

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ORAL QUESTIONS

Status of Husky Oil Upgrader

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier, I address my question to the Minister of Energy who, in returning from Ottawa, announced that the agreement we had hope for on the Husky oil upgrader was nowhere to be seen, and that what we have instead is a delay of a year, from 1986 to some time next year, the delay of the starting of the construction of the upgrader, and that we have called on the taxpayers of Saskatchewan to pay about \$13 million for work that has already been done.

What I would ask the minister is whether or not he's satisfied with the one year delay in the construction of the upgrader that he got when he went down to Ottawa. And what the people of the province had wanted was a firm commitment from the Ottawa government that construction would proceed post-haste.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, it's quite obvious, to me at least, that the hon. member was not at the meetings in Ottawa because he has virtually all his facts wrong. There is no delay on this project. The work that's going to be done has not already been paid for. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, this project is proceeding. The pre-construction design work and engineering work that must be done before cement can be poured is going to be done.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, if it hadn't been for our Premier, I would suggest that this project wouldn't have gone ahead, but it's his kind of leadership that's propelling that project ahead today. And I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of people inside and outside the oil patch that are very, very excited by that announcement that came out of Ottawa.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, supplement to the minister. I wonder if he could, for the people of the province who are paying the bill, explain in detail the \$90 million that the taxpayers of the country and the province are being called on to pay, how that will break down in terms of what is being paid out for work already done and for work that will be done in the future.

And I say here, Mr. Speaker, the Premier clearly implied in his answer a couple of days ago that this 90 million was for future work to be done, and what we're hearing now, it's to pay for work that has been done. Now there's two very conflicting reports coming out of the Premier, and I would ask you to clearly outline what we are paying for, what the taxpayers of the province are being called on to pay?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, what we are financing with this \$90 million is the construction,

pre-construction, and design work, and in fact I would suggest that we got a rather good deal for the public purse out there. And not only is this project proceeding, but it's proceeding with prudence, and it's proceeding with the taxpayer in mind. Because the maximum \$13.5 million that we in fact will contribute to this design work, we attached a few strings to it if you like in so far as that money gets paid, but it gets paid because jobs are maintained out there. Oil wells have to pump; operators have to operate those wells. So we've got some very good linkage established with our dollars. Jobs have to be maintained out there in the oil patch before we pay that money.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister, again, who refuses to answer the question: of the \$90 million that is being called on to be paid, a good part of it by the taxpayers of Canada, how much of that 90 million is for work that is already done, engineering that has been completed — which now is owned by Husky Oil, which can be sold around the world, paid for by taxpayers — what percentage is paid for work already done, and what is paid for work that is to be done in the future?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is trying to warp what is going on with this project. The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is this project is proceeding. It's proceeding like the paper plant. It's proceeding like the bacon plant is proceeding. You might be against jobs and economic development for north-western Saskatchewan, but we are not.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister again. I want to ask the minister again. Can you clearly indicate, having sat in on the meeting with the federal minister and other colleagues and the Premier of Saskatchewan — I know you weren't there to take part but only to listen — but can you tell us what you heard? Can you tell us whether or not the majority of the 90 million — the majority of the 90 million — is to pay for work that Husky has already had done? Is that not true?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Oh no, that is wrong. I sat there at that meeting and what I saw was three governments and Husky sitting there, committed to go ahead with this project. And go ahead with it we have done.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Supplementary to the minister. I don't believe what I'm hearing in the refusal to answer the question. How many dollars of the taxpayers' money went to pay for the work that has already been completed by Husky Oil on the engineering feasibility studies of the Lloydminster upgrader? How much of that is being paid for work already done?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, there's a number of dollars have been expended in terms of this project already. In fact one could argue, I think, that Saskatchewan has been very much the benefactor of this already, and there's been well over \$100 million spent on the development side in the oil field already because this project is proceeding. And that kind of money that's been expended has maintained jobs out there. It's created capital investment which in itself has created new jobs.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Supplementary to the minister. You've refused to answer how many tax dollars are going to bail out Husky Oil's engineering studies and planning that was done over the past two years.

Now what I would like to know from you, Mr. Minister, is whether or not, while you were in Ottawa, you were man enough to stand up to Pat Carney and get an agreement signed. Was there an agreement signed for the procedure and the going forward of the upgrader at Lloydminster? Were you man enough to stand up to Pat Carney and demand a signed agreement.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the meetings in Ottawa, there will be a letter of agreement signed.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Supplementary to the minister. You say there will be. Are you then telling us that no agreement is signed with the federal government, no agreement has been signed with the federal government, but yet you put \$13 million of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money into the hands of Husky Oil for studies that were already done?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — What I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is, we're building it. The meeting was held. The draft agreement is going to be signed very shortly.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Final supplementary to the minister. I want to ask you again clearly. You put on the line \$13 million of taxpayers' money from Saskatchewan, and you're telling the people of the province that no agreement is signed. You gave the money, \$13 million — that's more than you gave to Pocklington — and you didn't get a signed deal. What kind of a business agreement do you put forward to the people of the province when you give \$13 million, or \$13 from every person in the province, to Husky Oil, and you have no agreement to go forward with the upgrader?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I want to be very clear, Mr. Speaker. This project is going ahead. No other governments have co-operated to the degree we have. It's going to go ahead. The future of . . . Saskatchewan's energy future, Canada's future energy security, lies in heavy oil. We recognize that. Now some would have said, some would have said, oh, oil prices have gone away down; you'd better back off this. That would have been the view of those who don't want to proceed, Mr. Speaker.

We said, Mr. Speaker, that we believe in five years from now oil prices could be significantly different. We said we would believe that we would be irresponsible if we did not proceed with this project, because in 1991 when you wake up in the morning, your toaster might not work because we don't have energy supplies here. We are going to build it. The deal is done. It's going forward.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sveinson: — I have a question to the Minister of Energy, and it applies to the line of questioning that has

just been put to the floor. I would like to ask the minister, considering that the Syncrude project in Fort McMurray, the 20,000 barrel addition to that project has been cut back severely in the summer of 1986: the fact that there is an Alberta election called and your election is pending — is your claim that this project in Lloydminster, is the claim that it's going ahead simply not political rhetoric in the view that you want to win an election in this province, and has nothing to do with oil economics?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — No, our commitment to this project has been clear for several months. IN fact, it was clear on the day in June of '84 when this deal with signed that we're going to go ahead with it. Saskatchewan's future is heavy oil — 25 billion barrels estimated reserves out there; conventional reserves estimated something in the order of 700 million. If we don't get going on this, you're going to wake up one morning and your car isn't going to run. It's just about that simple in this country.

Mr. Sveinson: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Syncrude's future is heavy oil as well. Although they are a private sector company, they realize that profits have to pay for expansion. I'm asking the minister: are you asking the taxpayers of this province possibly to pay for a lame duck in the oil industry so that you and the Alberta government can be re-elected in 1986?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is taking a responsible and reasonable approach here. We recognize that we have to have an energy supply in the future of this country. We can't be held hostage to the whims of some others outside there in the oil-producing world. For those reasons the project is proceeding. It absolutely flabbergasts me that both the parties in the opposition, Mr. Speaker, are against this project.

Mr. Thompson: — new question, Mr. Speaker, and I direct it to the Minister of Energy. Will you not admit that the \$90 million study is little more than a ploy to get the heat off of your government and Premier Getty in Alberta in these last few days before your provincial election campaign? Isn't that what the \$90 million study is really all about?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — No, it is not a study. This is design pre-construction work. The project is going ahead. It will be built. It makes sense to build it. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if you stand back and you look at this project, here's the situation today: every year, year in and year out, as long as I've been living in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, we can't market even our light and medium crude out of that area in January and February because the heavy oil causes pipeline bottle-necks. Okay? For that reason alone, it would make sense to upgrade that crude up — heavy crude.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, every day that passes there's less and less diluent to mix with the heavy crudes to pipeline it down. Those reasons by themselves are economic sense enough to build the project. But, Mr. Speaker, if you stand back and you really look at the project, if you think about it in a very fundamental way, does it make sense to take the heavy oil here and ship it into the U.S. or ship it into central Canada and let them upgrade it and refine it down there? Because what you're in fact doing is, you're

shipping prairie jobs, Saskatchewan jobs, down to the northern tier states; Saskatchewan jobs down into central Ontario.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this project makes as much sense in Saskatchewan as taking barley does and putting into cattle and processing it, and having slaughtered beef or slaughtered pork just like my friend here has done with putting a bacon plant together. That's what we're talking about, Mr. Speaker, in terms of fundamental economic sense, and that's the kind of project this upgrader is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Premier of Alberta has as much as admitted that this is little more than a stalling tactic. This morning in Edmonton he is quoted as saying . . . This is what the Premier of Alberta said yesterday:

. . . the agreement to go ahead with the study keeps the multi-billion dollar upgrader . . . alive for another year. A decision is to be made at that time on whether to proceed with the upgrader . . .

Or not to proceed.

Will you now admit that this \$90 million study simply puts off a final decision on the project for another year and until after the provincial elections in Alberta and Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Speaker, here's what I'm hearing, and here's what I'm reading about what people are saying in this project, and here's what I'm hearing from people that's lived and worked right in Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, *The Meridian Booster*. And what does one of the paragraphs here on page 4 say? It asks the question, Mr. Speaker:

Who deserves credit for the miraculous turn-around on this project? Grant Devine deserves credit because he flew to Ottawa with a determined look on his face and refused to leave until he got what he came for.

We got what we came for, and we're going ahead with that project, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thompson: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Premier Getty also had a rather disturbing comment with respect to the financial negotiations on the upgrader. He told the Alberta legislature on Wednesday, and I quote:

The original agreement has been set aside (I'm quoting from Premier Getty in Alberta); the original agreement has been set aside without prejudice to any of the parties.

In other words, Mr. Premier, Mr. Minister, there is no financial agreement on the Husky upgrader, there is no Mulroney government commitment to the Husky upgrader, and this \$90 million study is little more than a

stalling tactic while Ottawa decides whether or not it will participate.

In light of Premier Getty's comments, how can you deny that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, the memorandum of understanding is alive and well. It's still on the table, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, we're going to use this time of engineering and pre-construction work, this window, to build on that memorandum of agreement. And that project will be going ahead and, I would suggest to you, it will be going ahead under the same principles that were outlined in that original memorandum.

Memorandum of Agreement

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — I'd like to ask a question to the Minister of Energy. It deals with the Husky oil upgrader, and it deals with the memorandum of agreement to which he referred.

Now the minister will know that the memorandum of agreement, signed by Husky and the federal and the Alberta and Saskatchewan governments on June 6th, 1984, provided a fiscal framework for the financing of this upgrader. He knows, as he says, the memorandum is in full force and effect. Did the memorandum anywhere provide for a grant by the Government of Saskatchewan to Husky, such as you have agreed to in Ottawa?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member doesn't have his facts right. We haven't given, as a result of the Ottawa discussions, a grant to Husky.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, will the minister agree that, pursuant to the agreement that was made at Ottawa, something more than \$60 million is flowing to Husky Oil on a grant basis, non-repayable by Husky, and that the Saskatchewan government's portion of that exceeds \$13 million?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — It's not a grant, Mr. Speaker. It may not even be as high as \$13.5 million. In fact, I would suggest the Premier struck rather a good deal for the taxpayers. Because what it will amount to, as is there provision for in royalty reductions, which are already in play as a result of development work that's going on by Husky, and so what that tells me is, by structuring that kind of arrangement to get the royalty relief, Mr. Speaker, you have to keep oil wells pumping, and hence jobs, jobs for operators of oil wells, are maintained.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is it true that Husky is going to get more than \$60 million from the governments that it wouldn't have otherwise got? Isn't it true that they don't have to pay it back? And you can deny that it's a grant, but do you have another word for money which governments pay to oil companies that the oil companies don't have to pay back?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — What we're going to pay to Husky is invoices, Mr. Speaker, for work they do to get design and pre-construction engineering done. And you can twist it any way you want, and you can be against this project. You, as premier, never brought one upgrader

project home in this province, and the people of this province know that. You are against it; the people are not.

