

April 7, 1986

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ORAL QUESTIONS

Removal of Federal Tax on Farm Fuel

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I want to direct a question to the Deputy Premier in the absence of the Premier, who, as we know, had an attack of cold feet and didn't call a provincial election on Saturday night. Instead he isn't here to answer; he's off in eastern Canada.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. The member is making statements rather than asking questions, and if he has a question, we'll take the question.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — I am indeed making statements, and everybody else in Saskatchewan is making the same one.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — My specific question is this: during the Premier's trip to eastern Canada, will he publicly and privately, demand that the Prime Minister live up to the 1984 federal election campaign promise to take all federal taxes off farm fuel? Will he be demanding that in his trip to Ottawa, or not?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I can understand the sensitivity of the members opposite not wanting to lose the advantage that they might have otherwise acquired by blowing their whole advertising budget in what they believed to be a . . . (inaudible) . . .

So, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the Premier's visit to Ottawa and his discussions with the Prime Minister, I'm sure that he'll be prepared to answer any questions that may come out of that discussion upon his return, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. As the Deputy Premier will know, so far the federal government has failed to deliver on the promise to remove all taxes on farm fuel, and today the federal sales tax and the excise tax add nearly 6 cents per litre or 27 cents per gallon to the cost of farm fuel. And I ask again: is it the position of your government that you pressure the Prime Minister to keep this campaign promise, or is it not the position of your government?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan is on record publicly, across this province, in calling for the elimination of taxes on primary production inputs, including federal taxes on gasoline, and I fully expect that he will continue to pressure for those input cost reductions, Mr. Speaker. I would expect that the Premier would be more than willing to enter that discussion upon his return to tell you just exactly how the Prime Minister responded.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Deputy Premier. Will you tell me whether the Premier has been

on record within the hearing of Prime Minister Mulroney, or does he go on the record only when the Prime Minister is at a good distance?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well, I believe, Mr. Speaker, whatever the distance, the Premier of this province will have far more impact than members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Capital Gains Tax Exemption

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Deputy Premier, and it has to do with the trip of the Premier to Ottawa. What I would like the Deputy Premier to advise this House is: is it the position of the government, and will the Premier be pressing the Prime Minister with respect to another broken promise, and that's the one to provide retiring farmers with a \$500,000 capital gains tax exemption. Because, as the minister will know, while there purports to be a \$500,000 capital gains exemption, when it is coupled with the minimum tax and the flat tax, farmers are facing very substantial tax payments, and they do not have anything resembling a \$500,000 capital gains exemption. Will the Premier be pressing that point with the Prime Minister?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the \$500,000 capital gains exemption that farmers are eligible for in Canada wouldn't have happened in the first place had our Premier not advanced those arguments to the Prime Minister. And I understand as well at that time that those exemptions were opposed by your party, so you're going to have to decide which way you want it.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I ask a supplementary question to the Deputy Premier. Does he not acknowledge that the combined effect of the Mulroney taxes is that if a farmer makes a capital gain of \$250,000 on the sale of a farm, he is frequently facing taxes for the year 1985 of 50, 55, and \$60,000 on that capital gain? And do you not agree that is a breach of the promise made to the electorate in 1984?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, not having had the personal experience — I haven't sold my farm, and I haven't had a real tax problem of late either — I can't speak from personal experience. But I just remind all members, Mr. Speaker, that the capital gain benefit that now can accrue to the farmers of Canada would not exist had it been in the hands of that party to make the decision.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I take it the Deputy Premier will not acknowledge that farmers in this province . . .

An Hon. Member: — I said I didn't know.

Nielsen Task Force Report

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — You will not acknowledge that in this province farmers are facing 50, 55, and \$60,000 tax bills in the circumstances which I have outlined. Perhaps I can find something with which you are familiar.

Mr. Deputy Premier, will the Premier be demanding at Ottawa that the federal government repudiate the recommendations in the Nielsen task force report as they relate to agriculture and more particularly the recommendations that there be a 20 per cent jump in crop insurance premiums, the end of interest-free grain cash advances, the introduction of variable freight rates and the end of farm fuel tax rebates? Those are four things in the Nielsen report. I ask you, sir: is your Premier going to raise with the federal government the deleterious effects of those recommendations, and will he ask the federal government repudiate those recommendations forthwith?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Yes.

Oil Pricing in Canada

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the evening in which the Premier got cold feet — and by the way I have something to assist the Premier with his cold feet and I'll ask . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Displays are not allowed in this Chamber, and I'll ask the member to have that removed from the House.

Mr. Shillington: — I would apologize, Mr. Speaker. I was overcome with compassion at the Premier's cold feet.

Mr. Deputy Premier, on the evening in which he displayed his cold feet, the Premier referred to the "ruthless robber barons" in the Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries and said he was going to stand up to them and said, I'm going to do something about it, and I'm going to start tonight. I wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you would tell us what it is the Premier has in mind that's going to strike terror into the hearts of the OPEC nations?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think the words of the Premier were that he would be prepared, in co-operation with the federal government and other producing provinces in Canada, to come up with any scheme that will bring stability to oil pricing in Canada so that the predatory effects of world pricing today would not close down our oil sector and leave us, Mr. Speaker, to the whim, then, of OPEC, following the collapse of our domestic oil sector. And having said that, I also would remind all members that that party, and certainly their counterparts in Alberta, in fact support floor prices, and they argue that that will bring some stability to pricing in the energy sector. I don't know if floor price is the answer, Mr. Speaker, but I'm sure that reasonably brilliant men around a table with an understanding of the industry will come up with some solutions, Mr. Speaker.

Training and Employment Opportunities for Social Assistance Recipients

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier, Grant "Decline," I have a question to the Minister of Social Services. Last September, Mr. Minister, Ottawa and the provincial governments reached an agreement to target 30 per cent of the training and

employment spaces under the federal government's major job creation program for social assistance recipients. At that time, Mr. Minister, the national Health and Welfare minister, Jake Epp, described the 30 per cent target as only fair, since employable social assistance recipients make up about 30 per cent of the total unemployment populations. Federal-provincial negotiations were supposed to be completed by the 1st of April of this year. I ask you, Mr. Minister: was that deadline met in Saskatchewan's case, and if so, how many Saskatchewan social recipients will be able to take advantage of training and employment opportunities through the federal government's Canadian jobs strategy program?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that Saskatchewan is the only province that in fact advanced welfare reform on to the national agenda last year. And as a consequence of our efforts to enhance training and education opportunities for people on social assistance, we were able to reach a general umbrella agreement in principle between the provinces and the national government.

As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, we are the only province to date that has come anywhere near close to finalizing the details of that specific agreement, and I expect that in the very near future we will in fact have signed that document.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I would like the minister to clarify, because he was not clear in his answer. Are negotiations, in fact, still under way, or have they broken off? Is it not true that Ottawa has temporarily broken off negotiations with Saskatchewan because the federal Minister of Employment and Immigration, who happens to be Flora MacDonald, sees the welfare changes announced in the provincial budget as "workfare", which is illegal under the Canada assistance plan. Isn't that why these negotiations are at an impasse, Mr. Minister, and Saskatchewan welfare recipients are caught in the middle, unable to take advantage of the federal training and employment programs?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — No.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The minister still hasn't answered the question. I once again ask him — I ask the minister, Mr. Speaker — would he clarify. Are negotiations in fact still under way or have they broken off?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — We're in the process of finalizing the agreement.

Job Creation for Social Aid Recipients

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I find that strange, Mr. Speaker, because I have here a copy of a confidential memo from Ottawa — in a new question to the minister — and this memo discusses the negotiations between your government and the federal government over how to help social assistance recipients take advantage of job strategy programs. And I want to quote from the document in my

new question. This refers to the provincial government:

... which has a major disincentive in place which require social assistance benefits to be decreased by the amount of any additional income received, including adult training allowances.

This, too, is listed as one of the stumbling blocks in the federal-provincial negotiations. It's clear in the confidential document that I have here. If your goal is really to help Saskatchewan people who are on welfare break the welfare cycle, Mr. Minister, can you explain why your policy is to penalize welfare recipients who have entered job training programs?

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, the reason why we entered into negotiations with the federal government, to begin with, was because Saskatchewan social assistance recipients were not able to have access to the training programs provided by the federal government. That was the primary rationale behind our wanting to get social assistance recipients into more education and training programs — which, I might add, Mr. Speaker, they were not able to get into at all under the federal government.

As it relates to this particular memo, my officials indicate to me that this is something rather from the past. Negotiations are at the finalization stage, and we're very pleased that Saskatchewan will likely be the first province for which social assistance recipients will be able to have significant access into federal training programs which they previously didn't have.

Saskatchewan Population Trends

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Deputy Premier, and it has to do with the Saskatchewan population drain. According to Statistics Canada, Saskatchewan suffered a net loss of 4,701 people during the first nine months of 1985. And when the final figures are released in a few days, it's likely to show an even larger net population drain.

I ask the minister: are you aware of your government's own internal figures that show, so far in 1986, Saskatchewan is losing population at the rate of more than 1,700 people a month, or 57 people a day? And these are according to your own statistics, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — First, Mr. Speaker, I long ago learned not to just accept figures thrown out by the members opposite as gospel. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, if the NDP and their negative attitudes about all of the projects that we talked about — if they can be put on hold and turned around and become as positive about the opportunity in Saskatchewan as we are, there will be people flocking to Saskatchewan in the next two or three years, Mr. Speaker, just to fill the positions — just to fill the positions, Mr. Speaker, in the bacon plants, in the upgrader, in the paper plant, in the Phillips Cable at Moose Jaw, Canapharm at Wolseley, Shackleton Engineering at Cut Knife, and many, many more, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Koskie: — Supplemental, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you can deny the facts all you want, or try to cover up. But

are you aware the figures published by your own government's Bureau of Statistics show that during January and February of this year, a total of 5,897 people left Saskatchewan while only 2,471 people moved into the province for a net loss in population of more than 3,400 people?

Are you not aware of these figures, and are you not shocked, in fact, by the exodus of young people from this province?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, the population of Saskatchewan is higher today than it was at any period in time that the members opposite were sitting over here. That's one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, that they will never have the opportunity to sit over here again. And if I can be flippant for a moment, Mr. Speaker, I kind of suspect that little blip in the population decline numbers was NDP campaigners moving over to Manitoba just prior to the last Manitoba election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Supplemental. The people of Saskatchewan are looking for a blip that will give them some jobs. Are you aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the essential drain, the people that are leaving the province today are young people with young families who are leaving in search of a job elsewhere.

Can the Deputy Premier tell us what, in fact, are the new projects that will be under way in the next few weeks that will offer some hope to these people to get jobs, until we can have an election and get a government that will, in fact, provide job opportunities?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that after the next election we will have a government that will provide that opportunity. I have no doubt of that at all, Mr. Speaker, because it will be the government of Grant Devine and the Conservatives in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how they can continue to demand having it both ways. Our Premier is in Ottawa talking about stabilization mechanisms for agriculture and the energy sector this very day — this very day — and they're saying: what's he doing in Ottawa? Why is he down there? Why is he trying to stabilize the oil sector? Why is he trying to stabilize the farm sector?

We're talking about jobs, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan and we're talking about ... we're talking about major projects; we're talking about the paper plant in Prince Albert; we're talking about Shand and Rafferty down in Estevan area, and the Alameda dam on the Moose Creek in my constituency. And I appreciate that very much, as do the people in that area.

An Hon. Member: — Ammonia.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Ammonia plant here in Saskatchewan, here in Regina, that they have opposed, Mr. Speaker. I just wish, Mr. Speaker, I just wish that members opposite would decide on which side of each of

these arguments they want to be on, and pick it and stay there.

