

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to this Assembly, 25 students from St. Henry's Junior High School in Melville, Saskatchewan, together with their teacher, Mr. Garth Gleisinger, and their bus driver, Mr. Philip Hack. They're seated in the Speaker's gallery.

I wish them a pleasant stay here. I know they are at the age in grade 8 where they will understand the proceedings and get a lot out of it. I recall that I attended their school in grade 9, and I was very interested in what was happening in politics at that time, and I'm sure they will get a lot out of the proceedings here. And I ask you to welcome them to this Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Police Investigation of Cabinet Minister

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Premier. I ask the Premier: can you in fact confirm to the assembly whether or not any member of your cabinet has been subject of a police investigation and, if so, which minister is under an investigation as reported?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, it's not appropriate for me to make any comment on newspaper reports, and I believe that the hon. member would understand that, given the nature of the report. And I would just let it go at that.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, I'm going to ask you then, forgetting about the report, Mr. Premier, can you confirm whether or not, to your knowledge, a member of your cabinet — and if so, who — is under police investigation at the present time, or was in the past?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the hon. member can read the newspaper report as well as anybody, and it's not my position, and it's not appropriate for me to comment on these reports at this time.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Premier, I'm asking you specifically: are you or other members of your cabinet aware of any police investigation pertaining to any one of the members of the cabinet? And if you are aware, would you indicate which cabinet minister.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, it's not appropriate for me to comment on police investigations. He's quite aware of that. I am in no position to comment at this time, and I won't be.

Mr. Koskie: — I'd like to ask the Minister of Justice: Mr. Minister of Justice, has any investigation of the city police pertaining to any member of your cabinet colleagues been brought to your attention, an investigation by the

Regina city police? Has the investigation pertaining to any member of the cabinet been brought to your attention, to your department?

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — Mr. Minister, the member knows perfectly well that if there is a police investigation, it would be highly improper and inappropriate to comment on that particular investigation.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, I recall to your mind the actions of the Hon. Marcel Masse, who resigned as the federal Minister of Communications on September 25, 1985.

The day Mr. Masse resigned from the federal cabinet, no complaint or charge had been lodged against him. He, however, told the House of Commons that he made the decision to resign from cabinet since the prospect of a complaint might cast doubt on his integrity, which would reflect on the government.

I am now quoting: "I am convinced that upon completion of the investigation my innocence will be established." That was the position taken by Mr. Masse. I think it was an honourable and appropriate position. In the end, no charges were laid.

Can you advise, Mr. Premier, whether or not you conduct your cabinet under the same rules that Mr. Masse enunciated, or is there some other rule which applies if any member of your cabinet comes under investigation?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I'm advised by justice that there is nothing, nothing in the allegations, that prevent the minister from carrying on his normal responsibilities. And beyond that I have no more to add.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Premier. Obviously, Mr. Premier, you know something of the allegations since you have referred to them. Mr. Premier, you will be aware that a course of action whereby a minister of the Crown, when under investigation and before charge, if any — this produced a resignation recently in British Columbia of the Hon. Mr. Rogers, and in Nova Scotia of the Hon. Mr. MacLean.

I ask you again: do the rules which have been enunciated by Mr. Masse and applied in British Columbia in the Rogers case and in Nova Scotia in the MacLean case apply to your cabinet? Or do you say that if a cabinet minister is under investigation, there is no reason to suggest that he might resign during the course of the investigation?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I can only reiterate that I am advised by Justice that there is nothing — nothing — in the allegations, that prevent the Minister from carrying on his normal responsibilities.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, supplementary. Are you then conceding, Mr. Premier, that there are investigations concerning one of your cabinet colleagues and that that cabinet colleague — he or she — retained their position in cabinet while the investigations were proceeding? Is that what you're telling us?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat what I've said before, that I have no comments; that I will say that I have been informed by Justice that there's nothing in the allegations that would prevent the minister from carrying on his normal responsibilities.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Premier. You have been so informed by Justice. Did this information come to you from the Minister of Justice or from officials of the Department of Justice?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I said I was informed by my Justice officials, and informed by Justice, and that's all I can add to it.

Mr. Koskie: — A new question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, obviously as the Premier of this province, when an investigation has in fact taken place by the police, when in fact that information has been referred to the Justice department, you obviously are aware of the nature of the allegations in respect to that.

And what I ask you, Mr. Premier: when did you first become aware of the fact that one of your ministers was indeed under investigation by the city police; and can you confirm whether the initiated through the Department of Social Services?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I can't comment on that, and I won't.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Premier, I ask you further: do you think the people of this province are entitled to know what details you know in respect to any particular allegations or investigations pertaining to any of your ministers? Do you think it's reasonable that the public should know whether you have knowledge in respect to investigation of your ministers, and what actions you took or did not take? Do you think that's a reasonable inquiry on behalf of the people of the province who you administer this government on behalf of?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, obviously the people of Saskatchewan will know. The people of Saskatchewan also know that people are innocent until proven otherwise. And I have no other comment to make with respect to the issue, and I'm sure the hon. member, from his previous profession, would understand that. So I can't make any more comment; I wouldn't serve the public, or justice or anybody else. It's not in the best interest for me to comment further.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Premier, and I want to underline the fact that I am not discussing the merits, if any, of the investigation, I am asking about the manner in which you conduct your government if, as, and when, a minister of the Crown is under police investigation.

Now, Mr. Premier, I have tried to instance cases, recent cases in Canada, where particular courses of action have been taken by the Government of British Columbia, the Government of Nova Scotia, and the Government of Canada. I ask you, sir: during what period of time have you been aware that a police investigation was under way

with respect to a minister of the Crown, and during that period of time did you ask for any action by that minister of the Crown by way of resignation or otherwise?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I can only reiterate my previous sentence, and I'm sure the hon. member can take from there. I am advised by my Justice officials that there is nothing in the allegations that prevent the minister from carrying on his normal functions. And I can't add any more than that.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Premier, we're clearly not meeting in mind. You are not, I take it, asserting that Justice advised you of that at the commencement of the investigation, but at the end of the investigation.

I am asking what happened during the course of the investigation. And I hope you're not telling me that during the course of the investigation that they knew there was no substance in it. I am asking you what course of action you took during the period of the investigation. Did you take any steps to suggest that the minister of the Crown might absent himself from the cabinet table, or might offer his resignation, as was done by the three ministers that I have outlined in my previous questions.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset, it is improper for me to make any further comment on this at this time. And I can only add, and I'll repeat once more, that my advice from Justice is that there's nothing in the allegations that would prevent the minister from carrying on his normal responsibilities. And that's all I can add at this time, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, one final supplementary. Mr. Premier, I want to ask you whether or not you think it appropriate for a minister of the Crown to remain in cabinet during the course of a police investigation, even though — granting what you say — even though at the end of the investigation it is determined that the substance does not impinge upon his ability to carry on his duties. I am talking about the period during the course of the investigation and asking you whether or not it is your practice to have such ministers remain in their office.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, to be fair to the hon. member, I'm sure that we can resolve to his satisfaction the answers to questions like that and other questions at a subsequent date. At this time — at this time — to be fair to everybody, it's inappropriate for me to comment at all. And I'm sure that he can raise questions later, Mr. Speaker, and in fairness we will respond to them, and so forth. But at this time I'm advised the fairest thing for me to do, for the public, and to serve justice, is to say nothing at all. So I've said my piece, Mr. Speaker, and I'll leave it at that.