They want it to go ahead, and we've struck a good deal for the people of this province.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Minister. Do I understand, Mr. Minister, that you are saying that the governments are going to pay . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. There's so much yelling in the House that it's impossible for the minister to hear the question.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you. Mr. Minister . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. I've just asked for order.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Minister, do I understand you to say that Husky Oil is going to submit invoices for work that they have ordered, and for contracts into which they have entered, and you are going to pay the bills, and you don't call that a grant. Do I understand that? And secondly, would you be good enough to indicate who else can submit bills to your government and get them paid?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I'll go over the project again. We are advised that it will take approximately \$90 million to get the design and pre-construction work done. Mr. Speaker, we have very competent officials. They have designed mechanisms to assure that, in fact, if it doesn't cost 90 million, obviously we won't pay our \$13.5 million. I think that's a very wise way to proceed in terms of being the guardian of the taxpayers' purse. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, that design work is what makes this project go ahead. You can't construct it unless you get that done. We're going to get that done, Mr. Speaker. They're against it; we're for it. It's quite simple.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Minister. Does the minister deny that by last August engineering contracts on key high technology components for the Husky upgrader had been let and that financial obligations were assumed by Husky and that it is, among others, these obligations which you are agreeing to pay — obligations which were in place last summer?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, we have agreed to proceed, and to proceed you have to get the design and pre-engineering work done. That's what's going to get done; that's what we're going to pay for.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, do you deny that a substantial amount of that work has already been done for many, many months and that that is, in fact, what you are agreeing to pay for and that such agreement was not included in the June 6, 1984 memorandum of agreement. Is it not true that under that memorandum of agreement you had no obligation to pay for the contracts which you are now agreeing to bankroll?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, as you will know, there was a fair number of provisions in the original

memorandum. As I have already said, that memorandum is very much still on the table. And secondly, in so far as how our contribution to paying these bills is done, as I said, it was constructed so that it would be paid back through royalties, and those dollars will be paid back as . . . If it isn't 90 million, if it's 88, obviously we're not going to pay more than our fair share. But more importantly, more importantly, Mr. Speaker, because of what's gone in the past, there's been, I would suggest, probably in the order of maybe something close to a quarter of a billion dollars spent if you look at what's gone in the development side out there in the Husky heavy oil patch.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I take it we have now established that you are paying bills which husky incurred as early as last year. Do you agree that of the \$90 million package, of which more than \$60 million is being paid for by governments, fully \$50 million of that is for work which has already been done, and which is for the account of Husky Oil, and much less than half is for work which may be done in the future, and that, in fact, governments have agreed to pay substantial amounts of bills which have been incurred by Husky, and that that was not in the original deal?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, what I know is this. I sat there for something close to 12 hours, along with our Premier and, I think, 10 other provincial and federal cabinet ministers, and there was a commitment to see this project go forward. There was also, Mr. Speaker, a clear indication that to get it forward, there needed to be spent something in the order of \$90 million. We sat down as reasonable and responsible people and figured out a way to get that project forward, to find that \$90 million. And that's what we have done, Mr. Speaker. And Canada, Saskatchewan, and the people of this province will be better off for that deal that we put together.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Minister. I am puzzled. Mr. Minister, you say you want to go ahead with the project. You say that the memorandum of agreement is still in place. You agree that we wouldn't have to make these grants if the project went ahead as planned. Why, Mr. Minister, did you not make an agreement to proceed on the basis of the original memorandum of agreement which called for no grants by the Government of Saskatchewan? Why did you agree to a delay in what was proposed in the memorandum and agree to grants by the province, and no firm commitment by the Government of Canada to proceed with this upgrader?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, once again the member is trying to lead us down the path of misinformation. Number one, no grant; number two, no delay. But what we did get, Mr. Speaker, is co-operation, and with the original MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) still on the table we're going to use this window to build around and under and over that framework of that MOU and this project is going to go ahead. You may be against it; we're for it.

We're for economic development; we're for helping north-west Saskatchewan; we're for bacon plants; we're for upgraders; we're for field development out there in the heavy oil patch. We're in favour of paper and pulp

projects going ahead; we're in favour of linking the oil patch and the energy industry. We're in favour of refining and building ammonia plants and the fertilizer that can throw forth from those projects for the betterment, not only of the oil patch, Mr. Speaker, but of the farming community

You see you don't have to drive a wedge, Mr. Leader of the Opposition . . . in this province we're big enough that you don't have to drive a wedge between those who live in the oil patch and those who farm — there is linkage there. We're in favour of economic development for all of Saskatchewan.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 20 — An Act to amend The Teachers' Superannuation Act

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Teachers' Superannuation Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill referred to the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills.

Bill No. 21 — An Act to amend The Teachers' Dental Plan Act

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Teachers' Dental Plan Act.

Motion agreed to and, by leave of the Assembly, the Bill referred to the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills.

Bill No. 22 — An Act to amend The Education Act

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Education Act.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to refer the Bill to the Non-Controversial bills Committee.

Leave not granted and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 23 — An Act to amend The Department of Education Act, 1983

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Department of Education Act, 1983.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to refer the Bill to the Non-Controversial Bills Committee.

Leave not granted and the bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Health Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 32

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, last night as we broke off the discussion of your estimates, one of the areas that was of concern to the opposition had to do specifically with the federal cuts to the established program funding. As I have indicated to you, Mr. Minister, that in the May 23rd budget, the Minister of Finance, Michael Wilson, said indeed that he wanted to cut the federal transfer payments to the provinces by \$2 billion by 1990-91. And I want to say that he has implemented that, because if you take a look at the federal budget, May 23, 1985, the budget papers titled, The Fiscal Plan, and I'll quote from that document:

To achieve a balanced package of expenditure reductions and spread the burden of expenditure reduction fairly, the government will be seeking reduction in transfers to provinces, of about \$2 billion by the end of the decade.

And what we were asking you last day, Mr. Minister, whether in fact you are in a position to indicate the extent of the impact that this is going to have on cut-backs to the general funding of health care in Saskatchewan. I'd like to ask you whether you had an opportunity to do any research through your officials since we last met last evening, and whether you can indicate the net loss anticipated for the year 1986-87. I'll stop there and we'll proceed as you give me the particular information.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes, following from our discussions last night when the member opposite was questioning about activities that we had taken to address the funding of health care from the federal level, I would like to indicate to the member opposite that as recently as March 4th, I reiterated a request in a letter to Mr. Epp, and certainly I will be meeting with him on April 28th to discuss these topics again. Just for the information of the House, the letter of March 4th, I would quote for you, Mr. Chairman, to the Hon. Jake Epp:

I am writing in support of the request of my counterparts in Ontario and Manitoba for a joint meeting of federal and provincial ministers of Health and ministers of Finance. Those of us charged with responsibilities in the health field are mindful of the need to contain the growth of expenditures on health care services while striving to maintain the quality of those services.

We appreciate, and indeed we share the fiscal problems that the federal Minister of Finance is attempting to address. I would expect, in the spirit of co-operation and consultation ushered in by the Mulroney government, that the federal government would be prepared to participate with the provinces in a real effort to make the fundamental changes required to contain costs.

To move forward from our discussions at last May, I urge you to convene a meeting at an early date.

That letter went to Mr. Epp as of March 4th.

I think your question was: based on the budget as outlined by Mr. Michael Wilson, what would be the reduction to Saskatchewan under EPF (established program of financing)? I must reiterate what I said yesterday, that certainly those things will be under discussion with the ministers of Finance. And as you can see by my letter, we're requesting a joint meeting of provincial Health ministers and provincial Finance ministers with our federal counterparts. I think with that type of meeting we can work out some type of agreement.

But in regards to your question, the best estimate of what they're indicating is perhaps about a \$13 million reduction. Of course, only a portion of that would be towards health as you understand, that's EPF funding which is for both higher education and Health.

But, Mr. Chairman, I want to assure you, as the Minister of health for the province of Saskatchewan, that I will be seeking meetings of this nature. I think it is imperative that both Finance and health sit down at the same time with their federal counterparts to map out some type of agreement that can be acceptable to all parties concerned

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, you have indicated that there is going to be, in the proposal of Mr. Wilson, a \$13 million loss, part of which will be directed towards health. I believe that's what you're saying. I want a clarification. Can you break it down? Under the proposal, the cut-back for funding of EPF by Michael Wilson, the Finance minister in Ottawa, federal Tories, what is the projected amount under his proposal that will be cut back in so far as the funding of health? What amount? You gave a general figure of \$13 million. What is it for health?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Let me preface my statement by saying, as I explain I think adequately to you last night, that is a projected figure. There are still negotiations that will take place. I can't say whether it will be \$13 million. We may be able to convince the federal government that it should be less than \$13 million.

But let's assume, for moving on in these estimates, let's assume that it is the figure of \$13 million. The hon. member opposite is asking: what portion of the 13 million would we estimate would directly affect health care. My best estimate at that would be about \$9 million.

Mr. Koskie: — Now the period that you've indicated to me — I take it you are answering the specific question that I asked — and the 13 million that you mention under the proposal of the federal Finance minister, the 13 million applied to the year '86-87, is that correct? Just so I'm clear.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Correct.

Mr. Koskie: — Now the basic proposal is to 1990-1991. And we are very, very concerned on the basic impact that this massive cut by the federal Tory party to the funding of

the established program funding, and particularly as it applies to health. And what I ask you . . . My information is, and our research indicates, that the proposed net loss for health care for the year 1986-87 is over \$10 million just to health care.

Now I want to ask you: have you and your officials got a calculation for each of the subsequent years up to the 1990-1991? Because Wilson is trying to extract \$2 billion of expenditure towards health and post-secondary education. And so I ask you . . . Our information is that over \$10 million under the proposal will be cut from Saskatchewan for the year '86-87. I ask you: have you got it for each of the additional years, the projected amount of the cuts by the federal Tories in '87-88, '88-89, '89-90, and '90-91?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, certainly, I don't know, and I think this indicates some of the problems that result in estimates. I wonder where you get the figure of 10 million. From the department we figure it is 9 million. There's a \$1 million discrepancy at this point in time. As I said previously, these are not hard and fast numbers.

(1045)

I'm concerned. I'm concerned about any cutback, and I can assure you that that is the reason that I have wrote the letter to Mr. Epp, asking him to put together a meeting of Finance ministers and health ministers to address this situation. That's the reason that I am going to Ottawa at the end of this month to sit down with my counterparts from across Canada. I hope all the Health ministers are there to sit down with Mr. Epp and to explain to him our grave concerns about any reduction of EPF funding.

However, Mr. Chairman, I want to make one think abundantly clear, and I think that can be best illustrated by this year's commitment to health care by this government. At a time of restraint, at a time when many other departments are having very little, if any, budgetary increase in their expenditures, Saskatchewan has decided to put 11.6 per cent into the increase for health care in this province.

So certainly, as one of my colleagues says, last year in our budget we came with the four pillars of our provincial mandate. And that is agriculture; and that is jobs; and that is health; and that is education. You can trace the budgets of this government, and you will see that those commitments are strong and they're solid, and we're committed to them.

So to try and indicate that even though, because of economic times in Canada, the federal government may see it necessary to cut back on some of EPF funding, that doesn't follow that there will be any type of cutback in health care spending in this province. So I say 11.6 per cent is a very strong commitment, and certainly our figures at this point in time, as I said previously, for the next year are approximately \$9 million. That is not a firm figure. I will do all I can in my power to have that figure reduced and, as I said last night, my colleague, the Minister of Finance, is at the present time, and in the future will do likewise.

Mr. Koskie: — I'll come back to my specific question. You have circumvented it rather skilfully. My concern is to get a handle on what is really happening as a result of your counterparts in Ottawa and the intention to cut massively the funding to education. You have the figure — we can use your figures or mine; they are reasonably close — '86-87, you have indicated about 9 million. My information is that it would be slightly over \$10 million in '86-87.

Now this proposal is a compounded type of proposal, and I want to deal with the seriousness of it and I know that you have analysed it. You must have analysed it, or otherwise you're not standing up for the health care of this province. And so what I'm going to do is to go from year to year, and to determine from you the intended cut in health care funding by the federal government for each of the years up to 1990-91, the year by which they intend to have cut \$2 billion from federal expenditures on health care.

I think this is a critical direction that the federal government is taking. And I think that you, as a Minister of Health, where the people of Saskatchewan respect the health care that the New Democratic party built here and want to continue — I think it's incumbent upon you to give us the facts as to what the vicious cuts are intended by the Mulroney and Wilson budget in Ottawa, your Tory counterparts.

Tories try to stand up and say they are for health care and for medical care and hospital care. And at the very time you have the first Tory government in Ottawa, and one of the major cuts is in respect to health care. And so I'm going to ask you: what is the proposed cut for '87-88? Simple question.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Chairman, I listened with interest to this man indicate about the great building of health care by the NDP government. Let me remind you again, and the member opposite, a moratorium on nursing home construction is certainly not building health care. A 5 per cent reduction in nursing positions — a 5 per cent reduction on July 1st of 1976 is certainly not building health care.

I will tell you what is building health care in this province. I will tell you, Mr. Chairman, that building health care in this province is introducing a chiropody program that this province never had; is a \$300 million capital project building 1,600 nursing home beds across this province; building major construction on acute care hospitals across this province. I will tell you what building health care is — a \$100 million patient care enrichment program to improve the staffing levels in the hospitals and nursing homes of this province.

Mr. Chairman, that's building health care. That's far different than a moratorium on construction and a reduction in staffing standards, which was the legacy of the NDP government in health care. There is the difference.

Now the member opposite asks about the EPF funding. I have given the figures that we have looked at for this year. In no way do I say that the 9 million is a firm figure. It is a

figure that we are going to be negotiating on. He wants to say to me: what is it in '87, and what is it in '88, and what is it in '89, and what is it in '90?

Mr. Chairman, I have no idea what it will be. Because if we don't know what it is in '86-87, why would one be guessing what it may be three years down the road? I tell you, and I tell the people of this province, and I tell the members of this Legislative Assembly, that I am on record to do what I can to make sure that the federal government will give us the necessary funds to finance health care. And I assure the people of this province, whether or not those funds are forthcoming, that the record of the Devine government is that one of our corner-stones and one of our pillars is in health care, and I challenge anyone to look at the health budgets of the last four years and dispute that fact. More money has gone to health care in this province in the last four years than anywhere else in the Dominion of Canada — approximately a 47 per cent greater infusion of money into health care than any other department in the government.

