

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
May 2, 1983

EVENING SESSION

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Embury: — Mr. Chairman, I'd ask leave so that I could introduce some Cubs. Mr. Chairman, we have with us this evening, in the Speaker's gallery, the 52nd Cub Pack who regularly hold their meetings in All Saints Anglican Church in the constituency represented by my colleague, the Minister of Education, the Hon. Gordon Currie who is unable to be here tonight to welcome them to the House. The approximately 30 boys who range in age from eight years to twelve years are accompanied by their leader, John Wright and I would ask that all members of the legislature join with me in welcoming this group this evening. We are very pleased to have you here and hope that your visit will be educational and interesting, and at 7:30 on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Education, I will be meeting briefly with the group in the members' dining room for refreshments. I'd ask the members of the House to welcome them here tonight.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

SOCIAL SERVICES

Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 36

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to go back to an item we were talking about the other night and it has to do with a press release that has been issued on April 28th that I didn't have at that time. It was issued by SANGSSA (Saskatchewan Association of Non-Governmental Social Service Agencies) which is talking about the unreasonable approach of expecting that group to go out and seek funding on their own after the year is already started. I was wondering: has the minister had time to think about that, and are you reconsidering your position of block funding for the SANGSSA group at this time?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I will be meeting with SANGSSA tomorrow, along with a few other people – the deputy included, plus the chairman of our health and social services caucus committee – to raise some mutual concerns that I think we both have, we meaning SANGSSA and myself through Social Services. And at that time we'll be talking about some of the conversations that have been held in the past year with SANGSSA and myself, and the implications as to where we go over the next two or three months, with the phasing-out time that was laid down.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder as well if the minister is in possession of a copy of a letter dated April 21st – which was a copy to all MLAs – to the Premier, which outlines the problems associated with attempting to collect the \$500 from each of their 70 or 75 groups as you mentioned, where that becomes the preoccupying reason for being out and around collecting money, rather than doing the advocacy work that is expected of this group, and if you accept that as a major problem for them, where a major part of

their time will now have to be out trying to attract funding rather than doing the work that they were set up to do. And if in your meeting tomorrow – is it tomorrow? – you will have an opportunity to hear their point of view.

I imagine if you are meeting with them, you must be reconsidering the idea of funding, otherwise I'm sure that you would not be wasting your time and their time. Can you give us any indication at this point as to any kind of an alternative that you might have in mind to put to that group tomorrow?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, I guess I don't consider it a waste of time to be meeting with them. Whether I have changed my initial position on the matter or not, I think any time that you can facilitate communications between two groups or two organizations or two people, nobody loses on that point. One of the things I will be discussing with them and suggesting to them is that the department will be co-operating with them fully in order to facilitate the transition of the membership, and I think at this point in time to suggest that we are going to change our mind would perhaps not be wise on my part. That is something that I will want to talk to them about, but I will be suggesting to them ways that we can help facilitate their operation.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, I take that as some type of a positive step away from where we were last Thursday night where we were talking about no move in terms of funding SANGSSA (Saskatchewan Association of Non-Governmental Social Service Agencies) and I imagine the fact that we are now meeting and talking . . . This is almost like the Crow rate debate, where if you can finally sit down and talk to the minister again, you take it as there is still a possibility that block funding for that group will be forthcoming.

I would encourage you to, at least to some extent, block fund that group to the point where they will be able to survive and carry out the role that they were mandated to do. In following this role that you have with the non-governmental groups over the past two months, I find that it is one which has been anything but smooth. And I have here an article from the *Star-Phoenix* which is titled 'Agencies Told to Tighten their Belts.' And it almost seems to me that this whole operation started at that time. And I would like to quote part of the article. It says in part:

'Many social service agencies make excessive demands on government for funding, and may find money that was there before isn't there now,' says Walter Podiluk, recently named deputy minister of the Department of Social Services.

And it goes on to say:

The deputy minister said the danger of non-governmental agencies with loose mandates is that the government ends up taking them over despite his department's commitment to local autonomy.

I just wonder if you could clarify for me and for the non-governmental groups, who will be interested in that comment, exactly what the danger of non-governmental agencies with loose mandates – that threat that if they have a loose mandate, if they're not responsible to the government that you will be taking them over – exactly what does that mean? Or was it taken out of context, or what is that to mean to a non-governmental organization? 'If you don't toe the line, we will take you over,' is what many of them are telling me they believe that statement to mean.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I guess when I look at some of the discussion that has taken place, either on this floor or perhaps through the media over the past months, when it comes to myself and the NGOs, my first reaction is that not all the information has indeed been forthcoming, particularly through the media. And I think there has been a rather strong emphasis on the negative part. I would also like to state very clearly that that negative component, if you're talking about negative meaning a large percentage in reduction, is a very small minority of the whole picture.

I think the relationship, when it comes to where the funding for NGOs has gone this year is very positive. And I have only to look at the percentages that have gone to the crisis intervention and the mobile crisis, and the Mobile Crisis Unit in Prince Albert, and I have only to look at the sexual assault centres for women, and perhaps even transition houses, which overall it is a much greater than 7 per cent increase. And of course, I look at the trusteeship services. And those, indeed, are run by non-governmental organizations. I have only to look at the family counselling services, whether it's the Catholic services between Saskatoon and Regina, or the family bureau in Prince Albert, or a few others. Those indeed have been very positive and none of that has filtered out to the public for whatever reason. I guess one can only speculate.

As to the intent, I believe from what you were quoting, particularly on what the deputy minister was saying, had to do with the accountability factor and perhaps overlapping of services and duplication, and there was no other intention than zeroing in on those areas.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I guess it's the point of accountability that I would like to question you on, and how groups like Community Switchboard were not being accountable. If the problem is accountability, could you fill me in on what they should have been doing in order to be accountable, because I don't think that message was ever relayed to that group, for example, before their funding was cut? And it would only seem logical to me that if the communication that you talk about is to be forthcoming, then before you were to cut the funding to those groups, I think that the communication should have taken place from yourself to them. And maybe you have a problem with accountability from those groups, but I don't think you relayed that message to them. And if you did, I would like you to explain to me how you told them that they were not accountable before you cut their funding off.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, I think it's much too simple to pick up on one word, 'accountability,' and apply it to everything that's been done. Let's look at a few other instances. For instant, the whole area, perhaps duplication. The whole area of trying to set some priorities in a time of very high need. And that's where I come to the area of information and referral.

I think as accountability goes for the NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) sector, I firmly believe that that section has to be a co-operative effort, and that is between the government having a responsibility and the community. So I am a believer that it is indeed the community, the local community, that determines the social fabric of that given geographical area, and rightly or wrongly, that's the principle that I stand on with it.

Now that does not take away the responsibility that we as a government recognize, and that's the financial responsibility of it. I think when the NGOs are looking at the overall program, they have to determine first of all the need, and if that is determined by the

community, then they are also accountable to that community. When it comes to the time for funding, the rationale for it, is there increased service? Is there an increased case-load? Are there some services to be dropped off because they are no longer relevant to the needs of the day? I think all those questions must come into play when you are determining the rationale and the accountability of the NGO.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Okay, I would like to know on Community Switchboard and Community Aid what criteria you used when you cut them off, and whether or not you consulted with them in advance to let them know the reasons why you were doing that. Was it an overlapping of service, or was it the fact that they were not, as you say, accountable, or what was the reason why you did it?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The high priority of the service that those two organizations were giving in my mind where there was no duplication, was the telewriter service, and that is what I consider to be an essential service, because it allows accessibility for those that have a physical handicap. So, once we sort out that priority we look at what the other services are. You want to look at Community Switchboard – it is basically one information and referral. If I open the front page of the Regina phone book – and perhaps that was not so when Community Switchboard was first originated, but it certainly is now – where they are to take the calls and relay them other places, you will note that their phone number is also enlisted with the sexual assault line, the rape crisis centre, the transition home, child abuse, the alcohol commission – and that, indeed to our minds, seem to be saying that we have a duplication there.

If I look at the Community Aid in Saskatoon, and I also look at another big organizations in Saskatoon that basically does the same thing. And we discussed a couple of letters the other night, pertaining back to 1981, when it was then suggested that perhaps there could be an amalgamation by some services – suicide prevention; child abuse and neglect; drug and alcohol abuse; emergency financial assistance; individual counselling; information and referral – by Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service. And yet we were seeing basically the same thing with the other organization, and given the times that we are in, we felt that there was still a need to initiate some new programs, plus put some new dollars into some preventive measures. And quite frankly, I guess there's only so many dollars to go around. That is not to take away from what those agencies have offered to the communities in the past year.

I also want to point out to this Assembly that for the last two or three or even four years there has been a suggestion of both organizations, Saskatoon and Regina, by the past administration to remove funding and get them to amalgamate into another area, and so whatever reason, perhaps you know, that didn't happen.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, I think as time goes on, you'll find that there is always someone making suggestions about how they can cut your department, and I don't think it'll come as a surprise to you now that your job will be not to allow those cuts to occur, and, yes, there were many suggestions when I was minister, and when my friend and colleague from Quill Lake was minister, that certain area be cut, and the reason they weren't cut is because we stood up in cabinet and said: 'We're not going to allow it.' And so when you're saying there were suggestions around about cutting this service or that, I'm sure budget bureau in that day would much have rather saved money in Social Services as well, so what is new? But, the problem is that there are cuts taking place today that didn't happen in years gone by, and that's the problem. And we will wait and see next budget cycle whether or not more of these groups are cut off, and whether or not it's not an attempt to stifle the advocacy role of many groups in the province to

provide more for those who are most in need.

I would like to turn now to another area and it has to do with the Valley View Centre, and I would like to ask you whether or not the individual who you will know, Dr. Maharaj, has officially left his position as of April 30th, or whether he is still on staff?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The position of the gentleman that you were referring to is effectively abolished the end of May.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — And so he is at present time still reporting to work, and I wonder what you think his job has been and will continue to be for this month. What role is he carrying out at Valley View and what has it been in the past?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — When the gentleman was hired, it was as a speech pathologist which was one of diagnosing and assessing, and that was some time ago when children were still coming into Valley View. The make-up of the population of Valley View, as you're well aware, has changed over the years because of community-based programs to do with the mentally retarded. And we have approximately eight children left in Valley View, very severely retarded, medically fragile, and the need for the diagnostic part of that is no longer necessary.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Is it not true that Dr. Maharaj works with adults in attempting to teach them a form of communication as well, and is that not the majority of the work that he does at the present time in Valley View? I know that reports that have come over . . . In fact, Dr. Maharaj was on A.M. Magazine, not a week ago, explaining that his role was to teach mentally handicapped people, whether they were children or adults, and he mentioned at that time that his job was, in fact, at least half carrying out that facility for adults as well as children. And I wonder if he was speaking out of turn, or whether there's a conflict that you're not aware of. Possibly he was fired or dismissed when you really don't know what his job at Valley View is, because he seems to assume that his job is to work with handicapped adults. Your opinion is that he was let go because there were no more children, and maybe it's simply a matter of misunderstanding. Maybe he is doing a job out there that the people in Regina aren't aware of.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I can only state what I've tried to tell you earlier, is that his role was one of diagnosing and assessing. Keeping in mind, as I had stated earlier about the changing conditions of the population of Valley View, the adults that remain in Valley View are probably much more severe than what you would see out in the community-based programs. Granted, I recognize that there are probably still some, if we had enough community-based programs to handle them, that could be move out. I think you have to keep in mind, it was the diagnostic part, as opposed to the servicing or the therapy end of it. And for those people coming in, once they are assessed, the program is laid out to the staff at Valley View, and it is they that work with the people in putting through the rest of the program, not the gentleman in question.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I didn't catch whether or not you said that he wasn't working with adults, as part of his job and job description, or whether he was. And I'd like that point clarified because I think it's central to the issue of whether or not he has a job to do out there. And if in fact he was working with adults, who is going to be doing that job after he leaves? Will that program then come to an end? And we have . . . I don't know how many, maybe there isn't a great number. Maybe there's only 20 or 25 who will have a program ended mid-course. And I would like to know whether or not you saw his role as being one of working with adults or not.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, to keep it simple, quite frankly we don't admit enough new adults in a given year to warrant a full-time position in that. As to how the service will be covered now, it will be contracted out to the community health services clinic. They will do the diagnostic and that plan will be laid out and carried through by the staff at Valley View.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder if you can tell me how you expect, with relatively the same population as there was last year, the role being played by those individuals out there with 11 staff less, to do an adequate job of what was being done there before, I think with a very meagre staff. I don't think that when I was minister there was a over-abundance of staff; at least, being out there a couple of times, I didn't notice anyone who wasn't doing a job. And how do you expect, and who will be carrying out the role of teaching communication to those mentally handicapped adults? I would like to know the name of the person, and the position, who will be carrying out that function.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, you're leaving the insinuation that all those positions had to do with the area of communications or speech therapy. And that isn't quite true, because it includes clerical, maintenance, and positions that had to do, when the population was much larger, with children and not adults.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, I would like to know what the difference in population is today as opposed to last year at this time, or when you took office – whether or not it represents that big of a decrease that you can afford to have 11 less staff.