Mr. Koskie: — A question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, you indicate that you have been advised by the Justice officials that there is nothing in the allegations which would make it impossible for the minister who was under investigation to carry on in his duties. I ask you: obviously you had to be informed by the officials of Justice at some period in time, I suspect, and I was wondering if you would be good enough to allude to

when you, in fact, received this information from Justice.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I can only say, in due course I can respond to those questions, and I will. But, Mr. Speaker, at this time, and it's as the hon. member knows, to be fair to all concerned, it's not appropriate for me to say any more or to add or to comment. So I will not comment any more. I've said all I can say, and I believe he knows the law as well as most members in the legislature. It's unfair for me to say anything else at this time, and I won't make any further comments.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Speaker, further question. Mr. Premier, you have made a statement here of findings of the Department of Justice which you indicate has exonerated the particular individual in question. What I ask you simply is: when were you appraised of the facts from the Department of Justice? How does that in any way jeopardize anything other than provide us with details as to when you had knowledge of it?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I can say to the hon. member: you may not think that it's fair, but I believe that it's fair for me not to make any more comments at this time. To be fair to the public, to be fair to the individuals, to be fair to Justice, I should not make any more comment at this time, and I won't, Mr. Speaker.

I've said, and I can repeat, I was advised by Justice that there is nothing in the allegations that would prevent the minister from carrying on his normal responsibilities. And I take that as exactly what it is, and I have no further comments, Mr. Speaker, and nothing that I can add to that.

Mr. Koskie: — One final question, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, the difficult position that you put us in is that you have in fact taken a position. You have taken the stand that you have received information from Justice officials exonerating, as you indicate — nothing in the allegations which would prevent the individual from carrying on.

Now if you can come forward here in the House and lead out with that particular amount of information, then surely you can indicate to the House when you were appraised of this, and if this was the first opportunity that you took to, in fact, bring it to the attention of the House, that there was nothing . . . What I'm saying is, if the Justice Department knew and told you last week and the facts were as you are indicating, that there is nothing in the allegations, then is it not incumbent upon you to have come to this House last week and not hold off until this week until you're questioned?

So I ask you again: will you indicate to the House and to the people when you received the information and the substance of what you have said here today?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat that to be fair to the public and to be fair to the individuals, there's nothing more that I can say now. And I'm sure the hon. member and the Leader of the Opposition and others can ask me questions for days at a later date, but at this time all I can say is that I've been advised by Justice that there's nothing in the allegations, nothing that prevents the minister from carrying on his normal

responsibilities, and it's not fair to anybody else for me to add any more or any less than simply that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Koskie: — Supplemental, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — The member had asked for a final. We'll take a new question.

Mr. Koskie: — In view of the position that you are taking today in so far as answering the questions, Mr. Premier, can you advise whether today or in the very near future the Minister of Justice will be, in fact, making a ministerial statement which will clear up some of the air in respect to this?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I couldn't comment on that either, Mr. Speaker. Everything in due course and we'll just leave it at that.

Mr. Koskie: — New question to the Minister of justice. I'd like to ask the Minister of Justice whether he's in a position today, in view of the reported facts of an investigation of one of the ministers of the Crown, and in view of fact that the Premier has indicated that the Justice officials have briefed him in respect to the matter, I wonder whether the Minister of Justice is in a position today to brief the House and the people of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Dutchak: — No, Mr. Speaker.

Premier's Trip to Ottawa

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, on another matter to the Premier, I want to refer to his trip last week when he went to Ottawa to ask the federal government to push up the price of gasoline and diesel fuel, and I say, Mr. Speaker, that many farmers and consumers are still shaking their head about that one. But, Mr. Premier, following the trip to Ottawa you issued a statement which said, and I quote:

I have requested that the federal government remove the PGRT (petroleum and gas revenue tax).

Now, Mr. Premier, the Mulroney government has already announced plan to remove the PGRT by 1988. Now what I am questioning here is what your proposal was. Had you urged them to remove it quicker or take longer to remove it? What was your proposal to the federal government as it related to the PGRT when they had already announced that they were going to remove it by 1988?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, when I went to Ottawa I was there for two reasons. One, is that I wanted to get a very, very large western grain stabilization payment out to the provinces and out to Saskatchewan farmers. And I'm happy to report today, Mr. Speaker, that the largest ever in the history of Canada has been paid out this morning, \$580 million — up to as high as \$11,000 per farmer — will be out in the next 10 days as a result of me twisting the arms of people in Ottawa. That's the reason that I was there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I was down there because I was worried, and I am still concerned, Mr. Speaker, of the thousands upon thousands and tens of thousands of jobs that are at risk as a result of what OPEC is doing to Western Canada. And I, Mr. Speaker, asked the federal government to remove PGRT as quickly as possible.

Now in the last federal budget, Mr. Speaker, PGRT was worth about \$1.1 billion — \$1.1 billion at \$22 a barrel. Now it's probably worth half that, 5 or \$600 million. And I want to make it very, very clear that the members opposite are in agreement to provide 5 to \$600 million benefit to the oil companies by removing PGRT. Mr. Speaker, I quote the Leader of the Opposition April 9th here in the legislature, and he says this:

The Premier suggested that the PGRT should be removed rather more rapidly than Mr. Wilson suggests. We would heartily endorse that. And we regretted that the two Wilson budgets neglected to remove the PGRT, the petroleum and gas revenue tax, which is being phased out over a period of some years and which we would like to see phased out now.

Well, let's make sure we got things straight here, Mr. Speaker. The opposition on one day complains bitterly because there's a \$13 million amount of money going to finish some construction engineering research — pre-construction, 13 million — and they complain bitterly. And the day before they asked to have a \$600 million grant go to the oil companies, and they agreed with it right here in the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I went to Ottawa for two reasons. I went there to get help for agriculture, and we got it in spades today — the largest payment that you've ever seen. Secondly, I said remove the PGRT and you can have a balancing effect. Oil prices can stabilize and come up a little bit, and gasoline and fuel prices will continue to go down.

Nobody in this legislature, in the history of the province, Mr. Speaker, let alone when those folks were in power, ever reduced the price of farm fuel like we have. We have provided them a royalty rebate. We took the tax off, and right now it's going down daily. And Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see the benefit going to farmers and to consumers as a result of what we've been able to do in the last two years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Premier, when you went to Ottawa to get the western grains stabilization plan, I'm impressed with how quickly you changed the federal legislation to allow that payment to come out. It's been written in statute for some time, and the phoniness of you, sir, to stand up and say you got the payment, is not going unnoticed by farmers.

My question, Mr. Premier, is: when you went to Ottawa to call for the higher prices for gasoline and diesel fuel, did the Mulroney government indicate at that time that

when they removed the PGRT that they would be looking to another source to raise that money?