So to stand there and to try and build a straw man, that maybe someone is going to take it away — the old scare tactics of '78 certainly don't wash today. The record of the Devine government in health care leads the nation in the provision of that care.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, there is a proposal by the federal government, and obviously in order to give me what the cut would be for the '86-87 year you've had to calculate it on the basis of the proposal and the intention of the federal government to cut back in health care. And all I'm asking you is that the basic proposal goes to 1990-91, and each and every year they're proposing to cut more and more from the health care. And don't stand here in this House and cover up for your counterparts. Stand up for the health care of Saskatchewan.

And so I ask you again, can you indicate, as you have for the '86-87, can you indicate for '87-88 what the proposal, what amount, Saskatchewan will lose under the Wilson proposal of cut-back in health care? A simple question: obviously it's over till 1990 — on the basis of the proposal. You know; you calculated it for '86-87. I ask you to do it for '87-88, and we'll take you through one step at a time. Can you give us that figure?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Chairman, I listen to the member opposite who said we're trying to cover up or something for federal counterparts. I will read the letter again of March 4th where I asked the Hon. Jake Epp for a meeting to discuss this topic. I've told this House at least four times that at the end of this month I'm going to Ottawa to discuss this topic. I have told this House that my colleague, the Minister of Finance has been in consultation and negotiation with the federal Minister of Finance on this topic.

So certainly we do not want to see cut-backs to Saskatchewan, and we will stand firm to try and get the best deal we can for Saskatchewan. It's evidenced day after day by this government. We saw the Minister of Energy down there, and the Premier, this last week, carving out a deal with our federal counterparts that benefits Saskatchewan in oil and in agriculture. And I can

assure you that we will do the same thing in health care. I think our record is very plain and well understood on that.

We don't know what the figure will be for this year. I give him an estimate of \$9 million. I would be happy if that could be reduced to 5 million or to zero, and that's what I'm going to try and do. So for me to give an estimate of what it will be the next year would be simply ludicrous, because we don't know what it's going to be in this year.

I'm financing health care for this year at 11.6 per cent increase, and I can assure you that I'm going to meet with Mr. Epp, and my counterpart will meet with Mr. Wilson. We've asked to get them all together in one room so we, and my fellow colleagues across Canada who are responsible for health care, can say to our federal counterparts, look it, we don't want to see reductions; we don't want to see reductions in EPF funding for health care. And we will try and carve out the best deal possible for Saskatchewan.

So for it to go on in questioning and say, what will it be in 1988, '89, '90, I have no idea what it will be. I've heard a general, overall figure that they have talked about. My concern and my priority is to get for the province of Saskatchewan the best deal for this year.

And I can assure you that following that, next year I will do the same thing, and next year I'll do the same thing. And as long as I'm charged with the responsibility of the Department of health in the province of Saskatchewan you have my assurance, the people of Saskatchewan have my assurance, that I will fight for the best deal for this province to maintain the excellent quality of health care that we have.

We are leaders. We are leaders, not only in Canada but across North America in health care. And that leadership, a great deal of it, has come within the last four years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, It's hard to believe that a five-year proposal has been put forward by the federal government and you're standing in this House and telling the people of Saskatchewan that you have not broken it down as to the extent of the cut-backs that are proposed by Michael Wilson and which is endorsed by the Prime Minister of Canada.

I want to ask you again very simply: are you telling this legislature that you and your officials have not, in fact, analysed or received any material from the federal government through your discussions to date indicating year by year the amount of the cut-backs, the proposed cut-backs. We'll get into whether there's negotiations going on.

I want to know — there is a proposal to cut back, and you know there is, and you know the amount for '86-87. But I'll tell you why you won't get into discussing the figures: because it's massive. It's going to undermine the health care of Canada. And you don't want the people of Saskatchewan to know that a federal Tory government is starting the undermining of medicare, as we know it across Canada.

You can brag all you want about maintaining health care in Saskatchewan. The basis of health care has been the financial assistance that the federal government has been giving to the support of the financing of a standardization of health care across the provinces.

And so I ask you, Mr. Minister, are you telling this legislature that you have, and your officials have, not done an analysis and you cannot, in fact, give us the total amount of loss each year under the proposal that you say you are discussing with Mr. Epp? Is that what you're saying? I want to be clear.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, last night, under questioning from the same member who was incensed and was hung up on the Nielsen report, figuring that everything that Nielsen put in his report was cast in stone, that it would come to pass in Canada — I said to the member opposite, the Nielsen report was a number of recommendations. Some may be good. In health care some are for preventative-type of initiatives; some are for life skills; some are for new programs. I don't deny those. I'm willing to look at all of these.

But I give one as an example — and I'm going to deviate a wee bit from health, just to prove my point. One of the recommendations of the Nielsen report was to do away with the Churchill line. That was a recommendation.

(1100)

The Nielsen report came up about a month and a half ago. The federal Minister of Transport, the Hon. Don Mazankowski, didn't accept the Nielsen report; said he's wrong; the Churchill line should stay; upgrade the Churchill line; I'm putting in (I believe) between 14 and \$17 million to do so.

So therefore, Mr. Chairman, that member opposite would like to take things and say, oh, they're falling apart. I get the feeling today he's trying to say that the federal government in this year are hurting us in health care through EPF. I can tell you that the EPF as is in the *Estimates* of this government, on page 10, if you look there, it says EPF funding estimated in 1985-86 was 441.455 million, and for '86-87, it will be 466. That certainly is not a decrease.

Now he makes much of what may happen in subsequent years. I tell you, and I tell this Chamber, and I tell the people of this province that we have put 11.6 per cent increase into the health care budget this year. I have written to the federal Minister of Health telling him that I am concerned if there would be any cut-back. I want to sit down with him and discuss this. I'm going to Ottawa within two weeks to do this and, certainly, I think it is more important to work out what we can in the spirit of co-operative federalism that the Prime Minister spoke about that helped him sweep this nation to power.

People want to see their legislative members at — whether they be federal or provincial level — whether they be from the Liberal or the NDP or the Conservative Party or the Parti Quebecois or whoever — people want to see legislators sit down, and in view of the times that

are here — the economic times — cut out the best possible deal they can. That's what I'm willing to do.

I'm charged with health care. It's a major responsibility in this government. And once again, let me assure you that I am going there to talk eyeball-to-eyeball, man-to-man, with Jake Epp, to try and cut out the best deal possible for the province of Saskatchewan. I will do that this year. And we may come up with a figure of 7 million; it may be 9 million; I can't say at this time, but I can tell you that that will be the stance of this government year after year. So to sit here and try and guess what it may be in the year 1990 — may be important to the member opposite — maybe that is one of his priorities, to speculate on what might happen in 1990. I believe that the mandate that I'm charged with, and what is in the best interest of the Saskatchewan people, is to cut the best deal for 1986-87 and that's where my priority is.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, obviously you're embarrassed to put forward the basic facts of the Wilson budget to the proposal to massively cut back on the federal funding and support of universal health care programs across this nation. That is the intention of the federal Tory budget, is to cut back massively on the financial support, the health care, which gives universal programs across Canada. And that includes medicare and the hospitalization services.

And what I'm saying to you, Mr. Minister, I've asked you: have you, in fact, received a proposal which we have read from the Wilson budget that he wants to, in fact, recoup or cut back \$2 billion by the year 1990-91? Have you, in fact, received that proposal? And if you have, I want to ask you: is there indeed such a proposal? Have you, in fact, the figures for each of the years?

Why are you covering up? If you're going to go meeting with them, surely you have the information that's set out in the budget — that he is going to cut it back. And so I ask you: can you, in fact, provide the figures, under the proposed Wilson cut-back, for each of the years to 1990-1991? Can you do it? Have you the proposal?

Have you worked out the details of how it would affect the funding here in Saskatchewan? Have you, in fact, reviewed the proposal? Have you looked at, down the road, the impact? Can you tell us the cumulative effect of the cut-back would be to Saskatchewan? And can you give a breakdown for each of the years?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I can tell you that certainly every province in Saskatchewan has received that. I mean, it was in the Wilson budget. Mr. Wilson said it publicly. I mean, there's nothing there that anyone is trying to hide from anyone. It was in the federal budget.

But certainly my officials and the officials from Finance are sitting down, analysing this, looking at a game plan that we can use for Saskatchewan. And the two ministers will be going to negotiate with our federal counterparts. We're looking at this immediate year. I think a lot hinges on how we do this year. If we're successful this year, then perhaps we will be very successful in years to come.

The member opposite I suppose doesn't really realize

how EPF funding operates. It's a pool of money that comes to the province from the federal government for the financing, to assist the financing of higher education and health. Certainly not all the things that we have in Saskatchewan here in our health care are funded through EPF. Certainly not. We have many programs that are completely funded by the provincial level. Many of them.

And there is no dictate that a certain amount has to go here or go there. So Finance and Health will sit down and will work out the best arrangement that we can see for Saskatchewan. My colleague and I will articulate that with our colleagues in Ottawa. I'm sure every other Finance minister and every other Health minister across Canada is doing exactly the same thing. I don't think they're worrying about the year 1990. They are worrying today about the year 1986-87. And that's what we're going to be doing, and our officials are working it out at this time.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I want to follow up on the ... trying to get some answers out of the minister on these proposed cut-backs that have been put forward by the Mulroney government in Ottawa. And we have got from him that the 1986-87 cut-back proposal is, in his terms 9 million; in the analysis we've done, 10 million. If the proposal goes forward, it will be \$9 million cut-back if the federal government has their way. And if you watch what has happened in the last week on the upgrader, they wanted a year delay and they got it, even though the Premier and the Minister of Energy went there to try to convince them to go forward and get an agreement signed. The federal government on that issue got their way.

On the deficiency payment for farmers that we should have been asking for with the federal government, a \$6 a bushel price for wheat, we didn't get it when we went to Ottawa. And there are many people who are concerned that when you meet with your federal counterparts that you'll not be any more successful in getting the cut-back removed.

Now my colleague from the Quill Lakes has been asking, with the cut-back in 1986-87 of \$10 million, what is the cut-back proposal for '87-88? What is the proposal that Mulroney has put forward to you that they propose to cut back in the agreement they're proposing? And I understand that you will be trying to put forward that you don't want the cuts to take place. I know that, and I've been a minister, and I know how those meetings go. But what is the federal government proposing to cut in '87 and '88?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Certainly that's rather difficult to ascertain because I can't say with certainty what the cut-back ... And I don't like the word cut-back. There may be no cut-back. I'm going down there to say, look it, fellows, I don't believe you should be cutting back at all. I understand that there's concerns in controlling the deficit in Canada. I think every Canadian does do that — understand that. I think people realize that there are going to have to be certain surgeries made at the federal level. I think Canadians support that. Certainly, I believe that health care is a priority, and as Minister of Health for Saskatchewan I'm going to go there and argue my best

case. I can't say whether I'll be successful. I hope my other colleagues from other provinces support my initiatives; I'm sure they will.

Our best estimate is that this year, taking the figures they've given, it may be \$9 million. I'll do everything in my power to see if I can get it less than \$9 million. We see the total figure that came out in the Wilson budget. You can carve it up however you want — so much this year, so much next year. That is sheer speculation, sheer speculation.

Mr. Chairman, it would only seem right to me . . . Until we know how it impacts this year, how in heaven's name would you know what will happen in subsequent years? I don't know. We can guess; we don't know what will happen. It is this year, and that is what we're working on now. And I can give you my assurance that my officials here, along with the Finance officials, are working out a strategy for my colleague, the Minister of Finance, and I to put forth the best fight we can for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I want to get back to the question I asked you and that is what the proposal is. Other governments . . . And we know that the NDP government in the last six months has clearly outlined to the people of that province what the Conservative government in Ottawa has been proposing year by year to cut out of their health budget. And I say to you that it is not good enough for you to say that the provincial part of the Health budget is increasing. What you're not saying is that the federal part is going to be decreasing and that the net result is that we have less nurses in our hospitals and that there's a shift of taxation from the federal government to the provincial.

Whether you raise the taxes or run a deficit, the impact that is occurring from these kind of cut-backs will be devastating to the taxpayers of the province. And to some provinces they simply won't be able to raise the taxes, and you're going to see the health care system in places like Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland completely collapse without the kind of support from a central government.

What we're arguing about is having a health care system in Canada. Because if the federal government goes forward with these proposals that you refuse to talk about, what you will have is one kind of health system in Alberta and Saskatchewan, where we have a resource base, and no health care system for our neighbours and friends and Canadians in the Maritimes where the resource base isn't there.

I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, very pointedly, what the proposal is at this time in terms of cut-backs for '87-88. You know what they're proposing. You know what your friends and party members in Ottawa are proposing to cut in '87 and '88. The people in Manitoba, the Finance Minister and the Minister of Health there, who you already said is a good Minister of Health, he told the people of the province what the cut-backs were going to be, year by year by year. He laid it out and he let the people in the province decide whether they liked that or not.

