants to talk or listen to the answer but . . . okay. I would also point out to the member from Estevan that what we are asking approval for today is one-twelfth of the health care budget.

If he wants to get into detailed questions like that, this government would be more than willing to answer. But I want to point out to the member opposite, the procedure. First of all, the House passes interim supply; then we move on to detailed estimates. And we would be delighted to move on to the estimates as soon as interim supply is passed.

Mr. Devine: — But, Madam Minister, I'm quite familiar with the procedure and what we have here is grievance before supply. People get to ask you questions before we give you interim supply; so the public, nor me or my colleagues, need a lecture from you on rules and procedures.

What we're asking you about is that you are charging people new fees. Could you please give us your best analysis on how much you're going to make from charging people for, for example, chiropractic care. You didn't used to charge, or you didn't use to charge as much. You're charging more. What's your estimate and we can divide by one-twelfth to see if you have got reasonable analysis.

How much money are you going to make off the people by charging for chiropractic care? Can't you give us an estimate of that?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, there are

about 50 different government agencies here. To believe, for the people of the province to believe, that it's reasonable for us in interim supply to have detailed information about 50 different government departments or agencies would mean that we would have files stacked up — I'm not sure the members opposite want to hear the answers — but we would have files stacked up all around us here.

This is why we have a process called estimates, in which you can ask those sorts of detailed questions of the Department of Health. We would be more than willing to give you those answers as soon as interim supply is passed.

Mr. Devine: — Madam Minister, this again, I remind you, is grievance before supply. Before we grant you and the people grant you the right to spend this one-twelfth, they need to know and deserve to know where you're getting your money from and where you're spending it.

I don't think, Madam Minister, that your estimates of how much money you're taking from people will be accurate. In other words, people are saying, I think you're gouging them. You're taking a lot more out of fees than you're telling people. And if you're not, we'd like to know.

And your analysis will tell you . . . And I've sat in the treasury benches long enough for you to know and for anybody to know that when you raise a rate or you charge a new fee, you have an estimate of what you're going to make from that.

Now, Madam Minister, if you don't want to get into it by chiropractic care and insulin for diabetics, you could give me an overall estimate of how much your increase in health fees is going to raise for the Government of Saskatchewan. Now that isn't 15 different volumes. That is in one category, which is the largest category in the Saskatchewan budget — health care.

What will you generate in new revenue this year as a result of your increase in fees? That's a fair question.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, there's a very easy answer to that: we haven't increased any fees in health so the amount of money to be gained is zero.

Mr. Devine: — Madam Minister, you are charging people for services that you weren't charging before. Would you please explain to people why the prescription drug program is costing them more and why that is not an increase in fees?

You're charging them for chiropractic care and you weren't before. You're charging them for insulin and you weren't before. You're charging them for optometric care. How much money are you going to make?

So if you look at the increase in fees, whether it's prescription drugs or whether it's for services, you are charging people for more and more fees. Now what

we want is an estimate of how much money you're going to make off the backs of people by charging them for that.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, we don't charge people fees. We don't charge people for the drug plan. We have not increased chiropractic fees in this budget.

But I go back to my main point. The member opposite professes a desire to lay before the public of Saskatchewan the details of this budget. I say to him, that's exactly what we would like to do as well. We would like you to be able to ask the questions that you want to ask of the Department of Health. But if you want to do that, then you have to move the process along. You have to pass interim supply; then we will move on to estimates and we will deal with your question.

(1115)

Mr. Devine: — Madam Minister, you're not going to get out of here with that attitude, because the people in terms of grievance before supply have very simple questions that they want answers to. You are charging them now a great deal of money for prescription drugs; they have to pay, where before they didn't. Now that generates some revenue for the province of Saskatchewan.

Can you tell the people, in the prescription drug program, how much money you are putting into the coffers of your treasury as a result of the fact that you changed the prescription drug program so that they have less protection and now they have to pay?

I mean they'd just like to know that. Before they grant you this money, they'd say, well how much are you taking out of our pocket on prescription drugs? And you should be able to answer that. It's a major category — hundreds of millions of dollars. It isn't nickels and dimes; it's a major category.

Can you tell the people of Saskatchewan — if you want one-twelfth here today — ballpark, how much money are you getting out of the prescription drug program because you're now asking the people to pay?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, you know, when I listen to the questions from the member opposite, I come to understand why we're in the present financial situation that we're in. I mean these questions are really incredible.

What we do is we subsidize drugs in the province. We subsidize drugs. We don't charge people for drugs; we subsidize the purchase of drugs by individuals. I know, as I say, one comes to understand why we have the financial problems that we do, and the subsidization level is \$57 million. But that information is open to the member in the budget address.

Mr. Devine: — Madam Minister, would you tell the

people of Saskatchewan how much support you provided them before you charged and asked them to pay, so that we can compare the differences?

We're not going to get into . . . if you want to get into semantics, now you don't protect them. If they can go to Alberta, they can go to other jurisdictions, you can find better protection. What they're asking is saying, I now have to pay; somebody is getting the money. How much is the Government of Saskatchewan reaping in terms of benefits as the result of your decision that the taxpayer and the users of health care now have to pay for prescription drugs?

It used to be, for example, a \$50 deductible for a senior citizen. Now it's something like \$800 every second quarter. So somebody's picking up \$750. And obviously the consumer of health care in this province wants to know, where is the money going. How much did the treasury of Saskatchewan benefit as a result of your change in policy? Can you answer that question?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, I really do understand why we have the problems that we do in this province. What happens is the government subsidizes the purchase of drugs by individuals in the province.

If the member wants information, he's already had it given to him. Saskatchewan *Estimates*, page 66, gives him exactly the information that he requires with respect to the drug plan. It says: 1993-94, \$57 million subsidy; 1992-93, \$67.7 million in subsidy.

But I think the people of Saskatchewan expect the opposition to be responsible, to look through the information they have and to digest it, and to follow the procedures of the House and say: yes, this is interim supply; we understand what that is and we understand what estimates are, and they're separate procedures.

Mr. Devine: — Well, Madam Minister, all I'm asking you is to give the public the information. So that if you are getting more revenue coming into the province of Saskatchewan, or there's a benefit, put it in your . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . If the benefit to the people . . . to the Government of Saskatchewan as a result of your changes, then we want them documented . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The hon. Health minister, if she wants . . . If the Health minister, Mr. Chairman, wants to respond, we'll be glad to get her into this.

She's been invited across the province to explain her position to hospitals and to people all over Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and she says, a few Tory ridings. I'll tell you Prince Albert doesn't exactly happen to be a Tory riding. And there's 300 people came out the other day to kick your health care policy all over the place because they don't like what you're doing. And you wouldn't even allow them to be elected to a board before you've made these decisions.

And the health care minister is now invited to Weyburn. She's invited to

Kindersley. She's invited to Eatonia and to Leader and to Prince Albert and to Melfort and to Nipawin and she won't show up. She won't show up because she's afraid to show up, because 500 people come there because they are worried and they don't like the wellness model.

And don't look at the chairman. You asked for this. So you can sit there and find out what the people of Saskatchewan think. They think you're arrogant. Your wellness model is not wellness at all. It hurts rural Saskatchewan. And if the Minister of Finance can't give answers, then you can stand in your place and you can give the answers if you think that it's such a smart thing to do to hurt rural people.

You're sitting beside a former Minister of Agriculture who went through the very same thing. People rallied across Saskatchewan because they didn't believe him and he lost his job as a result of it. And I'll tell you what you saw in agriculture is going to happen in health care in this province. People are fed right up with what you're doing. You promised not to. No, no, no, no, you said you wouldn't do this and you said that you would look after people. You would put more money in health, more money in education, that you would cut taxes.

And what have you got? You've done exactly the opposite. You didn't tell them the truth. You campaigned that you wouldn't have to do any of this and people are saying, for . . . Today back-benchers in the Alberta legislature said, for heaven sakes we might as well annex Alberta, the rate the Saskatchewan people are going to the province of Alberta.

They're going over there for better health care, lower taxes, better protection for seniors, better environment for business, and they're much more optimistic about their future. It's not doom and gloom all over the . . . you don't see thousands of farmers rallying in Alberta. You don't see thousands of people rallying in health care and a Conservative government in Manitoba or Alberta, only in Saskatchewan.