And did they indicate to you, as reported in the *Leader-Post* today, that, and I quote:

The federal government is negotiating an end to its tax on oil and gas production and will replace it with a refinery tax of 2 to 3 cents a litre (that's between 9 and 13.5 cents a gallon) that will be passed on to consumers by the end of April, the *Montreal La Presse* says.

Did you encourage the federal government to make that move as well — that gasoline and diesel fuel go up by between 9 and 13.5 cents a gallon? Was that part of your proposal?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, we can have a little bit of fun in this legislature when the member opposite starts calling what we've done in agriculture and in energy phoney.

Mr. Speaker, you can't recall ever in the 11 years that the former people were in administration — not once was there an interim stabilization payment, not once. The first one, Mr. Speaker, came . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, they don't want to hear this, Mr. Speaker — the same as they were the other day. When I got up to talk about agriculture, all they'll do is holler from their seats. Well I suggest they have enough respect for this House that they listen to the answers . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Speaker, they don't want to hear this. I mean, the students that come in here from around the province are all talking about the opposition and the noises they make. They can't stand to listen. They can't stand to talk about agriculture and about energy in a reasonable fashion. They've got to sit and holler from their seats. Mr. Speaker, as long as they're sitting and hollering from their seats, I will speak and I'll tell them the truth.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, there never was an interim payment under the previous administration. It was there last year for the first time, and we put it together with the federal government. This is the second one, Mr. Speaker, and it's there, Mr. Speaker, because we asked for it. And it's the largest in the history of this country and the history of the western grain stabilization program.

With respect to taxes on gasoline, let's look at the record, Mr. Speaker. The largest tax on gasoline is in two provinces that you want to find — neighbouring provinces, Mr. Speaker. We will look at Manitoba, where the NDP are in power, and they tax consumers for gasoline. And they've been doing it for years, like the NDP did here previously. You go into Ontario and you've got a Liberal-NDP coalition, and they tax, Mr. Speaker; they tax gasoline.

Mr. Speaker, we have brought gasoline prices down in the province of Saskatchewan. We've brought them down for farmers. We'll bring them down for consumers, Mr. Speaker, and nobody else, nobody else will see any more effort bringing those prices down any place else.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite say they are really concerned, really concerned about unemployment. I don't hear them saying one solitary thing about the thousands upon thousands of people that might lose their jobs in the energy business. They're not concerned about unemployment, Mr. Speaker. They speak out of both sides of their mouth. One day they're absolutely against \$13 million going on research for phase 3 of an upgrader, and the next day they say they'll give 5 to \$600 million back to the oil patch. They're on both sides; they're inconsistent.

They're only consistent on one thing, Mr. Speaker. They're consistent in being negative and whiners.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure

Health

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 32

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, I wanted to ask you some questions about reports coming out of Ottawa that deal with legislation which will be introduced this week which will impact on the province of Saskatchewan in a very serious way, that is, a change to the patent life of certain drugs. And I wonder if you could at this time outline in some detail your knowledge of the changes that are taking place, because I'm sure you've been consulted and members of your staff have been consulted about the changes that will be taking place.

Basically, what is there now, and what will be passed after your federal counterparts in Ottawa get done with the Act? What do you anticipate coming before the House of Commons this week which will change and greatly affect our drug plan here in the province, because it will cost a good number more dollars to purchase drugs if the legislation is changed as proposed?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, as you're aware, certainly the previous federal government had commissioned the Eastman report in which they looked into the period of exclusivity that the innovative company should be allowed to have before a generic company can actually copy that drug. And as you know, the system has been that the generic company pays a royalty to the innovator. Eastman, in his studies, recommended that that period of exclusivity be four years.

However, I understand that there is some legislation being introduced into the House that would look at the period of 10 years of exclusivity. I don't know if you were in the discussion of estimates when I read out the telegram that I sent to the federal minister, indicating our position from Saskatchewan. Certainly, with a longer period of exclusivity, it could have a very significant

impact upon drug costs in our province to the drug plan, and certainly one would not want to see a significant increase to the consumers.

So I have indicated to the federal minister our position that we would be doing whatever we can to try and avoid that type of a change to the patent protection. It goes along in the Eastman commission also, the recommendation that perhaps some of the revenue . . . that the innovative companies would do some manufacturing and development in the provinces, of drugs here in Canada. I suppose I'm rather a doubting Thomas in that regard. I'd have to have it shown to me pretty plainly that there would be benefits going to the province of Saskatchewan.

So at the initial point is that we have asked for a meeting; other ministers are doing the same thing. I'm sure there will be a meeting of federal and provincial Health ministers to discuss the whole topic, as well as the departments of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Actually it is the federal minister, Mr. Côté, that has been doing some of the advance work on this proposed change, and he has been in discussion with my colleague, the Minister of Consumer Affairs, here in Saskatchewan.

So I hope that gives you some idea of what the problem *per se* is, and what the stance that we in Saskatchewan will be taking towards this.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The minister has, I don't think, dealt with the issue that I wanted to find out, and that is the specific changes that are taking place in terms of the length of time. Now I may have missed it, but what is the present legislation, and what is the proposed legislation in terms of the lifetime of the patent? If you would outline that for me, I would follow up with some questions.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The existing situation now is that there is no period of exclusivity. It takes four or five years before a generic will be able to copy the innovator. So actually there's that period of time. But there's nothing in legislation. Eastman, as I said, recommended four. The discussion that is around at this point in time is somewhat in the 10-year period, but I'm advising my officials that there has not been legislation introduced as of yet, but there's some discussion of 10 years. But certainly our position, as I point out, is that we could not support that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The announcements that were coming out over the weekend were that the legislation would be introduced this week in the House. Have you been given an opportunity to see the legislation or to have input into it before it comes before the House? Have your colleagues in Ottawa, the Progressive Conservative government, have they taken the provincial governments aside and said, look, this is what we're proposing to do, and do you have any concerns with it?

I guess this would be the question, is whether or not you have made your case with the federal government. Because I think once the legislation is before the House, while it can still be changed, it seems like an unusual way to do it — to introduce the legislation and then start your lobbying if you're opposed to it. But have you seen the legislation, and have you had input into it?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Certainly I expressed last Friday in our discussion that at the Health ministers' conference last fall I put this on the agenda and led the discussion for the provincial Health ministers, of the problems that we would see if there was change brought about. Since that time I've been in contact with the federal Health minister on different occasions, and as recently as the 24th of March sent him a telex which I have read into the record. And if you want a copy of it, I would provide you with the copy that states very emphatically that, because of these increases, could be very damaging to the program and its continued success.

And in light of apparent lack of concrete reciprocal arrangements, and in the best interest of all Saskatchewan residents, I would request a reconsideration of the entire issue by the federal government, and may also request that this matter be discussed in a full and detailed hearing with all provincial governments. So we have been discussing this since last fall, and I think my telex indicates our stance quite strongly.