You are hiding information again about proposed cut-backs from your cousins in Ottawa, the Mulroney government, who in 1984 promised that health care was a priority. Then when he gets elected he says, here is a proposal: we intend to cut millions of dollars, in fact over a billion dollars, in health across Canada. That's what was the proposal. And what we're saying is to break it down. What is he proposing in that time period to be cut from the Health budget of Saskatchewan? And I want to go through year by year, 1987-88, what the proposal is.

And I know you're going to go to a meeting and argue that that cut shouldn't take place. I can concede that point to you. The public will make a judgement on how successful your government has been in dealing with Ottawa and whether or not we think you will be successful in this area.

But leave that as it may be, that you're going to go to a meeting and argue the point that the cuts shouldn't take place. I'll give you credit that you'll go to the meeting. I don't know what the results are going to be. The record of your government hasn't been great . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, it hasn't been great.

We wanted the upgrader to go ahead; the Premier went down there this weekend and got nothing. He spent \$13 million to get a year delay. That's what it cost the taxpayers of the province — 13 million bucks. We wanted a deficiency payment for grain; he got nothing. He got an 81 cent reduction. Now you're saying you're going to a Minister of Health conference to try to get a cut.

(1115)

What many will assume is that instead of a \$10 million cut this year, you'll come back with a 13 million cut. Now I'm not saying you will, but watching the record of this government with Ottawa, it isn't a shining success. So what I want to know is what the proposal is, what the Michael Wilson proposal is for '87-88, what he has told you they intend to cut in this formula. We're going to stay on this for some time until you answer some of these questions.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, I think the member said something in the introduction to his statement about a cut-back in nursing positions. That simply is not true. Not true at all. There has been no cut-back in nursing positions and the member knows that. There has been an improvement in nursing positions every year since this government took power — every year since this government took power.

Let me indicate to you, the cut-back in nursing services in the province of Saskatchewan was on July 1, 1976. Each year there has been an increase in the number of nurses into the hospitals and nursing homes of this province and there is a substantial . . . a \$100 million patient enrichment program which is going to put in over 500 — 500 — new nursing positions over the next five years, with about 300 of them going in this year, Mr. Chairman. So to stand here and try and mislead the people of this province that there's been a cut-back in nursing is simply untrue — simply untrue.

Now regarding the EPF funding: as I've said, I'm going down there. We're going to put forth our best case. The member realizes that. He says that we haven't had much effect in Ottawa. I would ask him or anyone else to compare the action and the input into agriculture by the federal government since we've taken over, since Grant Devine has become the premier of the province. There has been more changes, more money flowing from the federal treasury into the province of Saskatchewan, and I heard the Prime Minister just the other day say there will be more.

So for the member opposite to stand up in this House and say that the negotiations with the federal government and of this government have not been successful, again, is simply not true. It is not true. Negotiations with the Prime Minister and our Premier have been perhaps the best that have ever taken place in the history of this country. So I'm going to go to Ottawa with that same type of "stand up for Saskatchewan." Let's protect Saskatchewan. We will work our best to try and get the most EPF funding we can in the coming year, and for subsequent years we will do exactly the same thing.

The member in Manitoba, who is a colleague and a friend of mine — the Health minister of Manitoba — it may well be that he is willing to take any proposal by the federal government as gospel. I'm not willing to do that. I have illustrated in this House how, even within their own caucus, the Nielsen report suggests certain things be cut, other ministers said no, that suggestion isn't right. We're going to keep that; we're going to build on that. So although the Finance minister says he's going to look at these kind of reductions, I am going to go there and talk man to man with my counterpart to try and reduce whatever reductions may be indicated by the federal Finance minister.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, I don't want to discourage the minister from his meetings, but I wonder whether or not he'll be taking all the Tory hacks along with him that the Premier took when he went to Ontario — Staff Barootes and Ron Barber and Pringle and Dave Tkachuk and George Hill. I mentioned Staff Barootes. But you can go to your meetings, you can go to your meetings. You can go down and meet with Conrad Black to try to raise some money for the next election. That's fine. I don't argue with that.

The point that we would like to know is what the proposals for cut-backs by the federal government are in the health care area. That's the issue. That's what we're talking about. That's what they talked about in Manitoba, in Ontario, and in other provinces. They'll be talking about it today in Prince Edward Island where there will be an election in the very near future, about cut-backs from Ottawa in the health care area.

I understand why you don't want to talk about it. You're embarrassed about it. You, sir, are embarrassed that you have a federal government that's attempting to wreck the health care of this country. You're embarrassed about a government that was elected in '84 on the commitment to health care, that is now saying we're going to take 1.3 billion out. I know why you don't want to give the answers — you're embarrassed. But that's not a good

enough reason.

You're being paid to provide these kind of answers and we would like to know what the cut-backs are going to be in '87 and '88, what the proposal is of the Michael Wilson proposal. We know that this has been floated by you at a number of meetings. Deputies have met, and they have discussed the proposed cut-backs, and they will be putting forward, I'm sure, solid proposals of why they shouldn't take place — why they shouldn't take place. But the question is: what is being proposed? What does the federal government want to take out of the budget in 1987-88 in the health care for this province?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Chairman, again . . . I just want to give a little more information on the topic of nursing because I heard some calling from the seats and so on. I'd just like to read this out for you and to indicate the commitment of this government to health care in this province. I want to at this time indicate to you, Mr. Chairman, that the figures that I will be giving you today are figures where hospital boards have themselves also increased the nursing capacity over and above the expenditure from SHSP. I gave you some of those figures the other day. But I want to congratulate the hospital boards because they certainly are responding to some of the needs that they see out there.

So I would like to, for the clarification and the information of all members in this House, give you these statistics. These are the increases from March 31st, 1982, Mr. Chairman, until January 31, 1986. Now these are the increases in nursing, professional nursing positions. The total for small community hospitals is 44.68. That is the total increase in professional nursing component in small community hospitals. In the large community hospitals — that's the Estevans and the Humboldts and Melforts and the Melvilles and so on of this province — there have been 34.44 actual nursing position increases, nurses. And in the regional hospitals, and those are the bigger ones like Moose Jaw and North Battleford and Swift Current, there have been 55.44 increases in nurses in those hospitals in that period of time. And in the base hospitals, and that's the ones in Regina and Saskatoon, the six big hospitals, there have been 229 nurses added into those hospitals over this period of time, a total in general hospitals, of 363.57. Add Wascana to that and it will come up to a grand total of 365.61 nurses put into the hospitals of this province since March 31st of 1982.

I wanted you to understand that and to know that because there have been allegations and murmurings from the seat that there hasn't been positions put in. Those are the positions that have been put in through SHSP funding and also with the boards taking some of their reserves and using them to enrich the staffing components. So I just wanted the members to know that.

As far as the EPF, as I pointed out to you, I can't understand this line of questioning or reasoning. Whatever may be in '88-89, '90, is only speculation. The Finance minister of Canada has said he wants to reduce. He's given a gross figure of what it may be. I don't take his target for each year, if he does have those, as being carved in stone. I said that even this year's is not carved in stone, and we're going to negotiate for Saskatchewan the best

deal to try and reduce any type of cut-back from the federal government to health care in Canada.

The members opposite seem to want to spread a bogymen that there will be different types of health care across Canada. I want to tell you there are different standards of health care across Canada at this time. Not every province has a chiropody program. Certainly not. Saskatchewan has, I believe, the best system of health care in Canada, and I believe it is my duty to see that that remains. And I give you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of this legislature and the people of Saskatchewan, that commitment that we will maintain Saskatchewan as the best health care system in Canada.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well I guess what's hard to believe is when the nurses are demonstrating on the steps of the legislature for the first time in the history of the province that your commitment is worth anything. That's what they're telling us . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well there were no nurses demonstrating any time when we were in government, on the steps of the legislature. They didn't do it. They didn't have to do it. But they are now.

And you'll say how bad it was in the 1970s and how good it is in 1982. But the problem with that argument, Mr. Minister, is that nobody believes it. And part of the problem with your government, and part of the problem with your election being postponed, is the fact that nobody believes you any more.

And the other part of the problem is that you don't give out any information. You're a very secretive government. When it comes to travelling around the world and the cost of these trips, you don't tell us. And even on what the federal government is planning to cut in health care, you won't tell us what their proposals are. There's a hidden agenda here until after the next election. That's what it is. There's a hidden agenda. We know what the cut-backs are, and you're afraid to tell the people of the country and the people of the province until after the election.

Because you know what happened in Manitoba when they came out. The people in the province of Manitoba told the Tories in Ottawa and in Manitoba: we don't want cut-backs in health, and we don't trust the Tories to go to Ottawa to fight for health care. That's what they said. And I say to you that we want to know what the cut-backs are proposed for '87 and '88 by the Mulroney government.

You know what's being proposed; you're hiding it. You have a hidden agenda till after the election, the same as you had when you were planning the April election; you were hiding the price of wheat. You had a little deal cooked with the federal government on the 81-cent drop in the price of grain. And you were going to try to hold that up until after an April election. And then when the April election got postponed, then you released it.

And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that here is again another issue that you're trying to hide till after the election. This is the massive cut-back in health to the province by the federal PC government. And I say to you: what is your intention, and what is the federal government's intentions for cut-backs in '87 and '88? How much money are they telling you they want to take from us?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Chairman, I don't know how a credible member of the opposition could stand in this House and talk about any type of cut-back in health care when the book in front of his face, the *Estimates*, the blue book in front of his face, the *Estimates* of the province of Saskatchewan, indicate that for the coming year there's an 11.6 per cent increase in health care spending in the province of Saskatchewan. And he can go back each year since we became government and he will see substantial increases to health care spending in this province. It's well understood that if there's a pillar of strength of the Devine government, it is in providing quality health care and in providing leadership in health care in Canada today. That's understood, not only in Saskatchewan, that is understood across Canada.

I meet with my counterparts in the Maritimes and in B.C. and they say to me, sometimes, how do you get as much money out of your government for health care? We have trouble. And I said, because it is a priority of our government. It was a priority when we fought the election in '82, and it will be a priority whenever the next election comes, and the people of this province know full well that if there is one thing that the Devine government has done that is outstanding in leadership in Canada, it is maintaining and building and providing the best health care system in this dominion. That's something I'm proud of, and my colleague are proud of it. And we will put our record against anyone else.

So for these people to stand up and try and raise the spectre of cutting back in health care, of cuts, is simply untrue. There is no cut in health care by the Devine government, and that is the government of which I am the Health minister. Our record shows that has never happened, and I can indicate to you that I will fight with the tenacity that I have with the federal government or anyone else — opposition, NDP, Liberal, you line them up — I'll take them all on and I'll defend the health care of this province.

(1130)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Another little Rambo over there, another little cheer-leader that's going to go out and attack the federal Tories. The federal Tories, yeah, he's doing a great job. But interesting, we have doctors on strike in Prince Albert, we have nurses rallying on the steps of the legislature, and we have chiropractors who are saying that you're running the health care system into the ground. And on top of that we have a federal government that's talking about cutting \$1.3 billion out of health — Tory government.

Now you may be proud, sitting with your little crew of Tories here in this House. But I'll tell you, you won't go out and meet with the nurses, you won't meet with the chiropractors, and doctors are telling us that you don't consult with them. You send them speeches at great expense, but you won't go talk to them. And I say to you, sir, that when you talk about defending health care, your record is less than believable. And you say the *Estimates*, that what you're putting in the book, is record. Yes, and I

know what you're saying you're going to spend.

But your record on spending hasn't turned out to be exactly accurate. And I go back to two years ago when your estimate on nursing home construction came in 40 per cent below what you told us in the House you were going to spend. You misled the House in estimates on how much you were going to spend, and you, sir, are not believable by the nurses — not by the nurses, not by the doctors, not by the chiropractors, and I'll tell you, not by the 6,000 people who are waiting for a bed in Saskatoon.

Now, I know what you're trying to do by hiding these numbers on the health care cuts here. I know what you're doing. This is the Mulroney government who said they had a sacred trust with social programs when they were elected in 1984. And the first thing they did was take on the senior citizens to see if they couldn't cut their pensions — until the old seniors got together and told Brian Mulroney where to get off. And Grant Devine goes to Ottawa and what does he say, tough old . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. Order. The member knows very well that in referring to members of the legislature you refer to them by their seat and not by their proper name.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, if I said Grant Devine I should have said Premier Devine. When Premier Devine went to Ottawa he said to Brian Mulroney, keep up the good work. That was at the same time the seniors were fighting to keep their pensions in the province. That's what he said. That's what he was saying. He won't fight with Brian Mulroney. He wants to fight with Sheikh Yamani in Saudi Arabia, and people are laughing at the man. And he hasn't shown up in the House here for four days.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order. I realize and appreciate that the discussion during estimates of Health can be wide-ranging, but they shall be adhered to regarding the health issue, not political issues that range afar from this country.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — But what we're talking about is in the area of health care, the Premier standing up for health care. And I'll say that rather than fighting with oil ministers in Saudi Arabia that he should be in Ottawa fighting for health care, and fighting against these cuts.

And, Mr. Chairman, you will realize, even though you're not running in the next election . . . And I can well understand why, with these kind of health cuts, why you're not running in Saskatoon. With 6,000 people waiting for beds in Saskatoon, I wouldn't run again in Saskatoon either, and I understand that and I appreciate you for that.