And the member says, and there's not deficits. There's deficits in Alberta and there's deficit in Manitoba. Yes they are. And they know and we know what they found here in Saskatchewan is, every once in a while they believe the untruth of the NDP (New Democratic Party), elect them and then you get this kind of stuff.

And then comes the arrogance, Mr. Chairman, the arrogance of the members who sit together here and complain, hide in the House, hide in the weeds. They lie in the weeds here trying to get away from all of the people. They won't go out and meet the public. And then the Minister of Finance has to have help from her seat mates here who chirp away and tell the public how smart they are, but they won't leave town. They won't leave this building. Well you're going to be a long time in interim supply if you're going to hide in here and chirp from your seats and not give us answers.

You are charging for health care; you're putting people through a great deal of pain; thousands of

people across the province are upset, and you won't answer any questions.

And we went through this last year when you said, well there will never be any new kinds of funding here. We wouldn't get into interim supplies; we wouldn't get into special warrants. You're into special warrants twice now and you said you'd never, ever do it. No talk, nothing opening, behind closed doors you went into special warrants, and you've now got one and a half billion dollars added to the deficit and the debt.

And we have some questions that we'd like you to answer. And last time when we said, we'll move along on interim supply; we'll answer them in estimates, you didn't answer zero in estimates. You didn't answer anything. It's the same thing. You're on record now, Madam Minister, that you will give these answers in estimates and we're going to hold you to that.

But this is grievance before supply. And you can tell people in this legislature and to the people of Saskatchewan why you have decided to put money into the coffers of your treasury on an item basis, on the broad scale, from your changes in health care policy. And the prescription drug program, you said that you were going to add more to your coffers as a result of your change. Can you give us, in terms of the changes in cost that people have to pay in health care, the total benefit to your treasury as a result of the increase that the consumer has to pay for health care services in this province?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, I would say again to the member opposite, if we want to get into the past, we'll have a very interesting time in this legislature talking about the past.

In the whole annals of Canadian history, it's hard to find instances in which a government brings a budget before a legislature, proceeds to spend and tax on the basis of that budget, dissolves the legislature, and yet doesn't even have the budget passed through the due process — imagine that process, imagine that process.

So what I would remind the people of Saskatchewan of . . . I would remind the people of Saskatchewan . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order, order. Order! I'm having difficulty hearing the minister because of the interruptions. We've had interruptions coming from the opposition benches, and when the opposition members come up, government members have been interrupting the opposition members.

I don't think that the committee will proceed very well if we continue to interrupt each other. There's lots of opportunity for members to ask questions, to stand up and to ask questions. All they have to do is stand to be recognized, and there's lots of opportunity for the government members to answer those questions.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My point is a simple one. This government respects

the processes. The processes are that this is interim supply. We understand fully the people of Saskatchewan would like to have detailed questions asked and answered about all aspects of the budget — health care and other areas — and we will move into that process once interim supply is passed.

Mr. Devine: — Madam Minister, grievance before supply; people want a general idea that you have some analysis of how you're going to get your money. And what we're trying to find out from you is that, have you done any research at all that can explain to people or justify the fact that you have targeted so much additional money coming into the treasury or benefit to the treasury as a result of your health care policies?

Can you give us any indication at all, in terms of your research, why you think that kind of money is going to be in the treasury as a result of your changes? Some indication, some analysis that would show that your changes that will result in a benefit to the treasury are accurate. Can you tell us and tell the people of Saskatchewan that you are going to get X amount of money coming to the treasury, of benefit to the treasury as a result of your tax changes, or your changes in charging?

For example, did you have any analysis that says, yes, the treasury will benefit this amount — let's say that it is on drugs and medicine — \$16.9 million? Is it going to benefit as a result of the changes in the policy where now people have to pay a lot more than they used to? Do you have any analysis to show that that's going to be an accurate estimate?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, when the Department of Health appears in estimates, you can ask them that question. What we did was we restructured things like the prescription drug plan because the cost of the prescription drug plan was increasing dramatically because of the changes made in Ottawa to legislation. We've laid out the projected savings in the *Estimates*.

I'm not sure why the member opposite believes that we have increased fees to health care. Unlike the province of Alberta, which he tends to be so praiseworthy of, we do not have premiums. They have premiums of over \$600 a month*. So we do not have premiums here.

Again, that's the general answer. The more specific answer can be acquired when we move into the estimates on Health.

Mr. Devine: — Madam Minister, you can't fool the public. If a senior citizen had a \$50 protective mechanism and now it's up to \$800, somebody's paying \$750. Right? And that's the senior citizen. That's the senior citizen.

It used to be 150 for a family, then it went to 375, and now it's virtually eliminated. Now can't you acknowledge — be honest with the people — can't you acknowledge that it's a major cost increase, a

major tax burden, for people who are buying prescription drugs? You pick up the benefit because you don't provide the protection any more. Now won't you admit that?

You admit that there's an increased cost to the people of Saskatchewan because of your changes and you pick up the benefit. Will you admit that?

(1130)

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, again I would refer the member opposite to page 66 of the *Estimates* in which we talk about the level of subsidization that this government provides for prescription drugs.

There are several provinces in Canada in which non-seniors get no subsidization for prescription drugs. What this table on page 66 tells you is the level of subsidization last year was \$67.7 million. The level of subsidization from the Government of Saskatchewan to individuals in the province is projected to be \$57 million for this year.

Mr. Devine: — So you're saying to the people of Saskatchewan, the government will receive the benefit of \$10.7 million because you have no longer decided to protect Saskatchewan family against the very high costs of drugs in the province of Saskatchewan. And you say no, we can't do anything about that. We're going to pick up \$10.7 million that will go right from the taxpayer right into your pocket.

Now, now that you've admitted that, Madam Minister, do you have any research to show that people will consume the same level of drugs, that they will get the same level of protection, the same attitudinal behaviour with respect to prescription drugs as a result of the fact that you've picked their pockets for \$10.7 million.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, again to clarify the member opposite's statements. This government, despite its difficult financial position, is going to continue to subsidize the taxpayers of Saskatchewan's purchase of drugs to the tune of \$57 million in this coming year. With respect to the studies, I'm not aware of such studies.

Mr. Devine: — In other words, you're saying to the people of Saskatchewan: we've just hit you with hundreds of dollars in increased expenses, we've done no studies, no research to show if you're protected, if you'll have to give up food or clothing or any other decisions you might have to make because of your changes. You have no analysis. It's just a cold, hard fact that you will now ask families to live without a deductible; you'll have seniors that'll go from 50 deductible to \$800. No analysis — this is a good, new, brand-new, socialist policy. No research — we'll just pick your pockets for \$10.7 million. Would you please pass interim supply so that we can get on and close some more hospitals. Is that what you're saying?

You have no research, no idea at all what this will do

to Saskatchewan people or their families, or if they can cope with it, or if indeed you're going to make this kind of money, or if they're going to back and off and say, to heck with you, I can't afford these prescription drugs, I'll do without. Do you have any analysis at all to say that your 10.7 is accurate? And number two, that people will be able to cope with this \$10.7 million that you're picking out of their pockets?

The Chair: — Why is the member for Prince Albert Carlton on his feet?

Mr. Kowalsky: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Chair: — Point of order.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that we're into interim supply where questions relating to interim supply should be dealing with the one-twelfth, dealing with the one-twelfth of the requisition . . . one-twelfth of the annual supply required in the entire budget, and that questions put in this legislature should be with respect to the one-twelfth and not with the detail analysis of any specific program but only how it applies to a one-twelfth requisition. That is the purpose of this motion, Mr. Speaker.

Quite frankly, I feel that the member opposite is out of order on it, and I would ask for your ruling on that.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, just responding to the member from Prince Albert Carlton, I would just like to remind the member and bring to the attention of the chairman — pardon me, Mr. Chairman — the fact that in interim supply we realize, yes, it's called for one-twelfth of the expenditure of this year's budget.

But also when you're looking at a call for the expenditure of the one-twelfth of the funds, there's also a need for the government to disclose how it arrived at where it's going to find the money to give it the ability to disclose . . . or to expend these funds.

And I think it's imperative that the people of Saskatchewan know where the government . . . what process the government used to determine whether there would be enough funds to even allow it to make even a twelfth of the expenditure.