But getting back to the point of the Dr. Maharaj, I would like to know who will be doing his job June 1st, which he is doing now, that is, teaching communication to mentally handicapped individuals out there – adults. Who will be doing that job in that one particular instance?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, I can only restate there are approximately eight children left there now and we would . . . I don't have the figure with me as to how many were there a year ago but I can certainly get that to you if you want.

Who will be doing the diagnosing and the assessment? I stated that will be contracted to the community's health services clinic in Moose Jaw and the assessment will be done there and in consultation with the Valley View staff. The plan will be worked out and it is the staff that do the teaching and the treatment, not the pathologist.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, I still don't know exactly who the person is who will be doing the teaching, and it looks to me like no one will be doing it. And another group of people who are not able to defend themselves are being used as scapegoats, and I think that it's fairly obvious that you can't do the same amount of work with 11 people less.

You're the person who made the comparison that there were a lot less at Valley View and then I ask you for what are you basing that on and you say you don't know. Well, how can you stand in the House and make a comparison that there's many less and when asked how many there are, you say you don't know? It's very simple to find out. I believe it's in the publication which you print monthly and the indication is that last year at this time, in February at Valley View, there were 657 and this year there are 653 and that's how many people there are in the population in Valley View and that's what we're talking about – a staff to take care of 650-some-odd people. And it's exactly the same

as it was last year. Three or four people – you can't say that that's a decrease when you're cutting the staff more than the number of individuals.

It's not that you don't know the answers. It's very simply that you're cutting 11 staff and the people out there will be getting less service. You can say it's secretarial or cleaning or teaching some type of speech therapy. But these are individuals again who cannot defend themselves and I think that the people of the province are getting a little tired of these people having to carry the brunt for cut-backs in budgets by this government.

And I would like, one more time, to try to find out from you who will be teaching communication to mentally handicapped people in Valley View after Dr. Maharaj leaves – if you would give me the individual who will be responsible for his case-load out there.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Okay, let me put it this way. Pathology is diagnostically orientated. He was a Pathologist. Therapy is the service-oriented – either a speech therapist or an adjunctive therapist.

An Hon. Member: — Know what he did?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes, I do, and I'm telling you, if you would just be polite and listen. I sat here and listened to your question; now you listen to the answer.

The diagnostic part of it will be contracted out to the community health services clinic and that will be done, and the plan will be laid out in consultation with the staff at Valley View where the adjunctive therapists who do the service orientation part of the program. As to the individual names of the adjunctive therapists, I don't have them tonight. I'm quite willing to give them to you whenever we can.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I'm very well aware of what Dr. Maharaj's job was. It was dealing with a specific program to assist mentally handicapped people, called the Pictogram-Ideogram Communication system. And he did a very excellent job of developing this plan and using it with some individuals at Valley View. And this was his role. I think that what you're saying is that there will be no one there to carry on that program and it will go by the way and he will move to another province where he has had job offers and another more progressive government – that's hard to believe provincially at this time in Canada, with the exception possibly of Manitoba –they will pick up a world-class speech pathologist and you will have let them go. I just fail to understand how you allow that, especially after a statement you made in the House on April 13th where you said:

The action taken was counter to direction given and that, too, will be dealt with, Mr. Speaker.

And in light of that, I would like you to explain that statement, why the firing of this individual or letting them go was counter to your direction. I would like to know what direction you had given them in advance to him being dismissed and who converted who in this situation.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, I can only state what I'm sure you've heard before, and I had indicated at that time that when we looked at efficiencies, if there were to be any efficiencies at all, it was not to harm the program area. As I indicated at the time this issue took place, I did not have that information before me and I wanted to be rest assured that the program part of Valley View was not affected, the hands-on, the direct

care of the people. When the information came forth, then we dealt with it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — You certainly dealt with it. That is for sure, but I think your statement here in the House, condemning your staff and insinuating that the directions, ‘The action taken was counter to my direction,’ was an attack on your staff and I would like to know who in fact sent the letters to the individuals letting them know that they were dismissed. And if you could also tell me the date that that communication was delivered to them, and also the other individuals who were involved, with their years of service. If you could read that out to me . . .

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Let’s be clear about one thing. These people were not dismissed. You’re doing injustice to them to tell the public that they were fired or dismissed. That is not true. The positions were deleted – redundant positions – and there is a difference, so be clear about that.

As to who signed the letters of the positions being deleted, that was done by the deputy, and we will get the information to you as to the names. And while we’re doing that, if you would like to move on with another question . . .

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder if you could tell me: who was the individual who notified Dr. Maharaj and the other 10 that they were dismissed? If you could give me that while we’re waiting . . . But on the point that you made about how much better people will feel whether their jobs had become redundant, I think if I were Dr. Maharaj I would rather have been fired than to be told that my job was redundant when he felt that he was doing a good job. I think he also would have possibly preferred you just being honest and saying the money’s going to oil companies rather than to Valley View, but to tell him that his job is redundant is a little hard for a professional to take. And I will say they were dismissed, and you can say that their jobs were redundant, and we’ll see who believes who. But I think there’s little to be gained in a battle of semantics over how these people were let out of their jobs. Very simply, they’re no longer working there, and you can attempt to explain it how you like. But I would like to know the individual’s name who went on the letter which asked for the resignation, or which dismissed them, or fired them, or whatever you’re terming this deal as.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, I stated it in my previous answer; perhaps you didn’t hear. The deputy informed them of the deletion of the positions. The deputy . . . (inaudible) . . . sitting to my left, who I introduced to you Thursday night.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — That’s what seems so hard to believe in the House when you say, ‘The actions taken were counter to my directions,’ when it was your deputy minister in fact who dismissed them. And in the opening line, I’m sure what you call this, but he says:

I regret to inform you that your permanent position as a speech therapist will be abolished effective May 31st.

You can say it’s deleted or whatever, but your deputy said ‘abolished,’ and that was the walking ticket for this individual. And I would like to know on what date this letter was delivered and sent to these people, if you could tell me that.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The letters were sent, to the best of our knowledge, April 5th by registered mail.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, that's the point that I was trying to make. I have here the letter which is dated April 4th. I have a copy of the registered letter. The stamp on the registered letter is dated April 1st. He received his letter on April 2nd by registered mail. To show you the sloppy type of handling of this firing or dismissal, he received the letter dated two days after he received it, which is almost unbelievable, and I would ask for an explanation, not for my sake, but for his and the 10 others who were involved in this complete mishandling of this dismissal.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The Friday previous to that was a holiday and also Monday, so Tuesday the 5th was the first day that we could ensure of getting to them.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, I don't understand the reason behind what was done with the mailing, but I suppose in retrospect that's a small part of the injustice that was done to these people and not to be worried about. But, I wonder, Madam Minister, if you now have the information on the other employees and the year of service that you could read to me.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I am informed we'll have to give them to you tomorrow because we don't have all the information here tonight.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder if the minister could tell me whether one of the individuals in fact had 42 years of service with the provincial government at the time they received their dismissal notice?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes, that's correct, and I believe that she has chosen an early retirement.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Can you give me a guarantee that this individual chose early retirement, rather than being issued a letter like this, saying that their job had been abolished?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes, she did receive a letter like that. And under the terms of her agreement her choices were one of exercising her bumping rights, the re-employment factor, or the early retirement, and she chose the early retirement.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Madam Minister, do you think it would not have been more appropriate not to have sent a letter like this, saying, 'I regret to inform you that your permanent position is abolished effective May 31st,' after 42 years of service with the provincial government, many different governments? And your department, rather than going to her or him, and asking and discussing early retirement, which I'm sure that individual would have appreciated and accepted; instead you sent a letter like this, or your deputy does, under your instruction, and after 42 years this is the end to a career.

And I think what's being lost in this whole shuffle of people and money is the fact that these are human beings who have spent their entire working life with the government, and to end this way I think is inappropriate. And I wonder if you could give me assurance that you will instruct your staff not to carry on the dismissal of people in the future in this, what I call an underhanded manner, because I'm sure that people who work for the department and various governments do not deserve that kind of treatment.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We have to follow what is laid out in the collective bargaining

agreement, and that is to be informed by letter, and that's what was done.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Madam Minister, are you telling me that one of your staff could not have gone to her and/or he and asked about an early retirement, and subsequently if that could not be arranged, then letters being sent out after that —that would have been impossible?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — As I stated earlier, we could not ignore what is laid out in that collective bargaining agreement, but I will add that the director of core services did go to her at approximately the same time that she was to get that letter.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — It may have been approximately, but the sad part is, is that they went to see them when their letter was on their desk, and while it was approximately, it was after the fact, and I suppose it only made matters worse rather than to make them better. And what I would like to ask you is that at a time when Sask Tel and other crown corporations are using a policy of early retirement, are you telling me that each of those employees get a letter like this dismissing them prior to the early retirement being taken? Is that what you're attempting to tell us?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, the procedure isn't determined by me or by my colleague here, the Minister of Health, or by you when you were minister of social services. The procedure is outlined in the collective bargaining agreement, and that took place at a mutually, I assume, a bargaining table, and we were adhering to those points of the agreement.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, it may be acceptable to the department, but I think there would have been a much easier way of dealing with the problem because I'm sure some of these individuals would have opted for early retirement prior to receiving what amounted to the dismissal notice, and the fact that you then subsequently give them what you're calling early retirement — I think there's quite a difference, and most people will be able to see that.