And as I have indicated to you in our discussions previously, we will be meeting with Mr. Epp on the 28th. And you know how legislatures work. I don't know . . . I hear the same press reports that perhaps that Bill is going to be introduced this week. We'll wait and see if it is. We all know the process, as we have it in this Chamber, and as you do in any other legislature in Canada, that when it comes to second reading, amendments can come in; the House amendments could come in from the person who brings in the Bill; opposition can suggest amendments, and that's the democratic process. And certainly we will be making our points very plain and straight when we meet with Mr. Epp.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The minister indicated, I believe on March 24th he sent the telex. I wonder have you had a response as to whether they're delaying the legislation so that your input can be taken into consideration, or have you had a letter back from the federal minister saying, I understand your concern and I'm listening and I'm not going to go forward. What response have you had from the federal government your lobbying?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, certainly, as you know, my telex is to my counterpart, Mr. Epp. I know that other Health ministers across Canada have been also contacting Mr. Epp. I don't know what's been taking place in regard to the Minister Côté, who will be heading the Bill through, but certainly as a Health minister, I and my colleagues across Canada have been expressing our concern to the federal minister.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I may have missed something, but did you say you have had a response from your March 24th telex saying that they are backing off of the position you are opposed to, or have you had any response as result of your fiery telex that you sent down there insisting that changes take place?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes, I have had a response. I haven't seen any legislation, but I've been invited to a meeting with the federal minister on February 28th. Excuse me, April 28th.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — And was there any guarantee given that the legislation wouldn't already be through the House before the meeting took place? It seems to me a strange time to meet after the legislation is before the federal House; and I don't know, maybe some people will have confidence in your ability to fight Ottawa, but it seems to me they're proceeding on this issue quite rapidly in spite of the fight you're putting up against it. I would like you to indicate whether or not you have a great deal of confidence that you'll be able to back them off the change to the legislation that many of us are concerned about.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well I certainly have confidence that if I go to Ottawa I will express the Saskatchewan position on this in the best manner I can. I think from past experiences that will be quite well received. I can also give assurance that I believe every other Health minister in Canada will be joining with me in doing exactly the same thing. What the outcome of that will be, who's to tell at this time?

(1445)

You know, we say, about what time should you do these sort of things? I can remember going as the Health minister of Saskatchewan to Ottawa on a number of occasions, and also to the Senate of Canada; the Health ministers went to the Senate of Canada. So I can't say whether we'll be successful. I can certainly say to you, Mr. Member, that I will outline, very succinctly and clearly, the Saskatchewan position. And the Saskatchewan position is that we do not want to see a period of exclusivity that would put additional costs on to our drug plan.

Secondly, in the whole talk of this reciprocal investment, or money coming into the province, I would have to be shown very, very distinctly that that would benefit this province before I would agree to anything of that nature.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The minister in an earlier comment referred to positive things that could come from changes to the federal legislation. I believe he said investments, or that type of thing. I notice in today's *Toronto Globe and Mail*, April 14th, on the front page there is, "No investment stipulation in generic drug law." So that argument that the federal government was giving to you was not accurate. And in the article they clearly outline that changes that would take place would not put any demands, or not write into the legislation that any investment would have to take place.

If I could, Mr. Chairman, there are couple of quotes in the article that I think deserve to be read into the record. In part they say:

The changes are likely to be accompanied by assurances from the federal Government that brand-name producers will be required to reinvest part of their earnings in research and manufacturing in Canada. But such requirements are not spelled out in the expected legislation, except in very limited circumstances.

This could mean that Ottawa has worked out a political deal with the brand-name producers under which they reinvest in Canada, but the deal would not have the force of law.

Now I just say, when you're dealing with very large multinationals that are based outside of the country, that these kind of arguments, that we have a federal government that is going to insist that they invest in Saskatchewan or Alberta, that if you were serious about that . . . I'm not say that in any way we should be moving towards it. But obviously even that part of reinvestment is not taken seriously by the federal government because they're not writing it into the legislation.

I would like to find out from you as well whether the department . . . And I'm sure they have done appraisals or estimates on the amount of money that it would mean to the drug plan if we were to move in this wrong-headed fashion — not to the drug plan, but the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. And the other day we were talking about cut-backs in federal funding for certain programs. And here again we have an even more ridiculous move being made by the federal government, where the increased costs of the drug plan will not go to the federal government and then hopefully cut our federal taxes, but will go to the drug companies in Germany or the United States or some foreign country.

I wonder if you could outline at this time what it will mean in terms of increased payments that will have to be made by the drug plan in the purchase of non-generic drugs.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I read the same article in the *Globe and Mail* earlier this morning. But I prefer to deal with the minister, minister to minister, rather than just going on newspaper quotations that can or cannot be correct. As far as the investment in Saskatchewan and to Canada, as I said earlier — and I stand by that — I am sceptical as to how much of that would be received in Saskatchewan, and certainly we'll be putting that point forward.

The member opposite wants to know the approximate cost as our best estimate of what this could do regarding the Saskatchewan drug plan. And I suppose, again I'll go back to my telex where I inform the federal minister of this. I say additional cost to our drug plan could reach \$15 million annually or nearly 20 per cent.

So certainly it's on that basis, Mr. Chairman, that I will be opposing the legislation as it appears to be coming now. But again until — and any legislator realizes this — until you see legislation, until it is in its final form and presented to the House, newspaper reports may often not be that accurate. So I will wait to see the legislation and then, with that in hand, certainly enter into discussion with the federal minister putting forth our position of opposition.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, just to pursue this topic for a little while longer. You say that your estimates show that the cost to Saskatchewan, the drug plan with the change in this legislation, would be \$15 million.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I said it could be. I think that would be the worse case scenario. You know, until you see exactly what's going to be happening and what exclusivity, if any — if it's 10 years, or do they go back to . . . (inaudible) . . . I think the member opposite realizes until one sees the legislation you don't know the actual impact. But our best estimate is about \$15 million at the worst.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I agree it would be helpful to see that legislation, but nevertheless in my experience and, I think, in yours, you would agree that usually when a Government of Saskatchewan makes an estimate on this kind of a cost situation, usually it ends up being greater. I think experience will show you that. And you would not want to suggest that the pharmaceutical manufacturers would not want, and would not indeed try their darndest to get the most that they could out of this.

Let us assume that \$15 million is the figure. Okay? If you apply that across Canada, Mr. Minister, that would probably be in total something like \$300 million. That would be \$300 million of cost which would guarantee no extra jobs, which would guarantee no extra revenues to Canada in taxation purposes — simply about \$300 million which would go to the drug manufacturers who are doing very well already, thank you very much.

I really am concerned that unless some very aggressive effort is made to stop the federal government in their proposed legislation that the Canadian consumer, and in our case the Saskatchewan consumer, is going to have to dish out an awful lot more money for drugs, simply because the federal government wants to do the bidding of the pharmaceutical manufacturers. Don't you agree?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — In our discussions starting last fall about this, and this was a point I put forth in the first discussions, was that, you know, you may talk about the flow back to research or to investment or to development or to industry — I would want to see it. I would want to find out in very specific terms what that would be to Saskatchewan, both in the ways of industrial development, or research money to our university. I have said that I am somewhat sceptical about that.

You mentioned that it may be a loss, a complete loss to Canada, extrapolating from our figures. We don't know that. You see, until we find out exactly what's in there . . . I mean, it may well be that there may be some inflow of research and investment money. Those things are the questions I want to ask because it's important to the province of Saskatchewan.