And I think if we got into detail, we could look back at a lot of the debate that took place on other occasions, certainly, Mr. Chairman, where debate got even broad ranging. And I remember one member discussing the fact of how the budget was going to affect bus service in the city of Regina. And I believe the minister of the day even gave a response to that question.

So I just want to remind, Mr. Chairman, that yes, we are talking about one-twelfth, but there is opportunity for some discussion to bring out the whole avenue of the financial expenditures that we're discussing here today.

The Chair: — I want to thank the member from Prince

Albert Carlton and the member from Moosomin for their comments.

And I should like to rule as follows: the purpose of interim supply is to grant money for the operation of government departments and programs on an interim basis while reserving to the Legislative Assembly the right to complete the detailed review of estimates at a later time. For this reason members must reserve their detailed questions on estimates and government financial policy for the regular review of the main estimates.

So the point of order is well taken.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, when you have the one-twelfth, you cannot hide behind either where you're getting the money or how you're going to spend it, in a general sense. So if in fact we have in the province of Saskatchewan, and I quote, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Chairman: a tide of fear and resentment growing against the provincial government's plans for health care and the future of town hospitals, then . . . end of quote.

What we're worried about is do you really have any research or analysis to show that you can generate the kind of money that you're talking about so the one-twelfth will be there. Because over the year, it will be twelve-twelfths. And we'll add it up. But we want to know if you've done any general analysis on your health care part of the revenue that shows you're either going to generate the income, or indeed whether there will be just generally enough protection for people given the very, very negative attitude.

And I could go on to quote, Mr. Chairman:

People worried about losing their hospitals are banding together in a loose coalition aimed at maintaining existing levels of hospital beds.

Public meetings in west-central and southwest Saskatchewan over the past few days have attracted hundreds of people. More are scheduled over the next week.

"People are pretty hot under the collar over this," said Leader Mayor Marlyn Clary.

What it's saying, Madam Minister, is that people have grievances. They are worried. You are charging more for health; you are closing hospitals; you are taxing them so heavily they're going to Alberta; and you're asking for generally one-twelfth.

I don't need detailed analysis. I don't need detailed analysis. I need general analysis. Give me a broad-brush analysis of how much money you expect to go into the coffers, benefit of the coffers, as a result of your change in health care policy. And then I'd like you to explain that forecast in a general way — not detailed — a general way and why you think people can afford to pay it. Fair questions.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, if I can

attempt a general answer to the member opposite's question. Let me first of all say that his reading of responses to the budget in Saskatchewan is, as usual, selective. I would read from the editorial of the *Leader-Post*, March 19: ". . . the province is doing what is necessary to create better times ahead."

He talks about our projections, and I've said again and again to the members opposite that in compiling the budget, what we did was we did an overall assessment of the impact of the budget on the Saskatchewan economy, and all of that information is laid out in the appendices to the budget address.

If he's concerned, if he is truly concerned about the revenue projections of the province and the capacity of the province to meet those projections, I would read to him from information which was tabled with the Speaker two days ago. This is from Wood Gundy, and it's an analysis of Saskatchewan's budget:

Saskatchewan's Balanced Budget Plan is a credible effort to come to grips with its rising debt problem. The Province's strategy of constraining expenditure growth over the next two years until revenue growth catches up makes fiscal sense.

Then they go on and say:

The success of Saskatchewan's medium-term strategy hinges on its ability to generate sufficient revenues over the next 3-4 years. The Province's forecast of reasonably strong growth . . . should be enough to generate the necessary revenues. The underlying C\$ and interest rate assumptions for their 1993 economic forecast are similar to our own . . . Saskatchewan's Balanced Budget efforts send a strong positive signal to financial market participants.

What they're saying is they've looked at our assumptions with respect to revenue, and that the whole fiscal plan that we laid before the province, they find it credible; they actually find it positive. I wish the member opposite would get out of the gloom-and-doom scenario and see some of the positive that other people are seeing.

Mr. Devine: — Madam Minister, if you are saying and Wood Gundy is saying that they agreed with your analysis, I'm just asking you for your analysis. I did yesterday. You've raised sales tax now from 7 per cent to 9 per cent, a 29 per cent increase. Can you show us any analysis that says that you're going to generate the revenue that you forecast?

What will businesses do and what will consumers do with a 29 per cent increase in sales tax? Particularly when there's a decision now in Alberta not to have any . . .

An Hon. Member: — There's too many variables to forecast.

Mr. Devine: — And an hon. member from his seat

said, there's too many variables to forecast. I'll tell you, a lot of people are saying that you didn't do your analysis, and if you did you're not sharing it. And probably you haven't done it accurately because they are rioting and banding together across the province, saying we don't like your assumptions on health care; we don't like your assumptions on the prescription drug; we don't like your assumptions on the pension plan; and we certainly don't believe in your assumptions with respect to sales tax increases and the kind of revenue you're going to get.

So again I ask, if we're to approve one-twelfth of your estimates for revenue on sales taxes, can you give me any assurance, any confidence, any level of research, analytical studies, that show that we will get one-twelfth of what you're forecasting? Have you studied the reaction of the business community and the consumer in terms of spending, to a 29 per cent increase in sales tax from 7 to 9 and this year from 8 to 9?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, what I would say to the member opposite is that we have laid out before the people of Saskatchewan the economic analysis that we have done. I would also say that there have been at least five financial agencies, respected agencies, outside the province who have been given exactly the information that the members opposite have been given. They've analysed the information. We have yet to come back with one of them saying that you haven't done enough study. And then they've looked at our information and they've said, we agree with your analysis.

We'll have an interesting day because I have lots of reading to do here. I would read into the record . . . this material was given to the Speaker as part of a package previously. Burns Fry says this — and this is very interesting words for members of the financial establishment to use these words. I would direct the member opposite's attention to these words very carefully.

The Romanow government has taken aggressive steps to deal with the budget mess which it inherited.

“Which it inherited” — Burns Fry, the financial establishment saying, the budget mess which this government inherited. Budget mess, not just a problem, but a mess which this government inherited.

The spending cuts and tax increases represent tough medicine . . . (but) the province has little choice but to practice austerity given its total debt . . . The deficit reduction program appears attainable . . . and gives the province a good chance of retaining its current credit ratings.

(1145)

Mr. Devine: — Well, Madam Minister, what you're saying is that outsiders are saying, well it's really nice that you're going to put more money into your coffers by taxing your own people and by cutting the support.

And they say, well way to go, Madam Minister.

But what I want to say to you is that you have choices and you have alternatives. What people are saying is they don't like your choices. And I'm trying to get some analysis, some research out of you. Because if you want one-twelfth of this . . . Maybe there was an easier way, Madam Minister. Maybe there's a smarter way. Why do we just have to agree with your way when there are hundreds and hundreds and thousands of people across the province saying, I don't like your way?

Maybe somebody down East in New York or Toronto says, way to go, you've hit people hard; you've raised the taxes a whole bunch — oh that's a good idea. You'll probably be able to balance the budget in four years.

Well lookit, you've added to the deficit; your credit rating is down to BBB; you're driving people out of the province; they're rallying all over the place because they don't like your cuts, and you're saying, way to go.

Lookit, this is what it says in Saskatchewan, Madam Minister. Budget has few fans. Critics are calling the NDP's budget a monster. That's what the local people are saying. They're calling your budget a monster.

Now if we have grievance before supply . . . This isn't in front of the New York bankers here, this is not in front of Toronto bankers, this isn't in front of the rating institutions, this is in front of the people of Saskatchewan who are paying through the nose because of your choices, your choices which are very unfair.

You've taken away support in health care. You've taken away support in pensions. You've taken away farm support. You've taxed business and now you're taxing the consumers so they're going to the United States and they're going to Alberta. And you're standing up there saying, well the rating institutions really like us; we're down to a BBB. We've added a billion and a half to the debt, and on this one-twelfth you want us to keep it up. That's what you're saying. Could we get encouragement to keep doing what we're doing and maybe in four years, if our estimates are right, the lines will cross.

I want to know, if you want one-twelfth support here, have you got any research to show that you are going to generate your tax revenue because of your health care cuts and costs that you've laid off to people and in terms of taxes? I don't want somebody's review, well it's nice they raised taxes; way to go folks. I want to know if you have any analysis to give us any confidence, as a result of you raising your taxes from 7 to 9 and because of your health care changes where you're charging people, that you will get that money and people will respond as you said. That's what the people want to know.

