

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

**April 28, 1983**

**EVENING SESSION**

**COMMITTEE OF FINANCE**

**CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE**

**SOCIAL SERVICES**

**Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 36**

**Item 1 (continued)**

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions to ask the minister concerning the spending estimates of the Department of Social Services. It's not that long ago we went through this process so I won't be asking many of the routine type questions, but regardless, I do want to ask a bit about your personal staff in your own office. If you could bring us up to date of the revolving chairs in that office. I've been trying to keep up. I understand that there was an Ian Sutherland, who worked for you, and a Nancy Coldham-Gracey. Could you inform me whether or not those two EAs still work for you or not, or if they have been replaced?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, my office staff is the same as it was last time, as the member probably well knows. Mr. Sutherland hasn't been there since December, and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I just told you that, that's how you know that. So if you would just listen . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The office . . .

**Mr. Chairman:** — Order! The member's trying to answer the question.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — My office staff at the present time on pay-roll is the same as it was last time, including the salary level.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Can you tell me whether or not Nancy Coldham-Gracey is presently employed by you, or whether she has been . . . resigned her position or whether she was dismissed?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Nancy Coldham-Gracey is on my pay-roll till the end of April.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — What is the arrangement of her departure? Is she leaving of her own accord, or is she dismissed at that date, or how is that working?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member from Shaunavon, I guess I would just politely point out that the arrangement within my personal office staff are between my and the office staff.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Can the minister inform me whether or not the taxpayers of the province are paying any severance pay to this individual on her departure?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — No, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — I would like to know as well, for Mr. Ian Sutherland, whether or

not there was any severance paid to that individual.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — No, there was not.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Chairman and Madam Minister, I watch with a great deal of interest the reorganization of the government opposite in terms of money being transferred out of the Department of Social Services to both the Department of Justice and the Department of Health. I wonder if you can give me a quick run-down on why that occurred and the logic behind it; as well, whether there was consultation with groups such as the nursing home association prior to the changes; as well as, whether or not there was consultation with the nursing home administrators and the boards of directors as well as the hospitals, who would be coming into the receipt of those nursing homes after April 1st.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, if perhaps I could deal with the logic first, and I don't think I have to dwell on it because I'm sure that it hasn't escaped the member as to why . . . nor would anything escape him as to the level 4 going from Health to Social Services. So I won't get into that part of it.

I think the first concern was the need to improve a co-ordinated service to those people that were using the system. And that means those clients be whether they through home care, through leaving the hospital going to home care, those that perhaps are in a hospital going looking, waiting - long waiting lists for how many years for a nursing home bed - and that was the overall objective of it.

As to the consultation process that took place: yes there was, between the Minister of Health, myself, SHA, the association responsible for the special care homes plus the home care association. And that was the nature of the consultation in a formal manner. If you want to get into further informal consultation, that happened during various meetings over the year whether it was in seeking some opinions and some ideas from nurses, nurses' aides, directors, administrators, the treasurer, secretary, individual board members that do have it.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — I wonder if the minister will give an indication as to whether or not she foresees in the near future that waiting lists at nursing homes will decrease as a result of this move and whether or not she foresees that the amount paid by people in nursing homes will decrease and if the services will increase as a result of this shift from Social Services to Health.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member is asking me to make some comments in an area that the Minister of Health is now responsible for. What I would say is that if there is going to be an improved service, it's going to come from the will of the government, and the will has been amply demonstrated over the last 11 months as to the number of beds - new beds - that have been created when you compare it to the three, four, six, seven years previous to that.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, I would ask the minister again whether or not, in the consultation process that went on, whether part of the discussion was a reduced waiting list at nursing homes that would result from this move and whether or not the amount paid by people in nursing homes would decrease. I suppose the main thing in making a move like this should be the needs of those people who are affected, that being the people who are in the nursing homes. Can you tell me whether or not they will get better service at a lower amount of fee? Was that the intention when you made the

decision to let it go to Health?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, as I had stated in my earlier reply, the first point was the need to improve the co-ordination of the service. It was between two departments, basically a high component of Health, and I would suggest if the improved co-ordination is there for the user of the system, then yes, indeed you are going to see the service to them become an improvement over what was in terms of accessibility and in terms of perhaps even the speed that one can go through the system and get some answers and some service.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — The other point that I raised was the amount that seniors will pay in nursing homes. Was part of the agreement that rates would be at least frozen if not decreased as part of this move?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, the consultation that the Minister of Health and I had with the various groups when this move took place was on the matter of moving it from Social Services to Health. It was not a consultation process that took place on what the rates are going to be, if they should be frozen, that type of thing. And I think the member is aware that there has been no announcement to date of an increased rate and if there is going to be it's not going to come from me; it's going to come from my colleague, the Minister of Health.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — So you are saying that you can't give a guarantee or assurance that as a result of the move that you attempted to influence the Minister of Health so that there wouldn't be an increase in nursing home rates later this year.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, the member from Shaunavon, his question as to what I influence the Minister of Health on and what I don't, I really don't think even deserves an appropriate answer. And as I have stated, if there's going to be an announcement, it will come from the Minister of health. The member of Shaunavon knows that full well, and let's not play any more games with it. We're here for Social Services, and not for Health.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, the minister talks about playing games. I'm sure that trying to protect the senior citizens in nursing homes from outrageous increases, as they saw last year, is not a game being played but is a concern for the many individuals who, under the previous government, saw the nursing home rates decrease significantly, and in the first year of the Conservative administration, saw them increase to an extent that many of them are having a difficult time making it.