Getting back to the point of the children in Valley View, I wonder how many children have been admitted over the past year. You're saying, I believe, there is only 12. Can you tell me how many of them were admitted recently, and whether or not you are increasing the number of children from this time last year, or is it reduced from this time last year?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I have given you the figure as to those that were in Valley View; that figure is eight. Plus there would be another eight that show up on the rolls, but they are in fact in the satellite home in Prince Albert. That's it, eight and eight. Eight in Valley View and eight at the satellite home. And there would be two at the most that would have come on during the last year as new admissions — two at the most.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Can you confirm then that there were only two who were admitted to Valley View, let's say since March 1st last year — between March 1st last year and March 1st this year at the time these people were dismissed? In particular, I am trying to get at the point that the speech pathologist who had been there for a number of years and you're saying it's because there were less children. I'm trying to establish how many people were there for example in 1980, '81, '82, so we can see whether there's a trend whereby there are less children each year to base your dismissal of this individual on. I guess I would like some background to determine what your decision to get rid of this fellow was, whether there was in fact less children or whether that number

was being increased.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I've stated to you earlier that I would provide you with the information when we can get it to show the population trend – the children to do with Valley View. We don't have it here tonight.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The information that I have, and here again I am going by the word of the person who was dealing with those children, but that information is that six children have been admitted since September of 1982. And that's over the past six months and what I would like is a confirmation or a denial of that, because that is what the doctor who had been working there is telling me and I would like you to confirm or deny that.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We will, along with showing the population trend, get the names and the dates of admissions looking at '81-'82 and even '83 for you. Once again, that information isn't here tonight.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would appreciate if the minister would do that for me. Another point on this matter of the dismissals at Valley View I suppose is that April 4th the letter which dismissed these people . . . I have here an advertisement for a position at Valley View dated April 5th. I wonder if there isn't a bit of a conflict here, where you're dismissing people on one hand, saying there are too many. The day after you dismiss those 11, you're saying that 'We will receive applications for accordance with article 902 of the CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) agreement for the following positions in core services.' And one is a community therapist, level 3 or 4. How do you fire people on one day, and run an advertisement on the next? And not only one position, but four of them: one in Moose Jaw, one in Prince Albert, one in Regina and one in Saskatoon. And wouldn't it have been a simpler matter to have transferred people rather than to dismiss some and then attempt to hire back?

While you may say there's no involvement of trying to get rid of certain people, these kind of documents make that very hard to defend on your part, because when you fire people on April 4th and rehire on the 5th, it'll be hard to convince unions and other workers that you're not cleaning shop of undesirable people, and putting in people who better fit the mould as you might see it. And I'd like that point clarified.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — First of all, I don't consider any of those people that were holding those positions as the undesirables. I find that very offensive. The position that you were talking about is one of a community therapist, and I think that you also have to kind of broaden your scope and take a look at the job duties between two positions. And if you want to talk about a speech pathologist and compare it to a community therapist, you're talking something quite different. For instance, a community therapist does several things: can be a person that supports the individual and his primary care-givers, and thereby enable him to remain in the community. They are also there to prevent admission or readmission of clients to such institutional settings as Valley View or North Park Centre. Perhaps in the case of children, to prevent handicapped children from coming into the care of the department. Those are some of the functions of a community therapist.

So it's very difficult in terms of looking at the program and where you're going with it, to compare it to that, and the people that had the positions that became redundant.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Are you saying then, Madam Minister, that Dr. Maharaj would not have been capable of doing the job, or you would not consider offering him the community therapist? Or maybe you did. Can you clarify that point?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, I'm not for a moment saying that the gentleman in question would be incapable or not qualified for this. That isn't the question.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, if he was capable, then was he offered the job?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, I guess like any other position in the union, one would be able to apply for it, and, you know, that's his option.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — But what you're saying is the job was not offered to him. He wasn't offered a transfer into that position, the rights which he would have as a member of the union, I imagine. And the other point being that he was a shop steward also raises the question of union involvement and whether or not that doesn't play a part of his dismissal as well, in terms of getting him out of the system because he was a shop steward in the union. And it's very difficult to explain this whole thing, and these are the points that people are bringing up when I go to Moose Jaw. Why is it happening, and when there's a new job created, was he offered the new position? And as far as I know, the answer is no, and maybe you can clarify that.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — To offer him this position before or while it's being advertised is quite contrary to the union agreement, and quite frankly, I'm surprised that you're not aware of that. I guess I shouldn't be surprised because I wasn't aware until just now that this gentleman, as you say, is, was, or whatever, a shop steward.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would like to ask a few questions on the issue of welfare and the welfare rolls in the province, to do with changes that have taken place in that area. And I would like to question you on the policy which regards those people who are known as the unemployed employables, and this will be a new change, and I think one that came into effect May 1st. I suppose that's the first question: can you clarify when the program to eliminate those who are newly unemployed employables from the acceptance or the receiving of the clothing allowance and household allowance for the first three months — when does that come into effect?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The date is May 1st, '83.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder if you can explain the rationale behind this as an incentive for people to go out to work. Can you explain to me how this is thought to be an incentive to get people off the welfare rolls and back in the job market? I would like to hear your policy, your broad general outline of what the thought was in developing this program — how you saw that as a means for people to get back into the job market.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — When I came into this department a year ago, I think there had probably at that time been several internal studies done, whether it was by budget bureau, bureau of better management, and even some done within the systems area itself. I would be less than truthful if I didn't say that the added numbers coming onto the unemployment rolls, and consequently later on, onto social assistance was not a factor to zero in on that particular area.

When I took a look at other provinces, it was interesting to find that we were one of few that did not put our employables in a separate category, as opposed to those that were

permanently unemployable. And I believe some time in the fall there had been a discussion in this House about single women being lumped in with everyone else instead of being targeted out in another area. So, then we took a look at that, plus the increasing numbers. It became imperative to try and do something, something that was not too painful. You might call it radical; I'll use the word painful.

When I take a look at the western provinces per se, and I look at the total, Saskatchewan fares very well. For instance, in the single employables, it is the highest; it is number one in terms of the money that's going out. Then that money includes the basic allowance and the maximum shelter and utilities. Now when I break that down into a family – meaning one adult and two children – then we are second. But it is still relatively high up there.

I think the other thing you have to consider is the factor of the 25 per cent of your allowance that a person is allowed to make before any more is deducted. And that was another consideration. We also looked at the consideration of requiring more money, and I don't mean for more numbers but I mean for food and clothing, because those, too, were going up. So we had to look at that factor. And when it balances out I believe the saving factor on this about 1.5 million, but the cost factor for the government and the people of the province in giving a 6.5 increase on food, and 8 per cent on clothing, is approximately 3 million – there were several factors taken into account.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — After that long answer, I didn't get the answer to my question: how is this seen as an incentive to get people back into the work-force, rather than being on welfare? What is the rationale behind it?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — If you want to talk about incentives to get back to work, you know it's going to be another long answer, so let me try and keep it short. This policy, as any policy for social assistance, is a safety net to cover the basic necessity as one requires it. You know, incentives to get back to work come from other factors, including the Department of Education, the Department of Manpower, overall government policy as to where the incentive comes to create jobs, which . . . We could get into the job creation program on that particular one, plus we could get into the policy of Sask Housing, which ultimately creates more housing and that kind of thing. This policy is one of protecting people when they need it, and no matter how you cut it, that safety net has to remain there.

As to what kind of incentives can be built in to get people back to work, I would think that you will see a few suggestions coming forth when the social assistance review is completed, and that'll take some time. Nevertheless, I expect that it will be done, and it's an area that I am interested in. When I look at the overall figures, the statistics for social assistance, particularly in the last month, February '83 to March '83, I see more training, more people undergoing training than they were in March of '82, and I think that's a positive side. I also see people that were employed and yet on some kind of social assistance, because they couldn't make enough. I see those numbers coming down, which tells me, in fact, that those people have found jobs, either full-time or at greater pay to maintain their family. I even take a look at the number of total beneficiaries, and that's often one that you like to talk about, but I haven't heard a word from you this month, and that's down by 67.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Madam Minister, the question that I was trying to get an answer to was how you expect a program that takes away clothing allowance and household

allowance from individuals for three months is an incentive to get people back to work. I'd like to use the example of a person who has been unemployed and on welfare for two and a half months. They're offered a month's work. Do you suppose that the person will go out and go to work for a month, knowing full well that they will then have to wait another three months to get a clothing allowance and a household allowance?

The insanity of the program in terms of getting people back to work must have escaped you and your department. Unless I'm misreading it, that person who went out to work for one month and then went back on welfare would have to wait another three months to get shoes for the kid. And I'd like you to explain that. Maybe I don't understand your program, but my understanding is that if there's any break, they will then have to wait another three months in order to get their clothing and household allowance.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We have a category in social assistance and I just went through it. That number was down and it is those . . . They are called employed, full-time, part-time casual. That could very well also include those that are in a sheltered industry or a sheltered workshop. Now, those are the ones that are often down as far as being in and out of the system, and they're not included in that category of unemployable employables.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Would someone who was laid off by the Department of Highways, run out of UIC and is on welfare for two and a half months and is offered a month's work – would he be considered in the unemployed employables who would then have to wait another three months or not? That's the individual I'm talking about.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The policy in social assistance – and we're talking broad policies – believe it or not, does have a great deal of flexibility. There is the matter of assets and that would cover such an example as you stated - \$2,500 for a single person and \$5,000 for a married person.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — You mean that they won't get the clothing allowance and household allowance?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, I can only state what I did before about the . . . (inaudible) . . . exemption of it. And you know, I think you're forgetting a moment about the special needs category. That's been stated before too.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I'd like to ask one more time, and use that same example of the highway employee who was laid off and runs out of UIC, and is on welfare for two and one-half months. He takes a job. Will he or she then have to wait another three months to get a clothing allowance and household allowance? Now that's pretty straight-forward and I would like an answer to it. Because my understanding is that the disincentive to go out and find a job for a month is the fact you'll have to wait another three months when you come back on welfare before you get a clothing allowance or household allowance. And that is a concern, because you're not creating an incentive for people to go work; you're creating a disincentive and that worries a great number of people, including those who are at home on welfare, but also those who pay the taxes to pay the welfare in the province, which now runs around \$14 million a month.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, in using the example you've laid out, hypothetical or whatever, if he's on welfare for two and one-half . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Let's be fair, what you are really talking about is seasonal work. So you're talking more than

one month's work, most of the time. Anyway, if he's on welfare for two and one-half months, takes a job for one month and then comes back on, he doesn't lose that – the time in the eligibility for the social assistance. Does that make sense to you? He doesn't have to start all over again.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would like to now go back to the case-load on social assistance for the month of March, and I believe the minister said that the number of individuals, which is 59-and-some-odd thousand, has actually decreased even though the case-load has gone up, and can you give me a rational explanation how that can occur? What circumstances are leading to the case-load going up, and the beneficiaries going down? Can you tell me the type of individual who then must be coming on to welfare to make that happen?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — What you are probably seeing are the very young single people, and what is the other factor that you will be seeing is that some that had been on – families – are probably getting the job because for whatever reason, the need is seen as much greater. At least that's the factor that I see with it. I haven't been given any statistics to indicate that, but I would think in just looking at that aspect of it, and in looking at what's happening in other provinces, it would not be out of line.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Today in question period you were saying you were encouraged by that trend, a trend where the case-load was going up, but beneficiaries are going down, knowing full well that what it meant was that there were more young people – the young people, in fact, who were coming home to Saskatchewan – finding no jobs, and going on welfare. I'd like you to tell me why you are encouraged by that kind of trend in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — What I have stated was: it was a positive sign to see stabilization, and in fact the numbers of welfare going down as opposed to being 1,000 a month or 500 a month. That was 170 – some a month. The other factor that was encouraging was to look over the last year and to see social assistance, or our social services, move more people that had been on social assistance, through training. I think that's a very positive aspect, particularly, when I look at a post-industrial age and jobs are going to be different in the future. You're going to need different training, and I find that positive in terms of those numbers.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Do you assume that this will continue, and that the trend of young people going on welfare will continue to increase, or is this something that you anticipate will level off, or how is the department now dealing with case-load predictions? Are you predicting that there will be a stabilization of the numbers on welfare or a decrease, or what is the opinion in doing your budget analysis?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We are expecting, at least we did our estimates on that basis, a stabilization period, particularly over the summer, with perhaps a couple of months to see a decrease. And like any other budget year, you want to see an uptake in the winter, depending on the seasonal work. And those were the factors that were looked at.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Are you basing this on your first-year administration, on a decrease that occurred over the summer-time?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — It stabilized last summer. But given some of the programs coming on and perhaps some predictions of the economy, we have every reason to be optimistic.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Madam Minister, in answering that question, are you saying that there were not increases last summer from what it was in March and April? Are you saying that it stayed the same over summer, or did it in fact increase rather dramatically in June, July, and August?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — It was April, May, June and July that it was relatively stable and then started to go up after that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — It concerns me a great deal the trend that you were talking about the other day where young people are predominantly the people who are coming onto the welfare rolls as indicated by the fact decreasing slightly. I also see that trend increasing if in fact universities have to limit enrolments this fall as a result of cut-backs in funding or not enough funding in the university field.