As I see it at this point in time, and the stance that I've articulated, is that I am doubtful of that. But I see that an increase in protection will bring about an increase in cost of the drug plan. And I resist that. I think we have a very good drug plan. I think it's one that I want to protect, and I'm sure you'd want to protect it also.

So that's the stance I'm taking down to Ottawa. And as far as consultation and discussions, I have not met with the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, but my deputy has met with him on two occasions, as well as my

colleague, the Hon. Mrs. Duncan, who has met with him also.

So the Saskatchewan position has been well-explained and well-articulated. And as I say, on the 28th it will be done again. Until we see the legislation, I guess, and have that meeting, it's pretty hard for me to say just what the impact will be.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I agree. Certainly we would want to see it, or in our case you would want to see it before you made any final conclusions, although I think there are some final conclusions which we can all draw. And that is that at the present time the federal government seems pretty firm in that it is going to introduce the legislation. I mean, they have announced it; they've indicated that they are going to introduce it. And that is good cause for all of us to be somewhat concerned.

As it applies to the potential research and other benefits that may be available in certain provinces because of this proposed change in the legislation, did I hear you say that if you are convinced by the federal officials that there might be some research done in Saskatchewan, you then might be interested in agreeing to the legislation to proceed? Is that what you have been saying?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — No, I think you've misinterpreted a bit there. I would have to have it spelled out very, very clearly to me that out of this whole change that we would benefit as a province. I don't see us benefiting as a province. I would want someone to indicate in hard, cold figures that Saskatchewan would accrue these types of benefits.

Now we can still look at a hypothetical. Say somebody said we are going to build a huge plant with a lot of . . . 500 jobs or something of this nature. I guess it would really . . . We have the right to take a look at that. But I'm not holding my breath, thinking that someone is going to do that.

So at this point in time I am saying I'm going to protect the Saskatchewan consumer the best way I can, the Saskatchewan taxpayer the best we can, by resisting any change that's going to put additional heavy expenses upon our drug plan. But, as I say, one goes down; there's talk of this other thing. I don't think it would be fair to rule it out before I go and discuss it, and we're not going to do that.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, I'm glad to hear you say that you're not holding your breath, because I'd hate to see us lose you because of suffocation, because I'm afraid that's what may very well be the case in this situation, and that's why my colleague and I are concerned about the process that has taken place here.

Now you did indicate that your Minister of Consumer Affairs and your deputy have met with federal officials to discuss the proposals. Are you meaning to say by that that they have met to discuss the proposed legislation? Has there been consultation on the proposed legislation by either your officials with federal government officials or the Minister of Consumer Affairs and the federal Minister of Consumer Affairs?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — No, the discussions that . . . I'll go over them again. The discussions that have taken place was at the Health ministers' conference in Ottawa where Saskatchewan put it on the agenda, and I led the discussion indicating to the federal Minister of Health the concerns that Saskatchewan would have.

Since that period of time the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has visited Saskatchewan and other provinces at least two times. The discussions with my deputy and with my colleague were with that minister and, as my deputy who attended there indicated to me, he made it very emphatic at that discussion that: look at, what about these accrued benefits? Let's see them. Let's see what you're talking about.

We haven't had any indication that there are any of them coming. So the next step, as it will come along, is that I will be meeting with the federal Minister of Health, along with all the other Health ministers in Canada, to explain our provincial positions. My colleague — you'll have to ask her in her estimates — may be meeting with the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, also. I'm not apprised of any such meeting at this time. But certainly that's the steps it's gone through. We have never seen anything that looks like legislation at this point in time. If the press reports are true, I'm sure I'll receive a copy of it within this week if it's introduced into the House.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — It's just this indication by your government and by your officials and maybe by your Minister of Consumer Affairs to the federal government, that you might be interested if they were to talk about accrued benefits. I think, Mr. Minister, that may have reduced your bargaining position immensely because the first principle — and maybe that's what you're saying that you have done, although I have to be assured of that — the first point that should have been made without any equivocation with the federal government is that we, as a province and your government, are unequivocally opposed to changes in legislation which would cause the consumer of Saskatchewan to pay a large amount more for prescription drugs, because that's what would be the effect of this legislation.

The minute you started saying, well, that is so but we want to look at the accrued benefits — knowing full well that likely any accrued benefits would not accrue to Saskatchewan — you have given the federal government an argument which then they can come back to you and say: look, over here in Ontario this is what pharmaceutical company X is going to invest. They're going to build this plant or whatever they're going to do, and therefore, you, yourself, Mr. Minister, have said to the federal government: hey, you've got a good point here.

Now you shake your head. I hope that maybe you will correct that because I really think that you have, in presenting that argument, weakened your position with the federal government. And that is good reason to be concerned because they are now able to say to you: there are accrued benefits. Oh, they're not going to be accrued in Saskatchewan, but they're going to be accruing to all Canadians because we're going to get, at the federal government level, increased tax revenue, and therefore

we're going to benefit Saskatchewan taxpayers even though they're cutting the EPF (established program of financing) payments by \$2 billion or over that in the next five years or so. Now can you clarify this for me in the event that I'm wrong in my assumption?

(1500)

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Let me get one thing extremely clear with you. I guess I'm fortunate in having been the Health minister for almost four years for this province and one of the senior Health ministers in Canada. I will certainly be putting forth our position; and our position, as it is in agriculture, as it is in any other aspect, we're here for the benefit of Saskatchewan.

So for you to even think, even think that because someone might say: well there's a benefit to Ontario or to British Columbia or even to Manitoba, that I would say: well look, this sounds good, let's go for it. I will go there and I will give you this commitment, and I'll give it to the people of Saskatchewan that when I go to Ottawa to talk about health, there's one thing that leads every statement, and that is, it's got to be good for Saskatchewan. That's my responsibility. That's the mandate that I'm charged with, and that's what we'll be taking there. I think it's only reasonable though, if there were to be some side benefits come to Saskatchewan, that I don't say, oh I'm not even interested in discussing these. I'm interested in going there and carving out the best possible deal for the province of Saskatchewan, and I look forward to doing that.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm glad you have helped clarify that, although I am not comforted by it very much, because if your achievements in making your arguments with the federal government, or your government's achievements — I don't want to get personal with you — are as successful or as great as they have been with your arguments on the established program funding — which is clearly in your own admission, as I understand on Friday, going to cost Saskatchewan an awful lot and many millions of dollars in funding for health care. If you are as successful in your negotiations in the drug prescription situation as you were with EPF, then heaven help us. The Saskatchewan taxpayer is in great trouble.

That's why I am concerned about your sort of soft approach like: you're doing a good job, Brian, or: you're doing a good job, Mr. Epp, or: you're doing a good job whoever you're dealing with, rather than sort of coming on pretty hard as you should as a negotiator and saying: we're just going to have no part of it, and if you're going to legislate it, you're legislating it over our strong objections.