What I'm trying to establish here tonight is whether or not in the transfer, which you were part of, there was any discussion on further increases in nursing home care, or whether there wasn't. And that's still the question, and I would like to know whether or not you, as the former minister, and part of the negotiation that went on to give over home care and nursing home care to the Minister of Health, whether those rates were discussed, and whether seniors in the province can expect an increase, a freezing of the rates, or in fact a decrease that they saw under a previous administration.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, as I had stated to you what took place in the consultation, what it was based on, and my answer once again is no. That was not part of the consultation process in the transfer.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Chairman, I want to spend a few more minutes on the reorganization. It seems clear to myself and my colleagues, and the rest of the people in the province, that the attempt that is being made here is a shift of money from various other departments to the Department of Health so that this government can go to the people in the next election campaign and say we are now spending many, many hundreds of dollars per capita more on health than was done under a previous government. And really, all that is happening is a shift of money from Social Services and DNS and Urban Affairs to make the department look like much more than it is. And I suppose the sinister aspect of this government this early on in its mandate to be carrying on a game like that when really cuts are occurring in the Department of Health and Social Services, to attempt to make it look like there is more money being spent, will not go unnoticed by the people of the province, when next time around you attempt to make the case that you are spending more in Health when really all that is happening is it's a bit of smoke and mirrors and shifting money from one department to another. And I would like to ask you whether or not that was part of the discussions that went on between yourself and the Minister of Health, and whether or not we can expect some of that in the next campaign.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — No, that was not part of the discussion.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Being part of cabinet, do you think that might have any part of your platform in the next election campaign, that this money will be included in the amount that you advertise as part of your political campaign for re-election?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, I can't even begin to second-guess what's going to take place in 1986. This is the '83-84 estimates . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, one of the jocular members from Saskatoon is talking about farming full-time, and I'm not sure what he did prior to the election, but going by the polls in Saskatoon at the present time, he'll be doing the same thing after the next election.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to turn to an area which many people in the province have written about and commented on since the time of the last budget, and that is the area of funding for non-governmental organizations. I would like to ask the minister whether or not she is reconsidering in any way in the light of the protestation that has come from a great number of groups, that the funding for SANGSSA (Saskatchewan Association of Non-Governmental Social Service Agencies) will be re-evaluated and re-established for the coming year, or whether she will continue in the ill-advised method of cutting back in social service groups to the extent that they no longer exist?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, we've been through this one some time before too, and the rationale behind it has not changed. I pointed out to the member of Shaunavon at that time, I was sincere about the rationale as laid down. I think I was accused of some political motivation behind it, and I had pointed out at that time that that simply wasn't true, and that still stands. The rationale I had given you before was . . . (inaudible) . . . As an association, it was one of perhaps a very small few, if not the only one in the province that received its total funding from a body other than its membership. The accountability factor, who defines the role of the association, how is it defined . . . Of course that comes right back to the accountability factor and that it should be through that membership. Now, having said that, we also recognize that NGOs have no other way of raising their finances other than through government, whether it be provincial, federal, or local government, and perhaps even that local body

might include something like United Way.

So what we said was, we will recognize that they have a financial problem when it comes to a membership fee, and we will recognize in their budget, up to \$500, a membership fee for them to belong to an association that they develop and that they perhaps give direction to, and that still stands today.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, is the minister saying that the grants to these individual groups will be increased by \$500 to allow that a membership be paid, or will they have to take it out of moneys, for example, in transition houses that is allocated for heating bills, or food, or where do you expect them to get that \$500 from?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — No, they will not have to take it out of something like paying their rent as a transition house, or perhaps out of their grocery money. It will be recognized as a separate item in their budget, overt and above what they have now.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — For the year of 1983, then, the budget that was applied for certainly did not include \$500 for this type of an organizational grant to SANGSSA (Saskatchewan Association of Non-Governmental Social Service Agencies). Are you saying that you will put in an additional \$500 for each of those groups to pay a membership in 1983?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, some time ago, several weeks ago, the deputy and the associate deputy had met with SANGSSA and had explained to them in detail the mechanism of the funding. As I had indicated to you earlier, there is a three-month phasing out because we recognize that there's a transition period for them. The \$500 is not in each individual NGO this year. We have a sum of money set aside in the subvote for when the three months is over and their membership starts coming on.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, you're saying if the group then, let's say at Transition House, who hasn't been given a \$500 grant for a membership in SANGSSA (Saskatchewan Association of Non-Governmental Social Service Agencies) would apply to you now, that they would get a grant of \$500 then to pay their membership in SANGSSA at this time.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — The arrangement as I understand it is that if they were to pay their 500 to SANGSSA, they would send the receipt in to us and they would be reimbursed for that this year.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — So then, just so I have it clear, that any group, whether it was a day care that was involved in a membership in SANGSSA or at Transition House, if they were to pay the membership of \$500, they would send the receipt to the Department of Social Services and be refunded for it.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, agencies that we are presently funding through the community services program will be reimbursed up to the maximum of \$500.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Then you're saying that groups such as day care centres that are involved in SANGSSA, that that wouldn't be part of their budget allowed in 1983.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — As I understand it, day cares have their own provincial association.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Many of them belong to SANGSSA, and what I'm trying to find out is whether or not the statement that you made earlier that any group who belongs to SANGSSA could send in a receipt for \$500 and be reimbursed for it . . . That was what you led me to believe in a previous question. I want, on a point of clarification, whether or not day care centres could send \$500 to SANGSSA, because I'm sure that there's a large number of day care centres that do not belong to a day care association.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, as the policy stands now, day care would not qualify under the community service grant. They have an umbrella association, the day care association, similar to home care boards belonging to the home care association; hospitals belonging to SHA; nursing homes belonging to SASH (Saskatchewan Association of Special-Care Homes); and that's how the policy is at this time.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Do you pay a grant to the day care boards to pay to their association at the present time?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — No, we do not pay a grant to a particular day care for their umbrella association.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, doesn't it seem a little unreasonable that you would cut the funding of SANGSSA (Saskatchewan Association of Non-Governmental Social Services Agencies) and give only money for grants to a certain number of organizations? Wouldn't that seem to be a way of undercutting that organization when a number of people or groups that belong to SANGSSA are in fact groups like day care centres that very much help to provide input and discussion into SANGSSA? I wonder if you would not consider your policy of not including them in the grant of \$500 at the present time.