Mr. Koskie: — Supplemental, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering whether the Deputy Premier, in light of all the announcements that you have been making during the last two or three months, trying to convince the people, or deceive the people, into believing that there is economic development here in Saskatchewan, can you indicate, you know, how many new jobs have been created in the last month with all of these announcements?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I don't know how many created in the last month, Mr. Speaker, but if it's important to the member, I'll find out. But February, Mr. Speaker, February to February, year over year, 17,000 brand-new permanent jobs in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Questions Regarding Government Spending

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Deputy Premier. Mr. Minister, my question has to do with the government policy of hiding information from the public. The recent provincial budget was a clear attempt to hide the real size of the deficit. And the recent Public Accounts, Mr. Speaker, made the same attempt to hide from the public your government's spending. Mr. Minister, in addition, there are some 42 written questions which have been ordered answered by motions of this Assembly and which your government has failed to answer. In fact, there are 13 written questions, which this Assembly ordered to be answered in the spring of 1984, which you have failed to answer. When will you, Mr. Speaker, come clean and finally respond to those long-standing requests for answers?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — My understanding, Mr. Speaker, by my staff, is that there are some ready now and they'll probably be tabling them tomorrow, and there will be some more tabled following tomorrow, and the day after, and in due course, and we'll provide them as they're ready, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lusney: — Supplementary, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, there have been some that are about two years old. The common practice is to have them answered by the end of a session. When, Mr. Minister, are you going to have those two-year-old questions answered? Will you make a commitment to this House that you will have this information in here — surely it's ready — that you will have this information in here by tomorrow?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I will make no such commitment. I will undertake to provide them with all due haste.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, supplementary. Will you then be prepared to make sure that some of the questions to be answered and brought into this House will be the amount of money paid out on advertising or to advertising firms by your government through departments, Crown corporations, and other agencies; and the amount of money paid out to law firms by your government; the

employment arrangements for one René Archambault, the Premier's brother-in-law, and the employment arrangements for Terry Leier, the former PC candidate who, at last report, was making more than \$100,000 from Saskatchewan taxpayers; and the full cost breakdown of the Premier's out-of-province trips, including his trip to Europe in January of '85. Can you make a commitment that these two-year-old questions will be answered very, very soon in this House?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to reply in this way. I'm going to reply in this way because I heard more of what the member from Quill Lakes was saying from his seat than the member from Pelly was saying on his feet. So the question — I didn't hear all of it, Mr. Speaker, so I'll answer it this way. Those portions of the question that I hear, I think I can provide the answers in due course. By that I mean in a short term.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will make the usual motions on interim supply prior to the appropriation Bill. Firstly:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$292,309,960 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 1987.

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1987, the sum of \$292,309,960 be granted out of the consolidated fund.

Resolved that a sum . . .

An Hon. Member: — One at a time.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — One at a time? That's the first resolution.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Chairman, I wish to make a number of comments about the resolution. I'm sorry, to the purist from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden.

I say with respect to this resolution, if any further evidence were needed, that you planned an election and got cold feet at the last moment — the presence of this Bill here today, I think, establishes that.

You obviously didn't expect to be here; you didn't expect there to be a legislature in session, and thus you expected to handle these by other means. So I say that among other things this resolution, I think, is ample proof that you intended to call an election, did a poll, I gather got the results on Wednesday night, and got cold feet.

Mr. Minister, I want to make a comment or two about this government's management of our fiscal affairs. The

management that this government has given our fiscal affairs is absolutely frightening. It is absolutely frightening, Mr. Minister.

Over the weekend I had occasion to add up the addition to the provincial debt which this government has brought upon us in the last year, and I would think, Mr. Minister — and I'm going to ask you in due course — I would think, Mr. Minister, in the last year you've probably added 20 to 30 per cent to this province's total debt in the last nine months.

The list of . . .

An Hon. Member: — They should be kicked out.

Mr. Shillington: — Well indeed they should be kicked out. They will if they ever have the nerve to call an election.

One of the reasons why the Premier needs a heavy pair of wool socks, one of the main reasons, is because of the mismanagement which this government has given to our fiscal affairs. People in this province are genuinely concerned. I hear people from all walks of life saying just that: my heavens, if these people are elected, there isn't going to be a province in four years. I hear people saying that from all walks of life. I may say though that it tends to come more frequently from people who are a little more mature, a little better educated, often with a business background. Anybody who can read a financial statement, a lot who cannot read a financial statement, can figure out for themselves that this government is seriously amiss in this fashion in which it has managed our fiscal affairs.

We have before us an interim supply bill which will undoubtedly add to that debt, Mr. Speaker. While the project in North Battleford, giving \$20 million to a former candidate for the leadership of the Conservative party — about which Maclean's magazine reports that the Royal Bank is foreclosing on his house in Edmonton — to give that person \$20 million is galling enough, but the figure is a trifling sum compared with the other dollops that you've been handing out here, there, and everywhere.

I want the minister to add up — indeed I'm going to ask him to. I want the minister to add up the development projects: the upgrader in Regina, the upgrader in Lloyd. — there are now two of them going — the project at . . .

An Hon. Member: — The ammonia plant.

Mr. Shillington: — Well there's a lot of natural gas and hot air connected to the ammonia plant. It's a long way from being ready.

You have the Rafferty dam and the Shand project, Mr. Minister. You have a trifling 250 million at North Battleford. These are very large sums of money. In Prince Albert, these are very large sums of money. Seventy million at the university. Again, anything which is stated in millions and only needs two digits to state it is scarcely worth mentioning, Mr. Minister.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, if . . .

An Hon. Member: — Are you against agriculture.

Mr. Shillington: — Am I against agriculture? Well I'm against bankrupting the province. I am against bankrupting the province, and you are well on the way towards doing that, Mr. Minister. The member from Meadow Lake says, are you against it, are you against it, are you against it. I say to him, it's not a question of what we're against, it's a question of managing our resources, being able to pay for what we're doing, and being responsible. And this government has been totally and completely irresponsible with respect to this province's debt. It is out of control, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, you ran a completely irresponsible election campaign. You promised free money during that election campaign. And lo and behold, when you get into office, the law of gravity still applied, and so, to your everlasting surprise, did the law of economics. And you found you couldn't print money and there wasn't any room full of money. There was no Heritage Fund as you thought it was — there was no room full of money. There was a Heritage Fund. There were annual reports published, and you people didn't have the wits or the brains to read the annual reports. Because if you did read the annual reports, then you were lying in the middle of that campaign. And since it's unparliamentary to say they're lying, I won't say that, Mr. Chairman. I'll simply say they didn't have the wits to read the annual report because they were either being grossly stupid or they were being dishonest, one of the two, in that campaign. The party was lying.

Mr. Minister, your irresponsible behaviour has continued unabated. You have never once given any consideration to the fiscal health of this province. You took over a province which had fiscal affairs that were the best-managed in Canada — and if the minister denies that I can provide such well-known NDP house organs as *The Financial Post*, which said just that, Mr. Minister. You took it over, you've been spending like drunken sailors, and now we find ourselves with our credit rating having been lowered twice in as many years. And I am fearful, Mr. Minister, that that may happen to us again this year with the rapidity at which you are increasing this province's debt.

Mr. Minister, we have no idea as a result of that budget what the net deficit is going to be for this year. I will venture to say, Mr. Minister, that the net deficit for this year, when the public accounts are finally filed, 18 months hence . . . Because in 18 months there is going to be a different administration in office and these public accounts are going to be filed on time, I can tell you that. We're not going to be waiting until April to get the public accounts.

In 18 months, when we get the public accounts for your term as Finance minister, I will venture to say, Mr. Minister, that Saskatchewan will have the highest . . . The deficit will be the highest per capita west of Quebec. I'll venture to say that's true, Mr. Minister. I'll venture to say that the deficit will be in the neighbourhood of 8, \$900 million — 8, \$900 million — and that will make it the

highest in Canada.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you genuinely believe that provinces are exempt from the economic laws of gravity. I wonder if you really believe that all of human experience has no application to the management of public affairs; that you can go on spending, Mr. Minister; you can go on spending like a drunken sailor; not worry about the deficit, when you find yourself in a bit of a corner electorally — and it may be more than a bit of a corner; I think you're finding yourself in a pretty big hole — when you find yourself in a hole electorally, you start spending money in a fashion which is hitherto unknown.

I don't think one could point to a similar period in the history of this province when the public debt has increased as rapidly as it has over the last 12 months — not for any good reason. Some of the projects . . . Indeed, if it were for good reason, I think we would get some of the information about some of these projects, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, contrary to previous practice and experience, no details are given out about these enormous development projects which add so massively to our public debt. We don't know what the deal is at Rafferty. We don't what the deal is at P.A. We don't know what the deal is in North Battleford. We just don't know. I would think, Mr. Minister, if you felt that these projects were in the best interest of this province, that you'd start giving us some of the details.

Mr. Minister, I'm going to have some questions to ask of you with respect to this province's financial affairs because I, for one, want to know whether or not the additional debt which is represented in this interim supply bill can be afforded by this province. If you people haven't got the wits to ask yourselves whether or not the province can afford this, then the opposition will be doing that for you. In due course, Mr. Minister, I will have some questions which I want to address to you. For now I invite the minister to enter the debate and begin to tell the people of this province how and why you are pursuing this course. Why you are pursuing a course which has every appearance of bankrupting the province?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I should explain to the hon. member that this is interim supply. It's one-twelfth of the budgetary funds to be voted on during this session; that there's amply time to vote both the Department of Finance estimates . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh you can debate it. I suppose the difficulty I have when you talk about the law of gravity, I think what we're seeing over there is political Murphy's Law. If the other party does it, it's wrong, but if you do it, it's right. If it's wrong for this government to have removed the gas tax, then why do you not maintain consistency in your consistent position which for three and a half years was that you were going to reimpose the gas tax. Now you say you're not going to do it. Then you say it was fiscal irresponsibility for this government to propose thirteen and one-quarter per cent mortgages, and you've maintained that position for nearly four years, and then all of a sudden in a panic you say you're going to get them down to 7 per cent.

Now, for heaven's sakes, be consistent. You can't have it

both ways, attacking the programs on the one hand and saying that they're fiscal irresponsibility, and now turn around and say you would maintain them or continue them. So having said that, as I indicated, this is the one-twelfth interim supply. It's not a new practice. I suppose I could get the historical records of going back for some time, and we'll get full chance to debate all of the issues, including the particular projects in mind.

I do say, in defence of the projects, that I hope the hon. members opposite, at least in the interest of the people of Saskatchewan, if they have concerns or doubts about the projects, at least will express the hope that the projects go ahead. Because they are in the interests of the people of Saskatchewan: they're in the long-term interest . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, obviously now the member from Quill Lakes has maintained the positions that the projects are not. I guess we will have a difference of opinion.

(1445)

I suppose we can get into debates. But I didn't raise the issue about the gas tax or the 13.25 per cent, the hon. member did. And I think in fairness that I'm responding fairly. So having said that, this is the interim supply; it's the one-twelfth; it's the traditional motion, and I've made the motion.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I just made note of the minister's comment which he took and gave in the rather lackadaisical way and in the usual arrogance of this government when he said: it is really not very significant what we're doing here today because it's one-twelfth of the government expenditures. Well I might say, Mr. Chairman, that that is an attitude that I think is far from becoming of any Minister of Finance in any government in this province. Whether it's one-twelfth, or whether it's 100 per cent, the fact is it's the taxpayers' money. The people of Saskatchewan will have to stand for that money: they are going to have to pay the taxes, and they have a right to expect and they have a right to be able to hear from the Minister of Finance and this government how that money is going to be spent. And for the minister to stand up, in his remarks on this resolution, and say it's only one-twelfth of \$3-billion-plus, I think is highly irresponsible.

If these projects . . . I will give the minister the benefit of the doubt, and I will say, okay, the projects that have been announced and costs that are astronomical — if they are so beneficial, then why is the minister and the Premier and this Conservative government so afraid to table the documentations which will provide to the people of Saskatchewan the information that they ought to be able to know about the costs of those projects, and what it's going to cost them or what the deal is. What is so unusual about these deals that this government doesn't want the people to know what they are?