I am a little concerned that neither your officials nor the Minister of Consumer Affairs' officials — or the ministers, you or her — have had an opportunity to talk to the federal government about the proposed legislation. It seems to me that legislation of this nature should have been discussed by the federal government and the provinces so that you — or this government in Saskatchewan, and Manitoba and British Columbia — could have had some input into it prior to its being introduced in the House of Commons. Doing it after they

have introduced it in the House of Commons, Mr. Minister, is like shutting the door of the barn after the horse has escaped.

Once the legislation is there, then the federal government clearly has indicated that it's going ahead, and with their vast majority it is well-known that they are quite prepared to steamroll over anybody or anything in order to put things in place to reward their friends. They have done that. You know that, and I know that. And so I'm asking you: have you asked strongly of the federal government, or has any other minister in your cabinet asked strongly of the federal government, that they want to discuss the proposals of this legislation prior to it being introduced in the House of Commons, so its not all done after the fact?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — You mentioned about our position with the federal government, and I would just go back through some of the initiatives that Saskatchewan has taken the lead on and has been adopted by the federal government. Certainly I think you know of the Break Free generation in non-smoking initiatives. It's across Canada. The lead province on non-smoking initiatives was Saskatchewan. We started that type of movement, and now the federal government have co-operated and have adopted it. I indicated to you the other day the proposal by the federal minister, Mr. Epp, to the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) to adopt Saskatchewan's policy of educational ads for liquor advertising, which will come across the country with CRTC.

I mentioned about the idea of an innovative seniors' fund, a seniors' fund to help bring about innovative ideas and care for the elderly, which has been pushed each of four years by Saskatchewan, and some indication that the federal government are at the present time looking at adopting it. The elimination of extra-billing — another area where Saskatchewan was one of the first provinces in Canada. I'm not saying the first, but certainly one of the first that addressed that, and most recently the support and recognition that has been paid to our home care program by the national council on ageing.

So certainly, you know, I think it is fair to say that when Saskatchewan goes to Health ministers' conferences and comes forward with initiatives, that many of these things have been adopted. I think the track record proves that.

In my letter of February 25th to the Hon. Michel Côté — I'll just quote briefly from this to indicate the type of expression we had given him. I say, and I quote:

It appears at this time that you may be considering extensions of periods of exclusivity substantially longer than those recommended in the final report of the commission of inquiry on the pharmaceutical industry. Because of this apparent position, I want to emphasize once again our serious concerns on this matter. As I have previously indicated to you, any significant extension of the Eastman recommendations in the particular area of exclusivity would have very substantial implications for our government with regard to funding our universal drug program.

So I think we have made it clear to them from the beginning the reservations that Saskatchewan would have. And once again I say to you that when we meet in Ottawa, we will certainly be putting these forward again.

You realize . . . and I hear you cry from the other side of the House from time to time for us to table legislation. You say, you know, bring in the legislation. The House Leader often says, please bring in the legislation so we have time to look at it, to contact groups that it may affect, and so on. So the very fact that they may be tabling legislation does not in any way, shape, or form, mean a *fait accompli*.

I mean, certainly we understand that the legislation comes forth and there should be due process and due opportunity for all interested groups. And certainly governments that would be affected by any change, to put forth their suggestions and, I would hope, be successful in changing the legislation if — if — the legislation is as being reported in *The Globe and Mail*. Until we see the legislation, we don't now if that is fact or fiction.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, I know that you have, several times in this House, mentioned your non-smoking initiatives, educational ads on liquor ads — even though they makeup 15 per cent of the ads, whereas liquor advertising is 85 per cent of the ads, promoting people to drink — innovative . . . (inaudible) . . . for seniors, and all of those things.

Granted, you may say that as many times as you want. You also indicate elimination of extra-billing. Well I might add and remind you that the only reason you have eliminated extra-billing is because the federal government passed legislation, which compelled you to do it.

An Hon. Member: — Liberals.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — And if I may say so, that was even done by the Liberal Party before what happened in the federal election. So for you to stand up and take credit for that, Mr. Minister, although I certainly favour the elimination of extra-billing, I think is stretching it a little bit too far.

All I can say, having listed all those so-called initiatives, Mr. Minister, I wish you would have taken just as strong an initiative as it applies to the question of the generic drug situation and the legislation which the federal government is preparing to bring in.

You indicate, and you try to make an argument, that legislation is brought into the House of Commons or this legislature and then people have an opportunity to discuss it and make changes. Well I may add to you that even your government — certainly our government, when we were the government, and would again — brought in major legislation that affected any group of people such as municipalities, hospitals' associations. We made sure that there was a consultation process with those people before the legislation was brought in, Mr. Minister.

And I simply say that it would have been just as fair of the federal government to consult with Saskatchewan and

Manitoba and Ontario, and the ministers of Health of all the provinces of Canada, before they prepared and introduced such legislation. I mean, there's nothing unusual about that. That's a normal way of running a federal government. And I think, in order that the federal government is kept on the straight and narrow with its huge majority, and is made to operate in the normal and acceptable way, it's almost incumbent on the provinces such as Saskatchewan, through our representatives — and that is you, Mr. Minister, and the Minister of Consumer Affairs, and the Premier — to insist with the federal government that that kind of process be undertaken before the introduction of the legislation. And so I'm somewhat disappointed to hear that that has not happened.

I am glad that on the 28th of April there will be a meeting. I will take your word for it that you will press Mr. Epp very strongly that this legislation will not be acceptable, because I agree with you that there will likely be few benefits to Saskatchewan, and that the only effect of it will be increased cost to the consumer.

I have no doubt in my mind . . . Maybe in your position you feel you have to give the federal government a fair chance to take a shot at it. I think once that legislation is there it is going to be much more difficult to have any influence on it, because I think the federal government will, by that time, have committed itself to proceed.

And so I say to you, in my concluding remarks before I move on to another item, that we are concerned that the efforts made by the Government of Saskatchewan have not been strong enough, and therefore I think maybe the horse will be out of the barn before somebody tries to shut the door.

Now if I may ask, still under the prescription drug plan, some questions on the negotiations as they apply to the fee schedule which pharmacists get for the dispensing of drugs. I understand, because I have had people phone me and I have also read newspaper articles, that there has been or is a lot of concern by pharmacists that the discounting being done by such large chains as SuperValu, Mr. Minister, is causing some difficulty, particularly for independent pharmaceutical business places.

I'm asking you, what is the status of the negotiations as it applies to this matter? Can you tell the House?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I'd just like to mention a couple of things on the topic you were on before in regard to extra billing. Of course the hon. member knows that you had 11 years to do more than just talk about it. I remember reading the reports of your party, and every convention you talked about it, but you never got around to doing anything.

You indicate that we had an ultimatum by the government of the day. As you know, we could have chose to be penalized and pay a penalty. Maybe that's what you feel is the correct way to go, that for every dollar extra-billed we could have paid a penalty to Ottawa. Our choice was to do different'; we thought that that money that we would be penalized could be used for other

health initiatives, as you see is the case today in the new budget with 11.6 per cent increase to health care. Certainly that couldn't have happened if we'd have been paying a fee or paying a penalty to Ottawa.

