

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
February 24, 1983

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

HON. MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure I introduce to you, and through you to the Assembly, 24 students from James Hamblin High School in Qu'Appelle. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers, A. Luhning and Peter Davies.

I had the very great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, to attend the opening of a major addition to their school. I know the students and teachers and the community are very proud. As I say, it is a great pleasure for me to introduce them to the Assembly. I ask all members of the House to welcome them and wish them a safe journey home.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to introduce a guest, or a couple of guests, from outside the province of Saskatchewan. The Hon. Bill Diachuk, minister responsible for workers' health, safety, and compensation, and his executive assistant, Brian Hlus. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery. I trust you will welcome them.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Job Creation Program

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services. On Tuesday, the minister seemed to be a bit confused about the number of people who were on welfare in the province and the extent of the problem that exists here in attempting to say that only 28,000 people were in fact on welfare. The numbers which are published in her own bulletin monthly would indicate not 28,000 but 58,000, including the parents and their children, are in fact on welfare. I think it is easy to argue that the children are not on welfare, but I think it is just as devastating to them.

In the group of the unemployed employable in the province of Saskatchewan in December, the amount paid out by her department was \$6 million. Every dollar of that is matched by federal money, \$1 to \$1, which would mean that \$12 million was paid out by the taxpayer to take care of people presently looking for work in Saskatchewan. That is more than the total amount of \$10 million she has put into a job creating program in one month. I wonder if she couldn't design with her staff some program that would be more meaningful than a \$10 million make work cutting garages and snow shovelling operation?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I was not confused on Tuesday. There were 28,000 recipients of welfare. When you added in the spouses and children, it added up to approximately 57,000 to 58,000. As to your dollar figures, I don't have them in front of me. I can certainly get them if you want me to check them out. I think in terms of who is going to make the work projects and the jobs, it is totally unrealistic of you to expect the Department of Social Services to do it all. I think we, as a government, have tried to co-ordinate our efforts from department to department in looking at an economy to move upwards and not downwards.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I believe that \$12 million, if you include the \$6 million from the province and the \$6 million from the federal over a year, it would be about \$72 million that is being paid out at the present time to pay people not to work, rather than to work, which they really would like to be doing. The other point that I would like to raise is whether or not the policy in the minister's department has changed recently on issuing reports on the number of people on welfare. In checking yesterday on the monthly statistics for January, we find that we can no longer receive them until six or seven weeks after the fact that she would have them in her office. This is a new policy, one which we have been able to get those statistics. I think for the purpose of informing the public to how serious this problem is, I wonder if she would revert to the old policy or clarify her policy.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Speaker, I received verbally, from the department to my office Tuesday morning, the up-to-date figures that were then to go to print. I could have chosen to give you the December figures. To my mind, that seemed, perhaps because I had the up-to-date numbers, withholding of the information. So I elected to go to the January figures. Those have gone to print and will be available. I guess the way I looked at it, the member for Shaunavon deserved all he could get and I gave you the January figure.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, supplementary. I can tell you that the unemployed in the province would like to get a job and they are not getting it under a policy that pays out that volume of money for people not to work. But I would like to ask the minister again about her policy of getting information on welfare statistics. The first 10 days in December we were able to phone the department and her office and get the monthly statistics for November. Now we find that we have to wait six or eight weeks after the end of the month before the published report comes out. This is a change in policy and I want to know if it's a new policy that you have instituted or one that your department has put in place.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — There has been no change in policy. If that is the contact that you had in December, then I suggest perhaps your contact has changed in January. Did you phone the department? They probably would have given you the figures. If you did it in December, why didn't you do it in February?

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, that's exactly the point that I am making. We did phone them in December. We got the answer to the question. We phoned them in February. We didn't get the answer. The minister is trying to confuse the issue, but the simple fact is . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Does the member have a supplementary? It's a long statement that

you are making and supplementaries are not allowed a preamble.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, in attempting to get the answer, I am attempting to clarify the fact that we are now having to wait six or eight weeks after the statistics are available to the minister before the opposition and the people of the province get the same statistics. I want to know whether or not that will continue or whether we can revert back to getting the statistics the week after or the week of the date that she gets them.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Speaker, once again, there has been no change in policy as to when the department gets the statistics, when they go to print, and when they become available in book form for the public. I received them Tuesday morning, verbally, from my office to the department. You could have done the same thing. If you had phoned my office Tuesday morning after I had the information, I would have given you the figures.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, this is getting to the point of absurdity. I told her three times that we did phone her office. We in fact phoned her office after she gave the statistics in the House — after — and the numbers were refused. And I want her to clarify whether or not those numbers will be available from her office in the future.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Speaker, those figures are available from my office today, if you wish them. You know, I was accused of withholding information. If I had given you the December figures, it was a no-win situation. I would have been accused of trying to make things look better than they actually were because I gave you the old numbers. You can't have it both ways.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I could tell the minister that you would be much better politically to give the old numbers, because they're not nearly as terrible as what they were.

Day Care Subsidies

MR. LINGENFELTER: — New question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Social Services. In light of the fact that there is such a large number of parents of families who are on unemployment and, in fact, on welfare, can she clarify if there has been a change in the policy in the day care division as to subsidies being paid to parents who are presently on welfare?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Speaker, there has been a change, as the member probably knows. It used to be that an unemployed person that had a child in a day care centre could collect the subsidy up to six months while seeking employment. That has been changed to three months.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I have a letter here dated November 15, 1982, from the director of day care, Shirley McKendry, which says in part, "The current policy is that parents can only receive a subsidy for a period of two months while looking for work." Can you clarify that little point? You just stood here and said three months. Is it two or three?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Speaker, I'll give this one to him. His two is correct, and my three is wrong.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, a supplementary on the same issue of the subsidy to parents who are on welfare who have children in day care. The policy of giving six months subsidy to parents who have children in day care and who are on welfare was set up at a time when the unemployment rate was very low in Saskatchewan and jobs were fairly easy to get. How do you justify and square that with the people who have now found themselves on welfare? Jobs are harder to get, and what you decide to do is cut back on the amount of subsidy, the date of subsidy, to those parents who are looking for work. How can they go out and look for work if they can't have their children in day care?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Speaker, I guess it's best to answer it with another question. How do you justify paying six months' subsidy when someone's not working, and yet according to their figures and their statements, there were line-ups to get into day care by couples wanting to work and couldn't get in?

MR. LINGENFELTER: — So what you're saying to the people of Saskatchewan who are attempting to find jobs in a very job shortage which they find themselves in, as a result of the policy of the government, is that now you are cutting back on the day care subsidies to those people who are attempting to find jobs. I want you to tell the people who are facing that predicament how they are supposed to do it.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I think I need clarification: how they are supposed to do what?

Public Service Guidelines

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker and Mr. Minister, I direct a question to the . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Mr.? Mr.? That's a nice looking girl, Al.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — That's right, except that I was going to direct the question to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, back in December at the height of the Van Mulligen affair, the Premier promised this legislature some guidelines. You will recall that at that time he said that it was merely a matter of common sense and that there would be no difficulty in committing those common-sense guidelines to paper, and I paraphrase what he indicated to this House. In December it seems to me we were promised a white paper. We now seem to be promised that something will come after the Supreme Court of Canada has dealt with something that is occurring in Ontario. What I would like to know is, what is so difficult about committing to paper the simple common-sense views which were supposed to be known to all public servants, at least in the mind of the Premier?

HON. MR. ANDREW: — Well, I think, Mr. Speaker, that the position that we took is the question of the gray area. I think when that question was asked in the fall session, we talked about the obvious situation, let's say, of a senior deputy minister versus the person that worked in the Department of Highways workshop out at Rosetown, Saskatchewan. And those two are very simple.

Where you had a more complicated problem was as you got to the gray areas in between. We tried to wrestle with that problem as your government tried to wrestle with that problem with a two-year study that was done trying to address the same thing. We

did come up with several options, then we became aware of the fact that the question came before the Ontario Court of Appeal dealing with federal employees participating in a provincial or federal election, and their comments and their activity. The reference also then dealt with and asked for wider interpretation by the supreme court of the Ontario guidelines as to what an Ontario public servant could do vis-à-vis political activity.

Now the legal information that we have is that what the supreme court, as you are fully aware, often does, is establish and interpret those guidelines in relation to the new charter of rights. We felt that simply to put out a white paper to get comments on something, only to find that it was now irrelevant because the supreme court will perhaps set out some very fundamental rules and guidelines. At that point in time, we would certainly be prepared, as I indicated to the media, to either move by way of white paper, or if it is clear from the supreme court, then certainly move by way of policy that is consistent with the supreme court and, therefore, probably consistent with rules across the country.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I direct a supplementary to the minister. From the statements of the Premier, it is clear that some guidelines have been laid down. It is in order for French consultants to campaign in by-elections on their own time, at least if they are brothers-in-law to the Premier, and campaign for the Progressive Conservative Party. That we've established.