I would like the Minister of Finance to answer that question. It has already been said in this House, and it's been said by the media, that this government has become the most secretive government in the history of Saskatchewan. Surely, every time the minister stands up and the Premier stands up and the Deputy Premier stands

up and then refuse to give straightforward answers on the financial arrangement that implicate the Saskatchewan taxpayer, that supports the argument.

I think that this government knows that the people of Saskatchewan are concerned about that, and clearly that's the reasons they have now declined to call an election. If they are so confident, then they should have called an election, or should do it very quickly. We are now past the stage where normally — which will be over four years — Saskatchewan people go to the polls to pass judgement on the government of the day.

This is now the fifth budget of this government. And the Minister of Finance, after he and his colleague, who was the previous Minister of Finance, have accumulated a deficit of \$2 billion or more — after this budget, they still are able to stand up in this House and say one-twelfth of the total expenditure is insignificant, well I say, Mr. Chairman, that that's an irresponsible attitude.

The minister asks this Assembly to pass on money which will be spent to pay for what he called a \$389 million deficit. Well I want to simply point out, as he has been pointed out by others of my colleagues, that that \$389 million deficit is not that amount. It's probably anywhere between \$700 million and \$900 million because of the hidden numbers and the hidden expenditures in this budget, and also because they were not listed as they normally would be.

In 1982 this province had a debt of \$3.3 billion — not bad considering the assets of the province and the wealth of this province. In four short years that deficit, that debt, has increased from \$3.3 billion to 8.7 accumulated debt. How can the Minister of Finance say that one-twelfth of that, or one-twelfth of his proposed budget today for this coming fiscal year is not really significant, and he doesn't really understand why we want, in this Assembly, to debate that and ask him some questions?

They have a deficit now accumulate at \$8.7 billion. This fiscal year it is proposed that it will be, I submit, well over \$700 million, even though the minister says \$389 million.

And what do we have to show for it? We have unemployment — the unemployment rate which has increased every year since 1982 so that there are well over 40,000 people out there looking for work, who are on unemployment rolls. There are many more who are no longer on those rolls, so I even question those statistics.

There are over 60,000 people who are recipients of welfare. In 1982 there were 4,500 of those recipients of welfare who were employables. In 1986 there are over 14,000 of those people who are employables. Do you think, Mr. Chairman, that those people are not concerned whether it's one-twelfth of the expenditure that the minister asks for today in his arrogant way or whether it's 100 per cent? Of course they are. They're concerned about finding work for themselves and for their children. They're not being assured very much by the comments of this government and that minister.

Now there are other ways in which this great debt burden

that the people of Saskatchewan are being saddled with which does not ever show up in any kind of budget. Let me give you one example. Let's take a look at our highways which the minister is asking for some money to pay for. Well because of the neglect by this government, the maintenance of our highways has been an absolute and total disaster. And anybody who's done any travelling in Saskatchewan will be able to tell you that. And everywhere I go people say to me: what has happened to our highways? We have holes where there were perfectly good roads before.

Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Chairman, and the people of Saskatchewan, what happened. Because of this government's neglect and reduction in the maintenance, our highways are deteriorating. And here is what the cost is going to be. Because maintenance is not adequate, we're going to have to rebuild those highways at a much earlier time than we would have had to rebuild them if the maintenance was there. That's going to cost the Saskatchewan taxpayer a lot more money down the road, because these people ignore those kinds of important tasks that any government has an obligation to live up to.

So we have this huge deficit. The minister stands up in the House today and wants more money to help contribute to that big deficit, and he says it really doesn't matter. Well I submit, Mr. Chairman, it matters. It matters. It's almost unheard of in any budget that any Minister of Finance or any government would be so blatantly misleading in what they say, and in the documents that they present, that they would not clearly show the true extend of the deficit.

Oh, I know that there's been a creation of a new Crown corporation which will borrow money on behalf of taxpayers, and then it supposedly will buy off the different kinds of projects. Well, is the minister prepared to stand up in the House and say that will not be part of the mortgage or part of the deficit? I don't think he's prepared to do that. At least, I hope he's not, because if he is, he should resign.

This government talks about a business approach to government. Well I'll tell you, most business people will tell you that if their approach to their business was done in the same way as this government has approached government and the budgeting of taxpayers' money, they would last for one year in business.

And yet this government continues to pursue this line: it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter. We're just going to spend this money. We're going to have nothing to show for it. We've got all kinds of money that were gong to give to the Peter Pocklington of this world because they're friends of ours. And the taxpayer, the low- and middle-income people who carry that biggest burden, is just going to have to pay for it. And even though I'm only asking, the minister says, for one-twelfth of it, it doesn't really matter.

I hope the minister might be able to stand up and explain one other thing. And I'll ask this again when we get into estimates with the Minister of Health. Why is there in this budget not any indication of how much money there is for

health capital projects?

Oh I know that the minister might stand up and he might say, well you know, in 1985-86 we developed a new approach, a new capital health fund. Well then I would ask the minister to say why, in 1986-87, is there no money listed in the budget for that new five-year capital health fund — not one, single penny. And he asks for one-twelfth of the budget to spend this money — some of it which is not even existing because it's not listed in the *Estimates*. Well now this year they're going to have a new fund. But again, in this new fund for capital projects, no money is listed.

And I've talked to people since this budget, and people have called it all kinds of names. Taxpayers are concerned. They've called it jiggery-pokery. They've called it fraudulent — and that's a kind of strong term. They've called it deceitful. And they simply want to know the answers.

And I guess one of the best ways that we might have been able to get that answer and an opportunity for people to express their deep-felt concerns would have been if that Premier and that government had had the courage to call an election, or will soon do so, instead of hiding in the wood. As somebody said during question period earlier, they might run, but they can't hide, because the voters of Saskatchewan are waiting to pass judgement, and they're waiting to be able to say: we've had enough. We can't afford another four years of this arrogant approach of spending our money without telling us what you're spending it for; of spending our tax money and increasing our taxes but having our services deteriorate while the deficit grows, so that we, the present generation and future generation, will be burdened with it, only so that these Conservative members of this House can desperately try to get themselves re-elected.

And I simply say, Mr. Minister, that that will not work. The longer you run, the faster will those who try to catch you run to catch you, and they're going to get the chance to vote eventually because you can't hide from that day inevitably.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I don't know how much of the debate of the total budget the hon. member wants to get into . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, that's the democratic process. Obviously we are getting two conflicting messages about the budget. That's also very much part of the democratic process. The people I hear from think that it was a very sound budget. So we can debate that for, as I say, some considerable period of time.

I did not say that the amount was a smaller amount, and I left absolutely no impression. What I said was: this is the usual practice of interim supply. It's not a new practice. It's not something that was invented in the last four years.

In 1981, for example, and '82 — I don't know, you may wish to identify the Finance minister of the day — in 1981-82. He may still be sitting in the Assembly; he may be sitting across from me, and he may have just spoken. But in 19081-82 there was an interim supply passed by the Assembly, a request for one-twelfth of the amounts budgeted, passed on March 31st. There was . . .

(inaudible interjection) . . . Well, we're later than March 31st.

Secondly, there was a second request in 1982 for interim supply, on April 27th for two-twelfths.

An Hon. Member: — Make that '81.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Sorry, '81-82. No interim supply in '82-83. In 1981-82 there was two-twelfths. So again, all I've simply said, and I've now repeated it several times, that the usual practice . . . If the hon. members are standing up saying that they do not intend to pass interim supply, we will simply be prepared to take that message back to those affected by not having the funds passed. Again, we can debate that for some time.

But the hon. member knows better than most that this in no way stops the members. We will have the first estimates, if we finish interim supply today, the Department of Health. You've already indicated some of the questions. I have every confidence that the Minister of Health will respond to them in the appropriate manner.

And having said that again, interim supply is, I would suggest, certainly in the modern history of the province, an annual request. If you wish me to, as I say, take back to the groups it effected, that will not be paid or not received the funds to which they're, I believe, entitled, then we will be more than pleased to do that.

(1500)

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions, and members opposite must understand that this opposition has to use such opportunities as are available to get some information because information is not normally forthcoming from the government opposite. And I just want to highlight this in respect of two issues. One has to do with the capital cost of . . . I'll use an example: the St. Paul's Hospital at Saskatoon; and to use another example, the cost of the college of agriculture at Saskatoon, which one would anticipate would be in the budget, the one, of the Department of Health, and the other, of the Department of Advanced Education. The minister will know that while these projects have been announced, not a penny has been budgeted.

The minister will know that in the *Estimates* books there is a note saying something about a Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. The minister will also know that he can look high and low in this budget and find no money appropriated for that corporation. He can look in the front and he will not find in the summary of budgetary expenditure any money for that corporation. So the net effect, therefore, is that notwithstanding the fact that the Minister of Advance Education and others, the Premier, talks about an announcement for a college of agriculture building, when they have to put up the money, the money is zero in the budget.

And others talk about the St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon, but when it comes times to putting their money where their mouth is, there is zero in this budget. Member opposite

says 44 million. I challenge him to find 44,000 in this budget for the St. Paul's Hospital, and if it's there, please correct me. If it's there, please point out where the money is. If it's there, please point out on what page it is. It obviously is not there, not set out in the way that every other project of a similar nature has been set out since World War II. It is not there so far as the university building is concerned. It is not there in the way that every similar project has been set out since World War II. I say it is not there.

Now we will be wanting to question the individual minister, and there are other ministers. I used two examples only with respect to these projects. I want to say, very frankly, that we do not want to hear from them that it's from the other corporation, and when we ask them where the other corporation is getting the money, they say they don't know. I would expect that the ministers involved, the Minister of Advanced Education and the Minister of Health in the two examples I have given, will be frank with this House and explain the method by which they propose to finance projects of this magnitude.

In the case of the Department of Advanced Education, it is a project announced at 75 or \$80 million. In the case of the Department of health, it is announced variously at 30, 40, \$50 million. These are not trifling amounts and ought to attract the attention of the minister, and the minister ought to outline with some care just precisely how these projects are going to be financed.

But in case the ministers indicate that it's not within their department, in case they say that it's somebody else who's responsible and not they, I'm going to ask the Minister of Finance to outline how he proposes to finance the extension of St. Paul's Hospital to finance the construction of the college of agriculture for 60, 70, \$80 million.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well the hon. member is quite correct when he states that there is a reference at the back page of the *Estimates* to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, a concept that I had stated publicly, which has met with, I might say, some public support. And it states the amounts of capital expenditure for health, 75.4 million; for Education, 50.4 million; for government generally, 21.4 million.

Just so that the hon. member is not forced into the situation of running all over the place in case that is one of the questions, the minister responsible for the property management corporation is the minister responsible for Supply and Services. And he will, as I have indicated, be the appropriate minister to respond to those details.

Certainly you may object to the establishment of a property management corporation. I suppose we can debate that in the appropriate forum. I think that there is some merit to a property management corporation. It's not something that we're the only province in Canada with a property management corporation. The ultimate question which the hon. member, in my view, should be asking, or the one that should be responded to is: are the projects to be built? And certainly the projects are to be built. And the projects, as a matter of fact . . . Many of the

third party that are affected by the establishment of the property management corporation believe that there is a far better chance for speedy construction, better control of construction, better control of the total construction project, through the use of a property management corporation. Time will tell.

I happen to believe that the property management corporation is the correct way to go. So having said that, the ultimate question is: will the projects be built? Obviously we believe they will be, and we are assured that they will be, and we are very confident that they will be. and we say categorically that they will, in fact, be built.

So having said that, I've indicated to the Leader of the Opposition where the minister responsible for the property management corporation, and that's the appropriate estimates to debate, the existence of the property management corporation if you oppose it; to debate the financing, funding, and what not of the specific projects, the projects, the proposed date of construction, the tenders — if they're at that stage — whatever details one wishes. That's the appropriate estimates to get into those questions.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I am not now wanting to argue about the merits or otherwise of a property management corporation. I want to know where the money's coming from. I simply want to know whether you're providing this money out of your budget, or are you going to borrow the money? Now that's a fairly simple question.