And just one other topic, Mr. Chairman. Just as an example, the member opposite said, well they always allowed a lot of discussion before legislation. There's just two I would raise, and then we'd move on to answer his question, and that is the take-over of the potash mines. There wasn't a great deal of lead time on that, let me tell you, or the institution of the land bank. So, you know, just to set the record straight.

However, the question that the member opposite asked was the status of negotiations with the Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association. I can indicate to you that the topic that you raise is a concern and has been discussed at negotiations. But unfortunately, because there has been no ratification at this point in time—and I'm sure you will understand that, having dealt with negotiations previously — that it would be improper for me to discuss any aspects of what transpired at that negotiating table. As soon as there's a ratification of the agreement, then of course what has been completed through the negotiation process would be made public. But until that point in time, I couldn't comment on it.

(1515)

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Can you tell me, Mr. Minister, whether you or your officials have received representations from pharmacists regarding their concern about the discounting practices of businesses like SuperValu, which is causing some hardship to a great number of pharmacies in the city and I'm sure, in other places as well. Have you received representations from pharmacists dealing with that concern of theirs?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes, most certainly. I think the biggest issue here is in Regina at this point in time because of certain changes in shopping patterns that seem to be taking place. My officials have met with a group of retail Regina pharmacists, and further to that my deputy has met with the executive director and the president of the Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association on that very matter. And of course these meetings took place prior to and as negotiations were progressing. But I think you understand that I can't comment on the negotiations.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Can you indicate, Mr. Minister, what the position of your government is with respect to the kind of discounting that's taking place. And I know that there always has been some discounting, in some cases done by some independent pharmacists simply to help senior citizens get drugs at a cheaper cost. Many of them would prefer to be able to do that. Can I ask you: what is the position of your government with respect to the discounting that is taking place, particularly in light of the fact of what SuperValu has been doing in Regina?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, certainly we're concerned about a balance in pharmacy practice. I couldn't articulate our position because that is part of the negotiations. But I can assure you that the whole topic was adequately discussed from what I have been

indicated. And I am optimistic that we will get an agreement from this round of negotiations that will be acceptable to the pharmacists, the smaller pharmacists in this city.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — I hope indeed that there is an agreement, and I hope that it will be of benefit to the small independent pharmacists in the city and anywhere else in Saskatchewan. The concern I have, Mr. Minister, because it has been brought to my attention as late as this weekend, is that there may be a proposal whereas a pharmacy that charged a reduced prescription charge would receive a proportionate reduction in the fee subsidy paid by the Saskatchewan prescription drug plan. If that is the case, then what would happen in this situation is that if a pharmacy chose to discount its prescription drug plan by 25 cents, the prescription drug plan which pays a portion of that fee would in turn reduce its portion that it pays to the pharmacist by 25 per cent. There is some concern with respect to that kind of a proposal being implemented. Can you tell me whether that has been discussed or considered by yourself or your officials as a new provision to be provided in the new agreement.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I can't discuss that at this time.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's like the federal government's legislation; you let the horse out of the barn and then you shut the door. If you're not prepared to discuss that at this time, then after it is implemented it's going to be too late. So don't come in here and say you can't discuss that at this time, unless you're prepared to explain why.

There is concern. This, if implemented, may not cause SuperValu any problems at all because, as you know and I know, SuperValu works on very large volumes. And because it works on very large volumes, and because it uses their drug dispensing service as a loss-leader in order to draw customers into the store, they might not care if such a proposal is implemented.

But the independent pharmacy, whether it's anywhere in the city of Regina or somewhere else, cares a great deal because they will be penalized by this proposal to the extent that many of them will be hard pressed to be able to survive as they try to compete with some of these other establishments.

So I think, because of the implications of this, I would very much appreciate if you would be prepared to at least indicate whether your government is indeed making such a proposal, and if it is, what is the rationale for making it.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I cannot comment on the proposals that my government is making at the negotiation table. Some of these things are at the table now, and some of them may be out for ratification in the very near future. I cannot comment on the negotiations.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Minister, that's really unfortunate because you are saying to independent pharmacies that there may be — if indeed there is, and I have information that tells me that there is — a proposal in the agreement brought forward by your negotiators

which would say to pharmacies: if you discount, we will discount in equal amounts the amount that we pay in the government portion of the fee. It has been brought to my attention that indeed that is part of the government's proposal.

Now let me say this, Mr. Minister, that will help SuperValu because they don't care; that will help the Pinders Drugs chain because they're a big operation and also work on volume; that will be helpful to the Bi-Rites. But that will not be very helpful to the independent who's operating in Humboldt or in Regina or in Saskatoon, or anywhere else.

So I think, in light of the implications of this, Mr. Minister — and some independent pharmacists have raised the concern — you have an obligation to address it in this House.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well certainly, I would think in the negotiations that take place the future and the benefits to the independents is certainly something that is of great concern to the pharmaceutical association. And as I say, I think we are going to be successful in working out an agreement that they will support. Certainly there's no intention to try and play down the role of the small independent pharmacists.

So, as I repeat again, it's not right for me to be making any public statement that would in any way jeopardize the outcome of those negotiations. I have told you, and I will tell you again, that the issue was raised with my officials; that my deputy met with the president and the executive director of the pharmaceutical association who, by the way, both of them are well associated with Small Town, Saskatchewan. The president runs a drug store in Montmartre, Saskatchewan, and the executive director is from that town also. So I think they know very well the concern of the small independent and have articulated it to our government and to me and to my officials. I have indicated that certainly that is in the negotiations, but I cannot say what the outcomes are at this point in time.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well I just simply ask you to consider, Mr. Minister, and speak to the officials who you have doing these negotiations, to keep in mind that this proposal will jeopardize any pharmacy which happens to be located in a predominantly senior citizen area of any city or town, which, as a service to the senior citizen, discounts by whatever amount they may choose to discount their fee to assist the senior citizens. If this is implemented, those pharmacies will no longer be able to do that without being penalized.

So the concern here is not only, I think, on the part of some independent pharmacies; the concern here will be strongly felt by the consumer. In this case . . . and I will argue on behalf of the senior citizen who, because the opportunity to be able to go to a drug store which may have discounted for senior citizens — a practice that's widely accepted across the province by many pharmacies — will no longer be provided for the senior citizens, because the minute that pharmacy X discounts a fee charge from the senior citizens in that community, that pharmacy will be penalized by an equal reduction in the government's portion of the fee.

I ask you, Mr. Minister: will you take that into consideration? And will you pass it onto your officials and ask them strongly to consider the implications of this, because they are not significant.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I'm a bit puzzled here. A minute or two ago you were rather upset about any kind of discounting, and now he seems to want discounting. I don't know where your position is. I can assure you that in our suggestions and negotiations and so on that are going on, there is nothing in there that will hurt the senior citizens.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Minister, interesting. In our discussion this afternoon, this is first time in which you almost raise your voice. That leads me to believe that you're uneasy about something, as is usually your habit in the consideration of these estimates. You get a little excited when you're pressed on any particular issue. And I suppose that's okay because it helps to deflect the argument.

Let me remind you, Mr. Minister, that the prescription drug plan was implemented prior to 1982, and during that time it was agreed that there should be some provision in which the competitiveness of the private sector should be able to have some room in which to operate. And so the opportunity for pharmacists to charge less on fees was permitted and included in the agreement. I have no objection to that because I think it's important to have that.