What I want to know, is whether it is equally open to consultants who may be other than French consultants, and who may be campaigning for a party other than the Progressive Conservative Party, to exercise the same civil right in this province?

HON. MR. ANDREW: — Well, I don't know where the question relates to the French or what language a person speaks, with regard to the guidelines, but I can advise the speaker in that term the same as before.

I think what we are seeing is situations that are going to be clarified and ultimately are going to be clarified by the supreme court with the new charter of rights. I would suggest that, simply until that time, we have to see what the supreme court is in fact going to say and maybe it will resolve a problem, as I say, that has been with governments for some time, including your administration when you were there. The public service commission had undertaken a study that was over two years trying to wrestle with the question of guidelines and political activity. So it is not simply something new to us. It's been something that's wrestled with by governments in Saskatchewan for some time, and I suggest governments across the country.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, supplementary question. While the government is so clearly wrestling with this question of common sense, would the minister give us an assurance that during this period, no public servants will be disciplined or punished, that is, discharged or transferred, for their political beliefs, until these common sense guidelines are made known to the public?

HON. MR. ANDREW: — Mr. Speaker, anybody that would be terminated or released by our government certainly would be for cause as interpreted by cause, and certainly open to challenges from the court if we did it for the wrong reason. I can give you that assurance.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Government

Services. The question is whether or not the minister is aware of the fact that a clerk-steno 2 in her department by the name of Sharon Young has been transferred from the typing pool in Prince Albert to Regina.

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — Yes, I am aware of that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Would the minister inform the Assembly and the people of the province whether or not that transfer was made against her will and for what reason?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — The transfer was not made against my will. The transfer was made by the deputy of government services who indicated to me that the position was required in Regina with the decanting of DNS to government services, along with three other employees.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, the minister is trying to tell us there is nothing unusual about the transfer, but I wonder if she could then tell us why this person was called in to the acting deputy minister's office and questioned about the fact that she was indeed related to Jerry Hammersmith and warned about being involved in politics at any time. Can you square that with the people?

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — I think you have been sadly misinformed on several counts. She was not warned. She was invited into the deputy minister's office. It's a normal procedure. We have taken on several segments of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. Last fall, the deputy flew up to northern Saskatchewan and toured the offices that would be coming over to government services to introduce himself and some senior officials from Regina to the people there. On January 3, we had three employees in DNS transfer down to Regina at which time they were taken into the deputy's office for coffee and to be introduced to the rest of the staff. And Ms. Young was treated no different than any other employee.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I find it hard to believe that the deputy minister of any department has time to interview and chat with every secretary who is moved or hired. But I can tell you that the reason that she was called into the acting deputy minister's office was to warn her about her political . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. The member is on his feet to ask a supplementary, and rather than asking a supplementary you are now telling us things. And I think you are going to have to put together the fact that we're in question period. Question period is for asking questions not for giving information, and supplementary questions in particular are to be straight and to the point.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I think that the issue is of a great deal of importance to the people of the province — knowing their political rights — and I think that a preamble to the question is not out of order. But I will keep . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Is the member challenging my decision? Are you challenging my decision?

MR. LINGENFELTER: — No, I'm not challenging your decision.

MR. SPEAKER: — Will you get on with your supplementary?

MR. LINGENFELTER: — The issue at hand here is a very serious question of political

rights in the province of Saskatchewan, and one that the people are demanding answers to. What we would like to know is whether or not the minister will again assure us that this person was not taken into the acting deputy minister's office and warned about political involvement at any time.

HON. MRS. DUNCAN: — I gave you my assurance in my previous answer. She was treated no different than any other employee that will be transferred to Regina at any time in the next 4 or 8 or 12 years. I would also like to tell the member for Shaunavon that that is exactly why we won on April 26 — because we don't put ourselves in high towers, remote from the people that work for us. We get to know them on an individual first-name basis.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Education Facilities For Off-reserve Treaty Indians

MR. YEW: — Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Minister of Education. My question, Mr. Minister, is with regard to the financial problems of the Northern Lights School Division, and the responsibility of education for off-reserve treaty Indians. The minister will be aware of the federal government's decision to stop payments for the education of off-reserve treaty Indians. I'm sure he is also aware that the school division will have to close possibly 30 schools, and halt the classroom education of possibly yet another 4,500 students at the end of March unless some positive action is taken by the provincial government. My question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: will you outline the steps your department has taken to ensure that these schools will remain in operation? And would you also give assurance to this House that your department and the government opposite will provide the necessary funds to allow these northern students full access to educational facilities and programs?

HON. MR. CURRIE: — Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member's question, yes, I am aware and I am concerned, as he is, about the situation that exists in northern Saskatchewan. I am concerned about the fact that the federal government is, in effect, at least threatening to withdraw its responsibility for looking after Indian students who are not on reserves or on crown lands. I am concerned that it was an action that appears to be taken unilaterally by the federal government. Certainly we have been monitoring the situation and, at this point in time, my own personal position on it is that the federal government has a very well-defined responsibility to look after Indian children, whether on or off the reservations.

The matter of dealing with the federal government is handled through intergovernmental affairs and the Attorney General, in his capacity as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, has communicated with the federal government. So perhaps I would defer to him if he cares to make some comments which would further answer your question.

HON. MR. LANE: — The government was informed in October of the position of the federal government and particularly the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In December we expressed in the strongest terms our objection to the policy and position of the Government of Canada in denying its responsibility for off-reserve Indians. Unfortunately, in being able to respond to your question about assuming the educational responsibility, it goes far beyond the question of the Northern Lights School Division, as I'm sure hon. members opposite are fully aware. It causes us some deep concern as well. Do we establish a precedent by assuming the

obligation? It is a matter, as I say, of deep concern. We expressed our objections to the minister responsible for Indian affairs and northern development in December; I have not yet received a reply.

As a second step, we have argued most strongly that the question of the supply of services by the federal government to our native peoples should be a matter of high priority on the section 35 constitutional conference. The hon. member may be aware that efforts were made by the Government of Canada to basically bury that particular item. It was through the efforts of the province of Saskatchewan that it was brought to a high priority and, I believe, that it will receive a fair degree of consideration at the first ministers' conference. I hope the hon. member is sympathetic to the precedent that would be established, and the ramifications for the people of Saskatchewan and the native people of the suggestion he made in his question.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

CONSOLIDATED FUND LOANS, ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS

CO-OPERATION AND CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 64

Item 1

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Is the minister ready? Would you introduce your official?

HON. MR. SANDBERG: — Mr. Chairman, with me is Mr. Dale Folstad, deputy minister of co-operation and co-operative development.

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 64 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

SOCIAL SERVICES

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 36

Item 1

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to the House today Mr. Walter Podiluk to my left, the deputy minister of social services; to my right, the assistant deputy minister, Steven Pillar, and immediately behind me is Mr. Art Uhren, director of administration.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have the privilege of being able to ask a number of questions of a department that I had the honor of attempting to run. The minister who is presently attempting to run it will understand very well what I mean.

I think it's fair to say that the estimates that we're doing today are basically money that has already been spent, and in this department it's a huge amount of money. I hope in the future we are able to have a look at the spending of this department at a date prior to a month before the completion of the year, because it makes it very, very difficult.

I really need a great deal of numbers from the minister. I have prepared a list of the type of grants that I need. I'll read them out and then send it across. I don't expect that you'll have all of them with you here today, but if I can get a commitment that we will have them in a certain length of time, like two weeks, we will maybe let it go at that.

But basically under section 6: child care institutions; 21: grants to day care centres; 22: organizational grants; 23: grants to community services; 24: construction grants for residential care; 25: senior citizens' provincial council grants; 26: grants and allowances for home care (that's the grants to the home care boards); 28: grants for associations giving grants to the handicapped groups; 30: grants for senior citizens' service; 31: job opportunities (location, amount and numbers of jobs created); 32: grants and allowances for residential care (that would be each nursing home that I would like there — the amount granted during the year); and 35: the ESP programs (the location and the numbers that might be involved in those programs).

And what I would like basically is a list of the groups, a location, and a very brief description of what they are involved in and have been involved in during this year.

If I could send this across and give the minister a minute to look at it to see whether or not she can give me an assurance that I could have those answers over the next couple of weeks. Just to clarify the point, those items are numbered not by the subvote but by the number of the vote. That may help.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, normally the kind of detail that you're asking for comes out in *Public Accounts*, but in order to accommodate you because you're so nice, we will supply them for you. Just one point on the child care institutions — if you're talking about all the child care institutions, like Roy Wilson, etc., they are not grants. They are part of the department. The department runs those, so they don't get a grant per se. If you want the total package, it's in the estimates.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, what I need on that would be a list of the institutions and the amount of moneys that are being used in those institutions. I realize that it's not exactly a grant, but it would be the operating expense.