With respect to the money required for, let us say, St. Paul's Hospital, is it proposed, Mr. Minister of Finance, that that money be provided for out of budgetary revenues, or is it proposed that that money be borrowed? Or do you have another source of money? Would you please indicate that?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — As I've indicated, the property management corporation is under the minister responsible for Supply and Services, and the financing and funding, funds . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No . . . on specific projects will be detailed at those estimates, whenever you, or whenever the estimates are brought forward. So they will vary. The means of financing will vary.

I have argued in the past, and I suppose we can debate the principle again, of a property management corporation that, in terms of the capital, at least some of the capital projects, that there is merit in debt-financing of projects that . . . and perhaps be amortized over a much longer period of time.

Again, we can debate that. Academics are debating whether that's a proper course or not. But the concept and the amortization of some of the major capital projects fight, and in the case of the thrust of the property management corporation, we've made it clear we're talking about buildings, that may be amortized over longer periods of time, and maybe debt-financed.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister,

do I take it that you simply decline to tell me where the \$80 million is going to come from that the college of agriculture is going to cost? I ask that question again, and I ask you: is there any money provided for in this budget by way of appropriation, or by way of borrowing, that your department will do for the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I have indicated that several of the projects will be debt-financed. The specific funding for the college of agriculture building will come from different sources, and I've indicated that in the budget speech.

We expect a public contribution. There's some discussions with the university as to the amount that they believe they can raise. We expect some contribution. I don't have the details from the senior level of government, province, and the various sources. So the projects will have different sources of funding and financing, and as I've said now three or four times, that the minister responsible for Supply and Services would go through the detailed projects.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I am not interested in the detailed projects. I used those as examples. I ask you, sir: where is money provided in this budget for this corporation? Mr. Minister, you have here laid out the money you propose to spend that has been raised, or will be raised by taxes. You have here set out the money you propose to spend that has been or will be raised by loans, advances, and investments. I find neither of them providing money for this corporation. I ask you: where is this corporation going to get its money?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I assume that if the projects are debt financed, the corporation would borrow.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — So that what you're telling me is that the corporation will borrow the province's share of the St. Paul's Hospital. Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — No. What I said is that there will be various sources of financing. Over time we see the corporation as generating income from some of the projects that are now in existence. I can think of commercial buildings. If it's got a positive cash flow, it'll be funding that way. So it's as I said — the details of the projects are going to come from various types of financing. It may come from the cash flow of the corporation; it may come from surpluses in the corporation, when the corporation is up and operating; it may come from debt financing, so it's going to vary according to the project.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, this corporation is an integral part of your budgeting package. As an integral part of your budgeting package, it is a part of your estimates. It is part of the Lane cook book. Now I ask you, sir, will you not state . . .

And this is the problem that people have with your government. These are perfectly proper questions that we ought to be able to get answers to from you — clear, coherent answers as to how you propose to use this

particular corporation, this management corporation, to finance the construction of capital works. I am sure that you must have an answer. You must know where the money is coming from. You must know where the money is coming from. Why will you . . .

Look, Mr. Minister. You have set out here \$151.2 million. Now that's a very specific figure. And when I ask you where is the \$151.2 million coming from, you say, well some of it may come from cash flow, and some of it may come from borrowing. Nonsense, Mr. Minister. You know where you propose to get that money. And I ask you to tell the House where you propose to get the 151 million.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well as I've indicated to the hon. member, there are different sources for the corporation to get the funds. I've said there's debt — debt financing. I made that clear. I've indicated, as well, the cash flow from the corporation that will fund these.

(1515)

You asked me about the college of agriculture. I've already indicated that public contributions is going to be a source. So, you know, there are the various sources. I don't know where the difficulty lies in that the corporation will start out obviously with a debt. It will borrow to start. The amounts of the various projects is going to, as I say, be better answered by the minister responsible for Supply and Services, the minister responsible for the corporation.

But having said all of that, we see the corporation, over time, is going to be generating a positive cash flow. And should that happen, it may self finance some of the projects. That option will be there. That happens, I believe in the province of British Columbia and the province of Quebec.

So the sources . . . I've indicated to you that the corporation will borrow, that many projects will be debt financed. Others will be financed through positive cash flow. Some, particularly the agriculture college, we expect a public contribution as well as contributions from the Government of Canada.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, the minister desperately tries to divert the discussion. I'm not talking about whether or not the sodbusters are going to contribute some money to the college of agriculture. I'm talking about the government's share of these projects.

Now, Mr. Minister, as you will well know in your estimates — and I will just refer to page 105 — the money that is going from your government, which you are borrowing for the agricultural credit corporation, and the Crown investments corporation, and the potash corporation, the crop insurance corporation, Sedco, the municipal financing corporation, the power corporation — they're here.

Now we have the property management corporation that's going to borrow \$158.76 million. Do you acknowledge, sir, that this \$158.76 — if you had

set up your estimates as you did last year — would have meant that your deficit was increased by \$158.76 million? Will you at least admit that?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I note very, very carefully that the Leader of the Opposition is not debating the merits or the demerits of a property management corporation — and it's for obvious reasons.

The fact that we establish a corporation that may make some financial changes does not take away from the merits, in our view, of the corporation. The fact that we believe that the corporation to be a good idea, that we believe that the corporation is good management, that we believe that the corporation will bring about some substantive savings to the people of Saskatchewan in its operation, should not take away from the effects. And we believe it to be a good idea. We believe it to be a very sound idea. I wish we had thought of it first but we didn't. The province of British Columbia's had one for some time, the province of Quebec has had one for some time, the province of Manitoba, for other reasons, had one. It's got some merit. So the fact that it has different effects should not take away from the soundness of the idea, and I don't believe that it does.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I'll ask my question again. Do you acknowledge, sir, that the \$158 million which you are borrowing for the property management corporation would, if you set up your books this year the same way as you did last year, would have increased our deficit by \$158 million and would have produced a combined deficit of \$547 million? Do you acknowledge that?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well I've indicated that the soundness of the idea should not take away from the effects. For you to argue, or the opposition to argue, that Crown corporations were not used in the past to affect budgetary transactions . . . I refer you back to your transfers of Ipsco shares in the past, which had an effect on the budgetary bottom line, if I can use that phrase. I take a look at the grain car corporation as having some effect on the budgetary bottom line. So you know, if you want to call the budget a "cook book," I mean, I could . . . I think that perhaps you guys are the Betty Crockers of budgetary budgets, and so your argument, I don't think, is a fair one.

Again, if you want to debate the merits or demerits of the existence of a property management corporation, fair debate. The fact that a good idea has certain effects, I don't think takes away from the merit of the idea. And secondly, the use of Crown corporations in the past, not only by your government or the federal Liberal government or anybody else, has been a practice. We believe that there are some fundamental benefits to the people of Saskatchewan through the use of a property management corporation.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I take it therefore that you are acknowledging that your deficit, if you calculated your books this year the same way you did last year, would be \$547 million. And if you're not acknowledging that, I would ask you to explain why it is not true.

I look at this property management corporation and I look at the list of items, and so far as we have any information on them they are all items which in previous years covered by tax money. Now again I want to use as examples — examples only — just how you propose to move this \$158 million which you're going to borrow for the property management corporation and how . . . to move that over to St. Paul's. I want to just use that as an example.

I want you to explain the financial transactions — and I'm not interested in the Health transactions now: I direct this to the Minister of Finance — how this money is to be moved to St. Paul's, and roughly how it is to be recorded in the books of the province.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Let's assume a project that is debt financed, that the property management corporation borrows on the credit of the province to finance a capital project. The capital project may well be, depending if — let's assume a hospital — that the government will pay the annual grant, whatever level that will be, to the hospital board. The hospital board will make its annual payment, whatever it is, to the property management corporation. That I expect to be a typical example of how it will flow through on hospitals.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Do I take then that the proposal is that money would be lent by the property management corporation to St. Paul's? You speak of debt financing and that St. Paul's would then pay back that money over time and that St. Paul's would get the money, presumably, from the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan.

And I'm talking now about St. Paul's because it is a project which is there and we can all see it. I don't see much action there in four years but there's some hoardings up there in any case. But we'll debate that again with the Minister of Health.

Right now I'm interested in the financial transactions. And you are saying now, Mr. Minister, that there will not be a grant to St. Paul's but there will be a loan to St. Paul's for the hospital project.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The property management corporation will build. The grant will go to the hospital or whatever the traditional funding — to the board — and it will pay the property management corporation whatever the annual costs are.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Do I then understand you to say, sir, that the property management corporation . . . It may well build, but I want to press you on this point. On this type of project — and there are many like it — are you saying that the property management corporation is going to do the building, meaning going to do the contracting? Or alternatively, are you saying that the property management corporation is going to own the asset? What are you saying with respect to that?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — That is that you have to pick and choose the asset, because the hospitals, the hospital board, will continue to own their facility. It will be financed, built by the property management corporation, owned by the hospital, funded through the consolidated

fund through the annual grant.

There are others where it may choose to finance it out of cash flow. Supposing the hospital has its own source of funds. It may want to make some payment towards it. It may not be the sole source.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I'm dealing with only the Crown's interest. And it seems very clear, therefore, that the money will be lent by property management corporation to St. Paul's, and St. Paul's will no longer get a grant to expand its hospital. There is no way that St. Paul's has to pay back anything to the property management corporation unless somebody lends them money. It follows therefore that the property management corporation is lending money to St. Paul's for the construction project. If this is not true, then I repeat my first question.

Take \$100,000 and follow it through from page 107 in the *Estimates* to its incorporation into St. Paul's Hospital, the project which is there. And as I say, this is one example. I could go through others, but I want to use one hospital and one university building.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well again, I mean, you take the project of a hospital. The property management corporation would borrow the funds to build. The government would continue to fund the hospital through the normal budgetary process. The hospital would then pay off the loan to the property management corporation.

That may not be the sole source. The hospital may have generated some funds. I mean, it's going to be dependent on the project. It's going to depend on the negotiations with the particular third party in this case, whether it be the university or whether it be the hospital.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I think we've established that point; that what we're now going to see is that the Crown, the minister is going to borrow money for the property management corporation. That's what page 107 says: consolidate fund loans, advances, and investments. That's your department, Mr. Minister. And it says that you are going to advance to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation \$158 million. That's what it says. Now you tell me that the corporation is going to lend that money to St. Paul's. That's exactly what you said — exactly what you said.

Look, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I am dealing with a Minister of Finance who's a lawyer, and he has got an obligation to explain the nature of the transaction. Mr. Chairman, I want to nail this down, because he is not asserting, he is not now asserting — in fact, he denied — that the property management corporation would own the addition to St. Paul's.

(1530)

He said the hospital board would own the addition to St. Paul's. He says that the property management corporation is going to put up the money — I say, lend it — and has got a right to get it paid back. The property management corporation has a right to get the money

back from St. Paul's. If any of those statements is not true, I wish the minister would indicate which is not true.

We are now talking about the Crown share, and I'm not asking the minister to deal with whether or not any auxiliary is providing some additional moneys. I'm talking solely about the money which is flowing through the property management corporation. I say to you that what you have told me, sir, is that your department is borrowing money; were going to advance it to the property management corporation; the property management corporation is going to lend it to St. Paul's; and St. Paul's in due course will repay the property management corporation with interest; and they will presumably get their money from the Crown since they don't have other sources of income — any significant sources of income.

Therefore what we see is the hospital is not longer getting grants for capital purposes but only loans for capital purposes. And they are going to pay back those loans from grants from the operating costs of the hospitals. That, I think, is exactly what you told me, and if that is not accurate, I would like you to clear that up and then we can go on to see whether the same policy applies to universities.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — That will probably be the way it operates. I can't envisage every project as to the exact financing in every project. As I say, the property management corporation from time to time may be doing it out of its own positive cash flow, so that that option we expect may well be there from time to time as well. And that's something it can decide to do.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — So far as the recipient of the loan is concerned, the people that used to get grants — the hospitals who used to get grants but who will now get loans — for them it doesn't matter whether the property management corporation gets the money from a cash flow or not. Presumably they're going to have to pay it back with interest. If this isn't the policy of the government with respect to these very substantial sums of money that are listed on page 134 of the *Estimates*, then I think it would be helpful if the minister made that clear.