And there are a number of other Saskatoon, or near Saskatoon people, from your party who will not run for the Conservative Party, and I appreciate your integrity in not being tied into these people who would cut the health care program, who would cut the pensions of senior citizens, and when it happens go to Ottawa and say to the Prime Minister, keep up the good work. Keep up the good work — that's what he said to Brian Mulroney. Now this Minister of Health says he's going to

go to Ottawa. He's going to go to Ottawa and fight to keep the health care funding that is proposed to be cut.

Well, I tell you, sir, in the province of Saskatchewan you folks are not believable when you talk about going to Ottawa to fight Brian Mulroney's cut-backs. Because the Premier has said to him, keep up the good work. That was after these proposals had come forward. After these proposals have come forward, Premier Devine went to Ottawa and told Brian Mulroney, keep up the good work. Now how much credibility will you have, sir, when you go to Ottawa and argue that these cuts shouldn't take place, when your Premier has said to keep doing what you're doing? That's the problem. That's the issue.

And when Husky Oil and the provinces want to sign an agreement on an upgrader, and the federal government won't sign it . . . Why should they? They know they have a Premier here who has already said, keep up the good work. They know they don't have to do anything for this province.

And what I'm saying to you very clearly is that we have a problem of credibility. And it's really hard to stand up to the federal government when you're down on our knees. It's hard to kick the doors of the office of the Prime Minister when you're down on your knees crawling around.

And I remember the Premier saying over and over again: this close relationship between myself and Mulroney, I'm going to exploit it. He says, I'm going to exploit this close relationship. Well I'll tell you, the people of Saskatchewan believe that Brian Mulroney is exploiting Grant Devine, or Premier Devine, and they're having a difficult time believing that he is a strong man and that he's going to fight with Ottawa, let alone go to Saudi Arabia and get the cartel set up again. They're laughing at him.

And all I would say to you, Mr. Minister . . . And I don't know whether you have any control over the agenda any more, because the Premier and the Prime Minister have a deal made. And they have clearly told you, don't release these health care cuts that are proposed. That's why you're not giving it out. That's why you're not giving it out.

The people of the province in Manitoba knew what the cut-backs were, and they told them. But you, sir, are on a mission for the Premier not to tell the public what these cut-backs are going to be. And I understand what your role is, but I don't think that's good enough. I think the taxpayers of this province deserve to know what the proposal of Michael Wilson is. You're being paid; both you and Michael Wilson are being paid. You're servants of the people of this province. They want to know what the cut-backs are that are proposed by the federal government, and what are they for 1987-1988.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Chairman, I think there's something that has to be cleared up, and that is that the member opposite does not always tell things exactly as they are. He indicated in the beginning of his statements, he said that I haven't met with the chiropractors, I haven't met with the doctors, and I haven't met with the nurses.

Well let me tell you, let me tell you, nobody believes that member opposite, because I remember just a few months ago when the member tried to make an allegation — a completely false allegation about the funds of the PC party in Pioneer Trust — he was proven to be exactly false. That member falsified . . . He didn't have the integrity to do the honest thing and resign. He wouldn't do that. So for that . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order, order, order. You also know full well, Mr. Member, that when the Chairman or the Speaker is on their feet, that there's supposed to be order in this House. Order. Order.

I would advise the minister that he is ranging well off topic with the discussion regarding Pioneer Trust, and I would ask the minister to come back to estimates.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well we just wanted to establish the credibility of the member opposite, because he says that I haven't met with doctors. I will tell you, Mr. Minister, I have met with doctors more times than any other Health minister in the history of Saskatchewan; more times in my tenure as Minister of Health than any other Health minister in the history of this province.

We worked out Saskatoon Agreement II. We did it in consultation. We did it without any disruption to the medical care of this province; far different — far different from the savage battle that raged this province in 1962, that destroyed relationships even to this day because of the inability of the government of that day to deal in a professional and co-operative way with the doctors of this province.

My officials last night met with the chiropractors. We're, as a caucus, meeting with the chiropractors on the 16th of this month. I have met with the nurses at the same meeting the hon. member showed up at. I've indicated that both the SRNA and SUN have been in my office many occasions on meetings. So for him to stand in this Chamber and try and insinuate, try to give the allegation that this government does not meet with the professional bodies in health care, is simply untrue — simply untrue.

Therefore, let us turn to the topic we've been discussing for a couple of minutes, and that is the EPF funding. Let me indicate to you once again: he says I'm on a mission. You bet I'm on a mission. The mission I'm on is to provide and protect the health care system of Saskatchewan. I don't apologize for being on a mission on that. We are on a mission on that, and we will go to Ottawa with that mission and we will argue the best case we can for this province of Saskatchewan. We're going to do it for this year.

They might like to speculate: what is it going to be in '88, '89, or what is it going to be in '90. I think the issue the people of Saskatchewan want decided is what is it going to be this year, and are we going to have health care protected. And I can say unequivocally with 11.6 per cent in the increase in the budget in this province, one-third of the budget of the Government of Saskatchewan, \$1,200 for every man, woman, and child that's out there today, we are protecting health care, and more important than that, we're building on health care

and we will continue to do just that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, you talked for a moment about Pioneer Trust and Tory money in Pioneer Trust. I think you pulled the money before it went down.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Order. Order. I've already indicated to the minister that the topic of Pioneer Trust is ranging wide afield. Therefore, in all consistency and fairness, I would have to rule that you also do not bring up the matter of Pioneer Trust.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The Chairman allowed the minister to get through his statement on Pioneer Trust. But I understand how you will protect the integrity of the House, and I understand that that is his role. But I would have appreciated it if he would have given the same courtesy to the members of the opposition to respond to the full statement that was made by the minister. But understand why the minister does not want to talk about funds and where they were allocated before Pioneer Trust went down, and the day that they were pulled out, but will . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. You have heard my ruling regarding Pioneer Trust. It is not the issue of whether the minister wishes to speak about it or not. It is the ruling from the Chair that it shall not be discussed.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The issue, of course, Mr. Chairman, is the funding cuts that are proposed by the federal government. This is the issue we have now been on for an hour. And here again I know full well that the minister's staff have the information about the spending cut proposals by the federal government. They have handed it to the minister any number of times. They've advised him, I'm sure, before they came into the House; they've had meetings about it, because as he says he has had any number of meetings with officials from the federal government and consultation. They know what the cut-backs are going to be. He has admitted that the cuts proposed for '86-87 are 10 million. And this is . . . Nine million. Our number is 10 million. But he has admitted that the area of \$10 million is being proposed to be cut by the federal government this year.

But he refuses to give the numbers for subsequent years, and I understand why, because he would appreciate that these numbers did not come out before the provincial election.

Now I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, whether you can us if the numbers for '87-88 are in the area of \$18 million. You've told us that the number for this year, the proposed cut, is 9 million. Is the cut for '87-88 in the area of \$18 million that Michael Wilson is proposing to cut?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I don't know if that's the figure or not, because, as I say, we don't know if 9 million is the figure for this year. It is suggested. We're going down there, and perhaps we'll be able to reduce that to 7 million, maybe to 5 million, I would hope we could get it down to zero.

I've said that is the mission that I am on. My colleague, the Minister of Finance, is having those discussions with Mr.

Wilson. I give, as an example, the Nielsen report where one federal minister said we should not go ahead with the Churchill line. And I showed the other one responsible for it put money into it.

(1145)

So any of these things may just be projections. And if they're just projects, I don't put a lot of faith in them. I am more inclined to deal with the negotiations right now and what is going on. And on the 28th of this month I will be sitting down with Jake Epp discussing these things. And I hope I'm successful. I may not be. I may not be successful, but I will give my best try for Saskatchewan, as will my colleague with Mike Wilson, to see if we can hammer out the best deal in EPF funding. That is the priority. That's what we're looking at this year.

So to look at '87 or '88, '89, '90, why would one waste his time worrying about that when the issue at hand is the one that you want to deal with? That's what we're going to do. And as I've said, I've written to him on March 4th to let him know my concern. We've discussed it at the last Health ministers' conference that I have attended as four years as the Health minister in this province. And we will be talking about it on the 28th of April in Ottawa with the Hon. Jake Epp.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, you waver on the number — whether it's a proposal or a suggestion — the \$9 million cut for this year. But I think we all know that it's a hard bargaining position that the federal government has taken, that they want to cut \$9 million in health care funding this year. Your number is 9 million, ours is 10 million. And we won't quibble over the million. The principle is, is the federal government has put forward a solid position that they would like to cut this money out of the provincial spending on health.

What I'm wanting to know is why, if you are concerned about these cut-backs, you wouldn't announce them to the public so the nurses who are concerned about it would rally behind you; so the doctors would rally behind you; so the 6,000 people who are waiting for hospital beds in Saskatoon would help you in your fight in Ottawa; so that the million people in the province would rally behind you to try to fight to save this health care that we have built in this province.

You see, what the people out there will be saying is, the minister isn't being totally truthful when he says he wants to fight in Ottawa. He's got a deal. He wants to cover up these numbers till after the election. Otherwise you would blow this up. You would make this an issue. You would say, look, I want everyone to write the federal minister to say, look, go to hell when it comes to cutting health care costs to Saskatchewan. That's what you'd be doing.

And you would be rallying nurses — instead of fighting you on the steps of the legislature, get in there with them. Say, look, we don't want these cuts from Ottawa. They would come with you. They would go with you to Ottawa. Doctors would go; hospital administrators would go; the people on waiting lists — and you could

have a selection of them from across the province. Take them to the meeting rather than the Pringles and the Ron Barbers and the Tory hacks who you've been taking to meetings. Take some of the people who will be impacted on by these cut-backs in health. That's what I'm asking you.

And I'll tell you that you could win this argument if you would fight, if you were serious. I don't believe you are. I think you're in the same boat as you were when the seniors were fighting to keep their pensions. You birds on the side said not one word to the federal government about pension cut-backs. You didn't say a word. You didn't only not fight the federal government, you didn't even support the seniors in their fight to keep their pensions.

So when you say here, we want to keep this quiet, and I'll go to Ottawa with my political staff . . . And I'm not talking about the people in this room, but I'm talking about the ones Devine takes when he goes — Ron Barber and Staff Barootes and Pringle — when he goes to meetings, that you're not being totally truthful with the public when you say you want to fight Ottawa. Otherwise you would be telling them, year by year by year, what the cut-backs are proposed by the federal government, and how you want every person in Saskatchewan to stand up and fight to keep medicare. You're not doing that. You have a hidden agenda with the federal government that after the election you're going to allow these cuts to take place. That's what's going on here and you know it.

And I say to you, clearly, we have to have these numbers out. They're an issue with the people. It's not a point of whether you're doing a better job in nurse staffing than we did. The issue is, it's going to get much worse if these health care cuts come to Saskatchewan and to other provinces.

And we can help in that fight. Whether we're in the opposition or in government, we can help in this fight if the numbers are out there, what these people in Ottawa are proposing to cut out of the health budget here in the province. And everyone would give you a hand in this fight.

But you're being secretive. You're hiding the numbers for one reason, and that is politics — pure politics. One, at the federal level you don't want to embarrass the federal Tory party; and secondly, you don't want these numbers to come out before a provincial election because you know the impact would be devastating if you had to go to the rural constituencies and tell them that there are major health cuts coming from the federal government that over the next five years are going to be massive. That's why you're hiding these numbers, and the people of the province know.

And I'll tell you, you're not going to get away with hiding them. They may as well come clean now, because we're going to stay here until these numbers are firmly implanted in the public's mind. Because it will be devastating if this plan goes through. We won't have a medicare system in Canada if this strategy of Michael Wilson and Brian Mulroney goes through.

The other point is, is we're not confident that you and your political cronies are going to go do the fight. We're not confident in that. And so what we want to do is lobby the people of Saskatchewan to fight with us. And I say to you: what is the cut-back for '87-88 as proposed by Michael Wilson?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Chairman, again the member likes to try and mislead. He indicates some kind of a fight between the nurses and I. There is no fight. The nurses came the other day with some concerns. I'm having my staff analyse those. I want to make the record very straight and clear. We had a very amicable meeting. It was a good relationship that flowed at that meeting. So for this member to stand in this House and try and mislead . . . And that is all the member tries to do, to mislead, to try and spread allegations of things that just exactly aren't true.

Mr. Minister, he accuses me of taking political people with me. I have never taken political people with me on any venture to Ottawa at any time. The person that I'll be taking with me is my deputy minister and perhaps one of my personal staff. We will be going there to put forward Saskatchewan's case, as we always have. We will continue to do that.

He talks about hidden agendas, cut-backs. Mr. Chairman, how evident does it have to be, when you see year after year after year, four successive budgets, in each case health care in Saskatchewan has been the major priority of expenditures by the Grant Devine government? Why would a person try and get up and try and mislead and try to scare or spook people that there may be cut-backs? I mean, if there was reduction in the budget, he might have some credibility. There's no reduction. There is an 11.6 per cent increase.

He'd like to raise the spectre of the federal government pulling the rug from under us. I don't know what's going to happen in the year 1989 or 1990. I don't know what the economy of Canada is going to be like; you don't know; and they sure as heck don't know.