Because I can read you all kinds of columns and headlines here that are very unfavourable. Very unfavourable. They didn't like what you're doing.

They don't like it today; they didn't like it yesterday. And if you want to get into trading headlines here, we can do that, and we won't get to the analysis of the one-twelfth.

So I don't need a lecture and the public out there doesn't need a lecture of how fine you are in New York because New York just dropped your credit rating to BBB.

An Hon. Member: — On account of you.

Mr. Devine: — And then the Attorney General pipes up and says it's because of me. Yes, all right. If that's the case, Mr. Minister, then if you want to campaign and show me your choices, you want to see . . . look at the choices, then lay them out here today. You can speak up all you like.

An Hon. Member: — Fifteen billion reasons.

Mr. Devine: — Now he's got it up to 15, eh. Why don't you tell the truth? Why don't you tell the truth?

Mr. Chairman, the members opposite don't like to hear the truth and that's why they chirp from their seat, as the Minister of Health did, the former minister of Agriculture they've now kicked out of cabinet, and now the Attorney General chirps from his seat. Because he knows this is very unpopular and it's wrong-headed. It's the wrong thing to do.

I can read you headlines that said harmonizing the sales tax and balancing the budget, the rating institution said it's exactly the thing to do. The business community said it's exactly the thing to do. And people said they wanted health care protection, they wanted a pension plan, they wanted protection in agriculture, and they said: I would like to have that. And the Attorney General . . . and then they went and voted NDP because you promised them less taxes and lots of health care and lots of education. And I can give you quotes here from the university who are sick of what you're doing to them. And you didn't tell them the truth. You campaigned on the \$14 billion deficit, and then when you got in you did exactly the opposite to what you said you'd do.

You wouldn't take this to the people for one-twelfth, one-twentieth, or one-hundredth. So if he's going to chirp from his seat about how he's got the answers to this, Mr. Chairman, you can let him provide the answers to this session and to the people of Saskatchewan.

This is grievance before supply. You have attacked the health care system. You've hit . . .

The Chair: — Order. I will ask for the cooperation of the House from members on both sides of the House to allow the member from Estevan to put his question consistent with the rulings of the Chair, given that interim supply is before the House. And I'll also ask the member of Estevan not to include the Chair in his debate before the committee.

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, again I would ask you in a very general sense, do you have any research or any analysis, other than newspaper headlines, that you know what you're doing by cutting health care support and the benefits of going into the coffers here; and by raising taxes the rate you have, do you have any analysis to show with confidence that you're going to generate the kind of revenue that you have in this budget that you're asking for one-twelfth of today? Can you give us any more indication of confidence in terms of the research that you have done?

And if you haven't done any research, then at least the public will know that you just decided to cut and tax without research. And you're asking for one-twelfth of this based on your best political guess, not any economic analysis. And that's all we're after. If this is a political document, fair enough. But if it's an economic document you must have research, and in a general way — not in detail by detail — but generally could you tell us why you're confident that your tax increases will generate this revenue and why your cuts to health care will help your budget this month?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, I would invite the member opposite to read the budget address and the appendices. He will find the information that he requires there.

I would like to make some remarks though. This is absolutely instructive. The past is becoming so clear to me. I now understand why we're in, to quote Burns Fry, a financial mess inherited by the members opposite.

He says, well those people in New York — you know, the people that you don't have to listen to — those people, they say that we have to do these things. We don't listen to them.

Of course you never listen to them. You never listen to the people who said, we're the people who decide whether you can borrow money or not and we say that you're running the province in the wrong way. Of course you didn't listen to them. It was patently obvious that you didn't listen to them.

But what is absolutely amazing to me is that having brought the province to the brink that it is — your administration having done that — you're still saying the same things: don't worry about what the people who have to decide whether they're going to lend you money or not have to say. They're irrelevant. They don't live in Estevan. And if they don't live in Estevan, what do they know?

Well let me tell you what some of the people who live in communities around this province are saying about this budget. This is from the *Herald*, Herbert, Saskatchewan, Tuesday, March 23:

(This) is probably the most sensible budget of recent history.

The *Weyburn Review*, March 24:

As a matter of fact, both Ms. MacKinnon and her government might be surprised at the extent of support among what may be a majority of citizens for the decision of this and several other provincial governments to say "Enough is enough!" to deficit financing that is pushing us all toward bankruptcy.

A conclusion with respect to this budget from the *Weyburn Review*:

The government probably has earned an "A" for overall effort. As to the details, we all have our own choices and priorities.

The *Leader-Post*, March 19, again:

One need look no farther than the budget's debt-repayment figures to realize the province had little choice but to raise taxes and cut spending. Interest payments alone account for the government's third-largest expenditure behind health and education and Saskatchewan's debt per capita remains far too high.

... the province is doing what is necessary to create better times ahead.

You know, when I look back at some of the decisions taken in the 1980s and you add them up and the incredible losses that were not necessary. Let me go through some of these: selling Potash Corporation for a loss, \$361 million; SEDCO losses, \$118 million; GigaText, investment loss of \$4 million. Obviously I'm striking some chords over there and waking people up. NewGrade write-off, \$232 million of taxpayers' money — thrown to the wind. And the list goes on.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we're trying to do in this budget is we're trying to say that is part of the past, it's part of the past we'd like to turn our backs on, and we have a budget which looks toward the future.

Mr. Devine: — Madam Speaker . . . or Mr. Chairman, a question to the minister, just a point here. The NDP, if she wants to get into it, borrowed money at very high interest rates from Americans to buy all kinds of things and they paid too much for it, from potash mines to land.

Here's an example. This is Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation under the NDP, purchased mines for \$250 million U.S., operating funds of \$200 million U.S., money borrowed in New York in 1971, terms were — now listen to this — sixteen and two-thirds per cent for 16 years locked in, one year buy-out, finished paying it off in 1986. At 16 per cent locked in, and you paid money at the top and you borrowed money to buy something that was already here, paid way too much for it. When we took it to the private sector with Eldorado Nuclear and marketed it, they said, I don't know who speculated and paid this too much.

It's just like farm land; you paid a thousand dollars an acre for farm land and today you turn around and it's worth \$400. And you expect the taxpayers to play with your speculation. That's what you did for potash mines, for PAPCO (Prince Albert Pulp Company) \$150 million, \$93,000 a day. We inherited that, three and a half billion dollars in debt at 22 per cent interest rates, and we carried it through the 1980s. And now you're coming back and saying to the people of Saskatchewan, oh we've really got a nice plan here. Well I'll tell you about your nice plan.

In 1991, Madam Minister, just for the record — because you were going on the record — here's what was said about harmonization and balancing the budget by '93-94. This is the investment outlook, Canada-Saskatchewan, May '91: Saskatchewan will be one of the few provinces to reduce its budget deficit this year (this is 1991). The budget deficit for the fiscal '91-92 is projected at 265 million or a 1.2 per cent GDP (gross domestic product), down 100 million or nearly one-third from last year's level. And the year before, Madam Minister, was 365 and we met the target.

Restraint initiatives, which reduce total expenditures by 4 per cent this year, more than offset the negative impact of slower economic growth and reduced federal transfer payments on provincial finances. The consistent application of fiscal restraint, the hallmark of fiscal policy for the past five years — that is the past five years in Saskatchewan — will lead to steep declines in the budget deficit over the next several years as the economic recovery takes hold. This fiscal discipline also underlines the government's commitment to meet its target of a balanced budget in '93-94. End of quote.

That's what it said, Madam Minister. You campaigned against that, which is a balanced budget '93-94, saying you had a new way to do it.

Madam Minister, here: Saskatchewan gets an A for economic growth. That is the 1990 budget where we had 365. We went on for a 265 and then a balanced budget. And you campaign and say no, we won't let you do it; we'll do it our way.

Now what have you got? You've got higher taxes. You've got more deficit. You've added a 1.5 billion to the debt that we had; you've added debt. You've got a lower credit rating. And you're saying, well aren't we very nice because we've raised taxes and we've cut health care and support to education and to farmers and to seniors, and you're very proud of that.