The other point is whether you can give me a number of groups in the community service area who would be eligible for the \$500 grant.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Through Social Services and the community service grants there would be approximately 70 to 75 organizations that would qualify.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — So what you're saying then: if there were 70 groups and each one of them applied for the \$500, would it be correct then that that total amount would amount to about \$35,000? And how would that compare with the grant that they had been receiving from the Department of Social Services?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, the three-month funding that they are allowed will give them \$13,500 plus the approximately 35 that you mentioned. What they had the previous year was 108,000. If you look at the history of the funding, and I'm sure that the member of Shaunavon could perhaps tell me some of the reasons - you know, I look at the funding in '80-81 and it was approximately 50,000-some dollars and that was 'seed money' to quote you out of the Maple Creek paper . . . Gull Lake paper. 'Seed money' - that's short-term to help until somebody gets on their feet and they can get the funding. That was in '80-81. In '81-82 their funding went up by 100 per cent to \$100,000, and that's the history of the funding. And as I said, perhaps you could inform us as to why the 100 per cent increase.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, I find it interesting that you could think that the group, even if every organization would give 100 per cent, that that kind of funding of

\$35,000 would replace \$108,000 and attempt to provide the same service. I suppose that we could expect this kind of thing where a program that was established and funded under the previous administration would be cut by the present government, but I don't think that anyone expected it to happen this quickly. And if you're intending to make anyone believe that we had an expectation of reducing the funding or not increasing it, it simply isn't true. I imagine there was 100 per cent increase in that area for the same reason there was 100 per cent increase in day care the year before. It's an expanding area, it was anew group that was just being established the same as day care, and we will talk about that more later - the fact that we put in 100 per cent increase in that and do some comparisons on your approach to day care as well.

But staying with the non-governmental organization umbrella group for a moment. I wonder whether or not you really expect that the function of that group will be carried on in the proper manner with a decrease in funding of at least 50 per cent from what it was last year.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — The figures that we are using are based on the organizations and the funding that would be coming out of Social Services. I believe the claim is that they have a membership of 120, 130. So I think, you know, in order to be fair about it one would have to look at the possible membership fee coming out of some of those organizations.

As to their function, as I have stated earlier, I fully believe that it is up to the memberships to define the role and the functions and what they expect out of their umbrella association in terms of help to the board. I think that's totally up to the membership, not up to us, to define the function.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Back to the point I made earlier. Do you expect that that group will be able to carry out their functions of being a lobby group for those organizations and an advocacy group for those organizations, given the fact that you have seen fit to cut their funding at least in half? And it is not a policy of this government to avoid criticism and demands on your department by attempting to undermine and destroy the major group who would lobby with the government? And having been in that position I know that they were not an easy group to deal with, as your staff will tell you, that it was a difficult time to go in front of that group each year and explain why you didn't have funding increases that they would see you give.

But I think in order to avoid the criticism that you're presently under, that you're trying to undermine those groups to alleviate criticism of yourself and your department is not a fair and honest way to deal with criticism . . . And whether or not you will not think of reinstating the funding for that group at this time.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, I can only say to you what I've probably said before. You know, I welcome constructive criticism and I mean that in good faith. And there is absolutely no attempt on this side to stick our heads in the sand and ignore criticism of any kind.

We have had, this government, the revenues going down. You know that. You've sat through the throne speech and budget. And when I look at some priorities to be set, the rationale has not changed since that time. We felt it was absolutely necessary to fund those direct essential services and that still stands. And that service goes to clients, to people that require some help with it. And there is no other reason. Whatever you want

to think it is, that's what it was based on.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, I agree that that's what it was based on but I would like to tell you that it's a misguided concept that you would see your way clear to be part of a cabinet that would cut oil royalties by \$130 million, that would administer a potash corporation that would go from earning 141 million in 1981 to making 600,000, by your books, or should be 12 million deficit, in 1982, and at the same time find its way clear to cut very basic social service groups like the umbrella group SANGSSA (Saskatchewan Association of Non-Governmental Social Service Agencies), which was getting \$108,000.