Now I want to tell you, Mr. Chairman, that the realm of the world that I deal in, the practical world of today and this year, is that there is some speculation or some indication that we may be \$9 million short on EPF directed towards health — may be, may be, nothing definite, nothing in stone.

I have said time and time again in this House, and I will say it again, that I will go to Ottawa and regardless of who is the Minister of Health, regardless of who is the Minister of Health, I will fight for the best deal for the province of Saskatchewan.

I happen to know the federal Minister of Health. I happen to admire the federal Minister of Health. I think he is the kind of person that really has the concerns of the Canadian people at heart . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh they can laugh. They can laugh about a man of the stature of Jake Epp. I like to see that. You mock and make fun of one of the most credible Canadians, Mr. Jake Epp. You go out in Steinbach, Manitoba, and you laugh about Jake Epp and see the reception you'll get, where he has an

outstanding record, an outstanding record as a man of integrity, as a community leader, as an excellent teacher, and as a very, very strong representative of the people of that part of Manitoba.

I have been with Jake Epp and I can tell you . . . And I would challenge you to go to the gentleman who is the health care minister in Manitoba. If you have the courage, you go to the phone right now. You go and phone Larry Desjardins, your health care minister in Manitoba, the NDP, and you ask him his personal view of Jake Epp, and he will tell you exactly the same thing that I have said. He will tell you that Jake Epp is probably the best health care minister that we have had in Canada in some time. He will tell you that over the past four years while we have been colleagues, that the only time that the provinces have had an opportunity to put forth our case, and to be listened to, is under Jake Epp.

So I take exception when I see people mocking and making fun of a man that I think Canada is proud of, and I am proud to call my friend, and I believe is an outstanding Health minister in this country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — So getting back to the EPF funding. I think it's understandable, with that kind of a relationship between Jake Epp and I, that we will go down and we will talk reality. It may well be that Jake Epp will not have the latitude to reduce the figure. That is a possibility. It may well also be that Jake Epp might be able to be convinced to do it. It may also hold true that from those discussions that new directions, new programs, new types of ways of addressing health care needs in Canada will develop from that kind of dialogue.

I say to you, Mr. Chairman, the chance of the latter taking place is a lot stronger with one of my colleagues or myself, somebody from this side of the House, talking to Jake Epp, than the constant lack of new ideas, ridicule that comes from the other side.

Certainly, we will be doing all we can for EPF funding in this current year to strike the best deal for the province of Saskatchewan. Anything beyond there is not carved in stone. I don't pay any credence to that. I believe in going step by step, year by year, defend, build, produce, and have and ensure the best health care services for the people of this province. That's what they want; that's what they tell me; and that's what they're getting.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, we heard a five-minute ranting about Jake Epp. And the people who will be following the proceeding will know that no one had mentioned Jake Epp's name up to that point, but I think it clearly indicates how this government operates. When you're on thin ice, you set up a paper tiger, and then you attack it with great diligence. No one had mentioned Jake Epp in a derogatory or positive manner before the minister gets up and rants and raves for five minutes about someone insulting the federal minister. And I hadn't heard anyone even mention his name. But it's not unusual because their leader, Premier Grant Devine, does it all the time. When they have a problem in the oil industry he goes over to Saudi Arabia and attacks

the sheikh over there. And here the Minister of Health, when he's on thin ice about federal cut-backs by the federal Finance minister, he attacks the opposition for insulting Jake Epp who they hadn't mentioned.

I'll tell you, this is one reason, Graham, that you're not credible any more because you keep doing things like this. The people watching, and even people in the gallery, say what is the man talking about? What is he ranting and raving about Jake Epp? No one had mentioned him in the conversation. I say to you, let's get back to the issue of the federal cut-backs that are being proposed.

Now we all know that federal governments like five-year plans. We heard it from the former Finance minister last year on health, and education, and whatever the other four pillars were that they announced last year. Everyone else in the province has forgot as well. But you have a five-year plan in Health. I don't know whether you believe it's credible or not, but the federal government also has a five-year plan. The federal government also has a five-year plan of how they're going to cut costs.

Now you're saying that your five-year plans are credible, but their five-year plans aren't. They have a five-year plan, and the five-year plan includes massive cuts to health spending and grants to the provincial governments, or transfers to the provincial governments. This is their five-year plan. And you're saying, well we don't have to worry about it. Well if we don't worry about this Tory five-year plan, why would we pay any attention to any of them? Which ones are credible? Are you saying that Michael Wilson's five-year plan has no credibility; that his five-year plan to increase spending in one area, which is based on taking 1.3 billion out of health, that all of that doesn't make any sense?

(1200)

The issue, Mr. Minister, is the fact that we have announced proposals to cut spending in health by the federal government. Your job is to fight those cut-backs, and part of it would logically be that you would include the public and the opposition in the discussion so they could give you support in Ottawa. I would like you to go back to the question of: what is the proposed cut for '87-88 in health care spending from the federal government?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The member called me by my name I guess, which is really not kosher in here, but said something about credibility. I'll just make one statement on that I would put my credibility against his any time, any place, anywhere in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — But, Mr. Chairman, I want to indicate to you and to the members of this legislature some of the initiatives that we have taken in Saskatchewan that clearly indicate that Saskatchewan is a leader — not only in our own province do we have the best health care system, but is acknowledged by the federal government and other governments across this province.

I want to indicate the non-smoking initiatives. We have

led the nation in non-smoking initiatives designed for the young people of this province to the extent that the federal government have joined with us, and other governments have followed in, to come forward with the "breakthrough" generation. Those initiatives that have been developed across Canada were first developed here in the province of Saskatchewan and picked up by the federal government.

A second one, that we discussed yesterday with the member from Quill Lakes, the alcohol education program — the 15 per cent life-style advertising, positive health life advertising — has been followed by the federal government adopting, almost in its entirety, the Saskatchewan plan.

I put forth to the federal government three years ago an idea for an innovative plan called the seniors health plan. It fell on deaf ears at that time. The Liberals were in power. Each succeeding meeting I've had, I've talked about this and pushed for it. My understanding is that the federal government are looking at perhaps developing that initiative.

Elimination of extra billing — we were one of the first provinces to grapple with that, and I suppose most recently, coming out of the consultation meetings that we discussed in our estimates the other day, the improvements to our home care program. We have probably — and other people say this — the best home care program in Canada. The National Council on Ageing have indicated that they believe the home care program — as it exists today, with many new initiatives, new funding arrangements whereby the areas with the greatest elderly population receive more funds, new initiatives for heavy-care patients so that they can stay in their homes — that that home care system is the best in Canada.

So I think there are a few examples to show that Saskatchewan is not without considerable scope on the federal scene when it comes to health care. And I believe that a province with that record, a province who is acclaimed by other provinces as being the leader in health care provision, will certainly be able to take a leading role in discussing with the federal government the necessity of continued federal financing in the provision of health care.

That's what we're going to do. That's what I'm going to do on the 28th of April. So to speculate what may happen in the year '88, '89, and '90, would be nothing more than sheer speculation and, Mr. Chairman, I prefer to be more practical and deal with the matters at hand. I've outlined as succinctly as I can what we are going to be doing to address federal spending on health care in the coming year. Anything other than that is sheer speculation in years to come. My interest is for this year, and we're going to go down there and we're going to put forth the best possible fight we can for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, I'd like to ask you . . . You say, to give us any of the details from beyond '86-87 would indeed be speculation. On what basis did you make your calculation to give us the figures for '86-87? Is it on the proposal that we are referring to, the five-year proposal of cuts? And why then, if that is the case, why

can't you then in fact give the '87-88 cut-backs?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — This is what the Finance staff have indicated as a preliminary; and as I said, it's not in stone. It is what they think might be the area for this coming year. They have, in their discussions with my officials, come up with the approximate figure of \$9 million. That's why I put out that figure. We're dealing with this year.

Finance and health are working diligently, as I have said before. Our officials — and very capable officials — are in contact with each other and working out a strategy and a game plan that is best for Saskatchewan also. My colleague, my fellow minister and I, will be articulating those stances in Ottawa.

Now one may question whether the Hon. Gary Lane is going to be able to negotiate that. I said last night I believe there is no man other than the Premier of this province that can go down and articulate the financial case of this province any better. I feel from the activities that I have had, and with my relationship with Jake Epp, that I will be able to put forth the health issues of Saskatchewan in a very credible form. So we're dealing with this year. We think it's around \$9 million, but you have our commitment that if we can make it lower, we sure as heck will.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, let's start from the beginning. Would you indeed outline to the people of this province what in fact is the nature of the proposal that you're looking at and studying — from the federal government, the details, the proposed cut-back? Would you outline the ingredients of the proposal that has been given to you to study and which you say you'll be meeting with your federal counterpart? Would you outline the nature of the formula that they're proposing for the massive cut-backs to health care?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, I'll just answer as I did in his first question, is that — and these are just estimates; there's nothing carved in stone — \$13 million approximately. That's the indication. The portion at the present time that may impact on health is \$9 million. That is the best estimate that our officials can come up with.

We're going to go there for this year to try and get the best deal. As I said before, if we can get that down to 11 million, we'll be very happy. If we get it down lower we'll even be more happy. But that is the estimated figure, and that's what we're dealing with. Anything beyond that is sheer speculation, and we are concerned to deal with this year. Those are the approximate figures. I gave them to the member some half-hour ago.

Mr. Koskie: — I'll ask you again, Mr. Minister: can you outline the nature of the proposal that you're looking at, the federal proposal? Is it indeed . . . stretches over a five-year period to 1990-1991? That's the question that I'm asking. And would you indicate the basis of their proposal detailing the reduction in the funding of the established program funding for health care.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well certainly the member knows, as does any other member, and I suppose anyone else that follows budgets and so on, that the Wilson budget

indicated a five-year reduction. We're dealing with this year, and it is upon the basis of this year that we may be able to change their mind. We may be able to establish a better deal. That's what we're working with, and that's what our officials have been instructed to do. And that's what they're putting their minds to. Next year we'll work with the year after that, and subsequent years — year after year.

But to say, what is it in 1990? How would I know? I don't know what it is for this year. I'm going down to get the best deal I can for the province, and I assure you we will do that. So you know, for him to think there's some master plan, from our point of view there's a five-year statement by the Minister of finance. We'll do all we can to try and talk him out of that, and we're going down to try and establish the best deal for Saskatchewan for this year.

Mr. Koskie: — We've established after almost an hour and a half, you agree now that it's a five-year program . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, you did. You said the proposal of the federal government is a five-year proposal: it goes to 1990-91. You said it. And are you saying to us and to the people of Saskatchewan . . . You have to be doing one of two things: either you're misleading the House by not providing the information of the proposed cuts using the same basis of establishing what the decrease will be in '86-87. If you use exactly the same basis of determining what it is in '86-87, and using the basis of the formula that is established by the federal government, are you saying that you cannot provide what it would be projected to be — the loss in income to the province of Saskatchewan in '87-88? Are you saying that you're going to go to Ottawa without even having calculated out the full impact of the proposal over the five years? Are you saying that — that you haven't done that, and you don't have those details? Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I am saying again that we are concentrating on this year Michael Wilson made a statement in his budget about five years. We don't know what each year would come down at.

We're concerned for this year. This is the year we're living in. This is the year we're financing health care, and a lot will depend on how we make out in the negotiations in this year. We may be able to, as provinces, with Saskatchewan probably taking the lead, indicate to the federal Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Health that the project of the statement that he said in his budget is not acceptable to Canadians. We may be able to convince him of that.

So we're going there for this year to see if we can get the \$13 million reduced. That's our agenda. That's what we're working on. Anything further than that, we haven't put our minds to it, because we believe on dealing with things year by year, and certainly the priority is to get the best deal for Saskatchewan this year.

Mr. Koskie: — All I can say, Mr. Minister: that if you're going, you better go and you better deal with only one year — because you won't be around if you call an election, I'll tell you that.

Mr. Minister, what you're doing here is a total cover-up for the convenience of the Tory party — the provincial Tories here and also for the federal Tories. What is really happening, Mr. Minister . . . And I'll tell you, the Premier of Manitoba stood up for his province. He told everybody in the province what was happening in the way of cut-backs in health care in the province of Manitoba. He spoke to the people of that province, and they supported him on it.

Mr. Minister, it's not fair that you stand in this House and not provide information which you have. What you are doing is trying to deceive the public until you get by the next election. Because I'll tell you here, you are not going to be able to continue to provide the health care that the people of Saskatchewan want on a provincial income alone because you already have run up a \$200 billion deficit. And you're charging up services to the people. You aren't paying for them. And now you're standing by and watching the federal government cut back on funding.

(1215)

And I'll tell you, Mr. Minister, the people of this province won't allow you to destroy medicare and hospitalization. That is sacred. And I'll tell you, the party that they say will defend it is the New Democrats, not Tories. Watch any poll. Find out who the people of Saskatchewan trust when it comes to health care and medicare. It's the New Democrats, not Tories. And I'll tell you; we'll take you on, if you want to, on this issue here of not standing up while the Tories in Ottawa are cutting massively for the support of health care.

Do you realize, Mr. Minister, that the total amount of transfer payments established program funding to this province, is \$466 million — \$466 million? And what I want to ask you: out of that \$466 million that you're getting in transfer payments this year, I ask you what amount of that is designated by the federal government towards health care financing.