I can read you all kinds of analysis that says harmonization at 7 cents across the province makes much more sense than what you're doing, for both economic activity and for the consumer.

So I'm asking you for an analysis. Do you have anything at all that would prove that your economic forecasts for this one-twelfth are right in terms of revenue from taxes or from money that you are going

to benefit by in terms of your health care changes? And if you don't, then just say no, I don't have it. This is a political document. It has nothing to do with economic forecasts because we have no economic analysis to back it up.

(1200)

Now if that's the case, if you don't have any economic analysis to back it up, why don't you just come clean with the public and say this is a political document. We're just going to raise taxes and cut here. We don't really know how it's going to turn out. I hope you support this one-twelfth because we think that we're on the right track.

Will the minister provide any new or existing or past analysis to show and to prove to the public that your forecasts for revenue have some justification and economic theory?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, the budget address has all of that information at the back. Never before in the history of Saskatchewan have the people of Saskatchewan been given so much information projected so far forward into the future.

You know I'm not going to bother getting into it with the member opposite except to say this. If there is a person in Saskatchewan who does not believe that the financial mess we inherited was created by the members opposite, that person also believes Elvis Presley is still alive. The people of Saskatchewan know how we got here.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, while you were out at your political meeting in Weyburn last night fighting off the demonstrators, the Associate Minister of Finance and I had a very good discussion about certain things. And we went through a number of areas in your budget that I think were very relevant to understanding the budget and understanding how we are giving you \$340 million here on interim supply.

And one of the crucial things that we talked about was the fact that your department has budgeted \$4.3 million for analytical research on how your budget performs. And I was assured by the Associate Minister of Finance that indeed that one-twelfth of that was being asked for, that you have several hundreds of thousands of dollars in this particular supply motion allocated to that research.

And he talked about the process of how StatsCanada gathered information for you and how the federal Department of Revenue collected funds on your behalf and then rebated them on various programs. We went through quite a lengthy process that involved some of the projections that you make on page 40 in your budget, and then we went to page 57, 58, and 59, and we went through some of these details.

Now my colleague a little earlier, Madam Minister, was asking you some questions pertaining to the

health care field. And in questions in this Assembly a couple of days ago, you assured me that there was funds allocated by this interim supply motion in a number of health care areas. I asked you for yes-and-no answers, and you gave me a yes in each and every one of these instances.

Now, Madam Minister, what I would like to know, very similar to the conversations that I had with the member from Weyburn last night, is that given the research component that we are funding in here, that you're asking taxpayers to come up with, one-twelfth of in this interim supply motion, exactly what the changes are now that these health care areas are no longer paid for by the taxpayer as a whole, that you are now charging fees for a whole range of health care areas?

I would like to know, Madam Minister, if those projections which you've outlined in the budget document in a number of areas — given that your department and the minister assured me last night that your people were monitoring all across the piece, that there was no hop, skipping, and jumping around here, that you were covering the waterfront on this stuff, given that there are several hundreds of thousands of dollars allocated in this interim supply motion for that research — I'd like to know from you what that research is showing as far as the flow of dollars that Saskatchewan taxpayers are now paying directly, paying directly for health care rather than having those funds paid for on their behalf by all of the taxpayers of the province.

Now if StatsCanada is doing that research for you, fine. But I'd like you to explain that process to me, how you're tracking that and how that information is being correlated so that it meshes with the projections being made in here. And I think, Madam Minister, given that health is such a sensitive issue today, that it'd be something that your people would be vitally interested in because all of those monies end up coming out of the Consolidated Fund and that there are projections that need to be met. Could you enlighten me, Madam Minister.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, yes, I gather that you had a very interesting dialogue with the Associate Minister of Finance.

With respect to the Department of Finance last night, I would point out the 4.3 million is for a whole department, not just analysis of the budget, but analysis of other statistics as they pertain to the Department of Finance.

What you're asking me today is analysis that is done by the Department of Health. And what I'm saying to you is, that question we would be most pleased to answer, and there is an appropriate time within the procedural process for that question to be answered, and that is when the Department of Health is here to give its estimates.

Mr. Swenson: — No, it doesn't work that way, Madam Minister. The Department of Health isn't the

department in charge of revenue in this province. The Department of Health gets revenue from you, and they in turn expend that revenue with their third parties and with other people.

Now if you're trying to tell me that we've got two departments of Finance in this province, then we've got a real problem, and the Minister of Health better get in here and start handling the interim supply motion. It don't work that way, Madam Minister.

Your associate minister assured me last night, that your department dealt with the analysis of all budgetary considerations. And what they couldn't handle themselves, they had the federal people do on their behalf for minimal amounts — for minimal amounts; that they didn't have to pay for a lot of the analysis that was done. That they then garnered that analysis and they put their own interpretation on it, as they do the budgets of other provinces, as they do the rating agencies, as they do lots of things.

There are revenue streams, Madam Minister, back to your department concerning health and the fact that people no longer are having those benefits paid for by the taxpayer, but are paying them themselves.

What I want to know from you, Madam Minister, in a whole realm of streams here, what those revenue implications are. You told me chiropractic, optometric, insulin, abortion, children's dental care, that all of those things were in this supply motion. And you told me that on Wednesday. Now I think it's only proper that you go through there and identify those revenue streams and how and what is happening there.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, I must clarify what my colleague said and did not say last night. What he said is that Ottawa collects data on behalf of the province. The data is then sent to the province in many cases, not to the Department of Finance necessarily. If it's data with respect to health, it would be sent to the Department of Health.

My colleague was of course quite willing to answer questions that were with respect to the Department of Finance. The Department of Health has its own unit that does policy development. Page 64 of the *Estimates* you'll find a line: "Health Planning and Policy Development." And what I would suggest to the member opposite is when the Department of Health is here, you ask them those questions.

Mr. Swenson: — Madam Minister, you're absolutely right. The Department of Health has a policy branch. There are people all over this province feeling the impact of that policy branch today. They get together by the hundreds now to discuss that policy branch. And I suspect that before they're done they just might implement a little change in that policy branch of the Department of Health. There might be a few people there that might be looking for work even or something like that, if folks out there have their way with the policy branch of the Department of Health. I understand that very clearly.

But what the minister said was that there is ongoing analysis in conjunction with a whole bunch of people that allow you to meet the projections in your budget. And those projections have to come true for your story to come true. Okay?

By charging Saskatchewan people health fees where they previously didn't have health fees, that is no different, Madam Minister, than a tax. Okay? It's no different than a rise in the sales tax from 8 to 9 per cent. It's no different than raising the gasoline tax from 7 to 10. It's no different than increasing personal income tax, Madam Minister. You are directly charging Saskatchewan taxpayers a fee, a fee.

Now, Madam Minister, that fee is taxation. Your department is in charge of tracking taxation. You have allocated large sums of money to track it, because that tracking, in conjunction with other governments, makes your budget projections come true or false. Now there are a whole range of new taxes, Madam Minister. You're the minister in charge of taxes. In the case of the issue before us is that it is now taxing health care. Okay? You're taxing.

What I want to know is if your folks aren't doing it, are you getting the federal department or are you getting StatsCanada . . . who are you getting to track this whole new range of taxation which you've told to me is being allocated one-twelfth in this budget. Okay? It's not difficult, Madam Minister. It's not the policy branch of the Department of Health that's in charge of taxation. You're in charge of taxation.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, the logic here is quite incredible. I finally am seeing what the member is trying to argue which is an incredible argument. He's saying the Department of Finance is in charge of taxation. Right, we are. He is trying to interpret the health care changes as taxation so that they'll be the responsibility of the Department of Finance. As I say, I'm incredulous at the leap in logic.

We're not taxing health care. What we're doing is we are reducing our level of subsidization. We do not charge fees. The province of Alberta charges health care premiums; the province of Saskatchewan doesn't. There is no sense in which we are taxing health care and nobody who was a reasonable person out there who is watching this or will read this will say that because of the changes made in health care, these are now taxes and therefore health care should come under the Department of Finance. That is simply not a reasonable argument.