And I'll say to you that the priorities of your government and your administration and your role in getting money for various organizations - if you're saying that's the problem - just isn't adequate. If you're saying that your philosophically do not believe in these groups, and that's why you're cutting it, I would believe that. And that's what I will believe. And that's what the groups will believe. But for you to stand here and say that we ran a \$317 million deficit and cut oil royalties by \$130 million, and you could not find money to pay the social service groups is simply not credible. And what I would like to find out from you now is whether or not the cut in this grant didn't occur after protests from these groups were made to you. And wasn't it an attempt to undermine them and cut them out of the money that they needed to operate - to avoid the criticism of the government, not only yourself, but all of cabinet?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — If we're going to talk about basic services, you know, let's not have a very loose mouth with the truth. Okay?

Let's talk about basic services. You know, all I've heard from across the floor is, 'Cut, cut, cut.' And that's all I've seen in the printed media. At no place or no time have I heard from you people even that much recognition of the increases . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Crisis intervention services, the Big Brothers, the Big Sisters, preventative programs, sexual assault centres for women. Now maybe that's not important to you, but I'll tell you fellows, it's important to me and a few other women in this province.

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

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — You know. And then there's a few other organizations, like the women's centre in Regina, and the Contemporary Women. You know, 'Cut, cut,' you say. Those are increases. Let's look at the Contemporary Women's Program for single women that have had a hard time - no employment, no education, no training. Doubled. Doubled, because they've been successful in getting them off the welfare rolls and into the mainstream of life. Single women. Now that might not mean much to you, when you're out on your tractor and your combine, and you're going home to have somebody fix you a meal and wash and iron your clothes, you know. But it means a lot to those that don't have that opportunity.

So don't give me the run-around, and anybody else, about the cut to basic services, because it's simply not true.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, Madam Minister, I see you have a fan club which would appreciate your right-wing radical cuts in social programs and any type of personal



innuendo that you would have about not understanding social problems that people would have. I would have you know that your record does not stand well with those same social service groups that my colleague from Quill Lakes and myself had the opportunity of increasing many times, both in the area of day care as well as in the many groups like transition houses and day care and on and on.

What your record is, Madam Minister, is one of cut-backs in very basic groups such as SANGSSA (Saskatchewan Association of Non-Governmental Social Service Agencies) and you cannot deny that. You are the minister who has orchestrated and is the architect of the undoing of SANGSSA in this province, the non-governmental group which has taken care of the needs of many social service groups. You may try to attempt to say that you've got an increase in one or two agencies but by and large your record is one of cut-backs and destruction of social service organizations and you simply will not be able to get away from that. What I would like to ask you is the date on which you notified SANGSSA that their funding was curtailed, in fact eliminated, in the province?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, they were formally informed approximately three to four weeks ago. I don't have the date here. If you would like the date, we will get the date for you tomorrow and get it to you.

**An Hon. Member:** — 1983?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — It was 1983, that's right, to the member from Quill Lake. This is 1983 and it was three or four weeks past in 1983. There had been some indication to SANGSSA as early as probably last June when I had my very first meeting with them. I did not question the role that they can play to their organization, but I did question the fact of the membership fee and the accountability process. And there was another meeting with them and that discussion once again took place. So it was not new news as perhaps you would have everyone believe.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — As the minister will know, the problem was accountability of this group and you were having some difficulty understanding what their role was. I think a much more fair and equitable way of dealing with that problem would have been to sit down with them and find out their side of the story as to what they were doing.

But Madam Minister, even looking at this issue from your own political benefit, which I'm sure you're attempting to improve on by cutting out a vocal group who is apparently not pleased with cut-backs . . . What you are really doing is driving these groups into an even larger group made up of the FSI, who are lacking funding, AMNSIS (Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan), SANGSSA (Saskatchewan Association of Non-Governmental Social Service Agencies), and you will find that there will be a group coming to existence in the very near future which will be much more politically devastating for you to deal with than what you have dealt with in the past.

I say again that it's a very misguided operation and advice that is telling you that you should be undermining that group, because any way you look at it those kinds of cuts will come back to haunt you over and over again.

And, getting back to the point that I made earlier in trying to establish the date on which you cut the funding, I think that it was a couple of days after this letter was received by the Premier of the province, and I would just like to read it into the record:

The Regina region of SANGSSA formally protest the discontinuation of programs such as By Ourselves, the mediation diversion program of the John Howard Society, the loans program of the Welfare Rights Centre. Furthermore, we demand that any non-governmental programs that have been cut back or eliminated by this budget be given a full 90-day funding in which to appeal the decisions that have been made.

Your response would be appreciated.

And this is signed by the Reverend Robert Gay who is secretary of the SANGSSA organization.