I want to illustrate to you that it's a major contribution to Saskatchewan health care and the quality of health care that we have been providing, and you are not going to defend it. And I submit to you, if you allow the Tories in Ottawa to cut their basic funding, that the quality of health care cannot be sustained totally by the province in view of the massive debt that you have run up here in this province — \$2 billion in debt. Interest alone on the debt that you have created is more than what medicare costs in this province — to pay the interest alone. Interest on our accumulated debt in this province is \$200 million. That's more than medicare.

And he is standing up saying that he's going to defend the financing of programs when he has a debt that he cannot even sustain the programs that are in existence. And he won't go to Ottawa and fight for the continuation of good health care across this province. He's going to duck and hide the facts, hopefully getting by the next election. That's what he's trying to do.

There's no doubt about it, it's in the budget. The plan is there. There's going to be a massive cut by the federal

government. Hundreds of millions of dollars are going to be cut from the support of the established program funding, which is the health and secondary education.

Mr. Minister, you know how massive the cut is going to be. But you're hiding it from the public. You know you can't sustain the health care. You're on the ropes because of your fiscal mismanagement of this province. Two billion dollars in debt — \$200 million in interest alone. And he's standing up saying he's going to be able to continue to maintain a health program without massive taxes or without deterrent fees.

There's no possible way, Mr. Chairman, that it's possible for this minister to guarantee to the people of this province a continuation of high standard health care in view of the fiscal mismanagement of this province. And if he doesn't get consistence from the federal government I will warn the people of this province to watch for two things: to watch for a premium on health care; to watch for deterrent fees after the next election. It cannot, it cannot be sustained under the system.

And I'll tell you what they're doing here. Four hundred and sixty-six million dollars is the amount in established program funding. And this minister here is going to stand by and allow our health care to be eroded by Wilson and Mulroney.

Well I'll tell you, there were a lot of sacred trust that were floating around during that last federal — indeed in the last provincial. But I'll tell you, no one believes the Tories' sacred trust because you broke the sacred trust that you gave to senior citizens in Ottawa when you went about de-indexing their old age security. And I'll tell you what is more. You broke your trust . . . The Tories are breaking the trust in bringing in a massive cut in financing, federal financing of health and secondary education.

I ask you a question, Mr. Minister: do you believe that to have a well-funded and sound health care program that a continuation of a federal commitment is an essential ingredient?

I say that there's going to be a massive erosion of the health care across this nation unless you have a commitment for increased funding by the federal government I ask you: from a philosophical basis, do you believe that in order to provide for Canada a high quality health care system, that it's absolutely essential that you have a commitment by the federal government, and a continuing and an increasing commitment to funding of health care across the nation?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I listened to the member opposite and, you know, they haven't changed. They haven't changed at all. The same doom and gloom philosophy that has prevailed in that party for the last eight years, doom and gloom and everything's going to get worse and Canada's going to hell in a hand basket — that's his belief.

Nobody supports the initiatives of the federal government. It seems strange that 41 per cent of the people in the latest polls support the federal government. But no, Mr. Doom and Gloom has to get up and try new

scare tactics, say, you're going to put on deterrent fees, things of this nature. That's what he said — deterrent fees and costs and going to make health care disappear from this scene.

He says: can you give us a guarantee that health care will continue in this province? I will point back to the record of the Devine government in health care. I will go back to successive increases in budget, far beyond any other province, and this year leading the nation at 11.6 per cent. I will go back to the construction of 1,600 nursing home beds. I will go back to a \$300 million capital health project putting major additions on the acute care hospitals of this province. I will go back to \$100 million patient care improvement fund for new staffing and new technologies. I will go back to the purchase of six CAT scans, by barter — making eminent common sense — getting goods that we have in our province that are not selling and trading them for the best up-to-date technology in the world, coming into Saskatchewan, into our base hospitals, which will put our ratio of CAT scans above anyone in Canada.

But let me tell you one other thing. He talks about deterrent fees. I want to tell you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to tell the people of Saskatchewan a fact that may have been forgotten.

When I came in as Health minister of this province, under the MCIC Act, The Medical Care Insurance Act; The Medical Care Insurance Act under the Blakeney government that were in here for 11 years and failed to eliminate extra billing . . . They didn't have the guts to eliminate extra billing, not the moral courage. They talked out of one side of their mouths.

They're the government that want to invite the Morgentaler free-standing abortion clinics into this province. That's the record of the Blakeney government. Free-standing abortion clinics, afraid to eliminate extra billing, and on the books of this province there was the capability, on the books of this province, up till 1984 was the legislation — listen to this, Mr. Chairman: legislation existed in this province up until 1984 . . . You can laugh because you don't know about this. You didn't even pay attention to what went on in this legislature. You can laugh about this but here was the legislation of the NDP.

Legislation under The Medical Care Insurance Act that permitted the use of premiums and user fees in this province. That legislation was there. In 1984 . . . Laugh; laugh if you want. Check the records if you so wish. Mr. Chairman, the changes to The Medical Care Insurance Act in 1985 brought in by the Devine government was to change that legislation so that user fees and premiums cannot be instituted in Saskatchewan. That was the change. They had legislation. Talk about a hidden agenda. They had legislation allowing the institution of premiums and user fees at any time.

Under the existing legislation of Saskatchewan, that can't be done. Who then is protecting health care? Which government is standing up and saying, we will not put in user fees or premiums? The member opposite again tries to bring about the doom and gloom. No ideas — they haven't changed one bit. Let me tell you that. They didn't

have the guts to eliminate that legislation because they had a hidden agenda that they would have brought in.

Mark my words, had they become government after the election in 1982 — thank goodness they didn't — I believe that hidden agenda was there to bring in premiums and to bring in user fees. That was the Blakeney government hidden agenda. We found that, and we said, that won't happen, and we took it off the legislation of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — I asked the minister a question. I indicated to you, Mr. Minister, that in the estimates, some \$466 million are provided by the federal government to Saskatchewan under EPF. I asked you: do you believe that the continuing commitment of funding from the federal government is absolutely necessary to provide a high quality health care system to Canada?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well certainly the EPF funding is used to provide health care. It certainly is an assistance. And as I have said time and time again, we want it to continue. We're going to go down there to negotiate the best deal we possibly can.

No one disputes the fact that the federal government has a commitment to health care. Sure, there may be some changes in the wind on that. There may be new programs, as the Nielsen report indicates. There may be new programs that will benefit many people in Saskatchewan. I'm willing to sit down and discuss those things.

But I'll tell you that my guide-line in discussing them will be just simply this: that I will be there fighting for the best deal for the province of Saskatchewan. That's the mandate that was handed to our government. That's the mandate that the Premier of the province gave to me, to try and safeguard and to build and develop the best health care system in Canada. I believe we have done that, and certainly we will be down there defending it and trying to get every available dollar we can to provide that system in the future.

Mr. Koskie: — You have indicated that federal funding is important. I say it is vitally important. I say that it's absolutely necessary.

But I say to you, Mr. Minister, what is happening, and the proposal is, that the federal government is going to cut back. That's the proposal, for them to cut back in a massive way the funding of health care across Canada. So what I ask you, Mr. Minister: can you give us the details, out of the \$466 million estimated in EPF funding, can you indicate what amount of that is allocated towards the payment of providing health care in Saskatchewan. Some of it is post-secondary education and some of it goes to health care. Can you give me the percentages of the apportionment used in the formula by the federal government, and can you give me an estimated amount, out of that \$466 billion, the amount that you in fact will be using towards supporting the health care system in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — This is rather interesting, Mr.

Chairman. We've spent a good time this morning discussing EPF funding when it first came in. I just want to put something straight for the record so that we get the historical perspective of how this all came about. I think it would be interesting; we've spent a lot of time discussing it.

It is interesting to know that prior to 1977, prior to 1977 the method of funding health care by the federal government to the provincial government was 50-50. It was 50-50. You added up your costs for doctors and for hospitals. That was it. You submitted it to the federal government and it was shared 50-50. That was up until 1977.

But in 1977, EPF funding came in. The member, the now sitting member for Regina North East was the minister of Finance at that time . . . the minister of Health in 1977 when that came in. And continually since that change in 1977, where the commitment by the federal and the provincial was 50-50 each, it has declined progressively down to where it is about 40 per cent by the federal government now. So to see the opposition stand here and make gross protestation about the EPF funding, when actually they were the government in power when the change in rules came in between the federal government and them.

(1230)

So there, I think is a point that can be well taken, is that if they were so concerned, why didn't their Health minister at the time, and their finance minister, put up a good fight with their bed partners, the Trudeau Liberals, and try and avoid the whole change to EPF? The question of the 466 million that the member was asking, my best estimate is that about 186 million is allocated to health this year.

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question for the minister. In listening to the minister in his tirade about what this government is doing for health services in this province, Mr. Minister, he talks about facts. Well, Mr. Minister, the fact is that this province now has a \$2 billion debt — that is the fact — over four years, which it didn't have before. The fact is also that we are paying \$200 million a year to service that debt. That, Mr. Minister, is a fact. We're not preaching doom and gloom; we are saying that this government is irresponsible in what they have been doing for four years.

And Mr. Minister, the federal government in their budget — Prime Minister Mulroney in their budget — said that they have to try to get their deficit under control, and in getting that deficit under control they were going to be making some cuts in various areas. One of those areas that they propose to make some cuts in was in health care or the EPF funding.

That, Mr. Minister, is what they proposed. That is what they proposed, Mr. Minister. Other provinces know it; you know it. You said yourself that you could be having a shortfall of about \$13 million. You are going to go and negotiate. You are going to negotiate and you are going to hope that the federal government will increase their funding to Saskatchewan, and that somehow it'll only be maybe \$9 million.

Well, Mr. Minister, there is no question that there is going to be a shortfall here and that the federal government is making cuts to Saskatchewan and they run their budget and their proposal on a five-year proposed plan for Canada, the same as your government is doing in your budget. You are planning everything on a five-year program. Well, Mr. Minister, you are saying that somehow that five-year plan that the federal government is proposing doesn't mean anything in their budget; that you are going to go there and they are going to change their mind, and there won't be any cuts. You are going to convince them to change their mind, and you are going to tell them that what they said in their budget is really not important.

And if you are saying that, Mr. Minister, you are also saying to the people of Saskatchewan that your five-year proposals don't mean anything. They should not be believed because Tory governments can change their minds at any time. That is what you are trying to tell the people, Mr. Minister.

Well, Mr. Minister, I think it's quite obvious that you are trying to keep some information away from the people of Saskatchewan. There is going to be a cut-back in health funding from the federal government. They have told you what it is, what's in their proposal, and I'm sure that you have looked at it because you said yourself, you're looking at \$9 million, but you are going to try to convince the federal government to change their mind on it.

For '86-87 you say there's going to be a \$ 9 million cut. Well, Mr. Minister, all we are asking you to do is tell us what, under that five-year proposal that the federal government is making, what impact that would have on health care funding for Saskatchewan. That's all we are asking. And surely you have looked at it for '86-87, '87-88, and all the way up to '90 and '91. You must have looked at what those cost cuts would be and what impact it would have on health services for Saskatchewan.

And all we are asking you to do is tell us what impact it would have on health care services. And if you told us that the federal cuts are going to create some problems for us down the road, then you would get people behind you in demanding from the federal government that they not make those cuts in the area of health care. But, Mr. Minister, you are not telling us that. You don't want to tell the people of Saskatchewan that the federal government is preparing to make cuts in health care, and that if they go through with their proposal, then what that's going to mean is that the people of Saskatchewan are eventually going to be faced, if a Tory government is elected in Saskatchewan, they are going to be faced with deterrent fees, or they are going to be faced with user fees. The people of Saskatchewan are going to have to pick up that shortfall. That, Mr. Minister, is what is going to happen with the federal government's proposal.

So why don't you just tell us what those numbers are, what impact it's going to have on health care funding in Saskatchewan. And then if you did come forward with all of those figures, you would have some people from Saskatchewan supporting you. You would have us supporting you in going to the federal government and

saying that we can't afford those cuts in health care, that if they have to make cuts, they should be making them elsewhere and not in health care for the people of this country.

So, Mr. Minister, why don't you just tell the people of Saskatchewan what those cuts are going to be — you've told us that they're going to be in '86-87 — what they're going to be in future years, or what you anticipate they may be in future years if that federal program continues as they have proposed it?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Once again, Mr. Chairman, we're dealing with this year. I've given an indication of what they would be for this year. I have no idea, until this year is decided, what subsequent years will be. It may well be, as I said before, we can have this reduced. I don't know if we can or not. I can tell you we're going to try our best. But to be speculating what the year 1990 would be, there's a lot of factors in this country that can change within three or four years.

So certainly, Mr. Chairman, we, the members of my staff, the members of the Finance staff, are working together to carve out the best deal for Saskatchewan for this year. And that's where our emphasis is focused.

Mr. Lusney: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's fine to talk about this year, and you have suggested what it possibly could be for this year, and you are going to try and negotiate with Ottawa to change that. But, Mr. Minister, if you know what it is for this year, I'm very certain that you and your staff — if not you, at least your staff — your department has looked at what the impact may be for the next five years, as proposed by the federal government. Surely they have looked at that, and I don't believe you if you say that they don't, or they haven't looked at it. I'm sure they must have put numbers together as to what the impact may be in future years, Mr. Minister.