Mr. Swenson: — When we get into leaps of faith here, Mr. Chairman, we just saw one. Unless I've missed something, I understand here that when I go to the chiropractor, before or after, at some place in there, the guy says get this out. You've got to dig in here. I want some of that green stuff, Madam Minister, before you're going to get the service. Now I can't just walk in there and say well the Minister of Health said or the Minister of Finance says that this is just a reduction in our fee schedule or something like that. I mean when

my kid goes to the dentist, Madam Minister, I don't get out of the place without digging in here.

An Hon. Member: — Isn't that an exhibit, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Swenson: — It's a diminishing exhibit. The member is right. My wallet and my bank . . .

The Chair: — Order, order. Order. Will the member for Thunder Creek please come to order. I think members on both sides of the House understand the rules regarding exhibits in the House and the member for Thunder Creek I'm sure will respect that and proceed without an exhibit.

(1215)

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The point is that there's a law of diminishing returns here for the average taxpayer. The taxpayer is now paying where he didn't pay before, okay? Money each and every time. Now, Madam Minister, if you're telling me that that isn't some form of taxation, I don't know what it is. It used to be that I as a taxpayer paid my income tax and then I didn't have to do that. Now I have to do that, okay?

Now, Madam Minister, those revenue streams . . . when the chiropractor or the dentist takes the money from me, that goes against the global projection that you have made by decreasing the allocation from the Department of Finance to that particular department. Right? You're saying that in dental care here in the province of Saskatchewan that it now drops from ten million three four eight to four million two hundred, that your funding level has dropped by that amount and I'm picking that up. I'm making up the difference, okay? Now that projection, Madam Minister, has to come true or the \$430 million that you come in here and ask for in interim supply, one-twelfth, doesn't wash, okay? Because if that's not running true, then the projection isn't running true.

Somebody, Madam Minister, and I'd suspect that it's the minister in charge of money, is checking to make sure that that in fact is happening. That the thousands of people walking in and paying the dentist and paying the chiropractor and paying the optometrist and paying in the health care system, are paying enough that your projection's right on. Because if they're not paying enough there, they're going to have to pay enough somewhere else.

And you're going to have to make a mid-course correction like your predecessor did last fall when he said, oop, it ain't 517 any more; she's a lot closer to 600. That mid-course correction, Madam Minister, affects all of us. And given what I've seen of some of your projections, I'm scared that we're in for a mid-course correction, because the chart on page 40 has some very optimistic numbers in it. And that mid-course correction's going to have to get sucked up somewhere else.

Now I want you to tell me the process that's in place

with this \$4.3 million of research that your people do in Finance to make sure that that health thing is tracking along. There's got to be a way for you to determine the volume of dollars that people are now paying in a whole lot of situations. And if you're going to tell me, Madam Minister, that there's no way to determine what that volume is, then you better stand up and say we're in for a mid-course correction.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, it's difficult to figure out what the question was there, but there are a number of areas that the member opposite appeared to touch on. What is very interesting is his concept of the role of government in a society. I find this absolutely fascinating. Because what he is saying to me is that everything with respect to health care should be paid for by the government, and if it isn't it's a tax on him.

Well I'll tell you, that's big government with a vengeance. Because what he's really saying to me then is every time he goes to his dentist and he has to pay, we're taxing him. Every time he goes to a health centre so he's in good shape to preserve his health and the government isn't paying, we're taxing him. I suppose if he cut himself shaving and had to get a band-aid and he had to pay, we're taxing him. That's what his whole approach to health care, if you take the logic through, is about.

Now with respect to projections and mid-term adjustments, there's no doubt that a mid-term adjustment had to be made this year. And I'll just read briefly from a document here:

Expenditures by government are continuing to exceed our revenues and the deficit now is projected to be over \$2.7 billion. The Canadian economy's performance has fallen far short of what was expected last spring. This has had a major impact on the fiscal position of all governments.

Fewer Canadians are employed in paying taxes. This means lower personal income tax receipts. In November the federal government advised the provinces that it had significantly overestimated national tax revenue for the 1991-92 and 1993 calendar years.

What's interesting about this document, in which a government is saying: you're absolutely right; our projections were totally off the mark here, is this is from the province of Alberta. And if you want to know how much they were off the mark:

The lower federal estimates mean that personal income tax payments to Alberta for 1992 and 1993 will be lower than budgeted. Alberta will also have to repay the federal government over \$100 million for excess advances received last year on 1991 taxes. In total, this year's personal income tax revenue is expected to be about \$475 million less than estimated.

So in this past year there were mid-course adjustments

made by all provinces, including our neighbouring province of Alberta. What we're saying is we have laid before the people Saskatchewan the information upon which our budget is based, the assumptions, the projections, and never before in the history of this province have the people had so much information laid out openly by the government.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Madam Minister, I appreciate that and I hope you'll share that information that you just read from with the Assembly. I mean that is the usual procedure, Mr. Chairman, when a minister quotes from a document, that they share it with the Assembly.

But I'm not concerned, Madam Minister, with the province of Alberta because there are enough Saskatchewan dollars and people flowing over there lately that they'll probably rectify their economic problems that they might have there.

Now, Madam Minister, what I was talking about was the individual contributions made by Saskatchewan taxpayers in regards to many components of the health care system. And I understand the problem that Madam Minister has in talking about taxing health care. Because I was treated to the spectacle in this Assembly through my entire legislative career of members of the New Democratic Party standing up and talking about how you're taxing the sick, and you're taxing the health care system, and you're trying to destroy it, and it should be universal and you awful, awful Tories are going to tear that health care system down just as sure as nails because you're going to get rid of universality.

And the member from Lakeview there, she talked about people making choices between drugs and food and that there was going to be deaths occurring because of these types of things. And she said, you know, if you'd just elect us the government, you don't have a thing to worry about. Universality will be enshrined in heaven forever. The New Democrats, the people that care, will always make sure that there is enough money for these areas and that you won't have taxes on the health care system.

Well, Madam Minister, I don't have time to pore through the volumes of *Hansard* to read you back probably 10,000 quotes from members of your political party on how you would handle health care; it's there for the record. Okay?

What I'm talking about today is just simple reality. You are asking for interim supply of \$430 million which is one-twelfth the total budget. Included in there is \$4.3 million for your department to do the research that ensures that your numbers are on the money.

Part of that process now is charging people for a whole lot of components in health care. And somebody, Madam Minister, has got to be checking out the revenue streams. The money is changing hands. Okay? The money is changing hands. Somebody's got to be watching that because you have laid out — as

you point to me on pages 66 and 67 and 65, a whole 64, 63 — a whole bunch of commitments in the area of health.

And you've told me that you've ratcheted back the funding in a whole host of areas. Okay? And when you ratcheted that back, you've asked the individual taxpayers to pick up the slack. Okay? So what I'm asking you, Madam Minister, and what we're allocating money to your department for, is the verification procedure of how well that process is going so that we don't have mid-course corrections that blow the numbers out of the water.

I mean last year you went through the same process and you gave us charts and graphs and you said the Canadian economy is going to grow at these things. Well it didn't happen. And you've got a whole bunch of qualifiers in here again saying, well if this happens or that happens then naturally my numbers aren't on the money.

But one of the things that's absolutely crucial because health is such a big component of the total budget of the province — it's one-third of the total budget — that if the revenue streams inside Health, which I'm now picking up as the individual taxpayer because you've changed the way that health care is delivered, means that those revenue streams have to be on the ball.

And as I said, I don't view it any different, Madam Minister, than paying more sales tax and paying more gasoline tax and paying more personal income tax, paying higher utility rates. I mean you can call them utility rates. You're taxing the use of power to get more money.

Madam Minister, you've made significant changes to health care. People are paying. Tell me how that process of verification, which your departments had allocated for, is going to take place. Is it the federal government? Is it your government? Who's doing it?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, the government will monitor the revenue stream and the expenditure stream of the government. But I would remind the member opposite that there are 365 days in the year. We're now on day 2. We're now on day 2, and as my deputy minister just commented to me, if you would let him out of this room so he could go back to his office, he would continue to monitor the process and tell you how the first two days have gone.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Madam Minister, you have a very competent deputy minister. He's got more stuff in his head than you and I will probably ever get there in our entire lifetimes. I mean we're talking about a very competent individual here, okay.

Madam Minister, he can spout you numbers that will go on and on and on for days because, being competent, he keeps track of these things. Now those revenue streams that are changing out there, I suspect there's been some analysis done and it's been some projections and you got . . .