I think that this kind of protest, coming from very credible groups and very credible people should be listened to. I wonder whether or not you're giving consideration to a 90-day appeal procedure in which these groups are allowed the opportunity to come forward and talk to you to try to determine whether or not their budget should not in fact be reinstated.

I think that any fair-minded person would not be against a reasonable proposal like this that would allow these groups to come to you and discuss what they have been doing, and I'm sure that all of them feel that they have been doing a very adequate, and a very good job, and whether you'll consider looking at that proposal.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, just a couple of comments. You know, don't lecture me. Patronize, perhaps is a better word, particularly when it comes to what I do for my political benefit. You know, there comes a point in time when you got to do a few things other than for the politics of it. That might be difficult for you to understand, but it isn't difficult for me to understand in terms of the frustration that I hear from people in dealing with the old politicians, so don't lecture me on it.

Out of the various groups that you mentioned as to the cuts, I would like to inform you that Social Services funds the welfare rights that you mentioned to the tune of \$177,000 this year. That's only in Regina. We have approximately half-a-million going around the province on the advocacy of the welfare rights alone.

As to the other groups, they do not get their funding out of my department. I will have agreed today to set up a meeting with SANGSSA (Saskatchewan Association of Non-Governmental Social Service Agencies) to talk about some mutual concerns. As I stated to you in an earlier reply, I'm quite willing to face some criticism, and some constructive criticism, but I would hope that it's a two-way street.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — I'm sure that any community group like SANGSSA who were involved in those operations for one reason and one reason only, that being to provide a service to people who are in many cases down and out, that they have the better interests of people in mind, and for you to suggest that somehow they don't, I think is inappropriate. And to refer to who's lecturing who, for you to lecture me on whether I drive my tractor, or who cooks the meals, or who washes clothes, I think that possibly you are the one who is attempting to lecture and maybe you should look at your own record before you start to admonish other people for how they are asking questions.

You referred earlier to areas of umbrella groups like for example, SASH (Saskatchewan Association of Special-Care Homes) and SHA, and I wonder whether you can tell me,

seeing as you referred to them, whether or not they get any provincial grants from your government to operate their groups?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, ask the Department of Health. We're doing Social Services tonight.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, in making suggestions that those groups don't get grants from the provincial government, you used the example saying that SANGSSA should act like these groups because they don't, and I would like to inform you that SASH does get a grant, did get a grant from your department last year to operate their organization to hold conventions and that sort of thing, and I would like to suggest that the same consideration be given to SANGSSA.

I have a number of groups which I would like to ask about and maybe you could save a good bit of time by simply giving me the list of community groups or social service groups that have had their funding curtailed or cut back for this year.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Is there a particular agency?

**An Hon. Member:** — No. The whole list.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well then, we will have to compile it into one and send it to you.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well then, maybe I will have to go through the list one by one. I was hoping that we could save some time. You provided me with a complete list last estimates with a bit of a description and all the funding, and what I would like to do is do some comparisons but maybe we can just go through a few of them at any rate and you could confirm whether or not these are accurate.

For example, the Community Switchboard - can you tell me . . . they were a group who received \$110,000 from the provincial government last year. Can you tell me what their funding will be for the coming year?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — The list that you refer to that we so kindly gave you last time - you also received a cut. You gave us some time to compile it and I believe the insinuation was being left that that wasn't necessarily so. As you well know, the Community Switchboard, the main service of that particular agency was the telewriter service, and that is going to be maintained. Community Switchboard will not be receiving funding, but the telewriter service will continue.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — The Community Switchboard, are you saying, will get no funding this year?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — It will have the three-month phasing out, and we are in discussion as to the best place, in order to provide the best service for those people that require the telewriter service, and they get the three-month phasing out, so that there is some time to put that service into place.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Don't you think it's a little appropriate of a sensitive government to cut out a program before you found out where it will be going to? Wouldn't it make more sense to have done that beforehand, to have found a place for a telewriter for those individuals to go to, prior to the day that you announced that you were discontinuing the service by the Community Switchboard? What if, for example, you

don't find an appropriate place to put it - then what will you be proposing?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — As I had indicated, there were several consultations going on with a couple of organizations. We have met with SHIP (Services for Hearing Impaired Persons), as an example, an organization that has a very special mandate in delivering some services for those that have a hearing impairment. Before the final decision is made there will be consultation with the deaf community in order to ensure that that is what they are most agreeable with.

As to your previous comment that it should have been in place before, I might remind you that's why the three-month phasing money was put in.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — The minister will well know that the service provided by both the Community Aid Resource Centre in Saskatoon and Community Switchboard . . . Here again were groups of individuals and volunteers who were involved in this, who I'm sure thought they were doing an appropriate job, and I assure you that the deaf community, the many thousands who use that service, thought it was a good service.

What I would like to ask you is why you saw fit . . . on what basis of analysis did you see fit to cut these two groups? I would just like to remind you that these are not just a few individuals. I know at a meeting in Saskatoon the other evening there were 200 people out who were concerned enough to take an evening off and come out and try to find a solution to this problem that you had caused. And I would like to ask you why in fact you saw fit to cut this service to these people in Saskatoon, and before you had a new home for them?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — The process of trying to co-ordinate some community service organizations began some time ago. For instance, on October 21st - I'm sorry - August 15th of 1981 there was a letter sent at that time to Community Aid. I'm not sure who the minister was at that time, but it was August 15th of 1981, asking Community Aid . . . perhaps starting the process for the amalgamation of that particular agency with Crisis Intervention. They are in the same building; many of their services are basically the same. For instance, one of the major features when Community Aid first started out was the information and referral. We have Crisis Intervention who is getting approximately \$300,000, also with information and referral, plus several others.