Now moving on to the university, is the same thing equally true with respect to the college of agriculture? And I'll use that example. Is it proposed that the property management corporation would own the college of agriculture building or that they would simply lend the money to the university who would own the college of agriculture building? And again I'd say, Mr. Minister, these are large sums of money. These are not picky items. And this is a brand-new concept that is much more a part of the budget than it is to be directed to the minister in charge of the property management corporation since he can hardly be expected to explain how this is going to fit into the fiscal plan.

I'm asking you again, sir, with respect to the university, is it proposed that — again, I'll take the example of the college of agriculture, and again dealing only with the Crown's share: is it proposed that that money be advanced to the university, that they borrow it from the property management corporation, or is it proposed that

the building would be owned by the property management corporation?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — My understanding is that the building be owned by the university.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, do I take, therefore, that what used to be grants for university buildings now are loans for university buildings from the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. I look at something like the college of agriculture which may have a Crown loan . . . carrying a Crown loan of \$70 million. I don't know what it will turn out to be, but let me use that figure. And the carrying cost of that loan would be perhaps 12 per cent, perhaps 10; but I'll say 10 per cent, then. Then the university grants will have to be increased by 7 million for that building, and a given amount for each other building which is financed in the same way, quite apart from other costs that the university might have.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well any project would be funded that way. That's how it would in fact operate, that the grants would have to increase to deal with the added carrying cost of amortizing that particular project over a much longer period of time.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — So that, Mr. Minister, and I use that one example . . . Next year, if this method of financing should be continued, and I trust it will not be . . . and this is a very different argument from whether we have a property management corporation. You can certainly have a property management corporation without massive debt financing. It's a very, very different argument.

But I come to the issue of interest on the public debt. Would the minister agree, therefore, that in a few years the figure of interest on the public debt will state only a small part of the interest on the public debt, and in fact we will have to hunt for interest on the public debt in the estimates of the Minister of Advanced Education because he will be paying 10, 15, 20, 25, \$30 million to the universities to cover interest on money borrowed by the Crown to finance hospitals. And so that we will have, therefore, very, very large amounts of interest.

And will he not agree that this is a very substantial change in policy. The policy heretofore has been that organizations which were essentially self-financing in the sense that they acquired money other than from tax sources — borrowed; people that acquired money primarily from tax sources were financed by grants; and that you propose to change that policy. You propose to make the university something like the power corporation, in the belief that it can collect money separate and apart from taxes when you and I know it can't. Mr. Minister, will you not acknowledge that this will mean that massive extra amounts of interest are going to be paid by the next generation of Saskatchewan people if this policy is continued for any appreciable period of time?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I freely acknowledge that perhaps on

many of the capital projects that future generations should, in fact, help pay for the cost of those projects. If we have a hospital that has a life of 50 years, it's going to be used by the people for the next 50 years, that it's fair for them to make some contribution towards the cost of the project. Yes, that is a change of policy.

The more broad debate as to what once includes in capital or capital budgeting is one that I suppose we could get into, but certainly it is predicated on the basis that future generations will help pay the cost of projects that they will use.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — But, Mr. Minister, let me take the university, for example. Past generations paid for the current buildings; you say that future buildings should be paid for by future generations, and this generation shouldn't pay for any of it. That is essentially your argument, and it is your argument because your government is so profligate that it cannot provide its fair share of the capital cost.

We inherited a university campus that was paid for by past generations. It seems perfectly . . . And we are not . . . Boy, oh boy, I am having some comments from members opposite about private business. Can one imagine a business conducting itself on the basis that it was given a very substantial equity and that one generation of management does not charge to current account any depreciation on all that substantial equity — not charging that against current — it is not providing for any future capital out of current it is therefore not providing for any past capital out of current earnings or any future capital out of current earnings, and that is recommended as a business proposition — that is recommended as a business proposition.

Mr. Chair, and Mr. Minister, if in fact we were charging depreciation against current expenses, depreciation on all the assets which we had acquired, then an argument which says that future generations should pay for their future assets because we would be charging against our current expenses some of the past assets, that would be an argument. But you want to take everything that was handed to you, use it for free — not add your share in your period of time at the helm — and then say to future generations, you go ahead and pay for what you use. We are using what was passed to us and we're using it free.

I suspect you may even go farther. You may even go farther and sell off something that you received from the past generation, and you will be in the happy position of having some of the assets you use paid for by the last generation and some of it by the next generation, and none of it by this generation, because you have so mismanaged the financial shares of this province, that even taking from generations past and future you can't manage to balance the books.

That seems to be the sad state in which we're in, but it seems very, very clear, Mr. Minister, that you do not intend to use the business approach of charging depreciation on assets which are here, and borrowing for future assets — that's a defensible position — or for paying as you go, which has been rule in this province

since World War II. You have decided that you are going to take what you got for the past generations, make no contribution to it, not add anything in this year and in this generation, but force the next generation to pay for the assets that they use, even though we're not paying for the assets that we use.

Now that, Mr. Minister, is financing which is not in the best interests of Saskatchewan people; it's not in keeping with the long tradition of "pay as you go" in these areas of highways and university buildings and hospitals, where we have not burdened future generations with debt, and we have welcomed what past generations have passed on to us.

You want to say, yes indeed, we welcome what that past generation has passed on to us, a fully paid-for university campus, but we're not going to pass on to the next generation any fully paid-for university campus — no way. We are going to say, if you use it in the future, you pay for it. That's what future generations shall do, but not us. We are going to use what was passed onto us free and clear.

And that is the proposal you're putting forward in this budget, and I say, Mr. Minister, that it is either unfair to the past generations for not . . . and we can't remedy that, obviously . . . they have given it to us, and we have the same obligation, Mr. Minister, to add our share to the pot and hand it on to the next generation, and it is that which you're refusing to do.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — If anybody thinks that the present generation is getting off scot-free to pay for things like the Sturdy Stone Building in the province of Saskatchewan, it paid through the nose for that particular building, and it paid through the nose for many other projects implemented.

Let me tell you . . . Oh, don't tell us there was no deficit. Nobody out there believes it. Nobody else believes it out there that those things were financed without a deficit. They were financed by the present generation and paid through the nose by the present generation.

(1545)

And let me tell you, in terms of the need for a property management corporation, the Sturdy Stone Building is a prime example; that there's a supposed commercial building — primarily a parkade never been utilized to 50 per cent; not necessary in terms of the size. Government offices had to be put in there. I'm referring to the liquor board, that we listened to debate here for one year one time, and the government denying that the liquor board store was going . . . the previous government going into the Sturdy Stone Building to try and bail it out and make it, allow it to generate some income

Certainly there's a change in policy. We've made that abundantly clear. We also acknowledge that in many cases there are assets that have already been paid for, but to say that the present generation made no contribution is terribly wrong. The present generation has made a significant contribution to capital projects throughout the province of Saskatchewan, and they have paid, as I say, in

many cases, very much through the nose.

We believe that over the long haul the property management corporation will lead to savings for the people of Saskatchewan. It will lead to savings in different ways. One, in terms of consolidation of design and building activities within government. Secondly, it will lead to — at least based on the past experience of other property management corporations — a better allocation of program expenditures, that now the costs of space and some of those are now integrated into the cost of programs. We get a far better valuation of the cost of programs. The very fact that in many cases managers now have to take into account the cost of calculating space costs in their budgetary proposals has led to some savings in other jurisdictions.

The advantages of using the property management corporation for things like capital leasing of some assets, some major acquisitions that may be leased over a period of time — there have been savings and substantial savings in other jurisdictions . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I've never denied, and I've freely admitted that this is a change in policy. But the very fact that it's a change in policy should not make the concept wrong.

I believe the concept has merit. The concept has merit in other jurisdictions. It has worked in other jurisdictions. It's been more broadly applied in other jurisdictions. It's had the support and a more broad application in the province of British Columbia by the New Democratic Party. So this is not something new. As I say, the concept has merit; the approach has merit. But to argue that the present generation is not making any contribution is wrong.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, as the minister well knows, when I talk about the present generation, I mean starting with the change of policy. Obviously since we have a continuous policy since World War II of paying for hospitals, nursing homes, and highways, and university buildings out of current revenue, this generation up to now has paid its fair share.

It is this year where we're changing, and it's that which I am saying needs to be explained. Dealing only with the theory of the thing, how is beneficial to have St. Paul's Hospital financed by a loan rather than a grant? Just take that as an example. How will it improve the efficiency — after all, the project is under way — how will it change the design? How will it improve the efficiency? How will it in any way assist you in ascertaining the cost of delivery of the program?

I will ask you those questions because those are the arguments you put forward for financing St. Paul's on the basis of a loan rather than a grant.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Well, we simply had to make the arbitrary decisions when the decision was made to proceed with the property management corporation of what is included. We started somewhere; we've made the decision. We can debate that from some considerable period of time. But there is an argument, for example, on schools that if the property management corporations is able to borrow on the strengths of the province, an

immediate saving is the small premium that school boards are paying to the local municipal financing commission, or the Local Government Financing Commission, for what funds they did get. So there are arguments for some savings already in some of the public buildings that perhaps a third party does some borrowing already.

We made the decision to go with the property management corporation. We can debate if we did it two years ago. It would have had the same effect, and the debate would have been then; we've done it now. If we had have left it for another two years, it would still have the same merits, in my view. And I will predict that in the not too distant future you will see virtually every province go with the property management corporation. I believe you will see the federal government go with it. I believe that you will see capital budgeting, as an initiative, be very, very well debated in the next month of two in the U.S. Congress. We may disagree with it. We may agree to disagree. But we've made the decision with the property management corporation to proceed.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, we seem to be unable to conduct a discussion here without discussing the merits of the property management corporation, and that is not at issue. We can debate that in another forum.

What I'm asking is: what are the merits of financing hospitals, the hospital construction, through a property management corporation? That is the question I ask, the St. Paul's project. Now what is the merit of saying to St. Paul's: no more grants, you've got to borrow the money.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — We may have some management benefits. The hon. members knows full well from time to time, historically, in the province, there have been differences between the Department of Supply and Services and the Department of Health and what should or shouldn't be. We hope that with some consolidation of activities that we get a more concerted approach to design and use and benefits.

You can make an argument, why did you put St. Paul's in when you're starting out now — fair debate. We chose to put all or most, if not all, the buildings under construction in to get the corporation established. You obviously disagree with that, but we see some, if nothing else in the future, certainly some management benefits.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, you could have achieved those management benefits very, very simply by simply taking this \$158 million, putting it in your estimates, having the property management corporation then make grants.

I'm not recommending this, but you could have got all of the benefits which you purport to want to achieve — virtually all of them — and still had your books represent the true costs of providing services in Saskatchewan, rather than disguising 158 million of budgetary costs and saying that it is somehow a corporation and is not budgetary costs. There is no reason for saying that you have to have a property management corporation, that

you have to force it to borrow, to achieve all those benefits which you seek to achieve.

But I want to ask one other question, and it is this. Am I then to believe that the property management corporation is going to be the one which will, by and large, supervise the construction projects of virtually all the hospitals and all the university buildings and all the government buildings and all the parks buildings in this province?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — To respond first. You take a single project. And I may agree with your argument, but the property management corporation is broader than one project. So I don't accept that singling one out is fair to the concept of a property management corporation. Obviously, on a project like a hospital, there are many players, and a property management corporation continues to bring all those players into design and the building of a facility. So there's no exclusion of the players by virtue of the corporation.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — We're reasonably satisfied to ask a few questions here. Am I right then in my assumption that . . . Since you say that economies are going to be achieved by standardizing construction and other like economies, am I right in believing that all the major Health projects, all the major Advanced Education projects, a significant number of the Department of Education projects, and all the Parks and Renewable Resources capital projects of a significant nature will be organized by the property management corporation?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — As the corporation develops and assumes its expertise, and I assume as well that it gets the confidence of those involved, that yes, we would see that evolving.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — And you say . . . I'm not quite sure why the confidence of those involved is too important if the property management corporation is putting up all the money. It's relatively easy to get the confidence of the people who need your money. It seems to me, therefore, that the property management corporation will in effect be making all the major construction management decisions for that range of projects. It's inevitable from what you say.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — If I can respond to that part . . . I'm sure the hon. member knows of many situations where perhaps the government has put up the money in the past and the very fact of putting up the money does not automatically obtain the confidence of the third party involved; that they may have some differences of opinion — so that's what I was referring to.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I want to review what I think is an easier set of questions, and it has to do with Parks and Renewable Resources capital. Where the asset is to be owned by the Crown it seems to me a relatively easier question as to whether or not the role of the property management corporation is likely to be intrusive.