And I wonder whether or not your department has taken into consideration the fact that when the summer jobs are over for students, if the university enrolment is curtailed, that you will then see another bulge in the welfare roll about October or November. And if you anticipated that in your budget and if it wouldn't make more sense at this point to take a large amount of that money, put it into universities so that those students can go on attending university rather than having to go on welfare. It's all coming out of the same pocket anyway — the taxpayers of Saskatchewan — and I think it would be a much more beneficial role to put the money into universities rather than pay them welfare to stay at home. And I wonder if you can give me an indication of what you have planned in that area.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I'm not about to comment on the Minister of Advanced Education budget. You talk about cuts and that type of thing. I don't see a cut in the percentage that the universities got from the very capable Minister of Advanced Education this year. Quite the contrary. And as far as the universities curtailing, I have the utmost faith in the universities being able to handle the situation.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I hope that your great anticipation that the stabilization in the welfare case-load is going to occur is believable because everything I see would indicate quite the opposite — that if the universities are forced to curtail enrolment, which the president has mentioned already, that many of the students that you have found jobs for this summer when it will inevitably end up on the welfare rolls come September or October, because they're not able to get into university. And I think that is what I'm saying, that the money would be much rather spent in terms of education for those students, by giving that money to universities as an interim measure to avoid the fact that these young people — who are showing up already, I may add, on your welfare case-load — would have a place to go to university, rather than ending up on welfare.

What I'd like to know now is, if you have a provincial average per month for the amount that you pay out to a family — a general average for each family in the province in terms of welfare payments.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We are projecting that the monthly average would be \$499.89.

Mr. Koskie: — Madam Minister, last evening, last Thursday, we were discussing the impact of your budget in respect to senior citizens, and I note that they are not exempt

from the massive cuts that you have put into place in this last budget. And I want to refer you to the cut in provincial grants to a senior citizen program in Yorkton. That was a unique senior citizens service, and apparently it will die for a lack of funding – about \$19,000 provincial grant to the Yorkton Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours, SIGN.

It is my understanding that they have been advised that they will not be receiving grants, and I want to indicate that that program had worked out a number of new and unique programs involving the community to assist the seniors. And I wonder what your rationale is for cutting this program. I note that it was previously assisted through the United Way in Yorkton. Although they receive some funding there, that will be down somewhat this year because of the decrease in meeting the quota in Yorkton. But I wonder, Madam Minister, if in fact you could indicate the rationale for the cut in this rather unique program.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — As I understand it, I think the program you're talking about, SIGN, began a couple of years ago as a pilot project, with a clear understanding that it was for a short period of time. There's three components that come into the funding of that particular organization. One, admittedly, is government grants and of course, the local resources, as you mentioned, United Way or whatever it might be.

The third component was the services that were being contracted, for example, home care. And some of the discussions – and we've had some very clear discussions with them – have indicated that there is still a partnership to be developed with the government in terms of the funding, and that's an area that we will want to look at closely.

Also in conjunction with the Senior Assisting Senior program, that area was one that was designated not to have one, and yet I guess from a personal point of view, when I look at the population of those over 65, particularly the east side of the province, would indicate that perhaps there is a real role there.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, when I look at the, some of the services that were being provided, it says:

The program has seen several services start for Yorkton seniors. After need was identified for helping managing prescription drugs, a church club was convinced to sponsor a workshop on drug education for the elderly. Girl Guides were asked to help seniors with their yard and garden work. The community college and the seniors were brought together for a teleconference class in local history . . . A senior transportation services was just started after the city service club was approached. The club bought a car which is driven by staff members, to help seniors get around, as well as deliver meals on wheels.

There is a whole range of services that were being provided. And the beauty of what they were doing under the sponsorship of this grant was in fact involving a lot of the community in the helping to address some of the concerns of the seniors. I thought it was the concept of the government, at least it was the previous government, to help to give the maximum amount of support to seniors in order that they may well in fact live in their own homes where they tend to be the happiest, rather than an institution.

And here we have a program which was involving the communities, was involving

youth with seniors, and what has happened is that rather than increasing their budget, what you have done is eliminated the service. Well, I mean, this here project that was going on under SIGN (Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours) is no longer funded. And how can you say that it's still being supported? This is sort of part of your great efficiency that you're trying to perpetrate on the people of Saskatchewan, when in fact what you're doing is slashing the services, and why don't you come clean and admit it? There's no doubt that you've cut \$19,000 as a grant. And they're deciding today whether or not they're going to be able to carry on without some government. And, I would have thought that if there was other institutions, or other service clubs participating, that you would be more than glad to participate in a small financial way in helping the community carry out its involved and in assisting the old people. I don't know why in fact are you cutting it, because you're saying it was just a pilot project. Are you saying you're cutting it and eliminating it because you're slashing the budget, or are you again saying that it's a duplication? I guess what we want to know is an answer.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, let's be clear about this. They're still being funded, and I had indicated that the discussions taking place to create a partnership, and that also included the contracting of services through organizations like home care. Now, you can correct me if I'm wrong, but one of my assumptions I made when you were in government and home care came on, that it was in fact to take over some of these services for our senior citizens. They are contracting with, through home care, that particular service. They're getting \$29,450 with government funding. That's over and above the other sources of funding that they have. I don't know what more I can say to you to make it clear to you that it's not dying.

Mr. Koskie: — Then, obviously, what you're saying is that the report here, that it says at its annual meeting, Wednesday, SIGN (Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours) members were told the two-year-old senior adult development program will have to be dropped for lack of money. And that's what I'm saying. What you have said is that you have in fact cut the services, and said to this organization, 'If you want to carry on, go and see if you can get a contract with the home care board.' But all of the other programs which you were assisting apparently are being eliminated by the elimination of the grant, the slashing of the grant, by your department. And it's as simple as that. They've released the report to the press, and have indicated that they met last Wednesday, and SIGN members were told that the two-year-old senior adult development program will have to be dropped for a lack of money.

Are you denying that, or are you changing its role, or are you making them find the money somewhere else? Are you, in fact, giving to them the grant of 19,000?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, when you first started out, you know, you left the impression that everything was going — transportation and all. And it's only lately that you mentioned the senior development adult program. And as I stated to you in my first reply, as a pilot project it was tried out. There are other programs on the go and that includes the Seniors Assisting Seniors program, which conceivably needs some expansion in this province.

Mr. Koskie: — Simple question: the \$19,000 grant that you were providing to SIGN (Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours) in Yorkton; has that been cut or not?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — A simple answer: it is part of continuing care's budget, and I don't have the director here tonight, because that is no longer in my jurisdiction.

Mr. Koskie: — Well I'm going to tell you that that \$19,000 grant was in fact cut, whether you want to admit it or not.

I want to go to another area, and that is in respect to the seniors. I want to ask you whether you have any particular program . . . A large number of our seniors are in fact still living in their own homes. May of them own their own homes, and I again thought it would be desirable for a government to encourage that. But in circumstances which are difficult — many of them only have the old age security pension, and perhaps a supplement . . . But certainly one of the areas that is making it more and more difficult for the seniors who live in their own homes is the rising costs of utilities and gas and telephones, and so on. What we had proposed, as you will know, was to establish a shelter allowance which would in fact grant to seniors depending upon their particular costs. And there was a formula set up whereby they would qualify for a shelter allowance. It was based primarily on their income and primarily on the amount of costs that they had: some had mortgages — small ones, some had larger ones; and also the increase in the utility rates, which are massive during your administration or will be. And I wonder: — what is your program within your department which basically addresses this, or is it the gas tax removal as your solution?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, the shelter allowance, as the member from Quill Lake has mentioned, was proposed; it had never been in place. And the rationale for not going ahead with it is no different today than it was then. And that was: specifically given the dollar situation, it was not targeted to that area that needed the most. This year in the department we are looking at setting up a bureau for senior citizens, and one of the high priorities for this year will be to look at the feasibility of targeting into the area of the senior citizen female that is single, because we believe that that is where the highest need within the senior citizen population is at this time.

Mr. Koskie: — One other area I'd like to ask the minister whether she has made any petition to the other members of . . . her cabinet colleagues in respect to an election promise, that is, of supplying free telephones to the seniors. And certainly this was held out as one of the benefits of this Tory party at the time. And of course, we have waited over a full year, and there is absolutely no results on that, and many seniors are wanting to hold you to the promise. And since you are representing the seniors division . . . Or has it been transferred to Health? So much has been transferred to Health it's difficult to know from day to day what you still have.

But in respect to telephones, have you a comment?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, I have not made specific representation on the free telephones, but I can tell you that there was a great deal of representation made, and a great deal — probably unanimous agreement — of the dollars that were required to go into the care for those seniors who could no longer stay at home. And of course, we've been around this before, and that has to do with the number of special care beds.

The other factor was the enriched housing project that the minister responsible for Sask Housing has announced this spring. If there was any representation made, it was perhaps to the Minister of Health, to do with the co-operative program after the senior citizens had talked to me and they had talked to my colleague. It didn't take a lot of convincing. I don't know what kind of arms were twisted in the previous 11 years, but obviously they weren't twisted hard enough, because we never got it. But we did get it this year. So those kinds of representations were made for the seniors.

Mr. Koskie: — Could the minister indicate whether or not during this rather difficult economic times for the seniors, with rents going up for any of them that are renting, on the average of 13, 14 some as high as 17 per cent, whether or not for those in particular needs — whether the Saskatchewan income program, the amount that'll be paid to individuals which qualify — has that been increased, and could you indicate the amount that it has been increased?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, that has not been increased. It is the same as it was this past year. But that is one of the areas that I indicated when you were talking about where money had gone for the shelter allowance, that the area of greatest concern that we will be trying to zero in on this year is the single female senior citizen. And I guess one of the avenues to address the problem, as I see it from my point of view, is through that allowance.

Mr. Koskie: — I hope, Madam Minister, that you don't zero in on the seniors like you did on the unemployed employables by putting in your safety net. I'm rather frightened by what you call a safety net.

I want to ask you whether or not you're still funding as a budgetary item, the senior citizens council.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes, we are.

Mr. Koskie: — As an individual item in your budget? Or have you incorporated within another subvote?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — It has gone into the grants for the community services in your blue book.

Mr. Koskie: — Can you tell me the amount in that subvote that has been designated this year for the senior citizens council . . . (inaudible) . . .

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — It reminds me of a guy who asked me to dance once, and he said: 'May I borrow your frame for this struggle?' That's how I feel about you with question period.

The amount is \$189,000, approximately.

Mr. Koskie: — Will you advise me as to the amount that it was the previous year?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Last year, as an item by itself, it was approximately 359,000.

Mr. Koskie: — What are the great efficiencies that you have, or have you also introduced a safety net for the senior citizens council?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, it has nothing to do with efficiencies. It has to do with representation by seniors on the aspect of the senior citizens bureau — a focal point badly needed within government for seniors. There has been consultation with the council, its chairman, executive director, and with a changing mandate for both, including the department in terms of what it can be doing for seniors and for the council. We felt that this was a way to go. We will at least try it to see if we can address

some of the problems that the seniors are having.

Mr. Koskie: — You indicated, Madam Minister, that there was going to be a changing mandate. Would you enlighten us as to the new mandate as compared to the previous?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The advisory council with the changing mandate will be primarily advisory, and the bureau for senior citizens will zero in on more of the service delivery. There will also be an expanded membership that we feel will be a broader representation of seniors around the province.