I had indicated to you earlier, given the scarce resources that are here, the decisions had to be made, and the first thing that was considered that we not lose a very vital direct service, and while that process, and I'm the first to recognize, can be somewhat painful, I do believe that there is a fair degree in some corners for the support of trying to utilize to the maximum with the resources that we have without losing that direct service to people.

And if you would like a copy of a letter that I received in September of 1982 by a former executive director of one of those organizations of supporting such a thing and the reasons why I would be glad to photostat a copy for you and send it over to you. I believe we've gone around before as to the reasons and they haven't changed any. The first concern was the direct service and what is essential. And we felt, with some co-operation and with some understanding, that the crisis intervention services would still be there and it would still allow the information and referral part to be handled.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — You're then saying that someone else can offer and provide the

service cheaper and better than Community Aid and Community Switchboard.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — No, I didn't say that at all.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, then, what possible rationale could you have for cutting out these two groups? First of all you say it's because you don't have enough money, and then when you're asked if it's because it was costing you too much and someone else will do it cheaper, you say no. So if both of those things are not true, then what is the reason for cutting the two groups out?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, as I had stated very clearly the area of duplication, the area of co-ordination and need to co-ordinate some services. And that obviously isn't a new fad. As I just said to you, August of 1981 - who was the Minister of Social Services, Department of Social Services? You know, resources were getting tight then and don't try and kid anyone. The unemployment factor was starting then and you knew where the revenues were coming from and what wasn't coming in. And there was a very clear need to maintain a very strong safety net for those that need it most. And therefore the areas where there was perhaps duplication, that was what we looked at.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, that letter you are referring to, I wish you would table it because there was no action taken on that idea. I'm sure that there were many ideas in the department while I was minister, that you could hold up and say, 'This was an idea,' and 'That was an idea.' But when the idea came up when I was minister or when the member for Quill Lakes was minister, it didn't happen. That's the difference. Those groups are still in existence, even though someone may have had an idea that they could cut costs in one way or another. The very simple fact is, is that those community operations stayed in place, despite the fact that someone in the department or some group or some individual had an idea that they should be cut back. And what I would ask you one more time is: what is the rationale for doing that if it's not to cut expenses? I would like to know whether or not you see that when you transfer it to another group, if you will in fact save some of the, I believe, about \$290,000 that these two groups received last year.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, you're quite right that the ideas may have been around when you were the minister and the member from Quill Lake was the minister. You're quite right. It didn't happen, but what did happen was that there was absolutely no effort on your part to find the money and to make the system more efficient. What you elected to do was not fund some organizations like SHIP (Services for Hearing Impaired Persons) that had a direct service for those that had a hearing impairment. That's very clear and we don't have to go around that again.

The other thing that you didn't do - while you perhaps didn't do away with Community Aid and Community Switchboard, you also didn't put any new money into some preventive services, whether it was on single parents or whether it was on teen moms. That effort didn't happen. I recognize in part this is an efficiency matter, but it was done with a great deal of compassion in order to maintain that direct safety net of service. And we did accomplish that with this move.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, here again, I find it hard to believe that you would be part of a cabinet that would cut oil royalties, and I hate harping on that, but it seems very simple to me that all of your problems could have been solved with even one million of that \$130 million, and rather than cutting oil royalties by 130 million, you could have

cut it by 129 and it would have solved all of your problems. What I am having a difficult time understanding is how you allow those cuts to go on in the sake of efficiency when other members of cabinet seem to find a very easy time in getting money to cut taxes, for example, for those kinds of corporations.

I would like to remind you that many other people who see the large deficit were believing that the deficit was being run in order that programs wouldn't be cut. And the difficult time the taxpayers are now having is understanding how we can run a huge deficit of \$317 million, cut programs, and each of us is expected to pay 10 or 15 per cent more in personal income tax by your own budget estimates. Taxes on cigarettes are up by 24 per cent. Taxes on liquor are up by 39 per cent. There is more money in the budget, but less services and it's just becoming very, very difficult to understand how you are running your operation and why people on the bottom end of the totem-pole are being asked to suffer as a result of your ill-conceived ideas of how the world should turn.