The other point, Mr. Chairman, would be the date or the time frame that we would be working in — whether or not we can get that information. I think two weeks is probably plenty long enough. Maybe you could get it for me in 10 days, two weeks?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, we don't see a great deal of problem in getting the information to you within two weeks. A maximum time may even be three weeks. I'm sure you understand the workings of the department and we are also getting busy for the '83-84 budget. So we will do our best to go the two weeks. Have patience if we are a few days later.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — The minister is then giving us assurance that we would have it in three weeks.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Yes. Three weeks at the outside.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, that will take care of a large number of individual questions. I have a question that will deal with your staff within the department. Can you give me a list of the people, along with their salaries, and whether or not any of your officials would have access to a government car in terms of a government car that has been assigned to them?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, we need a clarification on the question. Are you talking middle management, senior management, the entire department?

MR. LINGENFELTER: — What I would be talking about is the management, middle-management — whether or not they have a car that is assigned to them. I am not talking about the car pool that a social worker might use to drive from Regina to Swift Current. What I am talking about is members of your management group who might have an automobile assigned to them.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, in keeping with the CVA policy on the assignment of cars, cars that are assigned for their personal use, there are two within the Department of Social Services. That is the deputy minister, and we have one other one in the name of Duane Adams, who is special assistant during a review on SAP.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — So there would be, in fact, two individuals other than the minister who would have automobiles assigned to them as personal automobiles in the department.

I'd like to know now, I noticed that the total number of people who are employed by the department, I think is 2,834. I believe those are positions within the department. I'd like the minister to tell me how many of those positions are vacant at the present time.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, we have 212 vacancies out of the total number of 2,460. That is quite a normal number for a department that size, whether it be through the actual turnover and the natural attrition that takes place.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, Mr. Chairman, it would seem to me that a vacancy rate of what would be approaching 10 per cent would seem relatively high, especially in light of the fact that the caseload in that department . . . I don't know what it would have increased but many of the social service groups are telling me that their caseload has increased by as much as 50 per cent over the last year. To find that you have that many vacancies is surprising.

What I would like to know is whether or not the freeze on hiring is affecting your department and, if so, if you have asked to be exempted from any hiring freeze that might be in place in order that the needs of the children who might be involved in a family dispute, that sort of thing, can be taken care of. Because even at the time when we were running the department it was just nip and tuck whether you had enough employees. That's when the caseload was probably one-half of what it is now. There has not been a great increase in the number of employees. I'm just wondering how you are handling this relatively large number of vacancies within the department.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, I believe the question was: how has the department been handling an increased caseload, particularly if there are some

vacancies? I guess I would like to say that the civil service, particularly in the department, has been handling it very well. We recognize that caseloads are going up, that there has also been some redeployment from central administration to the front lines. We feel that they are doing very well.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, the other part of the question is whether or not the hiring freeze is in place in your department, whether or not you are being affected by that at the present time.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, the hiring freeze per se has only affected us in terms of filling some certain administrative positions, but not the front-line positions.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I think that I would just like to reiterate, in the case of social workers who are involved in child protection and the whole area that is being drastically increased, and, I admit, not only here but across Canada, that the responsibility falls on the department and, inevitably, on the minister. As a result of large increases in the number of people who are involved in marriage breakdowns, employees would be involved with child protection and in the case of child abuse. That whole area is one in which I feel she should be making sure that when the cabinet debate goes on and it comes to a decision whether you cut oil royalties or hire more social workers the case will have to be made very strongly, that it is your responsibility. Inevitably, when those kinds of issues come up you will be the one who will be held responsible for it.

Another area which I would like some information on would be the number who are directly involved with your department and your office, would be a list of your executive assistants and special assistants and their salaries.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, I have a special assistant by the name of Rita Archer — \$40,000; I have an executive assistant by the name of Rod McLean — \$30,000; and one Nancy McLean — \$35,004.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I wonder if the minister could tell us or give us a list of the number of times the executive aircraft has been used by the minister and employees of the department since May 8?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — We will need some time to get that to you.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — If the minister is saying that we can sort of work on a three-week operation on most of these answers, on ones like that that you won't have right before you, that would be fine.

I would also like a list of the charters made by that same group on private company aircraft which you may have chartered or members of your staff would have chartered.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — We shall get that for you.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, one of the main areas within the Department of Social Services is, of course, the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan. In question period today we had an opportunity to inquire about the large amount of money, and I'd just like to distinguish what we are talking about — the money that is flowing out of the provincial coffers to the unemployed employable, that group of people who are able to work, willing to work, and very much want a job. But because of the economic situation in Saskatchewan, in large part, we believe, due to the inaction of the government in

many areas . . . What is the government doing in order to design a plan in order that the \$6 million a month that is flowing out of that area be shifted into another area, whether it's ESP program or whether it's a major job creation program, to see that that fund of money goes to something that is more meaningful than paying people not to work rather than paying them to work?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to clarify the 6 million, the figure that you just used. You used it earlier today, too, and the officials tell me the 6 million is the gross figure. Half of that comes back, so it would be 3 million as opposed to 6 million, and not a total of 12 which was the figure that you used, I believe, in question period. As to what the Department of Social Services is going to be doing about it, I think this is the second ground on that issue too, and I had stated that that is an overall government strategy; that it is totally unrealistic to lay it all on social services; that they do an economic strategy, industrial strategy, or whatever, and the government is co-ordinating it.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, Mr. Chairman, it seems obvious that the large amount of money, the increase in the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan, is getting completely out of hand in the province of Saskatchewan. I would like to check a number on the increase from last year, the 1981-82, to this year '82-83, in that one area alone. My number, when I add up the supplements and the main budget, is something in the area of \$100 million in increase alone in that one area. Can you clarify that point and give me an exact number?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, in '81-82 the figure for the social assistance program was approximately \$89 million. In the spring of '82-83 the then government budgeted \$106 million, 106.5. That turned out to be underestimated by \$35 million. With the revised budget in the fall of '82, the figure was put in at \$141 million. The forecasted figure for 1982-83 is \$152 million, which will indicate that we were approximately 11 over on that also. But, in the forecasted '82-83 that takes into account the figures that had been previously in DNS.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, I'd just like to question your number of 152. I know we're not on the supplementary estimates now, but I see under public assistance in the supplementary estimates that were included with the budget a number of \$13 million and I believe another number in the area of \$11 million in one of the other supplements, which would add up in my calculation to quite a bit more than \$152 million.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I think your \$13 million figure you're taking out of the '81-82 estimates. If you look at the '83 no. 3, it's \$11 million. If you add that on to the 141, you get 152.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — What you're saying is that it's \$152 million this year and was \$89 million last year then?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The figure that the government budgeted for in 1981-82 was \$89 million, but in fact it was short \$13 million and that figure also did not include the figures for DNS.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, can you give me the number that the transfer from DNS would have been, the number of millions of dollars difference that there would have been? Because when I look at the DNS estimates, I see that it has been increased, the

amount that is paid in that area, as well. So it seems to me you must have terribly high welfare rates in the North if you're going to increase it there and you're saying you've transferred a bunch more to your department.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — In '81-82, the government budget had been \$3.2 million for SAP in DNS and they actually received an additional \$4 million. Now we are looking at, for the year '82-83, approximately \$10 million in total.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — And that would be the DNS that is in the Department of Social Services now, excluding the DNS budget for public assistance?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The 3.2 and the \$4 million was totally out of the DNS budget for the year '81-82. For the '82-83 budget, the first half was in DNS because it did not come on stream into social services until October of 1982, and it worked out to approximately . . . The breakdown was \$5.4 million and the remainder was out of social services.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — So then, of the \$152 million that we are talking about, is the total amount for social service budget in public assistance about \$5 million from the Department of Northern Saskatchewan?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — That's approximately correct.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — What we're talking about is \$147 million, if we're talking about a direct relationship between last year and this year. I think that any way you cut it, you have to . . . It would be difficult to argue that there isn't a very severe drain being made on the public purse in terms of people being paid not to work. And I just think that the minister should attempt to put all the imagination and all the work that she can by her department and her government to encourage them to create meaningful employment.

And I think when you look at that number over a four-year period, projects like water pipelines and projects like building a 144-bed nursing home in Saskatoon, four-laning the Trans-Canada across the province, are all in the realm of possibility, just using that number alone. And in terms of the unemployment and what that would do to lower the unemployment rate would be very significant indeed. I think that's only the tip of the iceberg, though, the fact that great amounts of money are leaving the public purse to pay people not to work.

The other area that we haven't seen yet are the social scars that will remain on a great number of people who are being forced on to the welfare rolls. We look back at another era (and I don't know whether it's a coincidence that the last time we had a Conservative government was at a time when we were at the beginning of a depression), but I can tell you the scars that were left from that period, when people were forced on to the street because there were no welfare departments at that time that gave any meaningful type of service for those people. The responsibility on this government to get those people work through meaningful employment becomes more and more important.