Mr. Koskie: — With respect to the activity centres throughout the province, there was the New Horizons federal program, and it was dovetailed by the provincial program, and I think one of the better programs of the two government levels working together. And I would just like to ask you: in respect to the activity centres, what financial support are you providing in respect to their budget and to capital construction?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We pay 40 per cent of the operating grant, and the total budget is 1.4 million.

Mr. Koskie: — And what is the contribution to capital development? Various centres are expanding some of the services for seniors. I'm familiar with one in which a bowling alley was installed and certainly during our time we provided assistance along with the federal government, plus the seniors raised some at a local level. Do you still have a supporting program to provide some capital for capital projects for seniors, and what is it?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We give 20 per cent of the capital project, and we have estimated about \$200,000 on the capital side of the budget.

Mr. Koskie: — Have you invoked any safety net, further controls, in respect to the application of this program?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I'm sorry, you'll have to clarify that for me.

Mr. Koskie: — I'm wondering whether you have changed any of the criteria that is used in order that a senior activity centre might qualify. In other words, have you tightened up in any way the criteria by which they make their application and supposedly qualify?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, we haven't.

Mr. Shillington: — I have one question, Madam Minister. With respect to the social assistance recipients and the increment given to them, I understand in my absence you answered a question from the member from Shaunavon, indicated to him that the increase in the allowance given to social assistance recipients was 6.5 per cent. It wasn't clear to me, however, whether or not you indicated when you expected that increase to take effect, and I'd appreciate an indication as to when you expect that increase to take effect.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The increase is due October 1, and it was 6.5 per cent on the food and 8 per cent on the clothing.

Mr. Shillington: — October 1, Madam Minister. Can you tell me when the . . .

What's the anniversary date? When was the increment put into effect last year?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Last year was April 1, but the year before was July 1st, and there has never been a set month for that.

Mr. Shillington: — Yeah. My point is that it will have been almost 18 months since they got the last increase. And I would suggest to you, Madam Minister, that 6.5 per cent is simply not adequate when the increases are staged that far apart. This is the one group, Madam Minister, who simply can't afford the iron corset that this government has provided for so many groups. This group has no margin – no margin. I suggest to you, Madam Minister, that the increment should have been higher than 6.5 per cent if you're going to space them 18 months apart. I wonder, Madam Minister, why you didn't . . . If you're going to give them 6.5 per cent, I wonder, Madam Minister, why you didn't at least provide the increment on April 1st, so that it would have been on the anniversary date.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, I guess it comes down to perhaps two or three things, one of them being the dollar factor. Even the October 1 is approximately six months, and that's 3 million, so you're looking at 6 million for one year. The other two factors that I see that come in with it under the present plan – we pay the actual on utilities, which is somewhat different than other provinces, including Manitoba.

The third factor are the special needs category. The flexibility is there, if indeed somebody is very hard pressed, to work within the confines of what the rules are. So the special needs category also had something to do with it.

Mr. Shillington: — Madam Minister, I'm not sure I understand your response. I do not understand how any of those factors would be of assistance to the vast majority of my constituents who must wait 18 months for an increase of 6.5 per cent. That is, in fact, an annual increase of around 4 per cent. And I suggest to you, Madam Minister, that that simply isn't adequate. This is the one group of people who, as I said before, have no margin. These people can't give up the second car; they can't give up the vacation to Hawaii; they live at a bare subsistence level as it is. When you give them 6.5 per cent in constant dollars, they've experienced a fair decline in real purchasing power. And I suggest to you, Madam Minister, that is harsh – harsh considering the people whom you're dealing with. And I wonder, Madam Minister if you wouldn't reconsider that and provide a more generous increase to those who are at the very bottom of economic ladder.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, perhaps you weren't here when I had talked about the four western provinces and we looked at the total sums. For instance, for a single employable in the four western provinces the total was approximately 522, and that was the highest out of the four provinces. Now when we got down to the one adult and two children, Saskatchewan dropped to number two at 823.

But the other factor as to the special needs that I mentioned, such things as special clothing, travel expenses, expenses for education of children, expenses for commencement of employment, special services for the handicapped, rehabilitation allowance, a housekeeping allowance, laundry service, household moving expenses, repairs, alterations, additions to property – those kinds of things come under the special needs. So if you look at the whole picture, you perhaps get a proper perspective on things.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Going back to the senior citizens operation, I wonder if you could tell me how many senior citizens are on the Saskatchewan Income Plan, February 1983 as opposed to February 1982. Can you tell me whether that number . . . I know that the population of seniors in the province is going up. What I'm wondering, the number of people on that program getting assistance from your department, even though you haven't increased the \$25 and \$45 amount, are there more seniors on the program or less?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — There are less on the program. And I believe I had indicated one of the reasons, or probably the only reason, is that the level of income for seniors has increased, that perhaps many of the pension plans that are around are starting to kick in.

For instance, in 1978-79, the case-loads were 34,292. In 1982-83, it was estimated at 23,539. And for this fiscal year, we are estimating 22,000.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — So there are about 3,000 less seniors, or family seniors on the plan this year as opposed to last year? Is that correct?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — There's approximately 1,500 from this year to last year. If you go back from this year to five years ago, there's 12,000.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Can you clarify for me then — in your report of February 1983, you have senior citizens, numbers of grants: 22,831. Last year's number is 25,995, or a reduction — and these are out of your statements — of more than 3,000. Can you clarify that?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I believe that the figures you are quoting are for one month — for instance, for the February of a certain year. The figures that I give you are the average for the whole year. And as our information indicates, that in the early beginning of the year, the take-up could be high, but it moves down as the year moves on.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I'm comparing February of 1982 to February of 1983, which seems to me quite a fair and accurate comparison. And it is over 3,000 less: February 1983, 3,000 less seniors on the Saskatchewan income plan than in February '82. So it's not seasonally adjusted; it's a direct comparison of two months, exactly the same time. And what I'm saying to you, that even though utility rates are said to be going up by 25 per cent for natural gas and 23 for power and 19 for telephones, you're saying that there are 3,000 less people eligible for the Saskatchewan income plan. And I say that that is not acceptable, and you're forcing — you must be forcing — at least 3,000 senior citizens off of that plan. I wonder why you would do that at this time.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, the average can be different for the year as opposed to a particular month, and you were reading for a month of February 1982, and for the month of February 1983. And the figures that I have, or have been giving to you, are for the average of the total fiscal year.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — What fiscal year are you talking about? We haven't had a fiscal year 1983 as yet. And what I'm saying is that all indications are, including the moneys that you've budgeted for the Saskatchewan Income Plan, that you're going to have many less people on it. Because if I look at the number that you're allocating for the Saskatchewan Income Plan, you see a reduction from 5.6 million last year to 5.2 million

this year, which is in fact a reduction. There are less seniors on the plan and I say that a comparison between February of one year and February of another, is a very accurate comparison unless you're saying that that trend is going to put more people and you're expecting more seniors to go back on the plan. Is that what you're saying, that next month we can assume that there will be more seniors on the Saskatchewan Income Plan? You must be; otherwise the comparison is accurate.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, the figures I were using, as I indicated for 1983, are estimated for this fiscal year. This is an estimated budget. I mean, that's not new. Government's have always operated on that when they're doing their budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The figures . . . For instance, the book that you're reading out of for February 1983, for that month, has 22,831. I gave you an estimated figure of 22,000 for this fiscal year, 1983-84. I also indicated to you that at the beginning of the year the numbers are higher and they drop down as you go through the year. That's why the average figure is lower than what you see for February of that year.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, I can quite understand that the average for the year is lower than 25,995, but what I'm saying is that the number you're using here in February, 22,000, is also higher than what that average will be, if you're talking about a trend. And I'm not using a prediction or an estimation. What I'm using is actual numbers of the number of the number of people who got cheques from your department in February of 1983 as compared to how many got cheques in 1982. And I say to you that under your government there are 3,000 less seniors in February, under a Conservative government, who are getting cheques in the month of February than there were under an NDP government in February of '82. And is that not true – 3,000 less?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yeah, that's correct. And there were 3,000 the year before that. And if you go over a five-year period, you end up with a difference of 12,000, and I've already told you why.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I think that I really don't know what year you're going back to to get a number of 12,000. I wish you would produce those numbers for me now, because when I ask you questions about where you're getting your facts and figures from you have a way of then saying, 'I don't have them.' Will you give me the numbers and where you're quoting that from?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Case-loads for the past five years, and the estimated case-loads for the '83-84 are: in the year of 1978-79, it was 34,292; in the year '79-80 – that's a year later – it's 32,072; and in the fiscal year of '80-81, it was 29,037 – another 3,000 drop; in the year '81-82, it was 26,427 – another 3,000 drop; in the year '82-83 – and my book says 'estimated', I'm not sure why – it says 23,539; and then we are estimating approximately 22,000 for the fiscal year of '83-84.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Can you tell me what amount of money was spent in 1981-82 on the Saskatchewan Income Plan on those estimates – 1981-82?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We don't have that with us tonight, but we can get it to you for tomorrow.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — There's another area that I see a grant cut, and that's the grant for senior citizens' services. Can you tell me where that money is going to and how it comes that there is less money in that area than there was last year?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — That, I believe, is transferred with continuing care. It should be approximately 130,000, if we're talking about the same one.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, let me get that straight. In vote 16, grants for senior citizens' services, which has gone from 1.5 to 1.4, are you saying that some of that money has been transferred to Health? And if so, tell me exactly how many dollars there.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — \$130,310 transferred to the Department of Health for grants to senior care centres.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The other point that I want to raise here is the grant for the Senior Citizens' Provincial Council. This may be a repetition, but can you tell me what the grant was last year, and will be this year?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — In round figures, last year, 359,000, this year, approximately 189,000.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — And what you're saying, I believe the rationale was that you're setting up a bureau within the department, or will that be within another department?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, that will be within the Department of Social Services.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Why is it that you're doing that – a government that was elected on people's freedoms and rights – why would you take a group that's free-standing and cut its budget and move it into the department? Can you explain to me how that fits with the basic Conservative philosophy that less government is better government? Why would you take the Senior Citizens' Provincial Council, cut its budget in half, and use that money within the department to set up another arm of your department to do what was already very ably and effectively being done?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, like you said, we're probably back to repeating ourselves. The same thing as I had indicated earlier – I have had several representations made from seniors on the whole issue of a bureau for senior citizens. In fact, I suspect there are a fair number of seniors that would like a department of senior citizens. And I am sure that you probably faced those kinds of things when you were also over here.

I guess, personally, I believe that with the changing and the demographics, the population of the seniors by the year 2,000, if government s don't have their head around the issues of an aging population, we're in for a heck of a lot of trouble at all levels of government from federal down to the local. And I think it is critical that government s begin to address that problem. And quite frankly, I think a lot of the advice has to come from seniors themselves, but it cannot be in isolation of the rest of the public. And that includes the young generation, because they're going to be paying the tax bill and working for it, and it cannot be done in isolation of the professionals who also do some work with the seniors. And we felt that this is a way of trying to created that focal point, at the same time expanding the advisory function by broader representation on the council. And that is basically the rationale behind it.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, to my way of thinking, taking away half of the money that was going to a free-standing senior citizens committee, known as the seniors' provincial council, and putting it in the department, is not doing what you have just explained you intend to do. What you are doing is setting up another bureaucracy

within your department to deal with what you see the aging problem to be, rather than what the senior citizens freely talk about in a free-standing committee and a provincial council. And here again, what I believe you're doing is taking over control of a group who will be advocating many services for the seniors, and you are attempting to stifle that group of people the same as you are with SANGSSA (Saskatchewan Association of Non-Governmental Social Service Agencies) and the other social service groups in the province today.