What have you got going to a doctor in this province? I don't know. I'm told that we had one million tests done for thyroid last year. That's one of the things that happens in the province in the medical system. You've got some pretty good idea of how many people tramped through the door of the dentist or the doctor or the optometrist or go in and apply for insulin.

That's the kind of tracking that gets done in order to come up with the number. Okay?

Now because that analysis was done, you're saying that X thousands of people are going to troop through the dentist's office and plunk down an average fee of X — my guess. I want to know, Madam Minister — because we're allocating you money here in interim supply to do that process — I want to know what your projections are and I want to know who's doing that and I want to know if we're on the target.

And your budget didn't come down two days ago. Are you telling me that people aren't using the health care facilities any more?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, seeing as you have such a high regard for the deputy, he will give you his personal assurance that on day two we're on target.

I would also say that the Department of Finance, as you can imagine, does not keep track of how many people go in to get tests for thyroid, same as we do not keep track of how many people end up before the courts in Saskatchewan. This is done by the individual departments.

And so if you want to know how many people go in for tests for thyroids and what the implications of that are, you will have an opportunity when we go through estimates to get those details.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday I was just about to begin to ask a few questions of the associate minister with regards to a question, when I had to go and do some other things, and my colleagues took over for the rest of the afternoon. So I want to pursue that with you, Madam Minister.

I'll just ask the original question that I'd asked, just to bring you back up to speed where we were at here. My question at that time was: what is the total dollar amount spent on paying off the legal bills of the Tetzlaff brothers, and is any of this money going towards this cause? And the answer that was given, as your assistants will point out, the answer I think that was given was that yes, that would be paid out of this one-twelfth under the Saskatchewan Water Corporation, 514 something or other here.

And I wonder . . . first of all, I guess I should say: can you confirm the answer that the minister gave . . . or the associate minister gave me? Was that . . .

(1230)

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, what I can confirm to the member opposite is that that is the responsibility of the Saskatchewan Water Corporation and the Department of Justice and when you get into the detailed estimates of those two entities, then you will have the precise figures that you need.

Mr. Goohsen: — Well, Madam Minister, your associate minister did in fact say that that money would be coming out of this one-twelfth and that it would be coming out of that portion. It is extremely important to a couple of people in this province to know how this process is going to work and how it's going to be paid off.

And it's important to me to know how you're going to do this because under interim supply, you have \$514,000 going to the Saskatchewan Water Corporation. If you're going to pay off two and a half million dollars or 250,000 or whatever it is, it makes quite a difference. We have to know if there is any rational reason to believe that you've allocated enough money to be able to pay off that bill. It just about sounds like to me like maybe you don't have enough allocated here to keep the Water Corporation going.

In other words I'm saying that this particular one-twelfth portion for the Saskatchewan Water Corporation should have been more than a one-twelfth share for this one period of time because you're spending more perhaps of the budget in this one month than a twelfth share of the whole proportion. You may have erred in not allotting say, two portions or perhaps two-twelfths for this particular department in order to be able to cover the bills, because you have one big bill coming in that won't probably show up in all the rest of the months.

Now is it not a fact then, that if you have erred, you will put this department into a deficit. So would you like to explain how this is going to work if you have one big expenditure coming?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, if I could clarify the Associate Minister of Finance's response. What he said is that we have allocated to Saskatchewan Water Corporation one-twelfth of its budget. He did not confirm the details about how that budget would be spent and he said to the members opposite if they wanted those details they could wait until estimates and those details would be provided.

He said the one-twelfth is allocated to pay bills within the department. He did not provide details as to which bills will be paid. That is a matter for estimates. We have no concerns about the capacity of the Saskatchewan Water Corporation to pay its bills.

Mr. Goohsen: — Well you weren't here and I was and I'm telling you, you don't tell the story straight here. The fact of the matter is that the Associate Minister said that the money to pay the Tetzlaff brothers would be paid out of the Saskatchewan Water Corporation money and that it would be paid out of this

one-twelfth portion, the \$514,000.

Now I don't know how much money for sure the Tetzlaff brothers are going to get but I know that it is a very sizeable and significant amount of money. And it looks to me like if you just took a one-twelfth portion, you can't possibly make this work. There isn't enough money in there to pay off a very big, one-time payment. And if now is the time that that's due, you're going to run short in all of the rest of the departments. Because if it takes a one-twelfth amount to run the normal operations of that department for the whole year each month, then if you're paying a massive amount of money to one thing on a special occasion, you haven't allotted properly to cover that.

And I'm saying to you that the associate minister already committed to this Assembly that that's what's going to happen, and I'm asking you how you're going to cover this. Where are you going to get the money from if they go into deficit?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, again I would clarify for the record and to the member opposite, that the Associate Minister of Finance did not give any details about how the money would be spent within individual departments or agencies, because that is not his job.

What the government does is it allocates one-twelfth of the budget, total budget allocation, to the particular departments and agencies. They pay the bills that they have to pay in the time frame that is allowed.

The procedure is absolutely standard. It's a procedure followed by the member opposite when they were in the government and it's very simple. We have a budget before the legislature. The budget has yet to be passed but the government has to continue to operate the affairs of the province and therefore we need interim supply.

Mr. Goohsen: — Well, Madam Minister, I've got until next fall to stand here and talk to you. And if you want to beat around the bush, we'll just keep beating around until we come around and we will find out the answers. We'll just take our time.

I've got a whole list of things I want to talk to you about. We'll talk about the Water Corporation and the Tetzlaff brothers' deal and all those things quite a few more times because I noted in the little notes that I've got here about the rules of this process, that there's no limit to the number of times that I can ask a question. So we'll just keep coming around to it and gradually you'll either answer it or we'll stay here until it starts to snow next fall.

I'd like to know, now that you've amalgamated the municipal governments, and now that you've amalgamated these two branches and there's no longer a Department of Rural Development, I'd like to know how much of the one-twelfth allocation goes to the rural municipalities.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, with respect

to time, the members opposite will decide how the legislature spends its time. They will also be accountable to the people of Saskatchewan about how that time is spent . . .

An Hon. Member: — But, Madam Minister, we're trying to hold you accountable. That's what we're trying to do.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Yes, and if in fact you want to spend your time on interim supply, in which nothing but very general questions can be asked from the point of view of the order of the legislature, the procedures, that's your choice. But you have to answer to the people of Saskatchewan as to whether that's the responsible thing to do with your time.

So you can say glibly you'll stay here till the snow flies talking about the generalities of the budget. But the people of Saskatchewan will hold you accountable if you in fact show no interest in moving on to the more detailed procedure in which they can get perhaps the answers that they have about the estimates.

An Hon. Member: — We made three motions yesterday to go to detailed procedures. You're the one that refused.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — The member opposite knows the procedure. You do interim supply, the general discussion, and then you get into the detailed discussion.

And I'm sure that the members opposite are quite right when they say the people of Saskatchewan have a number of questions that they would like to have asked about this budget. And I'm sure there are details that they would like to have clarified. But I'll tell you, the members opposite are not facilitating that.

With respect to the question asked, that question he knows is appropriately asked when we get to the estimates.

Mr. Goohsen: — So you're refusing then, Madam Minister, to tell the rural municipalities what share of the one-twelfth allocation they can expect to get from your government.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is this. There's a budget before the legislature; the budget has yet to be passed, but the affairs of the government have to continue in the interim. So the standard procedure is for the government to come before the legislature and to pass an interim supply Bill. The rules and the regulations about this particular phase of the legislature's activities is that only general questions can be asked, not detailed questions about departments. I don't run the Department of Municipal Affairs.

And once that particular process, the general questions of interim supply are over, then the opposition is free to ask exactly those detailed questions that they want to ask. But it's the members opposite who are quite openly saying to the people of

Saskatchewan they're willing to delay this process for an endless period of time. That's fine, but that's their choice. They're choosing to only talk about the generalities. They're saying to the people of Saskatchewan, we do not want the opportunity to legitimately get into the details of this budget. As I say, that's your choice, but you'll be held accountable for that choice.

Mr. Goohsen: — Well I'm quite prepared to go to an election tomorrow if you'd like to call one. I don't mind being accountable. But you're the government and you're accountable for the taxpayer's dollar. You're accountable for the public's purse. You're the one that's holding all of the money of all of the province and you're the one that has to explain to the people. I don't think they're going to stand and judge me for being accountable for where the money's going; they're going to judge you on that.