Which leads to another question, and that is the blame that has been placed by the minister on the children, so-called, from Alberta who are coming home to find jobs in response to an election campaign and not being able to find jobs. And I wonder what the minister is doing to inform the so-called children who are in Alberta not to bother to come to Saskatchewan at the present time because there are no jobs available and they're going to have to go on welfare if in fact they come home.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I'm well aware of the numbers that have gone up on the social assistance rolls. I hear from them. I talk to them and I see them, including some of the problems that are a direct spinoff of the unemployment figure. I would ask, if you are so sure that I have accused the children of Alberta in coming home and filling up our welfare rolls, to put the statement in the House that quotes me as saying that. I would suggest to you that if people are coming into the province, and the children from Alberta, it's because first of all we have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. Secondly, the cost of living. And that suggests to me as it should to you that some of the efforts are being paid off.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, I don't have the news release in front of me. I will find it as this procedure goes on. But word is that the department or the minister has indicated that one of the main reasons that the welfare rolls are swelling increasingly all the time is because of the people returning from Alberta or people moving from Alberta. But are you denying that that statement was made by your office or a member of your department?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — If you go back and read the paper, it will tell you an unidentified source. As to where that unidentified source comes from, I have no idea.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, I think it's very obvious that we're skating around the issue of the whole campaign promise that people should come to Saskatchewan to find jobs. I agree that, at the time, April 26, people could come to Saskatchewan and find jobs, because there were many projects under way and many other projects planned. Whether it was four-laning the Trans-Canada, in which nothing took place this year, or whether it was building an oil upgrader or building a 144-bed nursing home in Saskatoon, or a hospital in Maidstone, there should have been jobs available. In estimating the number of dollars we would have needed for welfare, it wasn't that our estimates were out, but the simple fact that there were no jobs created after we left office, and therefore there was a large increase in the amount needed for welfare.

What I would like to know is whether the minister can tell me the exact number of people who were on welfare in the month of January. I know that she used a number in the House. I'm not quite sure if it was exact; I haven't been able to get that from the department. But I would like the caseload for January as well as the number of individuals.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Would you like it verbally, or would you like a copy of the card that I have?

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I think I'd like both.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — January 1982 to January 1983 — are those the figures you want? Those are the figures I have. I do not have from December to January yet.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — What we would like is the month of January, 1983.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — In the month of January, 1983, we had in cases — not all the people that are benefits, you know, from 0 to 19 that you get hung up on — cases; the employed, 3,993; in the unemployed category, fully employable, 6,983; partly employable, 6,761; for a subtotal of 13,744; in the unemployable category,

temporarily, 4,905; permanently, 6,125; for a subtotal of 11,030; for a provincial total of 28,767.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, in the category of unemployed employable. I would like a comparison of January of 1982 and January of 1983 — those two numbers of the unemployed employable.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The subtotals? Or do you want the whole thing again?

MR. LINGENFELTER: — No. I just want the totals.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The total? January of 1982 was 22,377.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — On the issue that I had raised in question period today about getting information from the department on statistics when they are released from the department. I'm not quite sure what you were attempting to say, whether or not statistics for the month of February, for example, will be available if we were to call your office the first week in March or not. I would like that clarified.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — No, they won't be. The first week in March for the whole month of February? I told you earlier the policy has not changed and you usually don't get any feedback until the third week into the next month. Then the book goes to print.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — You are saying that the statistics for February will be available the third week in March?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I could probably get from the department the figures the third week in March, verbally. Then the book goes to print and what happens is that it is a month behind, obviously, because the book doesn't come out until about the first week of the next month.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I know all about printing books and how long it takes. What I am trying to find out is whether the opposition and the press who might be interested can get the statistics from you, verbally, before it is published in the monthly bulletin.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — If somebody wishes to phone my office the third week of the month, we normally have the information unless there is some problem with the computer print-out or whatever. I would gladly give the information.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister could inform her staff of that policy because when we called there yesterday, apparently they were unaware of it because they refused to give us the information which you had at that time.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I have, Mr. Chairman, no idea what the staff in my office have to do with '82-83 estimates.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, I agree that we are dealing with an issue that is very current, but I don't see why the minister becomes defensive about the numbers that are involved in welfare, unless she is trying or attempting to hide the numbers and keep them from being discussed in the press and by the public because of how devastating they are. But nevertheless, whether you give them to us, I suppose, the third week in the month following or whether we wait for the bulletin doesn't matter a great deal. I am just wondering why it has changed because definitely it has. When we

attempted to get them yesterday, your office wouldn't give them to us. You are right. It doesn't fall under the year under review. We will leave it at that.

Another area which I would like to cover under social assistance is that group of people who are called, or are referred to as the working poor, which is the second fastest growing area in public assistance in your department. I would like to make the case to you, and if you could possibly explain it to your cabinet, that what has happened as a result of the lack of increase in minimum wage is that the taxpayers of Saskatchewan are called on to pay a larger and larger amount of money to many of those people who are on minimum wage, working for multinational corporations like McDonald's and A & W through your department, and how you explain to the taxpayers of the province that social assistance is being paid to more and more people at the same time as Minister of Labor refuses to increase the minimum wage. I would like to know what the increase has been in the past year, from 1981-82 to '83-84 per month for that group of people — those people who are employed but also receiving social assistance.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, the fully employable people that are getting some kind of assistance from social services in fact have gone down. In January 1982 it was 960; in January 1983 it was 910.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I am talking about the dollars paid. If you could give me the number of dollars paid to that group.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — In 1982 it was approximately \$406,000; January of '83 it was \$426,000, and that has to do with the increase in the allowances on the pre-added, the shelter, etc., that went along with SAP.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, I think that you may say it's because of an increase totally to do with an increase in the allowances, but I don't agree with that and would dispute the fact. I believe that a large amount of money is being paid out to people who are employed at this time simply because the minimum wage hasn't kept up to reflect the cost of living, and they are falling off of where they were totally independent, and becoming dependent on the province to pay for part of their income. I would like you to make the case to your cabinet colleagues that this is unacceptable, that the people of the province shouldn't have to pay the way so that McDonald's and A & W can have cheap labor in this province, but in fact you have a responsibility to take people off welfare rather than put them on.

To this end I would like to talk about a task force or a committee that has been established to, as I understand it (although it is a very secretive operation), study social assistance in the province of Saskatchewan. I would like the minister to outline what this committee or study is doing at the present time, who is involved in it, what their mandate is, and whether or not public hearings are available. If a group — many of them who have gotten hold of me want to submit briefs to this. Are they going to travel around like the water committee, or like the other task force that we have had, similar to the one which is in existence in Manitoba at this time, to study the whole area of social assistance?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The review that is being done on SAP is being headed by Mr. Duane Adams. He has for staff the equivalent of two full-time people out of planning and evaluation and one secretary. As to why the member for Shaunavon feels that it's secretive I have no idea, considering the number of invitations that Mr. Adams has sent out to organizations, to the public in general, to individuals including people on SAP. I

believe, to date, they total approximately 1500. If that's secretive, then I live in a different world than you do.

As to the process, that has been the process to date, not the public meetings so far. I think that is something that I will be discussing with him in the immediate future.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, I realize that invitations have been sent out to a number of groups. I have no idea how many invitations, but I would encourage the government and the minister, and I'm sure the opposition would join with me; for this operation we would encourage you to make it as public as possible and hold hearings in the various communities. Come up with some type of a design for this large amount of money, which is being paid out to people who would rather be working; get all the help you can get in terms of creating jobs, meaningful jobs, in the various communities throughout the province.

I would like to know, as well, regarding this committee, if you could give me the salary of the individuals, the person heading it up as well as the two people who are staffed to him at the present time.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, I'm glad the member is concerned about it and looking forward to it. I suggest his concern is about eight or nine years too late. The salary of Mr. Adams is at the deputy minister status, which he was when he left, and, I'm sorry, I don't have the exact dollar figure. The other people have been seconded from the department and are on their normal salaries. I will get those dollar figures for you if you like.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Okay, if you will get those numbers for me under the same arrangement, that will be fine.

What I would like now is a breakdown of the categories of social assistance — not the categories, but the amounts paid per month to an individual, for example, who might be on social assistance in Regina — the shelter and clothing and that type of thing.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The monthly basic allowance in categories first of all are pre-added in the year 1982. For each adult, \$140.00; for each child up to three in the family, \$125.00; the fourth and subsequent children, \$115.00.

The second category is a household allowance. This is for each family unit receiving payment under number one which I just read to you in maintaining its own household. That figure is \$60.00.

Now there is another category, the special needs — the individual item of need. Number one would be the ordinary food for each person. That was amended on April 1, '82. For an adult, it is \$102.00; for children 10 to 17 years of age, \$87.00; and children 0 to 9, \$82.00.

The second category in there is clothing for each person, \$23.00. The third one, personal allowance for each person, 10 years to adult is \$15.00 and 0 to 9 years is \$20.00.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, these rates, I believe the minister said, were effective on April 1, or has there been an increase since April 1 of '82?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — There has been no increase since April 1, '82.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — In what other categories have there been any increases for food allowance or clothing, anything like that?