Is it understood — and I see the minister in charge of the property management corporation is about so he can

doubtless assist us in the committee here — is it thought that, for example, if a ski-lift is going to be constructed in a provincial park that the property management corporation would do that sort of work? Is that the type of things that will be done? I say this because I look at page 73 of the *Estimates* and there is not money in there for park construction at all. And since I am sure that there are many park projects that have been announced, and there are many more that will be announced of all kinds and shapes, and which I'm sure is true of many other public projects — I'm not suggesting for a moment that the public will anticipate that they will be built, but some of them may be built and they may well be interested in knowing since . . . I speak with respect to the parks project — there's no money in the budget. What was it you had in mind?

(1600)

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I don't have the details of what parks facility and resource development . . . The total amount direct is somewhere in the range of \$3.2 million allocated to the property management corporation. I don't know what those projects are. I can attempt to obtain them, but I don't have them.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lane: —

Resolved, that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1987, the sum of \$292,309,960 be granted out of the consolidated fund.

Motion agree to.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Chairman, I move the following resolution:

Resolved, that a sum not exceeding \$71,915,580 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 1987.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I don't have my *Estimates* here exactly but that's one-twelfth of the heritage fund, is it, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Yes.

Motion agree to.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Chairman, I move the following resolution:

Resolved, that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1987, the sum of \$71,915,580 be granted out of the Saskatchewan Heritage Fund.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The next item is special projects fund,

for the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Chairman, I move the following resolution:

Resolved, that a sum not exceeding \$78,460 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 1987.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Chairman, I move the following resolution:

Resolved, that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1987, the sum of \$78,460 be granted out of the special projects fund.

Motion agreed to.

The committee reported progress.

FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lane: — I move the resolutions be now read the first time.

Motion agreed to the resolutions read a first time.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — By leave of the Assembly, I move that the resolutions be now read a second time and agreed to.

By leave of the Assembly, the said resolutions were read a second time and agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Hon. Mr. Lane: — By leave of the Assembly, I move:

That Bill No. 19, An Act for the Granting to her Majesty Certain Sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal year Ending on March 31, 1987, be now introduced and read a first time.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — By leave of the Assembly, I move that the Bill be now read a second and third time.

Motion agreed, the Bill read a second and third time and passed under its title.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Health Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 32

Mr. Chairman: — Would the minister like to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce the officials that will be assisting me in this set of estimates. Seated beside me to my left is Walter Podiluk,

deputy minister of Health. Across from Walter is Don Philippon, assistant deputy minister of Health. To my right here is George Loewen, associate deputy minister of Health. Directly behind me is Dick Bailey, assistant deputy minister of Health, and beside Dick is Lawrence Krahn, the director of administrative services.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a few brief introductory remarks before we get into the estimates in themselves. I think also at this time I would like to indicate there are a number of other branch heads at the back of the Chamber that will be assisting us as we go through the estimates. Mr. Chairman, I think it's appropriate that Health should be the first of the departments on the estimates of this session of the legislature, because I think being number one and being the first one reflects the position of Saskatchewan health care on the Canadian scene. And, Mr. Chairman, I don't intend, as I said earlier, to make a long opening statement. During the throne speech debate, and the budget debate over the past couple of weeks, my colleagues on this side of the House have certainly enunciated very articulately this government's commitment to health care, and I think it has been described and documented very well.

However, Mr. Chairman, I want to mention just a few highlights of the 1986-87 Health budget. First of all, Mr. Chairman, in the 1986-87 budget, for operating and capital, the total budget is \$1.2 billion. And that's an increase, Mr. Chairman, I should say an increase over last year of 11.6 per cent.

And, Mr. Chairman, we are providing \$75 million for the largest construction, capital construction, in hospital and special care homes. We've heard some discussion of this a little between the Leader of the Opposition and the Finance minister. That's for capital for special care homes, hospitals, and other health care facilities, and this certainly reflects a continuation of our five-year plan towards capital construction.

Mr. Chairman, we are continuing our efforts to administer health care programs and services as efficiently as possible, so that the new dollars can go where they belong, and that is directly into services for the public.

Mr. Chairman, in 1986-87, the Health budget reflects our government's continuing priority on health care for the people of Saskatchewan, and I welcome this opportunity to discuss the 1986-87 Health estimates with the members of the Chamber.

So therefore, without any further discussion, Mr. Chairman, I would certainly be willing to enter into a complete and thorough description of this year's health care budget. I say, as I take my seat, an improvement, and addition of 11.6 per cent over last year — I think substantial in any constituency, in any part of this country.

Mr. Shillington: — My colleague from Athabasca just now referred to the spirited government caucus. I'll tell you, it reminds me of a bunch of basset hounds that have been drugged. You not only look sad; you look dead, as well.

I say to the minister that if you welcome the opportunity to discuss your record in Health, I wonder why you have consistently avoided appearing at the debates which have been organized by the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. The latest display of courage on your part was in Prince Albert, where I gather no one — not you, not the member from P.A.-Duck Lake, and not the member from Prince Albert, nobody . . .

An Hon. Member: — Sleazy wouldn't even turn up.

Mr. Shillington: — Sleazy did not apparently have the courage to go and face the music.

Mr. Minister, I have never seen . . . I know of no parallel for the rapid decline in the quality of health care that this province has seen over the last four years, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I will admit, as critical as I am of your effectiveness as a government, I will admit the effectiveness of your last campaign in '82. Anything which had any shadow of substance became a major crisis for which the former administration was personally responsible. But I don't recall you campaigning on the issue of health care.

(1615)

And I suggest therefore, Mr. Minister, that that may well confirm what we say, and that is that we had a health care system in 1982 which met the needs and the expectations of Saskatchewan people. And they aren't always the same. Clearly, Mr. Minister, the health care system which we have today meets neither their needs nor their expectations.

Mr. Minister, there are any number of stories which illustrate the depth of concern with respect to health care, Mr. Minister. You can stand — as I gather one report did, from one Regina television station — you can stand in the doorway and simply ask people as they're coming in or going out, are these hospitals adequately staffed? And the answer, in eight cases out of 10 for the reporter who did it, was no — in eight cases out of 10.

Well, you may think that to be another vicious attack on the Conservative Party. All I can say is, you people are suffering from a bewildering variety of enemies. It used to be just the trade unions. Now you have added to that the nurses . . .

An Hon. Member: — The teachers.

Mr. Shillington: — The teachers. I gather from comments of the Minister of Social Services the other day, you've added to the list of vicious, unfair enemies, the Ombudsman. And I think when we get to the Provincial Auditor's report, we're going to find once again — because I have never seen a report quite like that — we are going to find yet another vicious, unfair enemy.

Well one of the enemies, Mr. Minister, which you apparently seem to feel is vicious and unfair, are the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. Mr. Minister, they are not creating this issue out of thin air. They are having such success with their campaign because their comments fall

on fertile ground.

When the nurses say our health care system and our hospitals aren't adequately staffed, their campaign is so phenomenally successful because they hear everyone saying, that's right, they're not adequately staffed. You can talk to virtually anyone who's been in a hospital recently — you can talk to virtually anyone — and they'll tell you that they haven't adequate staff.

I just read a letter in the newspaper. I didn't recognize the name, and I've been in politics long enough in Regina that most active supporters for the NDP, I recognize their names. I didn't recognize this name. This person wrote that . . .

An Hon. Member: — A new one every week.

Mr. Shillington: — There are so many new ones, that's probably true. The member from Canora asked if that's not a new supporter. There are so many new supporters and converts to the NDP that I'm probably being presumptuous to suggest that anyone could remember all their names.

In any event, this person, I thought, made a valid point. The person said, my child was in the hospital. There were 30 children in that wing and two nurse. I sat with my child and read government ad after government ad after government ad. And as I sat there giving my child the care that ought to have come from a trained professional, I wonder about this government's sense of priorities.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, about this government's sense of priorities. I wonder if it really appropriate to be underfunding our hospitals and lavishing money on other things.

Mr. Minister, we just completed a discussion with . . . It wasn't a discussion; it was an ill-fated attempt to get some information out of the Minister of Finance. He believes in open government about as much as the rest of you do. We attempted to get some information out of him with respect to some spectacular development products — spectacular in the cost and spectacular in the looseness of the financial arrangements.

But, Mr. Minister, you appear to be giving about \$20 million to Peter Pocklington, a man who, as I say, his financial affairs are well chronicled. I recall in question period, when it was announced with him sitting in the press gallery, reading an article from the *Macleans* magazine which suggest his Royal Bank was foreclosing on his house. You've got \$20 million for him. You have vast sums of money for Weyerhaeuser under the most elastic of arrangements with respect to paying it back. You've got 700 million for Estevan.

Mr. Minister, the list goes on and on and on and on. Why have you not some money for hospitals? Mr. Minister, why can you not do something meaningful with respect to hospitals? Why can't you get the staffing level up to the point where those who are professionals in the hospital . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Well why don't you people call an election? If you think

your health program is so great, then call an election. Call an election. If you haven't got the nerve to call an election, then at least show up at some of the debates put on by SUN.

I say, Mr. Minister, that you haven't got the courage. It may well be that you have the good sense not to show up. It may well be that your record in health care is absolutely indefensible. I think that's probably the case. I think your record is indefensible, Mr. Minister, and I want to congratulate you on having the good sense not to go out in public and try and defend it, as you haven't.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Again, Mr. Chairman, if you listen to the consistency and the logic of the member opposite, he stood on his feet at first and said, why don't you go? When he sat down he said, I'm glad you're not going. So I don't know just what logic he is using.

But before I begin discussing the hospitals, I'd just like to make it very abundantly clear to everyone here the credibility of the person that was on his feet previously. I have a little newsletter he sends out to the people of Regina Centre. He happened to send this out on March 25, 1986. And he happens to say this about health care.

He says the PCs have allowed our health care system to deteriorate. As he says now, we need more nurses, we need much better home care — although we put more money into home care than his party ever did — and we need more nursing home beds. He puts this in brackets. He says:

Did you know that the PCs are planning only 30 beds for all of Regina over the coming three years?

Mr. Chairman, that is simply unadulterated . . . untrue. What is coming in Regina on special care homes is 118 beds — 30 at the Salvation Army, 48 at Santa Maria, and 29 extra ones in the new rehab centre. So, Mr. Minister, before you ever stand in the legislature, one of the basic rules of politics that you have never learned, my friend, is get your facts right before you stand up and shoot off your mouth.

So certainly I think . . . And that's what you're saying — 30 beds. It's 118. He speaks as if he was the big advocate of nursing care in Saskatchewan. I went to the Regina meeting, right in his seat, in the Regina Inn, right in the middle of Regina Centre, but I didn't see the member opposite anywhere there. I didn't see him there are all. No. He's the big man. He says, well I'm concerned about nursing care. He wouldn't show up at the meeting in his own seat. That's his concern. That's his hypocrisy.

I can tell you, when there was a meeting in . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, they were there. They tried. But he wasn't there. He wasn't there. He's the big advocate. He's standing up saying the great concern he has. He hasn't got the decency to the nurses of Saskatchewan to show up in his own seat . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Or the guts. That's right.

But I want to say to you, if you think 11.6 per cent increase is declining health care, I don't know what you would expect to be an adequate amount of people's funds and

taxation to be put into health care. If you believe one-third of the expenditure of the budget of Saskatchewan is not for the provision of adequate health care then I question where you're coming from also.