There is another group that I would like to have a confirmation on. This is a more recent cut-back and it has to do with the co-ordinating council on social programming or social planning which received \$60,000 from your department last year. Can you tell me how much they will be receiving in the coming year?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — They received approximately \$60,000 and this year they're getting winding-down money of approximately 7,380. If you go back to the beginning of the council, it was a time when there was no Kinsmen Foundation that had their own director; there was no advocacy groups per se, such as the Voice of the Handicapped. And they were particularly instrumental in helping the Voice of the Handicapped to become an organization with funding of its own to do some advocacy work particularly for the physically disabled. And many of those groups now have their own, and it was felt that the time had come that that function was no longer a direct service to those groups.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, can you tell me what groups - a list of groups that were involved in this co-ordinating council? Can you give me a list of the memberships that were involved in that group?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Yes, we can, but we don't have it here. I'll send it over.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, what was some of the work that you did? Is it all being replaced by another group and is the funding going to another area to make up for the work that they did? Or where will that now show up in your department, or is it something that is being eliminated? Also, was there consultation with the various groups who were involved in the co-ordinating council before you made the announcement?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Yes, there was consultation approximately two months ago, and there were several groups there, including people from University Hospital. As I'd stated earlier, the group had become more of an information-sharing group, and perhaps that does not take \$60,000 a year. They do not, to my knowledge, have a full-time executive director. Perhaps they could better be termed a secretariat.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Can you tell me who the president of that group is?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — We'll have to send that over to you.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — The minister has said that this group was consulted with. Can you tell me where the meetings took place? Were they directly with yourself or with the deputy minister? And who out of the long list of groups like the Canadian Arthritis Society, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Canadian Paraplegic Association, Ranch Ehrlo, Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers, Senior Citizens' Provincial Council . . . Can you tell me where these meetings took place and which of these groups - some 30 groups - did you consult directly with?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — The meeting was held in the boardroom over at the department, and it was with the deputy. And there was approximately five, six people of their executive with the deputy.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Can you tell me who the representatives were and what groups they represented?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — No, I can't tell you that tonight, but I can probably get the information and send it over to you.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — The news release that was issued by this group when they found out that their funding was being cut, dated April 27th of '83, in part, Bob Ryan the president of the council had stated that, 'The need to maintain this organization with its wealth of expertise in the rehabilitation planning field is felt strongly by the membership.'

And I wonder if the minister could tell me whether she disagrees with that statement by the president of the group. Not that it's a study group or whatever she referred to, but is very active in actually developing rehabilitation planning in the province and has been the basis for many of these groups being established. And what you are in effect doing is eliminating the possibility of any new group being developed in this area, which you then will not be asked to fund. And isn't that the problem that you're solving by doing away with the co-ordinating council for social planning?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — I really can't fairly comment on what you have quoted in there, because the department has never received a report or a study as to what they were accomplishing. I think that I would . . . before I make a comment based on no knowledge at all. That would not be fair to the organization, regardless of which way it might be.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Well, Madam Minister, I would just like to go through a few of the projects that they have been involved with starting: in 1980, a brief that they submitted to the federal special committee on the disabled and the handicapped; later that year, a congress report on 'The Impact of Deinstitutionalization on the Provision of Services to the Disabled'; in 1981, 'Saskatchewan Needs a Rehabilitative Approach', in response to the report on the provincial task force for rehabilitation; secondly, 'Social Security for Canadians', a submission to the parliamentary task force on federal-provincial fiscal arrangements; thirdly, a brief presented to the task force on mental health in Saskatchewan; and fourthly, provided support and secretarial staff to the Saskatchewan committee on the International Year of the Disabled Person.

I suppose it's that last point where I became involved and knew of their workings because they were very involved in the International Year of the Disabled Person. They

did an excellent job of putting forward ideas and concepts which we now should be setting into place. And it shows how far we have come, I suppose, in 1983, to where we are not only not enforcing or implementing some of the plans from the International Year of the Disabled Person, but in fact are taking a drastic step backwards by doing away with many of the groups who are advocating more and better services for those very individuals who are involved in this operation. And I would ask the minister to send to me her idea as to whether or not she agrees with the statement that I gave to her earlier. I will give the floor to my colleague from Regina Centre for a moment in this area.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — I'm not sure the member left us with a question before he left. Perhaps it was more of a comment than anything. The only thing that perhaps has been impressed upon the department was that they were indeed very instrumental in the International Year of the Disabled. I don't think there is any disagreement with any member in this House as to the work that was done that year and perhaps should be done every year, regardless of whether it's the International Year of the Disabled or not.

I guess I can only come back to the matter of the direct service to clients, to those that need it most, and the essential service component.

**Mr. Koskie:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, I want just to relate to a specific group in society. As you know, in 1980 we celebrated our 75th anniversary, and part of that celebration was paying a tribute and respect to the pioneers of this province for the contribution that they had made in building this province. And, what I would like to ask you, if you could outline briefly the highlights of your budget and budgetary increases in respect to the assistance of our senior citizens.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Perhaps a gentle reminder - with the reorganization that took place, while the formal reorganization came in April, there was of course the budgeting process, which also included nursing homes and that type of thing.

I want to say that when it comes to senior citizens, I think that one should be very aware the importance of the government-wide programs on them, whether it be the chiropody program for the first time ever in the history of this province, the direct service to the seniors, or a new enriched housing project through Sask Housing. We have the activity centres, the Senior Helping Senior program that has a very good possibility after evaluation of being expanded. There is the supplement income plan, as you are well aware of. Of course, there is the funding for the senior citizens association, the Action Now group, and for the first time ever again in this province, as the chiropody program in the Department of Health, the first steps have been taken in consultation with seniors to create within the Department of Social Services a bureau of ageing.