So let's play our roles correctly here and get them in order. What you've just done is said that you're allowing your government to amalgamate two branches of government. You've eliminated the Department of Rural Development; you now have one, Municipal Government, which serves both urban and rural interests. And what I'm saying to you is that we believed for a long time and now it is reinforced in our minds that this was a conspiracy from the beginning to amalgamate these two departments so that you could camouflage where the money would go, so that in fact you would not have to meet your projections of the minimal cut-backs to rural municipalities that were projected last year and we were able to prove were wrong. You projected a very small decrease again for this year and for next year, and those remain to be seen, whether they were accurate or not.

But you have combined these two branches of government in order so that you could lose in the mix the figures, because you were not ever planning on sticking to that plan of giving those dollars to rural municipalities. You will now manipulate things so that in those departments those monies will drift to the priorities in the bigger urban centres where you have political support. And you will not give this money fairly to individual rural municipalities throughout the province under the programs that had been laid into place before and which you had committed yourself to through your government last year through the budget and again this year.

And so what I'm saying to you is that by refusing to tell us what you're giving you are confirming our suspicions that there is a conspiracy against rural Saskatchewan. And now it goes even deeper. That conspiracy is against rural municipalities in certain parts of the province. You are going to manipulate the way the monies are divvied out so that only those people that supported you in the election will get funding and nobody will be able to track it down and pin you down and show this to be a fact.

Now, Madam Minister, I note here that for the first time . . . and I asked a few people about this so I could

be wrong; I haven't had a whole bunch of research. But I'm told that . . . I noted that the agricultural portion seems to be dropping. Then I got to the bottom of the page and I noted that Social Services seems to have gotten bigger. When you look at the two, you find that Agriculture has now significantly less money than Social Services. I'm told this is the first time in the history of the province of Saskatchewan that the most important industry in the province, the industry of agriculture, has less funding than social services.

Now that could be for two reasons. Either again it's your revenge on rural people, taking away financing to the most important industry in the province, or else on the other hand, we have got a very serious, serious problem here in that instead of using money to create jobs for people, you are simply accepting the fact that you're going to just put people on welfare and let them sort of drift into oblivion. And that's a sad scenario when you see the monies for social services getting higher than the monies that go into the industries that could provide jobs.

Madam Minister, I'll give you a chance to defend yourself. Can you tell the people of this province that what I have surmised is not true, that you are not just simply laying down and quitting on them; that you're not just simply saying we're going to throw money to welfare and let people sit around idly doing nothing while you do nothing to create jobs and provide some kind of alternative for them?

(1245)

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, I would be delighted to answer that question. The member opposite has his facts dead-off here. His allegation is this is the first time in the history of Saskatchewan that more money has been spent on Social Services than on the Department of Agriculture and Food.

What I would like to read into the record — because there is so much disinformation coming from the members opposite that we have to begin to correct some of the worst of it — I would like to read into the record the budget expenditures for the year 1986 when the members opposite were the government. In the year 1986, the members opposite, as government, spent \$340.5 million on Social Services; 220.3 million on Agriculture and Food. Social Services was significantly higher. In 1987, the members opposite, again being the government: \$355.6 million was spent on Social Services; 298.4 was spent on Agriculture and Food. Again Social Services was significantly higher.

A very interesting year is 1988. In that year 378.4 million was spent on Social Services; 165.2 was spent on Agriculture — an even greater gap in terms of Social Services being allocated more money than the Department of Agriculture and Food. And I could go on to read into the record the reality.

The members opposite simply have to work to get their facts straight.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — So now we've proved another important point. I had to let you hammer on us a little bit in order to get you to do that, but I did prove my point. You do know how to answer questions. You have the ability to answer questions and you have the knowledge to be able to answer questions. You have to be trapped though, into thinking that you're being politically sneaky and smart here, in order to draw you into the debate so that you will actually answer some questions.

So now that we know that you can answer questions, have the ability to answer questions and even have the background material to give facts and figures, perhaps we should go on to some more important questions like: how much money will the Tetzlaff brothers be getting out of this one-twelfth share?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, I would remind the members opposite again of the procedure that we're involved in. The procedure we're involved in is interim supply. It is a procedure in which only general aspects of the budget are to be discussed, general principles.

When the members opposite decide that they want more detail about the budget, such as who allocated money to whom in a particular department, then the procedure is that the department comes in here, and under the . . . in the process of estimates, answers those detailed questions.

And again I would just ask the members opposite — it's going to be their choice — do they want the people of Saskatchewan to continue to watch the debates or read the debates in the legislature, and have us talking all over the map about generalities? Because that's what this procedure is about. Or do they want details, do they want details about this budget and how the money is going to be spent?

And I guess I might ask a further question. What is the particular political agenda that is leading the members opposite to decide to delay this procedure, spend House time on this particular procedure, rather than on the more informative, detailed look at the budget?

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to answer the minister's question. The answer of course is yes, we do want to get some details from you. That's why we're standing here.

It's just amazing though, how your mind seemed to go blank when I ask a question that might lead, might lead us to some conclusions about how you have presented this interim supply Bill with a very serious flaw in it. And that very serious flaw that I'm going to point out to you is simply this: in order for the expediency of not having to face the wrath of the people, you simply took an interim supply of one-twelfth of every category throughout the entire page here of every department in government. One-twelfth will not serve the needs of many

departments on a particular month.

It is very clear that the bills for one month in some departments are maybe even a third of the total annual budget. It depends on what you're talking about. If you've let out road contracts for the Department of Highways that need to be paid for, they might all come due in the month of July. That means that you may have to have, in one month, three month's allocation.

You can't possibly guarantee to the people of this province that you have allocated the proper amounts of money unless you do in fact go into some detail in those areas where there's a good chance that you have erred. And I say to you that in the Saskatchewan Water Corporation you have erred or you would answer our questions. And you know you're in error and that's why you're dodging.

You're ducking because you know you're wrong and you know the people of Saskatchewan will judge you harshly if you open up your mouth and tell the truth here. It's better to be silent than to tell the people and let them find out. They'll think that you're not doing a good job, but it's better to be quiet and let them think that than to remove all doubt, I suppose.

Well let's carry on. Mr. Chairman, I'll try again. In the Department of Highways which I was just referring to, Madam Minister, you have \$124,665,000 allocated. People have told me they've seen stakes up around the province on . . . along different highways here and there. Other people say that there are signs of activity in gravel crushing in different areas and those kinds of things.

And what I'm wondering: has the Department of Highways, seeing as how they've done some bragging and advertising about expanded works, has the Department of Highways budget this year significantly higher than last year? And are there contracts being let at the present time?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Chairman, again I don't know whether the member opposite sincerely doesn't understand the procedure or whether he's trying to just deceive people with respect to the procedure. But again what I'll say is this: this is a procedure that has been in place in this province for over 20 years.

When a budget's been introduced into the legislature but it has yet to pass, governments traditionally come forward and one-twelfth of the budget is allocated and is allocated for a very simple reason — so that the affairs of the government can continue to operate; so hospitals can be paid; so schools can be paid; all of the necessary things that occur in this province. And it has been absolutely standard procedure for a one-twelfth allocation across the piece.

And as I say, I'm not sure whether the member opposite sincerely doesn't understand that this is the procedure or whether he is playing a particular game about it.

Mr. Goohsen: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm just totally, totally beside myself. I sit here trying to ask questions on behalf of the public of this province to try to get some simple answers, some simple answers to where millions, millions of dollars are going to be spent, and all I get is a lecture about the low grade of my intelligence. Well my intelligence isn't on trial here.

Madam Minister, your ability to run the finances of this province is on stake here, and it's about time you took your job seriously and started to talk to the people of this province about where you're spending the money. Because we have had it with you. There's no way that this opposition will stand in this House and tolerate the way that you treat the public purse. It is unconscionable the way you throw away money, thousands of dollars here, millions of dollars there, and give no report to anybody.

And you have the nerve to sit in this House and criticize the way the last government ran things? I can't believe my ears. This is totally ridiculous and we'll have no further part of it. I tell you, we'll turn this matter over to your House Leader; maybe he can run this thing better than you can.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:55 p.m.