And we'll go back to the nursing positions. We have put in over 430 nursing positions in the last four years. And that, let me remind you of something that I know isn't music to your ears, but that comes because of a cut-back of 5 per cent in nursing staff to July 1st, 1976, by the NDP government, because they felt it was in better interest to the people of Saskatchewan to buy more potash mines with their money rather than to keep nurses at the bedside. That's the scenario. So I question where you're coming from, and your facts.

And also, while I'm on my feet, I'll give you a few other ideas that you can listen to. Did you know that we lead Canada, and we are 36 per cent above the Canadian average in the number of approved general beds per capita? Were you aware of that? Thirty-six per cent above. And we're building more beds in the hospitals. University Hospital is getting two new floors. And also that we lead Canada and are 21 per cent above the Canadian average in its number of general hospital nursing staff per capita — 21 per cent above the Canadian average. And you have the audacity to stand up and say things are declining.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, perhaps the reason why I have such audacity is because I am in such numerous company. Virtually everybody in this province who has ever given a thought to our health care system has said that this system is collapsing, and that is not an exaggeration. That is not an exaggeration. I commended the minister on his good sense in not going out in public and defending what is an indefensible record.

I also want to congratulate the minister on his good sense in his reading material. Mr. Minister, I will send all newsletters that I send out, I'll send them to you, and no doubt as time goes on, you will do a better job of defending your department in the legislature. So I want to congratulate you on reading a very fine piece of written material, Mr. Minister. I want to congratulate you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the member from Moosomin ought to recognize looking pretty silly and stupid, as you have over the last four years as well. You ought to recognize that condition.

Mr. Minister . . .

Mr. Chairman: — You know, I think we can set the tone of this discussion if we keep it with the member whom

you are questioning, and not talk to other members in the House. So let us keep the discussion going back and forth between you and the minister and we'll make progress.

Mr. Shillington: — I agree that any contribution made by the member from Moosomin in this debate is bound to lower the quality of the debate. I well agree, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for what is a common sense ruling.

Mr. Minister, one of the problems we unquestionably have, and I'll ask you to comment on this, is that the nursing homes appear to be full of — not full, I'm sorry . . . the hospitals appear to have a large number of people in them who don't really require hospital care in the normal sense. They are people who require nursing home care, perhaps a level of home care. Mr. Minister, I wonder when you're going to get around to dealing with that problem, as distinct from talking about it.

We have heard an endless amount of talk about nursing home beds and very, very little action, to the point where the problem has got to be acute. I don't know, Mr. Minister . . . if we got the nursing home patients out of the hospital, I don't know whether or not we'd have enough hospital beds, Mr. Minister. We might or might not. But that is so theoretical at the moment, the question is not worth discussing. The point is . . .

(1630)

An Hon. Member: — Do they hate you guys out there!

Mr. Shillington: — Well, the member thinks they hate us. I say, if you think they hate us, then give them a chance to get even with us. Call an election.

Mr. Minister, will you not admit . . . Will you (a) save us the malarkey about the NDP having a freeze on nursing home beds? Will you save us the speech? I tell you, Mr. Minister, it's not relevant to the solution of the problem. I know that your fantasies and your myths with respect to the failing of the former government may be the only cheer you people get these days, but I ask you, Mr. Minister, to deal with some solutions. I ask you to comment on the problem and tell us what you think the solution to the critical shortage of nursing home beds is.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I know he doesn't like to hear this, but one more time I'll tell him. You were the people, you were the people opposite that said in '76: there shall be a moratorium on nursing home beds.

Well anyone would understand if you put a moratorium on something then, certainly there's going to be problem that develops from that. And when we came in — and you've heard me say this before, but I'll tell you again — one of the first needs I saw was care for the elderly. And we came with a five-year plan of nursing home construction — 1,600 beds in 60 communities cross Saskatchewan. And that program is going into its third year now. And I can tell you it's very well received. Also, it is providing more nursing homes for a year than any other place in Saskatchewan — more nursing home

beds.

So for you to stand there and complain and be concerned about people in the acute care hospitals that are blocking beds because of a lack of nursing homes, I can tell you I have that same concern. I had it. But the difference is that we've done something about it, and you put on a moratorium. That's the difference.

Mr. Shillington: — I know that this government, unable to deal with the problems of the present, delights in living in the past. But I ask you, Mr. Minister, to give us some description of what you are going to do with the problem. I gather that we may at least deduce from that last comment that you admit the problem is serious. I ask you what you're going to do about it.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Just to indicate — and I'll just run through a few of them. This isn't in any way the entirety of the program, but in 1982-83 there were 30 new beds in Birch Hills; there were 12 in Biggar; there were 49 replacement ones in Weyburn; 12 replacement ones in Biggar; 16 replacement in Wakaw; 36 replacement in Middle lake - -that's 1982-83.

In 1983-84, 30 new beds in Central Butte; 30 new beds in Whitewood; 15 new beds in Spiritwood; 21 replacement beds in Spiritwood; 19 replacement beds in Herbert.

In 1984-85, 10 new replacement beds in Davidson; 15 in Indian Head; 10 in Kelvington; 80 replacement in Kindersley; 14 new beds in Kinistino; 50 replacement beds in Lloydminster; 60 new beds in Outlook; 11 new beds at the Regina Lutheran; 50 new beds at Circle Drive Alliance in Saskatoon; six new beds and 24 replacements in Stoughton.

So for totals: new beds in '82-83, 43 of them; replacement, 113. In '83-84: 75 new beds, 40 replacements. In '84-85: 162 new beds, 166 replacements.

So that's just some of the activity that's been taking part, and as I say, that's only for the first three years of the program. There's much more to come yet.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you'd be kind enough to send us that document. Those figures are hard to get when you're speaking them. Would you send us the document?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes.

Mr. Shillington: — And I gather you'll send it right now, will you?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I'm not going to send you my copy, but I will provide another one for you. You might lose this one.

Mr. Shillington: — Well I wonder if you'd trust the pages to make a copy of it and bring you back your copy. It is germane to the discussion now and I'd ask for the information now. For this government to say we'll send it to you is absolutely pointless. Years go by without you people even answering a question. I frankly don't trust

you. I frankly don't trust you when you say you will give it to us. I ask you, Mr. Minister: give us the list now, which you just read off.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes, I'll be providing it to the pages and they'll get it to you.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would tell us . . . I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you would list the years in which there were no nursing home beds built. You spoke of this never-ending freeze of nursing home beds. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you'd give us the years in which there were no nursing home beds built in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, I can tell you I'd have to look back through your record, which is dismal reading. I thought maybe you having been a minister of the Crown at that time might know, but obviously you don't. I know when the moratorium was put on. We will go back through that dismal research and we'll provide that for you. It might be available in your files somewhere, though.

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Minister, I say to you that no such freeze exists. Ask the gentlemen sitting beside you and I think they'll confirm that. There was no such freeze. There were nursing home beds built every year, Mr. Minister. So I ask you, Mr. Minister, to consult some of the people you have with you and give us the years in which there were no nursing home beds built. I want to hear those years. I think they know. I think they've got the information right in front of them. I ask you to get it from them and give it to us.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Most certainly. We will give you the information of your dismal record of nursing home beds being built. We will also send you a copy of the letter of the moratorium, and we will also send you a copy of the reduction letter in 1976 of 5 per cent for the hospitals — just so you're up to date and know exactly what took place.

Mr. Shillington: — Nothing of the sort took place, and the minister very well knows it, Mr. Minister. If in fact there had been such a freeze in effect, I can't believe that you would be careless and incompetent enough to come to your estimates and not have the detail of such a freeze.

I say to you, Mr. Minister, it didn't exist. You and your fellow ministers have made that up. It has got to the point where you are the victims of your own propaganda. But there was no such freeze, and I know I'm never going to get those years because they don't exist.

Mr. Minister, I ask you again to deal with the present. You stated . . . Mr. Minister, I'll ask you to be a little more specific, since I haven't yet got the copy of that document. How many nursing home beds have been built in the city of Regina since April 26, 1982?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The member opposite wonders why I don't come to estimates to defend the activities of his government. There is no way that I would stand here and

defend the dismal health record of the government opposite. But if he doesn't have any files or any records we will send some to him.

I have one here that I'll be glad to send over. I'll be pleased to send this over to you too. And it says here January 4, 1976. It's from W. Smishek. He was the chairman of treasury board, and it was to the Hon. H. Rolfes, minister of Social Services. It says:

Construction grants for special care homes. On December 1, 1975, treasury board reviewed the Department of Social Services 1976-77 budgetary request for construction grants to special care homes. Treasury board is seriously concerned about the level of construction occurring in special care homes. The level of activity proposed in the 1976-77 budgetary request will result in a surplus of beds without considering the impact upon home care. The treasury board deferred a decision on the level of funding to be approved for its activity pending the review of more detailed information on all committed projects.

Until such time as the need for additional beds can be clearly identified (until such time as the need can clearly be identified) and a suitable construction policy defined (they didn't even have a policy), a moratorium (spelled m-o-r-a-t-o-r-i-u-m) on further commitments should be enforced. Signed by Walter Smishek.

That's as plain, my friend, as the nose on your face.

Mr. Shillington: — Well, Mr. Minister, if that is your evidence that there is a freeze on nursing homes, Mr. Minister, I accuse you of either misleading the Assembly or being unable to read the English language. The letter says no such thing . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Probably both.

Mr. Minister, that letter is from the minister of Finance at that time to the minister of Health, asking him to justify his request for additional nursing home beds. I know this is going to come as a shocking surprise to you, but there was a day when the role of the minister of Finance was to try to keep some control over government expenditures and to ask minister to justify their expenditures. And that is all the letter is doing, is asking the minister to justify the request. It is nothing other than that.

I say, Mr. Minister, if that's your proof, then I regret that your education was neglected, because you don't appear to be able to read the English language. That's not what the letter says. That is clearly not what the letter says.

I take it, Mr. Minister, from that, that there is no evidence or any freeze when the former government was in office. Or do you have some real evidence as distinction from that bit of nonsense, Mr. Minister?

I wonder as well, Mr. Minister, while you're attempting to defend that comment, if you can tell us whether or not you're going to get around to telling us what you have been able to do in the city of Regina. It's the area I'm

familiar with.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I mentioned about the city of Regina when I was indicating the untruth that you put in your letter to your constituents. But I have another letter here. This is July 13th, '78. This happens to be to Theodore, little town out in north-east Saskatchewan there. They were wanting a nursing home. I don't know how many years they asked for it. They're getting one now, by the way. But here was the letter on the 13th of July in 1978. It says that:

. . . the policy has prompted the government to place a moratorium on the development of any additional special care beds.

That was signed by Mr. Ross, the senior standards consultant.

I have another letter here, the same year as the potash take-over, April 27, '76, to Dr. Morely Smith-Windsor, the executive director of St. Paul's Hospital. It says here:

. . . that the reduction in approved in-patient days has required a reassessment of your approved staff component for 1976.

A reassessment of the approved staff component. It says:

. . . for your hospital the following staffing reductions will become effective July 1, '76. You will lose at St. Paul's, six registered nurses; you will lose three certified nursing assistants; you will lose 2.5 nurse's aids; you will lose two dietary aides I; one lab technician, and 0.5 laundry aides.

Those were reductions right in the year when the government opposite went on their potash binge. Let's go a little further to see the other threatening things that they put in the letter to St. Paul's Hospital. They say this:

In addition, adjustments may occur in nursing supplies, in pharmacy supplies and radiology supplies, and laboratory supplies, and printing, stationery and in office supplies.

An Hon. Member: — No CAT scan.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — They never had heard of the CAT scan at St. Paul's at that time, because they knew there was no hope to get one. When you were being cut back on stationery and printing supplies, what hope did you have getting a CAT scan? Zip. So there's another letter that you may be interested in putting in your little file.