And I would like to say that his will not go unnoticed by the many seniors in the province. And you are basically alienating another group of people who could be your ally in dealing with a very important social problem and condition which we are getting into in the province of Saskatchewan, with what has to be the highest percentage of people over the age of 65 in Canada, I think with the exception possibly of Newfoundland. And the Senior Citizens' Provincial Council's budget has been increased each year by about 10, 12 per cent over the last number of years, and were doing an excellent job of having input into the provincial government. And the same way as we see the co-ordinating council of which the Senior Citizens' Provincial Council was a part – their funding being done away with – we are also seeing groups within that area also being cut. And this is just another example of that.

And here again, I wish the minister would meet with this group to try to find out what the problem was. Why is it? Are they not accountable to you on a regular enough basis? My indication is, that at least while I was minister, they met often – probably once a month – to tell me what the problems were in the area of senior programs. And what I would like to know is, how many times over the past year you have met with the seniors' provincial council? Have you been meeting on a regular basis? And how many meetings have been held and who was present at these meetings?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I have met with them as a full council one time. I have met with the chairman two or three times. The deputy has met with them two or three times, plus I have met with the senior citizens' association and their executive several times. I have also spoke to that particular group. I have met with the senior action group a couple of times, plus I have accepted speaking engagements to the gerontology association, plus the council on aging. The consultation process has been very broad, as has the communications and the consultation with the council, the chairman, the department, on this particular issue.

Quite frankly, I'm sorry if you see it as a way of trying to foot the funds on the senior citizens. I suggest that you take the blinders off for a moment and you recognize the problems that governments are going to face with an aging population. And there has to be a direct link that seniors can have a voice into there. This is not engraved in stone. If it doesn't work, then something else can be tried, but obviously we're getting a little closer to the year 2000 and we're not about to slap a moratorium on beds and a few other things. So let's not kid ourselves, the problem is there and it has to be dealt with.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder if you could explain to me: under public assistance, assistance to the aged has gone from 4.3 down to 3.6. Can you explain to me how, in an area where the total budget has gone from 141 million to 171, those people who are the seniors and the pioneers of the province are seeing a reduction of about \$0.6 million in the money that has been allocated to public assistance for the aged?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The category that you are looking at is for persons aged 60 or more, but who are not covered by other reasons. And they fall into the particular

category in the dollars that you're looking at, and the reduction in the numbers . . . (inaudible) . . . is due primarily to the shift of level 1, you know with the population aging, to the higher fixed-cost levels of special care homes. I would think, if you were to take a look at the populations from level 3 to level 4, you would see the same kind of trend.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, I'm not sure how any fixed funding for levels of care would have anything to do with it, 1982-83 to 1983-84, because the program was introduced in, I believe, June of 1981, and the impact would have been well in place prior to that. And it looks to me that like there is another group of people who are losing out, even at a time when, as I mentioned, utility rates are ever increasing for this group of people.

In the area of children in care, I wonder if you can give me an indication of the numbers of children in care in the Department of Social Service this year, February, to February of '82 – the numbers for that month.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The number of children in foster and group homes in the end of March of '82 was 1,523 and on February 28th of 1983 was 1,587.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — So then that number has basically stayed the same or gone up very, very marginally. I wonder if you have a record with you of the number of cases of reported child abuse to the department, February 1982, to February 1983.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, we do not have that separated from children in care.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would ask the minister again, are you telling me that there's no differentiation in your department from children in care to cases of child abuse? Is that what you're attempting to lead us to believe?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I'm telling you: I don't have those figures here tonight.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — That is different and I would appreciate it if you would send those to me. Will you give me a confirmation that you will send that to me?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes, we will.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I had asked a question on grants to Non-Governmental Organizations last day and I forgot whether or not you have given me a commitment to send me a total list of all the grants that were being paid in 1983-'84. Will you do that for me?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes, I had agreed to compile a list of those that were cut and I thought perhaps to keep things in proper perspective, you would enjoy the majority that received an increase.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would appreciate getting both those that got increases, those that were frozen, and those many that were cut. In the area of the number of cases on welfare in the province, when I look at the number for February, I see a total being paid out of 14,203,558. Can you tell me whether or not that total . . . If that average were to continue for the year, it would amount to 170 million being paid out in welfare for the coming year, and using the March numbers would be something over 172 million for

the year if you annualized the monthly rate?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Right. We were estimating 171 million as indicated in the blue book.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The point that I want to raise here, if you're talking about . . . Then you're predicting that the case-load will go down over the coming year, is that not correct — in order for you to meet the targeted 171 million? You must then . . . predicting that it's going to decrease over the coming months, is that correct?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, as I had indicated earlier, we were looking at a decrease over the summer months, a stabilization and a slight increase for the seasonal work.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — So what we're seeing then is, if the case-load doesn't increase and continues this spiral, that your estimate of 171 million is going to be off, and off quite dramatically? Is that not correct? And if this number of 171 million projection is nothing more than a number, and will be in fact once the increase comes in for the last six months — you already admitted an extra 3 million — will be something well over 180 million? If the projections and the increases which you have seen over the past months are any indication, that 171 million is merely a number that you've put in the blue book to make it look better than it actually is?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — You're talking about estimated figures, you know. If you want to talk about fudging numbers, I can't think of a better person to talk to than to yourself. I take a look at a few projected numbers in last year's proposed budget and the year before that, and we're close compared to those.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Madam Minister, we can go back and do my estimates over, but I defended the budget when I was minister and what I'm asking you is whether or not the \$171 million, in fact, isn't going to be severely exceeded. That's the point that I'm trying to raise here, is that the 171 million will be nowhere near the actual, and it will be something more than that. And don't we already realize that with the numbers we're seeing showing up in the month of March?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Based on our best estimates — you have that before you — we are looking at an estimated figure of 171 million.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Madam Minister, just in getting off that point, I would put my money on something over 180 million; you can put yours on 171, and we'll see who comes out closer. But from the indication that you have here, the numbers in front of you, you don't have to be a magician to predict that it's going to be well over 171 million paid out in welfare in the coming year.

I would like to ask one short question on Sedley, the home at Sedley. What is the date of closure of that facility and where will these individuals move to once you close that home?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The projected closing date is August '83 and we will be looking at a treatment cottage in the city of Regina, another treatment cottage in the city of Prince Albert, plus we will be looking at a youth crisis centre in Prince Albert and a foster parent therapist program in the city of Saskatoon.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Is this part of your new decentralization program where you're

moving facilities like that out of places like Sedley into Regina and Prince Albert? Is this the decentralization program that we're coming to know in this government?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The Roy Wilson Centre — I'm not sure how I say this politely — the Roy Wilson Centre has been slated for closure for a long time according to the fire reports. You agree. That's good; that's about the only thing you and I agree on. As to why that wasn't done in the past, I have no idea.

The second feature as to why it's being done now is to try and improve some youth services, particularly youth that are having some emotional problems, and to be more specific, females, because it's the only one in the province. I would suggest to you if you take a look at the statistics at Prince Albert you would know that they require some service in that part of the province.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I thoroughly agree that that facility has served its purpose and it was on the drawing boards for closure. What I'm concerned about is the fact that I see a centralization program of this government, indicated by the fact that senior citizens programs are being moved into the department — where we are seeing services like this being moved into the centre areas; where Valley View is having their staff cut; where your administration in your department, even though you have half of the department that you used to have, is seeing an increase in the administration; where we look at 112 people last year and, low and behold, 118 this year in administration even though you have only half the department that you had last year to administer.

And what I'd like to know is why you are choosing to cut back in areas outside of Regina while in your tower downtown in Regina you choose to increase staff even though you have let half of your department disappear. How does that work? What are these 118 people doing here in Regina, as opposed to 112 last year, when delivering its services in Moose Jaw you see fit to cut back? It's that kind of a double standard that I have a hard time understanding.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, I think there were about three points or three questions in that speech somewhere. First of all, the issue you raise is the admin positions. Those positions were scattered throughout and have been slotted into the administration division. You know, for you to even suggest that this is a cut-back in service, particularly when you're talking about the Roy Wilson Centre, has just got to be the most deceptive thing I have ever heard. We are looking at an improvement of service from 20 spaces to 34, putting it in areas where if it's a young girl in Prince Albert, or a young girl in Saskatoon, she's not being shipped all the way down south, as you might have it, and I just find that totally obnoxious that you even see it that way.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, the minister can say that keeping people in rural areas rather than in Regina is an insidious plan, but I would say that opening offices in rural areas, outlying areas out of Saskatoon and Regina like Fort Qu'Appelle and Lloydminster while we were in government, decentralization like that was well accepted by the public. And what I see happening now is a centralization program of this government where control is the rule of the day, where ministers are attempting to move everything into their administration area. And I use again the increase in the numbers here, even though your department has shrunk to about half of what it used to be. How is it that you need more administration — the question is — today than you needed last year at this time, when at the same time, Valley View with the same number of people, is expected to do it with less. How do you square that with the people who

work in Valley View and the people of the province who pay for your administration downtown?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Fourteen positions credited to a new initiative called job creation are included in the subvote that you were talking, so if you take a look at that, in fact you have an overall net reduction.

Mr. Koskie: — I just want to go into one other area, Madam Minister, and that is in respect to what is known as the regional operations. And here we note that there is a very substantial cut – 21 positions have been cut in the regional operations. And what I would like to know is: can you provide us now with the list of all those 21 persons that have been cut and the positions which they held in order that we can in fact determine to what extent the services are undoubtedly cut? Have you got that information with you at the present time?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, the positions are basically within administration and vacant, and there were some that were redeployed and the moneys that were freed, so to speak, were put into the field-worker level.

Mr. Koskie: — All right. Let's go through the various regions. Can you in fact give me, in the Regina region, how many social workers were there in 1982 to start with?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The person years for '82-83 and '83-84 for the Regina region work out to 162.7. Now that's the total component. Plus we have 15 temporary positions in Regina that are basically for the field staff level.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, what I was trying to get at is, can you provide . . . For instance, let's start with the Regina regions as I indicated. Now, how many social workers did you have in 1982, and how many do you have in 1983? Give me the numbers.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We don't have that information broken down here tonight, but if you would like it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Just let me finish. If you would like it, do you want those with a degree, or are you more interested in the social workers that are working at the grass-roots level, the field staff, or do you want the social workers that are also in admin? We will get the information to you as quickly as we can.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, my contention and what I want to establish here, Madam Minister, is that in fact the fieldworkers, the social workers, those handling the cases in the various regions, have been decreased, and what you have done is drawn more people into the city and added it to your administration. And surely during estimates we could expect to receive that particular information, and what I would want then – if you can't provide it tonight, which I am very surprised that you can't – what I would like is for you to provide us with all the individual regions, give us the number of active field social workers in each of the regions in 1982 and in 1983. And I would like to know how soon you could provide that, because if it takes six months to get it, it's not of much use to us, because we may be doing another set of estimates.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I can give you one portion of it. Last year there were 95 social workers at the field level in the Regina region. This year you have 95 social workers in the Regina region at the field level, plus 15 temporary at the field level. If you want the rest of the social workers, I don't have that tonight.

Mr. Koskie: — Then can you just, to complete this out, as you're saying 95 last year,

95 social workers in the field this year, I would ask you to . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . yes, I would ask you to give an indication of the case-loads in '82, and the case-load in '83.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — The average case-load for last year and this year is approximately 170.