I suppose that brings up the next point: that these people have been expected to live the complete year with no increase from this government, at the same time as many other people who are in much better financial condition are receiving regular increases. And I would just like to remind you of your responsibility in defending this group of people, because they are dependent very much on the Minister of Social Services and various social service groups throughout the province. Because I can well imagine that attempting to clothe your children, I believe it's at \$23 a month, could be a very, very difficult time. Having a young child of 10 years, and knowing that it costs \$40 or \$50 for a pair of shoes, it's a pretty difficult and pretty lean time.

Another issue which I would like to bring up is the family income plan. I believe that your budget included about \$15.7 million for the family income plan. In our budget, we had allowed for \$17.5 million, or about \$2 million more than what your budget has had in it. But I would like to remind you as well that had we known that the economic conditions would be what they are today, that budget would be a fair bit higher than that — whether or not you find this amount in the family income plan to be adequate.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, there has been no change in policy on the family income plan, briefly known as FIP. The difference in figures — as I am told, cabinet approved \$5 less than what the Department of Finance for the original budget of '82-83 had put in the book, \$15 as opposed to \$20, and that gave you \$1.2 million difference. Some people would say it was cosmetic, whatever.

The remainder is a decrease in the projected case loads coming onto it.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Can you give me some numbers of the number of people on the family income plan, and is there any way of breaking that down to whether or not they are rural people who might be dropping off the family income plan simply because the asset level of the farm family might be increasing simply due to inflation, but has nothing to do with the income they're receiving at the present time?

I think you don't have to think very far to realize that many farmers today, as opposed to this time last year, have very little income, even though the assets in their land have increased in many parts of the province of Saskatchewan. The word that I am receiving is that there are many farm families falling off of the family income plan at a time when the opposite in a moral sense should be happening.

Times are harder now, and you would think that it would be automatic that as income on the farm would go down, the number of people on the family income plan would go up. And whether or not you can give me numbers that would indicate what is happening with rural people who are receiving the family income plan.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, in effect, the rural caseloads are up, and city caseloads are down. Did you want the figures? For the cities it's 3,834, and for the rural, 2,944, and for DNS, 679 for this month — December of 1982, I'm sorry.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — The overall number then would be down slightly, and that

would be the reason that the amount in the budget is less?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — That's one of the reasons.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — To do with your regional operation and the staffing which we had talked about earlier, I think there's a couple of areas, Prince Albert being one of them, where the word is that staffing and the staff are having a difficult time coping with the large number of cases or caseloads that they have at the present time. I'm wondering if there's any thought been given to a major infusion of people in certain areas like Regina, the Regina region, Saskatoon and Prince Albert in terms of staffing and social workers who are having a very difficult time coping with the caseload at the present time.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, we are the first to recognize that there are certain regions in this province where the caseloads have gone up with social workers. As to how they've been handling the work is a tribute to them in these times. We have recently added three people to the staff of Prince Albert, and we will be further considering this year redeployment within social services to those areas that require it the most.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — The case here again is that the moneys that are spent in that area are very important in terms of the children of people who are involved in very difficult times. I think that can't be overestimated or overstated. We're very concerned about reports that we hear from various hospitals about the large increase in child abuse at the present time. I don't want to go into that in any detail now, but the minister will be well aware of cases that I refer to.

In terms of the regional operation, we were in the process of decentralizing the regional operation. At the time of the change of government several new offices had opened up. It was the intention of the department at that time to open up a number of other offices. I'm just wondering whether the minister is going ahead with the decentralization of social services, or whether that is now on hold.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — As to a review of the process of decentralization of the regional offices, there are indeed parts of it that are being gone ahead with. The Saskatoon East office opened February 14. The West office will be opening March 12. Wynyard — there was an office there. Staff has been placed and space is being located. The same thing for Regina North and South. Fort Qu'Appelle and Rosetown will also be on the immediate horizon.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — In the Swift Current region, which is, of course, of a great deal of interest to the present minister and the former minister, are there any changes that you're intending to make in the Swift Current region?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — In looking at the decentralization plan when I first came into office, that was one area that was put on hold because of the very large geographical area that it covers. At the present time, we are not looking at the district office versus region — at this time.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — There's no consideration to opening an office in Shaunavon at this time then, the minister is telling me?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I can't imagine why.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — In light of the pressures that have developed in the province in terms of The Family Services Act, I wonder if there's a review planned at this time and any process under way to have a white paper, a green paper or whatever, in terms of The Family Services Act, to get opinions from the various community groups and individuals and professional people around the province on this most important act. I know that there is a rumor that changes are in the wind. Can the minister bring us up to date on any plans that she has in that area?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, obviously the rumors he hears must have some truth to them. The Family Services Act is of a concern to me, not only to me, but I think to this government, and there is definitely going to be a review of it. And the earliest time that I suspect any changes at all would probably be for the fall of 1983. We have gotten no further in terms of process to this point in time except to know that we are going to review it and you could likely see some changes.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I had asked before changes would occur whether or not public hearings and public input would be granted to the public. The minister I don't think answered that, but I would encourage her to consider seriously the possibility of holding public hearings to have input from individuals and groups as I mentioned earlier, in the whole process of changing, making changes or proposing changes to this most important act.

The topic of funding to various groups we touched on lightly when I sent the list across to you. I would like to just briefly go into a couple of areas because I know it's a concern of the minister and that anyone who takes over the job of social services is inundated with hundreds of requests for grants and increased grants. But there are several areas that I am concerned about, and in particular, already established groups who are facing the possibility of cutbacks or at least a major hold on funding to their programs.

The one in question which I would like clarification on is one which I had brought up in the House last fall, and that is the SCCC&A (Saskatchewan Council for Crippled Children and Adults), and the \$200,000 that was in question at that time — whether or not that money has been given and granted to that organization so that proper salaries can be paid in the sheltered workshops. One of them is in the minister's constituency and is one which I am sure we are both very concerned about, because I believe those people who are in those sheltered workshops today, once their transportation is deducted, are earning in the area of \$10 or \$15 a month. I just think that this is a very regressive step from the movement which was being made in a different direction. And, I think that in large part it was due to the fact that the right amount of granting from the provincial government wasn't available. If the minister would just bring us up to date on grants being made available to the Saskatchewan Council for Crippled Children and Adults.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, the \$200,000 that is pending has absolutely not a thing to do with what you determine as proper salary level; that is up to the board. The \$200,000, as I understand it in the verbal contract or agreement that was reached with SCCC&A and yourself when you were in office as had Minister of Social Services, more to do with the restructuring of the organization in order to make sure that it remains viable. The deputy will be meeting with a new executive director who has for a very short period of time been in place, to discuss the \$200,000.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, it's true that in negotiating loans and advances and grants for groups, you may say that the \$200,000 wasn't meant in the category of salaries. But it's difficult for me to understand how, for example, if there's 200,000 less to put into another area, the one option of course left to the board is to cut salaries to make up the shortfall. And so even though the grant wasn't earmarked for salary increases or maintenance of salaries, if they don't get the \$200,000, the board is faced with the very difficult task of cutting the salaries, which I feel really should fall more justly on the shoulders of the provincial government.

I would just like to here again encourage the minister, because it's an area of concern to many people, that salaries in sheltered workshops not be kept as low as \$10 and \$15 per month, because I think that in a province that is supposed to be the wealthy and a province of Canada that has been over the last number of years, we could do better than that for the people that are handicapped, working in the sheltered workshops.

In the area of another group I have some concern about, and I know that the group has concern, is the Saskatchewan Association of Non-Governmental Social Services Agencies, which represents a large number of social service groups, I believe in the area of 150. Maybe the minister will clarify that point — how many groups actually are represented. Can she give me some indication at this time (and I realize again it's not in the year under review, but I'm sure that she's far enough along in her budget to give us some indication) whether or not funds will be available at least at the level that was paid this year, as inadequate as that might be, for their coming year, so they will know where they're at in planning.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I believe there is approximately 121 NGOs that belong to SANGSSA, and approximately 75 per cent of that number get direct funding from the government. And you are absolutely correct, it's for future estimates, and this is for the year 1982-83.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — So the minister will give no assurance to that major group at this time that funding will be available for next year?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I'm doing 1982-83 estimates. I don't have the 1983-84 budget in front of me.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I wonder if you can rack your brain back far enough to the last day or two when you were considering the grants to a fairly major group and whether you could give them some indication. But if you're telling them that you are not able at this time to give them the guarantee, that's fine as well.

There's one group for whom my colleague from Quill Lakes was asking the Minister of Co-ops, I believe it was yesterday, about. The fair tax deal, I believe the name of it was, and I may have that a little wrong. But can you tell me whether or not funding to that group was cut off; if it was, whether or not that has been reinstated, or how that process worked?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — It was the Fair Deal Tax Service which is a part of the welfare rights association, and the Fair Deal Tax Service is no longer being funded, nor will it be.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — And the reason for that being given at the time, I believe, was because it was an area which would much easier or more aptly funded through

consumer affairs. Is that the reason?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — As we said several months ago, I have great difficulty when I try and define what social services is all about. For a while I thought I was into industry and commerce. And then today you talk about minimum wage and I think I'm the Department of Labor. And as you well know, the department is difficult all by itself without all the other departments coming into it.