And all we are saying is, tell us what that could be, what those numbers would be in future years. And even if it does change in the future, if you can convince the federal government to change their mind, then those numbers will be irrelevant. But what we should be telling the people of Saskatchewan is that there is a crisis; there is a problem shaping up that it could be a problem this year, and it could be a bigger problem next year, and it could be an even larger problem two years from today in the services that we provide in health care.

Now, Mr. Minister, don't tell me that your people or your department is not looking at what impact those cuts would have in that five-year proposal that the federal government made. And just tell us what it is and what could be happening to our health care system if that funding is cut the way the federal government proposes. Just tell us that.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Chairman, once again, very simply and very slowly. We do not know exactly what it is for this year. We believe it may be in the neighbourhood of 13 million EPF total. Approximately 9 million of that will be for health.

But until we go down, and until we sit down and talk

eyeball-to-eyeball, man-to-man, from our province and other provinces in Canada, who is to know what the first year is? How would I be able to say with any degree of certainty what the second or the third year would be, or if there is going to be a second or a third year, until we establish exactly what it is for the first year?

I've told the members over and over again, and I'll tell you again. I will go there. My colleague will go there. We will put forth the best case that we possibly can for Saskatchewan. It may be I come back with less than \$9 million. It may be that it is \$9 million. But until that exercise has been gone through — and I have written to the Minister of Health to ask for that type of meeting — until that has taken place, to try and guess what may happen in two years, in three years, or in four years, I believe is nothing but sheer speculation, hypothetical. It may not happen at all.

So I don't use the abilities of my staff to be dreaming about something that may not happen. I tell them: you sit down, and you work with the situation today, and you carve out the best deal for Saskatchewan. And I can tell you that that's what they're doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sveinson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have all had to suffer through this sanctimonious NDP rhetoric for the last hour and a half in this legislature and certainly across this land. I've just had an opportunity to examine the '82 budget, just for the information of the House and the information of the minister. And it does relate to what's happening today.

In 1982, the NDP, after legislating hospital workers back to work, tried to buy an election in Saskatchewan through the actual expenditures in health care, which were increased from 524 in '80-81 to 604 million in '81-82. At that time they didn't give us in their blue documents information on actual expenditures in prior years.

I look at this year's budget document. We're debating Health at the present time. We have another election year increase by another government, the Tory government of the day, and the election year increase, as the minister just enunciated a few moments ago, is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 11 per cent.

Since 1982 I must suggest that the Tories have increased budgetary expenditures in Health by close to twofold. I don't think that can be supported, certainly, with expenditures on people who are working at the bedside, or nurses and staff income. It reflects more so I think on expansion on capital expenditures within the health field as well as expenditures on things like typewriters and computers for hospitals, and other hardware that certainly is required from time to time for diagnostic therapy and for the upgrading of technology within the hospital setting.

But I do ask, and I believe a lot of taxpayers in our province wonder how and why the budget in Health has doubled since 1982. And I realize when the Conservatives took power in 1982 it was demonstrated very aptly that under the leadership of the NDP that we

stood in Saskatchewan number eight in health care in Canada. The minister now claims that we're number one, based purely and simply, I believe, on expenditures. We've bought ourselves seven places in the horse race for health care in Canada.

(1245)

I suggest to the minister that we have gone from bad to as bad in 1982 with response to bedside health care in Saskatchewan. At the Regina General Hospital, admissions spend up to three and four days in stretchers waiting for hospital beds. We received information yesterday that in many hospitals across the province there are waiting lists, and certainly Regina is no exception. Saskatoon is the worst, and we have waiting lists approaching 6,000 patients in Saskatoon. So the system is under a great deal of pressure.

And there isn't any question that, I suppose, additional expenditures are required. But to suggest that doubling our health care budget since 1982 has addressed all those problems is only political rhetoric and comes at a time just before an election campaign, one that you were in desperate need of collecting some goodies that people can at least support your government for.

I ask you, sir, to explain how you have anticipated that that doubling of expenditure has, in fact addressed the health care needs of this province when, in fact, nurses across the province, through their own union, and at several meetings that I attended, are indicating that staffing problems are down from the Canadian average by at least 22 per cent by their estimates.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Certainly you're correct, and I'm glad you realize that we have doubled the expenditure on health care in the time that we have been in government — a 47 per cent increase over other budgets.

You mentioned why I say that we're number one in health, and is it totally on expenditure. Well expenditure is one aspect, but certainly the scope of our program, the scope of the program in Saskatchewan exceeds, I think, any other province. I mean, there are a number . . . There are other plans that don't have the chiropody programs, things of this nature. There are other systems that don't have the continuing care within Health. There are other areas that don't have the ambulance system within Health.

So if you look at the total scope of health care in the province of Saskatchewan, as well as the funding, I think you would — the per capital funding — I think you would see the basis why I say that we are a leader in health care.

As well as you . . . I don't know if you were here when I read out some of the federal initiatives — and I understand that you have to be in your office getting some research done, so I don't say this in any derogatory way to you — but I don't know if you were here when I read out some of the initiatives that have been accepted federally because of Saskatchewan's lead. And I'll just run through them for you.

Number one is our smoking initiatives. We have led the

nation in non-smoking initiatives. And the federal government, with all the other provinces, have come out with the Break Free campaign. But Saskatchewan was the initiator of that. I tell you that sincerely.

In the alcohol advertising, yesterday I think you were in the House when you heard me mention that the federal Minister of Health is using the Saskatchewan model of the 15 per cent positive type of ads that have to be there, and approaching the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) to have that enforced across Canada. So that's another one where Saskatchewan has led the way.

Since becoming the Health minister, at each meeting I have asked the federal government to look at an innovative idea of what I call a seniors' health fund. It fell on deaf ears with Madame Begin, but with Mr. Epp I think it is being considered. And certainly with the additions we've made to home care just the other day, the national council on ageing said that Saskatchewan has the best home care system in Canada — as well as we were one of the first provinces to eliminate the extra-billing.

So I think, looking at that, you would see that . . . You know, one can quibble. I suppose you can say we're second or somebody's better, but I believe, and maybe I'm a bit biased, that we do have the best health care system in the nation.

You asked about the General Hospital. I'm concerned about that. I know that in Saskatchewan there are two hospitals where the emergency . . . the demands of the emergency wards are far in excess of others. That happens to be the General in Regina and St. Paul's in Saskatoon. Some of that comes from the . . . because they're down-town city core hospitals. And I won't go into a detailed explanation. I know you understand that and you know the factors that lead to them having more demand on their emergency services.

I'm happy to say, with the regeneration of the General that is going on now, that some of this pressure, I hope to see that it is totally alleviated in the future. So I think we are doing things to address some of the things that I believe you have sincerely stood here and indicated to me. And I thank you for your comments.

Mr. Sveinsson: — Just one further question on the estimates for '85-86. I believe, sir, you must know the figures, the actual figures for Health expenditures for '85-86. In this document we only have the estimated figures and based on your estimated increase for '86-87, I would ask what the actual figures, the expenditures for the year ending March 31, 1986 for Health were; and based on that I would like to know if there were any additional expenditures in '85-86 that haven't been reported in this document.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — My officials indicate to me that at the time of publication not all the expenditures were in. There's a special warrant of about 17 million. So I would take the estimated '85-86 expenditure, add 17 million and you'd be very, very close.

Mr. Sveinsson: — Your actual expenditures for the year

past, you're saying, were somewhere in the neighbourhood of 1.65 billion. And that's what you based your estimates for '86-87 on.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The figure that my officials come up with is approximately 1.1 billion in '85-86.

Mr. Sveinson: — So in fact your increase for '86-87, as estimated, isn't the 11 per cent you claim but is closer it looks like to 1 per cent rather than 11 per cent as this budget document would indicate.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — To correctly assess that, you have to go to the back page of the document where it has the new property management Crown and you see 75 million in there for Health. You wrap that in also into your figure of the total increased expenditure. The capital is not in the estimates for Health, it's under the property management Crown.

Mr. Sveinson: — But that would be an expenditure on the expenditure side, you're saying, and it would be added to this figure of the Health estimates, which is basically part of the sophistry of this whole document, sir. You've removed the expenditures for health care, for capital expenditures in health care, from the actual deficit for '86-87. And you've done that throughout the document.

Also I notice — and I would like an answer to this question — we could get into it in the step by step, but your grant to the Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission . . . You mentioned earlier your example in alcohol advertising is being used across the country. You have a very slight increase in budgeting for the grant to the Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission. On the other hand, you're reporting an increase of about 91 million to the Saskatchewan Liquor Board. And I wonder why you haven't accordingly increased the grant to the Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, because the problem is a huge problem out there and does require as much funding as can possibly be allocated from the government.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Normally SADAC got 7.5 per cent increase and the alcohol advertising costs are not shown under SADAC — that's the Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission — but under the health communication subvote of the Health department, if you follow that.

Mr. Sveinson: — So you're saying the actual figure for the commitment to programs of that nature is much greater than indicated in your Health budget.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I'm saying that the commitment is more than what the SADAC budget reflects.

Mr. Sveinson: — I would just like to indicate, we've been discussing briefly the EPF financing and how it's flowing into this province. I would like to suggest to you that under the NDP administration in 1982, 55 million did come in under that program, and this year it's indicated the increase will be 18 million, so that the funds coming from Ottawa have, in fact, tapered off.

I think the question was asked earlier with respect to

projected loss of income from that source. I'm asking you, sir: has this been consistent through your administration and do you expect it to continue?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — It's been quite standard over the past four years; the EPF funding has been quite standard, they tell me.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I want to . . . I got out of the discussion here for a few moments, but I want to go back to the issue we were raising when I left off, and that is the major cut-backs in health funding by the federal government.

Now what we have been talking about, very clearly, is the amount of money that is being transferred from the federal government, through taxpayers from across Canada, which comes back through EPF to the province for health care funding. I wonder . . .

An Hon. Member: — You've been questioning all morning.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Yes, we've been questioning all morning, and for the member from Regina Victoria, we're going to keep questioning because funding for health care is very important. And I would say, Mr. Chairman, that the member from Victoria, Regina Victoria, can get up and ask questions as well if he likes. He can get up.

I can remember there was a time when members of our government got up and asked ministers questions. And I know why the member won't, is because he chooses to chatter from the seat.

But I want to ask the minister, and I know you've had some time to talk to your advisors who are there: what will the cut-backs be that are proposed if they go through, if you lose your argument as other ministers have done in dealing with the federal government? What would they be for 1987-88? You have told us that the proposal for 1986-87 is a cut of \$9 million. Our numbers say \$10 million, but for now we'll accept the \$9 million cut you're talking about. What is proposed for next year? Certainly you're now at the point where you're making plans for next year, and you will have to have your people dealing with the five-year plan of the federal government in the event that it is forced on to us. What is the cut planned for '87-88?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well the only hard figures we have is the increase from 441 million to \$466 million. We're working within the confines of those figures for this year. I've indicated I'm going to Ottawa to talk about the total 9 million figure. We're going to put forth our best argument, but anything beyond that would only be speculation. I have no figures worked out and I haven't instructed my department to look at that. We're working out a game plan for this year, and I hope it will be a very successful one.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would ask the minister whether he thinks it would help his cause in the fight if he would make public what the proposed cut-backs are. Do you think that it would be a good strategy to make public what they're proposing in terms of cut-backs, and get behind

you the nurses and the doctors and the public? Is that a reasonable proposal, or do you reject that out of hand?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — How would I put forth a proposal when we don't know what it is? We know what we're dealing with this year. I'm going there as the Minister of Health for Saskatchewan. I believe that there are nurses and doctors and people out there that have faith that I will strike the best deal I possibly can for the province of Saskatchewan.

So certainly I believe that that support is there, and I'm going down as the minister. Part of the duties of this office is to carve out the best deal possible for all the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I would ask the minister: are you trying to lead us to believe that the federal government has not laid out to you what the proposed cut-backs will be over the next five years?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well I'm saying the same thing as I did in regard to the Nielsen report. The Nielsen report lays out a number of initiatives, a number of things that maybe could take place. Those are only suggestions.

What I'm dealing with is the actual thing that is happening this year. I've said time and time again, and I will say it over and over, as many times as they want to ask their repetitive question, is that I'm going down there to carve out the best deal I possibly can for the people of Saskatchewan, so that we will have as many funds as possible to provide the valued health care that is appreciated by the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, the question here is: one minute you say you don't know what the proposal of cut-backs is; the next minute you say you do know but you're not going to tell us because you don't believe the proposal. Is there a proposal for cut-backs for the next five years, or isn't there?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite heard the federal minister give his budget the same as anyone else in here. But what I said: I am not even sure that the \$9 million figure is hard and fast. I hope it isn't. I'm going down there to use every ability that I have to try and talk them out of that. I don't know if I'll be successful.

But for the members opposite to think that — when we don't know hard and fast if the 9 million is a hard and fast figure — what it will be three years hence, how would one know? You deal with one year and you see what you get in that year and you deal with another year and another year and another year. I don't know what the conditions in Canada will be four years hence, and I'm sure they don't know.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 1:01 p.m.