Mr. Koskie: — Have you or your department made any indication as to what is a reasonable case-load? Certainly, I know when I was minister that there was grave consideration for individual workers having to carry a case-load in the range of over 150, and what I'm asking you: have you in fact reviewed it to determine whether or not that level of case-load impairs the capacity of the fieldworker to do some degree of counselling out there, or are they relatively reduced just to basically being able to push the paper?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I think I have stated many times to this Assembly that there has been a concern from my point of view and from the department on the case-load. And having said that, let me also state that we have constantly monitored the situation and tried to look within to see where there could be greater support given to those fieldworkers. And some of that has also meant a simplification of the systems, the paperwork, the type of thing.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — In the area of administration, I still want to come back to that in your own department, in subvote 1. I would like to know where and why you need an increase of six staff, even though the continuing care area, the home care area, has been removed from your department, as well as corrections. I would imagine that the administration staff should reflect fairly adequately the need for that type of people in the administration of the department. I would have assumed that in the area of administration, you could have seen fit to reduce the staff by 30 or 40 per cent, given the fact that you have a much reduced department. And the fact that it is increased by six people at the same time as you are practicing great austerity in other areas in administration — let's say, Swift Current or the other regions . . . Why is it that in Regina, in the administration within your department, you've increased it at the same time as administration in other areas is being reduced? I just fail to understand that.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I already stated, with the job creation project, it was a new initiative, and it needed some people to work in it. And if you look at the 14 jobs that have been necessary in order to get the program going, plus there's another two to do with the SAP (Saskatchewan Assistance Plan) review, and if you were to consider that factor, you would be down to 102, which as I said earlier, is a net reduction.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Let me just run this by you. You have a program worth \$8 million in a job creation program . . . (inaudible) . . . debate how effective or ineffective it is, but I don't want to get into that tonight, because a good part of the \$8 million you have in this year's budget is part of the \$10 million from last year which you didn't spend. You know that and I know that and we won't spend a lot of time going into those details.

But what I would like to say is the fact that corrections, which was a very large budget; continuing care, which was a very large budget; the home care program, which amounted in itself to more than your job creation program . . . How can you explain to me that you need more associate deputies and more secretaries and more staff like

that, given the fact that you have reduced your budget by about \$150 million – and you can say it's a job creation program that makes a difference, but you reduce your total budget in the department by about \$150 million – how is it that you need more staff to administer a reduced budget? I thought this was all about efficiency and streamlining, and how is it that you need more staff to administer a reduced budget?

I go by your figures here. Your total budget has gone from 446 million to 304, your administration staff for that department has gone from 112 to 118. I think that your staff in that area . . . If you're cutting back anywhere, you could probably cut a bit at the top, and we should see about 75 people in administration in that department in order to reflect adequately the amount of money you're spending.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, I can only state . . . You know, from a lay person's point of view in looking at the admin area, I share your concern and I guess it's rather comforting to know that a year down the road or whatever that we decide to become more efficient in that particular area, we have your full support. I'll keep that in mind.

As I stated earlier, there's 14 jobs to do with job creation and if you take into account the review that's going on, those two positions, the net reduction- reduction – is 102. Next year we're going to assume that we won't require the job creation program. You know that's very likely and if you would just look at the whole picture, as opposed to the book that's in front of you, you'd be better off.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — It's hard to ignore the book when it's your budget. And the fact is that we have 300-and-some-odd million dollars being spent this year – 304. We had 446 last year, and you're saying in order to spend 140 million less, you need six more people. I think that I agree with you when you say the public doesn't understand those kind of numbers, nor should they, because very simply they shouldn't expect the government to cut back in areas of Valley View, in areas of social workers, in areas of regional administration at the local level in Swift Current and P.A. and Saskatoon, in order to build the staff in the regional office in Regina. I simply don't believe that that's what they expected from this government when you were elected.

In fact, I think they believed quite the opposite, that your government when elected would be centralized rather than building an empire in Regina. I must admit that it's rather surprising that a budget reduction of that type would take more people to take care of. I think that if you're saying that in future years you will shift emphasis and these staff will move out into the regional offices or into Valley View, then I would thoroughly agree that we should have 75 people in administration in Regina and more people out delivering service. And you will have the full support of the caucus on this side if you're going to beef up social workers and cut back on this type of administration, and I can guarantee you that.

What I would like to ask the minister now is if she will give me a general outline of her policy in regards to day care – where we are at in the area of day care at the present time in Saskatchewan and what we can see in the future in that area.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Well, if we're going to get into general policies, I guess we can talk for quite a while, and maybe it's a good time to talk about it. We did talk about it before we adjourned for supper tonight.

The day care is a much bigger issue than strictly activity centres or – I'm sorry, day care centres and even family day care home – and when I say a much bigger issue I mean

that from the female perspective of things, such things as flex-hours, part-time work, greater child tax credits. And it's interesting, if I look at history I don't see the legislators of that time fighting for those kinds of issues, and I'm not sure why, including the whole area of child tax credits for those families that can and/or choose to stay home.

That has never happened, and perhaps if I look at the imbalance of the various legislators around the country and other countries, I think I could safely assume it's because it's been predominantly male. I would like to see a balance so that women and men – because there are more and more men as single parents that are rearing their children – I would like to see a balance where a particular family or person has a choice as to how they're going to handle their child care problems when they must go out and work. I believe very firmly that that is the ultimate goal of this government. When I look at the issue of day care today, with the economy where it's at and the unemployment factor, I see several things. First of all, I see a changing of expectation, at least for some parents, in moving away from the centres towards the family day care home. I think that I see a trend on the vacancy rate, but that is only going to be short-lived, because as the economy comes back up and the people are gaining more and more employment, you will see the take-up on day care increased. The ideal day care would be a community day care or a family neighbourhood day care, whether it's the centre or the home, if that's what people choose.

So, in looking at the general policies, those are the things that we will be keeping in mind. We have been able to maintain the same level this year. And when I say maintain the same level, I mean in terms of the dollars, but that allows us the flexibility to create 100 new spaces in centres and 75 new spaces in family day care homes if the need arises. So that's approximately where we are with day care today.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Can you tell me, Madam Minister, whether or not the subsidy being paid to parents who have children in day cares will be increased this coming year? I believe it's at 230 per month per child at the maximum. But can you clarify that point – whether that maximum will be increased? It may be 210, I just forget.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Our subsidy remains unchanged for this year.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — So the subsidy remains unchanged. So any increases that the day care experiences . . . Let's use a number of 15 per cent, which is a number I'm hearing. That 15 per cent then will be passed on to the parents directly, with no increase in subsidy. Is that correct?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — No, that's not quite correct. You're making an assumption there that they're automatically going to increase it by that much. You know, what we did, we took a look at where that subsidy level was at and did some comparisons with it. And it's one of the highest in Canada. It's also relatively close to what day care centres are charging. And if I compare it to Manitoba . . . You know, for instance, one parent with one child in Saskatchewan is allowed the gross income of 1,639. And that's the point at which the subsidy begins to be reduced. Now if you compare that same situation with Manitoba, you know, they begin to reduce theirs at 1,087. So there is a degree of flexibility in terms of where we stand with other provinces.

If I look at the family part of it, the gross salary is 1,766, and they would still qualify for \$195. But in Manitoba at that same level, their eligibility for a subsidy terminates. So I think, you know, given the overall picture, that it's been reasonably reasonable this year.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I don't think that many parents and day care operators in the local boards will think it's reasonably reasonable because what I'm hearing is that there is developing a major crisis in day care which I suppose will be the next issue that we will have, now that you have created that type of a situation with the Non-Governmental Organizations. But I know there is a day care directors' committee being set up both in Saskatoon and Regina who are attempting to deal with this ever-increasing problem and the rate structure that they're going to have to set into place, now that they know there will be no increase in funding for the day care centres, or, in fact, the grants paid to parents. Because I think there was expectation built up that that's where the money would go. I have another question on a pilot project that we had been studying, and that is native day care. Can you tell me whether or not there will be in fact a native day care project brought into place into Saskatchewan this year?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We are at the present time giving consideration to two requests that are in for native day cares, and one is in Regina and the other one is in the city of Moose Jaw.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Can you tell me how much money is allocated for native day care in the province this year — I don't know where that money would be allocated, whether it's within the budget of the grants to day care centres — and how much would it be?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We don't pull out, and never have, separate categories for native day care centres or native day care homes. It's in the overall figure.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Okay. That will solve that. I would just like to say in closing off this area of day care, that I think again that you should look at the spending that you're putting into the day care centre. Because very, very basically what is happening that very large debts — and you will know this better than I — are being built up by almost all day care centres in the city of Regina and Saskatoon. And you will have to deal with that . . . At least the day care centres who write to me . . . The 24-hour day care centre, I know, has a fairly large bank loan, which they are having to deal with and they have to pay interest on this, and I think they were banking on an increase in subsidies to help them through that.

And very basically now that the government has not seen fit to put more money into day care, there's only one place for them to go to solve that problem and that is to the users of the day care centres. And so, while day care rates may be at around 300 or 310 on average in the cities, I think that you will see them having to raise that by \$20 or \$30 a month. And that will make many people look at the option of becoming unemployed and joining the unemployed group rather than working, because they can't afford day care. And maybe that's a solution, but I don't see it as a solution — quite the opposite. I see it as an attack on the working women in particular and another example of this government's stand on women issues.

And while you will say that you have more of an insight into women's issues, maybe you do, but I wish that you would use that influence in cabinet to see that some of the women's issues were gotten funding from that cabinet and from the finance minister, because to date the litany in the area of women issues is not well-served by your input in cabinet and other members who are in cabinet at the present time.

And with that I have no further questions, and unless my colleagues have some we will be letting go.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, just a short comment on a comment, I guess, and no question. The financial difficulty as the member from Shaunavon has stated on day care is not so much the subsidy rate and what this government is doing or not doing as he suggests, but the vacancy rate. I have a concern with it, particularly for those centres that are towards the downtown core, perhaps in the lower income areas, because they do in effect touch mostly single women, and we will be monitoring those very carefully. So let's be clear, that it is more the vacancy rate than anything else in this particular problem.

Just one brief comment on women's issues. Perhaps if there's anything that's been an injustice done in this province this year, it's similar to the great story of 'ah, they're going to do away with medicare,' and it has been on the women's issues and the terms of information that has not gotten out there. And while it's a fact of life, sometimes it's a little difficult to swallow. One can only hope that the members opposite perhaps will do away with their campaign based on the tactics of fear and start to use a little common sense with it.

With that, Mr. Chairman, let's go.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I can't allow this little attack in the final shot to go by. But in the area of women's issues, if you're talking about promoting women within the civil service, I would like you to point to me some of the deputy ministers that you have seen fit to influence and get into positions of power. I would like to know the number of associate deputies that you can list off that have been hired since the last April election. I would like you to list off the executive directors, the increase in numbers in that area, and I defy you to say that you have hired more women in those areas. True, you may have hired more women at the lower level, but here again I think it shows the inconsiderate aspect of this government in dealing, even in that area, of hiring women to the higher echelons of the civil service.

In the area of day care, the reason that there is a high vacancy rate, Madam Minister, is simply because people can no longer afford to take their children to the day care centres. And what you have done by not raising the subsidy to parents is assured that that will continue to be the problem, and less and less people will go to the day care centres because they cannot afford to pay \$350 or \$400 a month day care if you have three or four children. It doesn't take a mathematician to realize that what you're doing is driving women out of the work-force and back to the home. And I say that that is an attack on women that you could solve and help to solve if you would take that kind of a commitment to cabinet and get the money that is needed for day care.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I won't get into the matter of who we have hired and who we haven't, but if the . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

Mr. Vice-Chairman: — Order, order! I cannot hear the minister replying.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — If the member from Shaunavon thinks for a moment that women's issues are just — are just — employment, you've got another thing coming. For a long time I have waited for some alternatives on the battered-women's issues and

have seen nothing from you guys – not a thing in 11 years. I never saw one member in government step forward and say, ‘Is there an alternative on the battered-women aspect? Is there an alternative without infringing on the human rights?’ Like, maybe we should be taking the guys and putting them in a transition house instead of the woman and all her kids. I didn’t see that addressed. The issue is much bigger – much bigger – and it’s about time you faced it because it’s not going to go away. And one day you’re going to be asked to vote on a few of these things, and I can hardly wait to see where you stand on it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I just want to say, Madam Minister, I have sat through this estimate as my colleague from Shaunavon has gone through them. I want to say that this budget which you have presented represents the largest cuts in the social services and people programs that his province has seen during the time that I have been active in politics. I want to say that we have major cuts in day care. We have had major cuts in the non-government organizations. We have had major cuts in social assistance to those in need. We have cut off benefits to those who are unemployed and have to resort to unemployment.