It is not being funded because the service can be done elsewhere. Consumer affairs has a program that will help, give information, that type of thing. Revenue Canada does the service for nothing, for nothing. And then we have some registered firms in this province who deal, specialize, in income tax returns, and they will do it for \$10. Then we have some volunteer expertise out of the chartered accountants association of this province that have run ads in various centres around this province to help seniors and low-incomes.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, the many people who were welfare recipients or low-income people will be very interested in that reply. I think that the Minister of Social Services and the Minister of Consumer Affairs should talk once in a while if a program or a funding arrangement is to be changed from one department to another. That's fair if you're saying that the fair tax deal should have been funded out of consumer affairs. Then the logical thing for you to do would be to request of the Minister of Consumer Affairs to take it over. But the reason, of course, for this service being provided is well known. Many of the people who are on very low income in that area of Regina used service very frequently, and very simply don't have access to high-paid accountants, because while you say it's \$10, I can guarantee you in using accountants that it will be a long, long time before anyone, no matter how minute their income tax may be, will get an assistance from them for \$10. You may believe it but I simply don't, because \$10 is not a reasonable sum for a chartered accountant to charge to fill out an income tax form. This was a service that was provided by local people of the area who understood very well the conditions that many of these people found themselves in at that time.

The minister has indicated that they have no intention of funding such organizations. I think that's an indication to other groups in this province that if you don't fit a certain mould, that if you don't believe in the free enterprise system totally, you are not going to get funding. And I think it runs up a red flag for many other groups who fight for the rights of welfare recipients or the poor in the province.

In the area of continuing care, I know there have been hearings throughout the province on a new placement and assessment program which is being requested by some nursing homes, and in other cases nursing homes are saying there shouldn't be changes. I wonder if the minister can bring us up to date on where that whole process is, and whether or not she sees any early move on a change in placement and the way that people are admitted to nursing homes in the province in the near future.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, even though the hearings are finished we are still receiving written briefs up until April 1, and then Dr. Baker will be compiling them into a report for myself to look at in the department. I have no idea what kind of changes will take place until I read it and talk to Dr. Baker about what came out of these meetings. To do anything else would be presumptuous on my part.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — So in essence we are looking at a deadline for accepting briefs

as April 1, 1983. Have you got any idea at this time what kind of a time period Dr. Baker would take, or his committee, to compile the briefs and get a recommendation to your office, just even a rough number of a month, two month, three months?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Three.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I'm sure that the nursing homes will be very appreciative of a speedy conclusion to this matter because there are a large number of nursing homes which find themselves in very great difficulty. I don't think the waiting lists are getting any shorter at any of the nursing homes. In fact, from what I am hearing, they are growing on a daily basis. I think part of the problem is the way that placement in the nursing homes takes place. I think that a speedy resolve of this important problem should take place, and two or three months past the end of April will be none too soon.

In terms of waiting lists, I wonder if the minister could give me a rough number of what she sees at the present time the waiting list to be for nursing homes in the province of Saskatchewan, whether you have any kind of number to give us at this time.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — It is very interesting to listen to your concerns. You say that if a decision is speedily coming that this will cure the problem, or at least part of the problem. That is really interesting. I find it also very ironic that you see the problem as placement, yet on April 21 you wanted more beds for the Shaunavon nursing home, which at that time had a waiting list of four.

We don't have a formal procedure province-wide of a waiting list. Let me refresh your memory. You well know, or should know, that often there is duplication on lists from time to time. It also probably means that some names go on a waiting list in five places. They get into one home and they never remove their name from the other four. We have also had the occasion where somebody is deceased, yet their name is still on several waiting lists elsewhere. It could also mean that they put their name in early and they may not require the care right now, so we have those kinds of problems, and while perhaps part of the problem is assessment, I often wondered over the last 10 months, considering the critical needs that are out there, and the pressures that have been coming on me, until a gentleman from Theodore sent me a letter from July '78. I found out why I have a great problem, and of course the then minister of social services was Herman Rolfes, and the letter talks about a moratorium that was put on nursing home beds in this province. That's the problem — a moratorium on nursing home beds. Don't give me that assessment and placement . . .

MR. LINGENFELTER: — The minister takes a very interesting position to the nursing home problem almost a year after she takes over the department of attempting to blame a minister from 1978. That's very easy to do when the minister, or the former minister, isn't here to defend himself. The fact is that she has had a year in which very little was done in that area, a year when the Minister of Energy and Mines was able to garner for the oil companies cuts in royalties of \$50 million and \$60 million, and the minister of the day is unable to get the money needed to carry out nursing home renovations.

I think it's a very weak argument. She now stands in this Assembly and attempts to blame a minister from 1978 for problems that she was supposed to solve over the past year. But I think that had the minister gone ahead with projects like the nursing home in Saskatoon that was well on the way (there was an agreement between the department and the board in Saskatoon for the building and construction of a 144-bed nursing

home there) she would have solved some of the problems and wouldn't have to go around attempting to find scapegoats for why there are long and huge waiting lists in the city of Saskatoon.

As to the town of Shaunavon and the waiting list at the nursing home in Shaunavon, yes, the waiting list was not terribly long, but the assessment of the day would indicate, and if you would care to go there — I believe you have gone there — you would realize that the nursing home has served its purpose, and the intention was not to create a lot of new beds, but to replace a worn-out, decrepit old building, as we did in the city of Weyburn for our friend from down in that area when we replaced and announced that St. Mary's would be rebuilt. In many cases you will realize that it's not only a matter of creating new beds, but in many cases beds and rooms are worn out. But the day of attempting to blame former cabinet ministers from 1978 will quickly come to an end, as I believe in the case of most boards who are writing to me. They've already shifted their attention to a different government, believe it or not, and are now expecting things to happen from that area and that will continue to grow.

But I would like to know now exactly how many beds have been constructed this year? How many are actually new beds? How many are replacements and the location of each of the projects?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — My apologies for laying it on the former minister of '78, all on his doorstep. Let's go back to 1981 and that will suffice.

You know, figures can speak for themselves. You budgeted last year \$4 million. That was terrific considering the year before you only put in \$834,000 and the year before that \$832,000 and the year before that \$200,000. So in April you put in \$4 million, and in August we approved \$6 million. Now you can't lie; those are the figures. \$6 million provides for 133 new beds and the upgrading of 197 beds.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — The announcement is very nice, but what I would like from you is a list of projects. I've heard all kinds of announcements from this government, but believe it or not many people don't believe the announcements they hear. What we would like from you is a list of a location of the beds and where the money actually went.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Would you also like the upgrading of the existing projects? Watson, Quill Planes, \$10,000; Estevan, Souris Valley Housing, \$60,000; Maidstone, Pine Island Lodge, \$2,555. This is just, I said, upgrading. I asked if you wanted it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Okay. Replacement of existing beds and new beds. The Wilkie Centennial Nursing Home, \$240,000, 5 new beds, the replacement of 25 beds; Prince Albert, Northern Housing, \$3,262,000, 35 new beds, 61 replacement beds; Saskatoon Convalescent Home, \$800,000, 6 new beds, 54 replacements; Weyburn, \$325,000, 1 new bed, 49 replacements; Saskatoon, Lutheran Sunset, \$6,000. Oh, I'm sorry, there's no new beds in that one.

The construction of new beds, Broadview and district, Centennial Nursing Home, \$311,000, 36 new beds; Preeceville Lions Housing Corporation, \$90,695, 8 new beds, 4 replacement; Birch Hills, \$170,000, 30 new beds; Biggar Diamond Lodge, \$100,000, 12 new beds and 4 replacement.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I thought the list would be longer, but that list seems very similar to the one that we had announced in our budget. I don't see a great number of new. Birch Hills, Weyburn, Biggar — all these places that were announced by the previous government. I'm just wondering where this huge list of new nursing homes is that you keep talking about.

The other thing I find interesting is that your numbers are considerably lower than the member for the Whitewood area. He talks about new beds of 226 and replacements of 222, for a total of 488. It seems to me this government is merely throwing numbers around. The people will soon catch up with that and the fact that there's no nursing homes is going to soon take its toll. I would like to tell the minister that very quickly you're going to have to design some of your own projects, because the ones that we had under design prior to leaving government are now being built and will be completed. We'll be interested to see your great list and great announcement that is designed by your administration under your hand, because the one you just read out wasn't designed since you came into the department.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask now if the minister could tell me about the increase in nursing home rates from 390 to 417, and what that will mean in terms of total money coming into the system, that one increase in the number of dollars being paid by seniors.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The additional amount will bring 2.6 million.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I missed that.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — 2.6 million.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — The increase took place part way through the year. What will it mean in terms of a full fiscal year? Is it in the area of 5 million or 6 million, as my arithmetic tells me?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — That is for the full year. That's an annualized figure.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Does the minister anticipate that that amount of increase will see the nursing homes clear to hold that level, 417, for the coming year, or can she give us an indication now whether or not she anticipates nursing home increases over the next few months? I know that many of the residents in the nursing homes are saying that 417 is too high; that the money they have left after paying their fee is very skimpy. Our government attempted to lower them, and in fact did lower them a great deal, and I think the people were expecting that that rate would be held, if not eliminated, as the province prospered over the next several years. I think they were a little shocked when they found out that the new government would treat that group of people in that manner.