Mr. Shillington: — I don't know if the minister is going to get around to reading the Eaton's catalogue, but I'll tell you those letters have about as much relevance to a freeze on nursing homes as the Eaton's catalogue. Those letters are nothing other than an attempt to maintain some modicum of financial control, something I know you people don't believe in. And the deficit is obvious.

Mr. Minister, I want to get back, if I may, to the question of the nursing homes beds in Regina. I gather you . . . In the list that you read out, I did not hear — you may

have overlooked them — but I did not hear a list of the nursing home beds built in Regina. So I ask you again, Mr. Minister, if you'll give us that.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Back over this statement that you've put out where you say in your newsletter of the 25th of '86:

Ned Shillington, MLA, Regina Centre, who says this: "and we need more nursing home beds."

Then in brackets he said:

Did you know that the PCs are planning only 30 beds for all of Regina over the coming three years? We need hundreds of nursing home beds for our seniors.

Then . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well you said the last three and here's . . . I'm giving you the answer. There are 11 at the Lutheran Home in Regina. The Salvation Army are presently going to . . . are making plans and they'll be turning sod very quickly . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well in three years . . . you've turned sod over three years, my friends. I know you wouldn't know anything about it because you didn't build any.

(1645)

But let me tell you, when you build a nursing home, the first thing is you have an agreement; secondly, you get an architect; thirdly, you dig a hole; fourthly, you build it; fifthly, you put people in it. Now that's what you do. I know you don't understand that, having not built any.

Going further, Regina Santa Maria, just located right down here on . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, right on Regina Avenue, that's where the Regina Santa Maria is, 48-bed addition within the three-year period. There will be . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's what he asked for. He asked for three years — three years, my little friend, is what he asked for, and that's what I'm telling you — within three years even you will be able to see them. And 29 extra beds at Wascana centre. Over the three years that's what you will have. That adds up to 118 and not 30.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, you attempt to create the impression that there was a serious shortage of nursing home beds in Regina in 1982. Now I want to ask you: how many beds have opened? How many beds with patients in them have opened in four years? Now don't tell me what's going to be built; don't tell me what sod is going to be turned. Tell me how beds have opened.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I said to you that there was a severe shortage of nursing home beds in Saskatchewan, the province of Saskatchewan, because you wouldn't build them. That's why. Because you were more inclined to take people's money and put it into potash. That was your priority.

You were the premier of this province. You sure were. And that's what you did. Now I'll tell you that there have been 11 beds at the Lutheran Home, and you know it; that also there is a commitment and sod will be turned in the

near future for another 78. And there'll be an addition, there will be an addition on the Regina rehab centre.

And let me tell you about the rehab centre because you'll remember this very well. You will remember, Mr. Ex-premier — and I say ex-premier because that's what you're going to stay — and you will remember that 24 hours before you called the election in '82, that you phoned the Health department and said, design a rehab centre. You will remember that. And I'll take you out here over supper and show you one that's being built.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Well a couple of comments, Mr. Chairman. It is very, very obvious that the minister is ill-informed. There's no point in hashing out what happened in '82 but I will say this: I saw the model of the rehab centre before the election was called.

But, Mr. Minister, in four years what have you achieved, other than a hole in the ground, with respect to the rehab centre? In four years you have not built one rehab bed, in Regina or elsewhere. Is that not true, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Chairman, surely you realize . . . If you've been to Saskatoon, and I'm sure you have, if you would look at the children's rehab centre — and you cannot be critical of this — the children's rehab centre, built in conjunction with Brunskill School, with the Kinsmen of this province, with the University Hospital, and with the Health department, is probably the leading rehab centre of its type in Canada. I'm sure you would admit that. So to be critical and say, what have you built in rehab beds, we have built one of the best.

Also, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, there's a hole in the ground, but you have to start with a hole in the ground, and there will soon be — there will soon be — one of the greatest rehab centres built in conjunction with workers' compensation, with DVA, with the Department of Health, which will supply outreach services to southern Saskatchewan.

So for you to stand here and to say we haven't done anything in the way of rehab centres, I think that's grossly unfair. Because I think you know how deep in your heart that that's a fine centre in Saskatoon and this will be a fine centre too, and we're well into the construction of it.

We have a board. We have an executive director. Just the other day, I'm sure you're aware, that we formed a board to look after the building and the administration of the Wascana Rehab Centre. And within a short period of time that will be up and functioning, and that will be a fine addition to health care here in Regina and southern Saskatchewan.

So I think it is a rather cheap shot when you would sit, stand in your place and say we haven't done anything in rehab, because certainly we have in Saskatoon, and this will be something that both you and I are proud of when it's finished.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister,

I'm obviously having a little difficulty making myself understood to the minister, and I'm going to ask him very calmly so he won't get upset: how many nursing home beds have been opened in Regina? Do you say that 11 have been opened, or a lesser number? Please, I'm not asking how many are projected, how many are planned. But it's four years, sir — four years, four years this month since the election — and I'm simply asking: how many nursing home beds have been opened?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — But I will tell you that, but I think it's only fair, if you were only going to . . . If you're really concerned about nursing homes, if you were, you would ask me that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I think your leader would like to have a discussion. If you want to chirp and holler . . .

Really, if you wanted to know the impact on nursing homes, if you looked across Saskatchewan, there's been a considerable number. And I sent that over. You have that material and I'd refer you to it. In Regina there were 11 at the Lutheran Home. That is the number. But across Saskatchewan there has been a considerable number that have been built and there are many of them that are going to be open in the not too distant future.

So I think it's . . . You know, one just can't — if you look at health care for the whole province — one just can't take a bit here and a chunk here and so on and say, what did you do here. I think to be fair you look at it in its entirety. And I think the record of the last four years in nursing home construction — and you must admit that — the record over the last four years has been very admirable.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, if, as the mister suggests, there has been a good deal of activity elsewhere, one would have thought that the waiting lists in Regina would have declined. That s the natural effect of taking the pressure off from homes that were, as he says, constructed elsewhere.

That is not what the people operating nursing homes in Regina tell me. I keep in touch from time to time with Pioneer Village and they tell me that their waiting lists are up. We all know that waiting lists are not totally reliable, but they are no more or less reliable now than they were before. In fact, I think they may be a little more reliable now because of some central assessing. And certainly my impression is that waiting lists have not declined. Are you asserting that waiting lists have declined?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — What I'm saying to you, Mr. Member, is that . . . And I'm glad to see that you support the assessment and placement type of facility of function that we have put in here in Regina and in Saskatoon and in many other areas of the province. I think this is very commendable, and I'm glad you're supportive of it because through that type of a system those who are needing to get in are the ones that get in rather than how it was in the past — maybe who you knew or how long your name was on the list and so on. That isn't the best way to get in; it's those who are best needing to get in.

I have a statistic here of the 1st of April that I would share with you, and that is in Regina — and this comes from RAPS (Regina Assessment and Placement Service) that

there are approximately 1,073 people listed there. Those are listed. Now let's just get this in context. But of those, they say 115 are priority. That's what they call priority. The thing that I think is very nice about this is what they tell us is that it usually takes only two months until they get in. Those 115 on the priority should be in, in two months . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Well if you want to question the Regina assessment and placement and call those people who are doing yeoman's service out there, if you want to talk down to them, you go right ahead. And I'll only tell them that too. If you question how authentic they are, that's their figures . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I don't want to give you short change. I want to give you everything that you need to know. I told you there's 115 on priority and within two months they should be in, and I think that is quite a commendable record.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, would the minister give the next down priority? You have three or four listings and you're suggesting with your choice of words, "priority," that these are the relatively serious ones. Would you give me the wording for the next category?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Two hundred and two are in hospital at this point in time. There is a priority of 115 that they feel should be getting into the nursing homes and I say within two months they should be in. And I don't think that is a bad record. You know, I don't think you can . . . When you look back at a moratorium, I mean, you look back at your record . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I know you don't want to look back, but in fairness, let's be fair. You were the premier of the province, man . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You can ask me any question you want and you know that.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — All right, Mr. Minister. I don't want to precipitate a great speech. I'm trying to get some facts about my constituency. Now that is legitimate. All right. You give me the categories that that board places potential patients in — the various categories — that add up to 1,019, did you say? With the names of the categories, not of the patients.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes. I have this here now. I'll provide it for you if you wish. Level 4C, 9; level \$B, 90; level 4A, 30 (10 non-ambulatory); level 3, 377; level 2, 305; and level 1, 262.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, would you not agree that leaving aside the level 1's and 2's where there may be some alternative services which would meet the needs of a high proportion of that number — although not all of them, because of social needs primarily — we still have 500 people in level 3 or 4, A, B, or C who . . . Are you telling us that you're building how many beds? A very, very small number of beds over a period of some three years.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well certainly you're correct in that the level 1's and 2's are remaining in their homes and I think that's where they want to be. Also we've put more money into home care so that, in fact, some of the level 3's . . . I was meeting with the Saskatoon home care group

today just discussing that and they are able to look after people with very high needs in the home care because of enriched funding, changes we've made in the funding for home care services. But certainly, the figures of the Regina assessment and placement group indicate to me that there's 115 people that are on the priority list and they say within two months they should be into the homes. I think that is quite an acceptable figure. I think it's much better than it was previously.

And as I say — and I'm not saying you are — but some of your colleagues want to question the Regina assessment and placement. But I think they're doing a commendable job for us, as they are in Saskatoon and in other parts of the province. There are a lot of volunteer people, a lot of people helping a great deal to see that our elderly are getting the service that they best need. I congratulate those people out there that are doing this type of yeoman's service.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I'm sure we congratulate them too. But turning to the issue at hand, will you concede the fact on or about November 18 your waiting list had 1,011 people on it and now you tell me the number is . . . 1,073, did you say? So indicating an increase of about 60 since November of '85, in the last four or five months. Would you agree with that?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, I don't have the figure that you're stating from of 1,011 and I've long since learned, not so much with you but with other members of your caucus, to doubt any figure that they bring forward.

But be that as it may, I think it's reasonable to assume that there will be more people waiting. The population . . . We all know the demographics. The population is ageing. We in Saskatchewan lead the nation in the elderly population. And to that end . . . And I think you might be interested in knowing that, when you mention home care, to that end in this most recent budget we have added \$30 for anyone that's over 75 years of age, to increase the home care budget.

We are taking those things into consideration so that with a combination of services — be they special care homes, be they home care services, and in some cases, acute care hospitals as well as some private care homes — we have to, and I think you understand this, that we have to look at all possible facilities, all possible arrangements to meet the needs of our ever increasing elderly population. And I will stand on the record that what we have done in the province of Saskatchewan since taking office in 1982 has made one monumental step towards that.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Well, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, we can argue the sterling qualities of the policies which you have introduced at another time when we get a few more facts on the table.

And I say this to you, Mr. Minister: it is my impression when I walk through the Wascana Hospital — correction, the Pasqua Hospital — that I see far more people who I would class as level 4 A, B, and C, in the older parts of that hospital than I saw short years ago. And I ask you whether or not the number of people who should be in nursing

homes but are now in our acute care hospitals has not sharply increased over the last four years. Would you agree with that?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I couldn't say whether it's sharply increased or not. I can tell you that there are level 4 people in the hospitals. I don't deny that. There have been level 4 people in the hospitals for some time. In fact, I believe it was your government that designated certain hospital beds for level 4 beds. If I remember correctly, that's what you did. So certainly that has taken place. It isn't a phenomenon that came in the last three or four years. It has been there.

Certainly in all aspects — in home care, in special care homes, in acute care facilities, through the drug plan, through SHA (Saskatchewan Health-Care Association), through all the health care services — the elderly population are consuming each year more of these services. But that only seems right when you see that the proportion of the population, the elderly, are increasing each year. They're living longer; they're living better lives. I'm glad they are. But certainly there's no denial that they do consume a greater proportion of the health care services of this province. And, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, you know as I know as the years go ahead — the years to the year 2000 — and some of us will be the elderly population with the Lord willing — we'll need more and more of these services. I think forward-looking health planning has to address that and I believe that's what we've been doing.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.