I want to say that this budget clearly demonstrates the priorities of this government. Cut those, cut to those who need the help most of all. That is the Tory philosophy and in one year you have established it well. And I want to say, the people of this province are watching with interest the future directions. Because I predict that you won’t be the minister in this portfolio next year because of the massive degree of cuts that you have perpetrated on the people of this society, the single parents providing care for their children – you have cut in day care; you have cut in every major area possible in this budget. And I think it is a disgrace, but more than that. What it indicates is the philosophy of that party opposite.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Using dollar figures, I challenge you to show where that cut is. You know, it’s about time the member from Quill Lakes and I had an agreement. You promise not to tell any lies about me and I’ll promise not to tell the truth about you. And let’s leave it at that.

Mr. Koskie: — All right, Madam Minister, if you want to prolong it and if you want to go on and ask me to document the various areas in the budget which you have not increased, which you held, you haven’t even increased at the inflation rate.

Now let us just start here. I want to ask you whether you increased the Saskatchewan income program. Have you increased that?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — We’ve been through half of this, but we’ve got all night so we might as well go through it again. There has been no cut, no cut in the level of income that a senior citizen can apply on . . . (inaudible) . . . You know, you tell one side of it. There’s been no cut on that.

You want to talk about the increases? You don’t talk about those. There’s been an increase on the FIP (family income plan) for low-income families. You don’t mention that. Let’s talk about Mobile Crisis. In ‘82-83 received \$361,000, but this year they’re going to get \$435,000. You didn’t mention that. How about Saskatoon Crisis Intervention? Last year, 251,000, this 335,000. And then let’s look at P.A. –

214,000, this year 229 for their Crisis Unit.

And if you want to carry on, perhaps you would like to talk about the rape crisis centres and the Sexual Assault, 7 per cent increase. Or maybe you don't want to. Maybe you'd rather do away with them. Regina Transition Women's Society, 209,000 in '82, 224 this year, a 7 per cent increase; Saskatoon Interval House, the same; Regina Native Women's Association Resource Centre, 181 last year, 194,000 this year. Then let's have a look at the Association of West-Central Native Women in P.A., 179 last year, 192,000 this year.

You know, you cannot keep things in proper perspective. The welfare rights, Saskatoon Self Help Council – you haven't talked about those. You haven't talked about the Moose Jaw Community Action Society. You have not once, not once have you mentioned the increase, 54 new spaces in activity centres for the mentally handicapped. Not once have you mentioned those. If you don't care about it, that's your problem, but I care about it, so let's mention them.

Mr. Koskie: — I would like you to go in the Saskatchewan income program. One program the seniors was getting . . . You say there's been no cut. I ask you whether the inflation rate this year has gone up and you maintain it at the previous rate. Well, this government froze with minimum wage, you freeze it for two years, you freeze the senior citizens, you make promises in the election, and you don't keep them. I want to say in day care, you've maintained the same rate as previously put into place by my colleague. I want to say, the people of this province are making an evaluation, and I will tell you that one of the characteristics of the people of Saskatchewan and the history of this province is their compassion in lending aid to those in this society that need it . . .

An Hon. Member: — Those that can't help themselves.

Mr. Koskie: — That's right: those that cannot help themselves. And I want to say, throughout this budget, you have in fact almost decimated some of the non-government organizations . . . You laugh if you want, go ahead and laugh, but you go and talk to the organizations. You have cut back in day care, you've cut back in the Senior Citizens' Council, and you start trying to indicate that you're going to have more efficiency. I'll tell you, Madam Minister, what you have done is to destroy the basic, sound, social programming that we had in this province, and you can't deny it.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I do deny it.

An Hon. Member: — Well, people don't believe you.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — You don't believe me. We have continually talked about priorities, where you set your priorities and from what I know of the members' past – and I'll give you some credit for some very good programs, one of them being the community-based programs for the mentally retarded, the move from the institutions to the community base – I think they're super.

But when it comes to having to set some priorities on where you put your dollar, you put it into the coordinating factor, the advocate factor, and we decided to put it into the direct service. And a very good example of that is last year with the organization that helps out those that have a hearing impairment. You know, you were going to cut them off, and they didn't have anywhere else to go – and yet you would fund something else for a coordinating factor. I deny that you are the super-most on social planning; you

might be great at social engineering, but that's as far as it goes.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, the minister talks about cut-backs that were planned by a former administration. She has been doing this all night. Every time she gets into a bit of a bind, she says, 'Well, if we hadn't fired them, or if we hadn't cut the funding, you guys had plans to do it.' Those are basically a smoke-screen, Madam Minister, where you're attempting to put the blame on a previous administration, but very simply, no one is believing it any more.

People know that there was a 100 per cent increase in day care in 1981-82, under a previous administration. They know that there is no increase, they know there is no increase under your administration. In fact, when you look at the inflation rate of 8 per cent, there is a cut-back in money for day care in the province of Saskatchewan for the first time in the history of the day care program. That's the legacy that you are creating in that department and don't try to tell me that we were planning cut-backs in different areas, because it very simply is not true, and you will not get away with it with the public of Saskatchewan.

You will have to list, the way we have listed to you, the cut-backs that we did when we were in government, and I defy you to do that. On the other hand, I can go through a list of at least 20 groups and areas where you have cut back, including a Saskatchewan Income Plan, day care, Valley View, administration in various areas, and the list goes on and on and on. And if you're going to accuse me of cutting back while I was the minister, I would like you to do the same, to get the list out and prove that point, rather than just a bunch of verbiage that you're trying to accuse other people of things that you don't have any proof of at all.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I would suggest that perhaps the member is doing some misleading, and very deliberately so, and that's unfortunate. But there's really not too much we can do about it for another three years — and then watch out!

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

Item 6

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wonder why, in this area, in child care institutions, when you're talking about expanding the program, how do you explain a cut of eight staff in that area?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I believe this one was answered previously, but for the benefit of the member, again, 5.2 related to Roy Wilson, and had been vacant. So they were vacant positions. One had to do with the Saskatchewan Boys' Centre, the accounting clerk transferred in, and another one in admin, and another one was in this subvote.

Item 6 agreed to.

Items 7 and 8 agreed to.

Item 9

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The cut-back of three staff there is for the same reason. They were moved into Regina or moved somewhere else or where did those people go?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Those are positions that are all vacant.

Item 9 agreed to.

Item 10

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The cut-back here of 19 staff – that is happening by attrition too. Were there any of those people laid off or are they just positions that you're not filling? And also, can you tell me about the case-load up there? Why are you . . . My understanding is that there is 85 per cent unemployment up in that part of the world, that the case-load has doubled. I'm wondering how you're expecting to do it with a cut of about 25 per cent in staff.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, five of those positions were deletions, nine were transferred – department of Health to Department of Justice – and another five were transferred through other interdepartmentally. I believe that was your question.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The nine that were transferred interdepartmentally, where did they get moved from – out of northern Saskatchewan to where?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — This was the five that you were talking about, not the nine. The nine went to Health and Justice. The other five were administrative positions and were out of La Ronge to various points in, I guess what you define as the South.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Any of these positions have moved to Regina?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Four of those were vacant and one was once again interdepartmental, and for the time being is staying in La Ronge.

Item 10 agreed to.

Item 11

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Of this number - \$1,077,000 – what part of that is transferred from DNS? I know there was, I believe, 500-and-some thousand transferred from DNS. And I want to know what portion of the \$1 million here would be also . . . would be transferred from DNS?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — There is approximately \$363,000.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — So in essence if you're saying that 300-and-some thousand is reduced from that budget, the grants to the day care centres, then in essence, are being reduced considerably. Is that correct?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Chairman, it does not include a reduction, because both years included the DNS factor. So it isn't the reduction.

Item 11 agreed to.

Items 12 to 14 inclusive agreed to.

Item 15

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, can you tell me, Madam Minister, whether any of that \$8 million is money that was budgeted in last year's \$10 million? Or is that all new money?

I can get into this and spend a long time at it. But if you will give me an answer for it . . .

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — If it clarifies for him any, it's part of the \$10 million that wasn't taken up by end of the year.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — How much of the 8 million actually was part of the original 10? All of it or what?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — That's what I said.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — So in essence this 8 million here really isn't any new money, but is just 8 million out of the 10 that wasn't taken up last year.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — All right. Well, as I had indicated, yeah, that 's true. You know, many of them didn't come on stream until the end of the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, it's not a trick. It's an accounting practice; you have to look at the dates. You know. There are still some jobs being approved. And there's still many applications come in. So, of course, you had to budget for what you didn't use on the take-up factor.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Madam Minister, you may say that it's only an accounting procedure, but when you budget \$10 million in 1982-83, I think most people would have assumed that you would have spent it and created jobs. But what you're telling us here tonight, that you only spent 2 million last year – and that this 8 million you announced in '83-84 is really old money, and the total is only 10, and with a bit of smoke and mirrors you're making it look like a total of 18 million was spent. And just for the record, I wanted to point that out, so that it wasn't thought to be a great large amount of new money going into job creation, but simply the fact that you didn't get the program under way quick enough to get it done in '82-83.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — There is no intention of having anyone say this is 18 million total. You have to only look at when the first agreement in Canada – the first agreement in Canada – was signed, was December 1. You know, you're talking about four months from December 1 to when it was first signed, until the end of the fiscal year. Of course.

Item 15 agreed to.

Items 16 to 18 inclusive agreed to.

Item 19

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Madam Minister, in the area of grants to unemployment support program: this a program that hires, I understand, a number and various people who are on welfare. Can you explain to me how, when you have a 66 per cent increase

in the unemployed employables, how you would find fit to cut back in this program that employs people on welfare? Why would you do that? This makes about as much sense as cancelling the exploration for natural gas in the grasslands park, where you have ready-made jobs for people who are on welfare, and you fail to put any money into those programs. Why are you doing this at the present time?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — I think when it comes to the employment of those that are on social assistance, you also have to take a look at the moneys that have been put into the job creation program, and that's why you see a take up on that side of it and a very small reduction on that part of it.

Item 19 agreed to.

Item 20

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I would just like to put out again here that the 171 million, if the statistics increases that we are seeing at the present time – and I want to point this out once more before we leave it – that the 171 million that's predicted here is not based on any fact, or any basic information that we already have at our disposal. Even projecting what the present rates of welfare are in the province and adding to that an increase that you have announced on October 1st, this number will be far exceeded. That's using present statistics, and all indications are that the numbers who are falling onto the welfare, coming off UIC, will increase drastically over the next eight months, and 171 million is merely the tip of the iceberg. I would advise the minister to do what she can to see that moneys going to universities are increased so the large number of students who find themselves without employment after the summer make-work programs are over end up back in university and not on the welfare rolls as I see happening if enrolment is curtailed, in fact, as the universities are now saying is going to happen.

Item 20 agreed to.

Items 21 and 22 agreed to.

Vote 36 agreed to.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — If I could just take a moment and first of all thank the staff that are here tonight and also the opposition. I would also, particularly, like to thank them for their co-operation Thursday evening.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to join with the minister in thanking the members of the staff for their co-operation and also look forward to getting the information that has been promised in the near future.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:32 p.m.