**Mr. Koskie:** — Well, I just want to make a comment in respect to what you have alluded to. I want to say, Madam Minister, that as I've said before, seniors are the people who helped build this province, and it was the policy of our government to assist them in a society that was changing, a society with high inflation. Many of our seniors were caught with limited income, and I want to outline what this government has really done for these people, many of whom are on fixed income.

While they have allowed rent increases of 14 per cent, and sometimes more, they have in fact allowed utility rates or are providing utility rates which will be very substantial. I want to indicate that you have provided a mortgage interest reduction program which is very little used by seniors, and I want to say that what you have done in fact is



decrease the income security or under SAP (Saskatchewan Assistance Plan) reduction for the aged. I want to say that what you have done is to cut back on the amount of funding in the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan and no basic increases. And I want to say that what you have done since you have been minister is to discard a shelter allowance which we had put in place to assist seniors to meet some of their basic costs.

I am very disappointed and I want to ask you in a concrete way: how are you in fact helping the seniors to curb against these massive increases, some of which I have mentioned? How do you expect them - many of them who are only on the social security pension and the supplement - how do you expect them to maintain with the rising costs which your government is passing on to them? I ask you to address that question and I don't think your budget has in fact done it.

Here is a large group, and an increasing group as you have indicated, somewhere around 12 per cent of our population. And certainly I think that any government with any compassion would address the needs of this group. As my colleague from Shaunavon has said, you certainly addressed, in a hurry, the needs of the oil companies to the tune of 130 million.

And you certainly addressed your friends in the potash industry. And what I'm asking you today and this evening is: how are you in fact addressing some of the increasing problems that the senior citizens are having with these exorbitant rates in utility rates and the exorbitant rent increases, and the potential of the removal of rent control? I think you have slid past it. You haven't addressed a group, an economic group, and a group that have contributed so much to society.

And so I ask you: will you stand up here in the House and indicate clearly to the people of Saskatchewan the truth of the matter, that you have deserted them?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, perhaps the first priority of any government in order to ensure the care of their privileged citizens has got to be one of ensuring that the economy is stable. As you well know, this government has taken very many steps to recover from a slowdown. And if the member is somewhat disappointed in what he puts forth, I would suggest that his disappointment would be alleviated if he would look at the positive side of some of the things that have been done within a very short period of time that directly affect the senior citizens.

You know, you're quite right - approximately 12 per cent of the population getting older and more frail. Well, let me tell you what we didn't do. We didn't put a moratorium on the number of beds that some of our very elderly, frail seniors required - no place to go. Put a moratorium on the beds - we didn't do that. In August, we put 6 million into the building of new beds so they would have a place to go with some dignity, and at a rate they could afford. That was in August of 1982. Sure, we're in a recession, and revenues are down, but when we looked at the priorities, that didn't prevent us from putting another approximately 7 million, in March of '83, in the same area, 4 million into new beds. But, more importantly, another 2 million to level 4 at the local level, and that's very important when you're looking at the care of seniors.

Now under, let me remind you, under the past administration, the idea when it came to those very frail seniors in those level 4 institutions was to maintain them in a very large institution, in a region, many times, miles and miles away from the communities, from families, where they have spent all their life. The 2 million that we put in, I would suggest to you, to the member from Quill Lake, is much more humane and compassionate than

anything you came up with in the previous years. That 2 million are going to allow some of those senior citizens to stay in those nursing homes and have the care when they become so frail that they move in to the level 4 category. So, perhaps that has eased some of your disappointment.

**Mr. Koskie:** — I want to say that in respect to the special care homes, that we instituted a program of charging seniors \$390, I believe it was. What you have done is increase it, and I predict that there will be another increase in respect to the charge that you are going to be making in respect to the special care homes.

And I want to say that in respect, also that we had the Senior Citizens' Council, and when I look throughout the budget, I have difficulty in funding a subheading in which there will be a continuation of a senior citizen council, and I would like to ask the minister specifically whether she didn't, in fact, increase the special care home levy from 390 to 417. And I would like her to deny that she's not going to be increasing it further. And also, I would like her to stand up and indicate whether she intends to continue to fund the Senior Citizens' Council. Or has she, in fact, lost all of that to the other minister? Because it's day by day she's losing more because of the incapacity, I guess, to really manage it. So, I want to ask you whether you in fact have, during your tenure, as when you had the senior citizens, the nursing homes under your jurisdiction, did you in fact increase them? I ask you whether or not you have any budgetary allowance for the continuance of the Senior Citizens' Council. I ask you whether you have any proposal for a shelter allowance to assist the seniors who are living in their homes. And the thrust of the program is to be able to maintain seniors in their homes as long as possible. And certainly what you're doing is making it impossible - high utility rates - as I've indicated.

So, I think you have to more specifically address them. And I want you to address the particular questions that I've asked you.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Within my tenure, when I had the special care homes in Social Services, it is true; it was increased. The 390 at that time was representative of 88 percent of the old age pension combined with GIS.

What the member did not state was that the 417 is somewhat less than the 88 per cent of the income and they also had more disposable income.

As to the council, yes, it will continue. As I stated, the first step has been taken to looking at a bureau of ageing. And to deny if I personally am going to raise the rate, Mr. Member, I can say, yes I'm not going to do that to the member for Quill Lake.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 8:49 p.m.