I guess what we're trying to get from the minister is some confirmation that 417 will be the maximum that people can expect over the next year.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — When the chart, on May 1 — the \$390 when it was brought in — was based on a percentage of the OAS/GIS, 88 per cent. If I had held the rate to 88 per cent, which was under the old policy, it would now be approximately \$464. As to what it's going to be in the future, once again I'm doing the '82-83 estimates, and you're into '83-84.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — So that the minister is saying that she can give us no assurance that increases won't take place in the nursing homes of the province over the next several months. I agree that we are doing the estimates for the past year, rather than in advance, but I thought, seeing the late date of this fiscal year and the fact that we'll have a budget within another month, that probably somewhere in the background among her officials there would be a thought or an indication whether or not increases are in the offing, but that will come.

I think that the minister in saying that the rates are set, or were set in relation to OAS/GIS, is simply not true. They were set at 390 with the anticipation that they would stay there, and, as I mentioned, as the province prospered, that they could be lowered even further. Because it doesn't make much sense. Had we used that formula when the rates were higher, they would have continually gone up forever and ever, and nursing home rates, July 1, 1981, under the previous government, dropped a great deal. In fact, in many cases they were dropped to less than half of what they had been previously, and I think that's why the shock in the many nursing homes when they were raised last time, and I think that it will be even a greater shock if the minister is anticipating raising them even further.

I have a question about the Valley View and North Park Centre operation, and it is basically asking the minister whether there is any anticipation or any plan in the works at this time, a study going on, to see the effects that selective residency charges would have on the residents in those two centres. Are you doing a study or an analysis of instituting charges at North Park Centre or Valley View at this time?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I don't know what a selective charge is, so you are going to have to explain it to me.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, a selective charge under other Tory governments is where there would be a charge placed on residents of those institutions.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, we are not considering any kind of special charge.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I'll include this to include nursing homes as well. There have been no discussions or meetings between yourself or officials of your department with any group or organizations that would be interested in privatization of these two centres and nursing homes in the province over the past six months, let's say?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The Valley View and North Park thing — I'm not sure I'm quite understanding you, but we have not had any discussions with anyone on this thing of private ownership, unless you are talking about a community board. There has certainly been previous discussion over North Park.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — You are saying then that no discussions have gone on with any companies, American or Canadian, in terms of privatization of the nursing homes, or North Park Centre or Valley View?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I have had representation made to me, as minister, for additional beds through a private company. That is as far as it's gone. There has been no talk with department officials. The nursing homes . . . I don't even know if they are Canadian or American.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Could the minister then tell us any detail about the request that she has received from a company or various companies about privatization of the nursing homes?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — There hasn't been any specific request per se.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Exactly what does that mean — per se? That's a difficult problem I'm having here. If the answer isn't no, I haven't had any contact, it's yes, maybe I have. And what I am trying to find out is who the company is, if you can give me that information. Who is interested in coming to Saskatchewan to run the nursing homes on a profit basis? That's what I'm asking.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — . . . (inaudible) . . . discussions with a company which runs approximately seven homes in this province, the same kinds of discussions which were ongoing with the previous government.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — You are saying you have had discussions with a company, and one company only?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — That's all whom I have had discussions with, yes.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, in my original question I asked your department officials or yourself, and the answer I am getting and hearing is that discussions have only gone on with one operation and that's logical. An operation that exists in Saskatchewan I'm not talking about. I am talking about new companies who have approached this government in terms of operating nursing homes or North Park Centre or Valley View in Moose Jaw.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I have had nobody, other than the company Extendicare, make approaches to me.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Again, will you confirm that your department officials have not been in discussion?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — They have had none.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Would the minister confirm that as well for the day care operation in the province, whether discussions have gone on in that area dealing with privatization of the day care centres in the province?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — There have been no approaches or discussions to do with day care in that line.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — You are saying that neither yourself nor your department officials have discussed the possibility and means of privatizing day care with companies from outside of the province?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — No, we have not had any discussions with private companies.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I might direct a couple of questions to the minister. I am talking particularly about public assistance under the SAP. I am looking at a report in the *Regina Leader-Post* of February 16 which says:

Saskatchewan social services department which provides welfare faces a \$40 million deficit, largely because hundreds of people have moved back to the province from Alberta. Government statistics indicate 7,443 people moved into Saskatchewan from Alberta in 1982, more than those emigrating from British Columbia and Ontario combined.

What I want to ask the minister is whether or not the figure of 7,443 is in any way unusual. Is that a significantly larger figure than has happened in every year of the last several?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, that figure did not come from us. I really don't know if it's unusual or not. I don't write what's in the paper. I only read it and some days I wonder why.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, I had an opportunity simply to reach for one of my files, and all I could find on short notice was the 1980 figures for January to June — the six month figures. If I may double those for 1980, which I believe I can based upon past experience, then the number of people who moved into Saskatchewan from Alberta in 1980 was not 7,443 but 7,262 which is not a very significant difference.

I also noted that further down in the article it said that 1,683 who returned were in the 20-24 group, and 1,292 were in the 25-29 group. Using the same method of calculation, in 1980 the figure of the 20-24 was not 1,683 but 1,708 — essentially the same figure. The figure for the 25-29 was 1,292 — by coincidence the same figure, 1,292. I want to say that the figures of this so-called influx from Alberta is the same influx we have had every year and very, very close to those figures.

The figures I am quoting are those coming from the Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics on SHSP in-migration statistics. I say that, on the basis of the figures for several years, there is no significant difference between the in-migration in 1982 and the in-migration in 1981 and the in-migration in 1980.

All I am saying is that nobody in 1980 said that this raised the welfare costs; no one in 1981 said this raised the welfare costs. There's a very simple method of not having huge welfare costs, if you have people coming into your province. The answer is to provide some jobs for them. That's what was done in 1980; that's what was done in 1981. So, this so-called influx from Alberta did not raise welfare costs.

The question that I ask is: why did the influx from Alberta up welfare costs in 1982 when it did not in 1981 and 1980 when the influx was substantially the same?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I suggest you ask the guy that wrote the article.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — The point I make, of course, is that, while there are migrations both ways from Alberta and Saskatchewan regularly and they're always very large — the movements across that border are much larger than the movements from Saskatchewan to Manitoba or from Saskatchewan to B.C. and Ontario or vice versa — none of this has heretofore been offered as an excuse.

I'll go on and read a little more:

A social services department official blamed the \$40 million deficit (in the

welfare budget) on the Alberta returnees and an increase in the number of people whose unemployment benefits have run out.

Well, I don't know who the social services official is, but I'll ask the minister why her officials are blaming this on the influx from Alberta, when the same situation occurred in previous years and the officials did not blame it on the influx from Alberta.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I'm not sure. I don't know which official in the department said it, if, in fact, any of them did. That says "unidentified," and I'm not about to jump off the bridge based on something "unidentified" in the newspaper. I have to admit, when I first read it, to place a phone call to the member for Shaunavon. Perhaps he knew which one it was, but then I rejected that idea. I simply don't know.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I will then turn to the figures for Regina, both the unemployment figures, the Canada employment service figures and the welfare recipient or social aid recipient figures for Regina, and I won't refer directly to the figures. I think we can all agree that they have gone up substantially not quite so much in Regina as in Saskatoon, but none the less, very substantially in both cities, and even more so in Prince Albert and other cities. My question to the minister, and if this should be directed to some other minister, I know she will advise me, is: what particular steps other than the NEED program have been taken to provide employment for the unemployed employables who are the big increase in the social aid recipients category?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I believe this is the second round on this kind of question. You just weren't here when it was asked the first time, but from your colleague . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You're absolutely right, I could probably refer you to several other ministers, if not all of them, because I assure you that the uppermost thing on their minds these days is jobs. Other than the joint program that we have in agreement with the federal government, there is the jobs program, the 2.5 that is on the go, and within just my department the capital program out of the total of \$5,000,000 is 800,000. The rest comes out of the various other departments, and you would have to ask those ministers responsible what kind of projects have been on the go for that. I could go on a little bit more and talk about the \$3,000 starter home thing that has created some jobs, and the rural gas, another 400 jobs, and so forth.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, I think that's why we're so difficult to convince, that we hear . . . Last September, I believe, was announced another housing program (I forget what it was called at that time) that was going to yield 400 houses and by the year end, the figure turned out to be not 400 but 32, according to the announcement. And the minister is now quoting what the gas program is going to create, but not how many the gas program has created. Accordingly, we are somewhat sceptical.

But I will change the subject. I know my colleague is going to follow up on this, particularly with respect to the ESP program. I was disappointed to hear the minister not put a good deal of emphasis on job creation through ESP. But as I say, my colleague is going to pursue that.

What I want to pursue is another narrower point and that has to do with day care facilities in the city of Regina. I have had some conversations with a couple of citizens in Regina. Someone moved into the city with two children and sought day care accommodation for his children. He advises me that he called every day care facility in the city of which he had any knowledge or record, and that the number of vacant places was three. He lives in the northwest part of the city. The two places which were able to accommodate his children were in the southeast corner of the city down by the university, but they were better than none, and so he took those two places. I am going to ask the minister in a moment what her figures show as to the number of vacant places for day care in Regina, approximately what we have. And perhaps I will ask another question so that we can deal with both of them at the same time.

By coincidence I spoke with another resident of Regina at almost the same time who was a day care worker and who was unemployed — a child care worker, I should say; I'm not sure she was a day care worker, she was unemployed. And she sought to organize a day care in order to give herself employment and to provide some day care spaces in the area where she lived, which happened to be the southwest area of Regina. She advises that she approached the department to see whether or not this could be organized, either as a private day care or otherwise, and was advised that no more funds were available from the department for day care. This would have been in the last month or two. Would the minister then comment on each of those questions? Are there spaces available in Regina day cares and is the establishment of more day care facilities being encouraged and funded by the department?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, I only have the figure province-wide for vacancies in day care. I can assure you at this time that the majority are between Saskatoon and Regina, but I will have to get the figure to you for Regina. The total number for the province is 370 for day care centre vacancies, and I would suggest that the gentleman that you were talking to buy a *Leader-Post* because there have been ads running in it for vacancies in day care centres for the first time in a long time.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — May I direct the minister's attention to the second question of what steps are being taken; what is the position of the department with respect to the establishment of new day care facilities?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — All the funds that were budgeted have been allocated for the fiscal year of '82-83.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — If a person sought to establish a day care facility and was otherwise qualified and could show need, is the appropriate course of action for him, her or them to apply to the department in the hope that money from the next budget might be available?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Yes. Are you thinking of retiring from this?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — No. That is an interesting suggestion, an interesting career pattern which I hadn't thought of, but I think perhaps I could find something for which I am even more qualified than running a day care centre, if I may put it that way.

AN HON. MEMBER: — He's running one now . . . (inaudible) . . . in this House.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Well, certainly in this House, and I'm not confining it to one

side or the other, on occasion one sees similarities.

But, what I am asking the minister particularly is: will there be money for new start-up grants for new facilities? Let me put it this way, in the year under review are you planning, so that next year there will be money for new day care facilities for additional spaces after April 1?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, he's into the 1983-84 estimates, and he's just going to have to be patient and wait till we get to them.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I'm going to ask the minister then. Is the minister telling us that up to the end of March coming, you have no plans, none whatever, and propose to make no plans to establish any new day care facilities in Regina?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, I am not saying that. What I am saying is: the question you asked is for estimates for the '83-84 budget. Pick up your book, and you'll read '82-83 estimates.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, I am not asking anything for the '83-84 budget. I am asking what the employees of your department are doing who are going to be paid with this money. And you are telling me that with the money which you are asking us to vote, none of your employees who will be paid out of this budget are doing any planning for day care after next April. And I want her to say that, because I have a perfect right to ask what your employees are doing who are going to be paid out of this budget up until the end of March. And you are telling me that not one day care centre is being planned now or up to the end of March. Is that what you are saying?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — If it's a job description you want of the employees of the department, I'll table you one tomorrow.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I am not asking for a job description. I am asking for the program of the department. What do you propose to do with the money that is voted? I am asking you whether you are telling me that with this money you are asking us to vote, none of the employees who are being paid with it are going to do any planning for day care, any additional day care spaces after April 1. If you're telling me that, fine, but what you can't tell me is, "I will not tell you what my employees are doing with the money you are voting." And that's what you are doing.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — You have to be a lawyer to understand it and I'm not. But anyway, the dollars currently that you are looking at and that are being paid out are for existing spaces. You need staff to process.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I take it you are telling me now that Mr. Podiluk, whose salary is being paid out of the money you are asking us to vote, is not going to spend any of this time on considering day care between now and March 31 at midnight. If you are telling me that, fine. If he is going to spend any of his time doing that, we are asking you what he is doing, what plans he is making — Mr. Podiluk and all his staff. What plans are they making for day care? I am not now talking about what grants are being paid out; what plans are being made by the people who are paid to plan?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, the day care program is really no different than any other program in the Department of Social Services or a program in any other

department of government. Time that staff are doing is constant in terms of reviewing, evaluating, looking at new initiatives, possible options and that type of thing. And to come back to one of your first questions a long time ago: the number of vacancies in Regina is 119.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Thank you. Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I wonder whether you would tell us what options are being considered for day care now by the staff in this fiscal year. In particular, what options are being considered for expanding the day care services which will be available in the city of Regina?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — The two options being looked at are day care centres and the family day care centre. They are being reviewed. In terms of the future direction, that has not been determined yet but it will be based on the direction of the emphasis where families seem to be wanting it.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, would the minister elucidate on what is the emphasis that families want to go? She obviously has a perception of that which may or may not be shared by everybody.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — I have never hallucinated in my life, and I don't intend to start now!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I did not use the word hallucinate. I used the word elucidate — e-l-u-c-i-d-a-t-e. I want the minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — I've been hallucinating?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — That's right. The member for Moosomin used that word. Mr. Chairman, I ask the minister to tell us then in what direction she is considering evolving the day care program. She is saying that she is considering it going in a different direction. Would she tell us what the different direction is?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Well, I never said it was going to go in a different direction. I said there were two options to be looked at and that was going to be based on trends. If you would take a look at the trends in the paper that would probably be an indication to you. The figures that I gave you on the vacancies is one indication of trends. We have vacancies in day care centres, but in some family day care centres we have a waiting list.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, do I then understand the minister to be saying that the department is considering a change in direction, or a change in emphasis of the day care program to emphasize family day care and de-emphasize what I might call institutional day care?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — No, I didn't say that. I said we were looking at two options.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I can have the minister say again that her plans for the next year are not finalized. That is what I understood her to say.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — We are back to square one. The '83-84 estimates will be in due course. This is '82-83.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, we are indeed back to square one. I am asking her not about the '83-84 estimates, but what planning she is doing in '82-83. I want to underline this, that it is the perfect right of the opposition to ask any government department what plans they have for the future. That's what I am asking you. What plans do you have which you are evolving with the money which you are asking us to vote? Please understand that. What plans do you have for day care? What conclusions have you arrived at, or what do you expect to arrive at, prior to the end of this fiscal year?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Chairman, both options are being reviewed, will continue to be reviewed, and both options will be there. So the single parents and two working parent families have an option to choose from.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, I think I'm having a little difficulty making myself clear. What I would like to ask the minister is this: during the fiscal year which we are now in, and for which funds we are now voting, have plans been made to increase the number of day care spaces in Regina by offering start-up grants for additional day care centres? I see that my question has confused. I'll rephrase it. During the year which we are now considering, have plans been made to increase the number of day care spaces in Regina? Period.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Are we talking about for fiscal year '82-83?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — No, I am talking about the future, and the future, indefinitely the future. And I'm not asking about what's going to happen in the future, I'm asking you . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — You are.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — No, I'm not. I'm asking you what plans have been made. Now you make a plan, and once you've made the plan on Monday then it's a fact. You've made a plan on Monday. The fact you might carry out the plan next month doesn't in any way change the fact that the plan is made on Monday. Now, what I am asking you is: what plans have been made? What plans have been made, or what plans do you anticipate will be made up to the end of March? That's what I'm asking you.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — This year is no different than any other year. What you are asking that becomes a fact after the throne speech, after the budget and into the '83-84 estimates. What is so different about this year just because you are across the floor?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . That's right. Larry, Larry, . . . all right. Out of the mouths of babes.

Mr. Chairman, I want to ask this question again and I state to be the privilege and the right of the members of the opposition to ask what the activities of the department are for the year in question. Now, I hope no one denies that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Will the member for Rosthern hold his tongue for a moment, just for a moment. Now look, I hope that is clear. I am asking what your department is doing during this year ended March 31, 1983. Clear? Now, one of the things your department is doing is planning for the future. And I don't have to wait until the future arrives before I ask you what you planned last year. I am asking you quite simply, what plans are you making, or will you make, up until the end of this fiscal year for day care in Regina? If you refuse to disclose what your department is doing with the money you are asking us to vote, say

so, but don't deny the fact that you've got an obligation to do so.

HON. MRS. SMITH: — As I understand my obligations in this setting, and I stand to be corrected — I haven't been around 21 years — but as I understand it, it is my responsibility to talk about the figures that are before you in the 1982-83 estimate book. No matter how you choose to phrase it, you are trying to get me to talk about the '83-84 figures, which aren't there until the throne speech and the budget come down.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, I seem to be having a good deal of difficulty getting across to the minister. . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Right.

HON. MR. TAYLOR: — I think, it being close to 5 o'clock, we should adjourn this House and perhaps things will work better after supper.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.