The problem was not created until the very large chains began to use the discounting process in order to undermine the independent pharmacists in this province. That's when the problem was created. And surely there must be a better way to deal with that problem than saying, as apparently is being said — and I guess in your position, as you say, with negotiations taking place you're not prepared to comment on it and you won't, so no sense me continuing to press it.

But if indeed there is a process taking place by which all pharmacies will be penalized if they discount for things, for customers like senior citizens, then I think maybe the negotiators that you have negotiating this are being a little wrong-headed and have not considered all the implications. And I want to put on the record my concern about this on behalf of senior citizens, the consumers, and on behalf of some independent pharmacists who, I know are also concerned, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, you know, Mr. Chairman, all I can say — and I repeat myself again — I cannot give out what is happening at negotiations. I can give an assurance to the member opposite that I feel confident that the outcome of the negotiations is not going to hurt the seniors in one way or the other, and certainly it is not going to be detrimental to the small pharmacist.

Now this is what he's been talking about and I give him the assurance — and I give you the assurance — that the outcome will not be detrimental to senior citizens and will not hurt the small pharmacies. So without going any further, I think those two assurances should relieve any of

the concerns that the member has. And I go back again, and I would like him to indicate why he at one time stood here three minutes ago, against any kind of discounting, and then two minutes later turns around and he's for certain kinds of discounting.

So, I mean, let's get consistent here, and please accept my assurances to you that the concerns you have raised will certainly be looked at.

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Just for the record, let me once again make it clear that I was not at any time in our deliberations here saying I was not in favour of any kind of discounting. I never said that, and you know that.

I am prepared to accept your assurance if you are prepared to answer the next question. And the question simply is: if pharmacies are reluctant to provide discounts for senior citizens — and I'm talking about community pharmacies where everybody knows everybody and they sort of understand the difficulties people face — if pharmacies are not able or not prepared to provide the discounting because there may be a provision in the agreement that penalizes them because of a reduction in the government's share of the fee, how will you protect the senior citizens from not paying a higher price?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think if I got into that I would be disclosing some of the negotiating stances that have been taking place. I'll just come again and give you the assurance that seniors will not be negatively affected.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, as we go through this list of different areas — nurses and doctors and chiropractors and pharmacists — I think what is becoming very clear, that the area the minister is responsible for, there are, indeed, a great deal of problems and they don't seem to be getting a great deal better.

(1530)

I want to return for a moment to the area of the drug plan and the impact that the legislation being proposed by the federal government will have on our drug plan here in the province. And my colleague has clearly indicated, as well as a number of other people, some of the ironies that are occurring here where the federal government is proposing legislation which would transfer, from Saskatchewan alone, about \$15 million, according to your numbers, from the users of the drug plan or, if you're going to pick up the whole cost within the provincial government from the taxpayers of the province, to pharmaceutical companies outside of the country.

I wanted to ask: in the terms of the lobbying that has gone on — and you have referred to lobby groups that push for legislation, and we often have pieces brought in that are then changed subsequently once they're introduced — can you give me a list of people or groups who are demanding, from within Canada, that the changes that are now coming before the House of Commons, who is pushing for these changes?

In discussion with the federal government, who are they saying is wanting these changes, because I don't know of

one Canadian who is asking that these changes occur? You're opposed to them; I'm opposed to them; all the people in the province are opposed to them. Can you tell me who's advising your federal colleagues in making these changes? Where is the pressure coming from?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — No, I don't know who all may be pushing for it. I know that there's been a number of groups that have lobbied against it. But one would have to ask the federal minister where all the people that are lobbying in for the change came from. I think a lot of it grew out of the Eastman commission. I think it's been there for a great period of time.

And who the lobby groups may be — there may be a number of them — I don't know. But I know that the government, the previous government, set up Eastman to take a look at this, to come in with recommendations. And the Eastman commission came forward and, obviously, there's been a considerable reaction to it from both sides; from groups that are wanting no exclusivity, some groups that favour Eastman, and then some who say: no, Eastman is far too restrictive, that we need something of a much greater period of exclusivity. So I couldn't tell you who the various groups are that would be lobbying for that change.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well here again, in your answer you say that some groups are in favour of it, and some groups are opposed to it, and then you end up by saying you don't know anyone who's in favour of it. And I would like you to outline — if you know people who are pushing for the federal legislation to be changed — if you could outline to the Assembly, and perhaps, on behalf of your colleagues in Ottawa, convert some of those of us who are opposed to the idea of a 10-year exclusive period, outline to us what the positive side is, or some of the groups that are in favour of that change.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — It is very hard for me to do, when I've said in this House that I'm opposed to it, that I'm going down there to argue the Saskatchewan position, that anything that brings about increased costs to our drug plan will be opposed. So how would I be able to say who is trying to indoctrinate who? I have made my stance very clear.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well at your meetings that you've had with the federal party and with your federal colleagues who are Progressive Conservative, what are they telling you the reasons are that they want the changes? Obviously they must have reasons. And other than to pay off a few of your friends, can you explain to us why that change is being proposed?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — There has been no such discussion as that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — So when you meet with your colleagues from Ottawa on the drug plan and changes to the federal legislation, they don't give you any reasons why they are proposing the change; is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Let me indicate to you that at the last Health ministers' conference — because there was an Eastman commission that had been put forward, and

because it may have some serious effects upon the Saskatchewan prescription drug plan — I instituted at Ottawa the discussion of why, as the province of Saskatchewan, we did not think a change in exclusivity would benefit this province. Many other ministers expressed the same sort of thing.

There was no feedback from the federal government as to why they thought there should be a change. That wasn't brought about. It was just mentioned and articulated by the provincial ministers that it could have serious implication for the drug plans; and secondly, that we wanted the opportunity to sit down and discuss it. We're being afforded that opportunity on April 28th.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The minister seems to have two different views of the federal government: one, that they listen to the provincial governments. When he's talking about the proposed spending cut-backs to provincial health, he says that when that comes about he is optimistic that changes will take place, and the \$9 million they propose to cut out of this year's transfer payments in the area of health won't occur. But yet when it comes to this legislation, you say the federal government hasn't even given you any reasons why they're bringing the legislation forward. And they're bringing it forward this week and still haven't given you an explanation of why they're doing that.

And these are two very conflicting views of this Mulroney government: one, that they listen to the provinces; and the other one, which is much more factual, I would say to you, is the legislation that is coming forward, even though all the provincial colleagues are opposed to the changes in the legislation. And I suppose there are a good number of people in the health care area who aren't convinced that you are going to have much headway when you go to Ottawa after the legislation is already set in place.

The other point, I guess, that I would make in the area of the drug plan in Saskatchewan, and increases that would have to take place if this \$15 million is taken out of the fund here in the province and is given to the large multinational drug companies, is that this will impact mostly on senior citizens in the province. As one of the main users of prescription drugs, which are prescribed by their doctors, they will be the most severely affected by changes that occur.

And I wonder whether the minister could outline: within the drug plan at the present time, do you have some sort of a breakdown by demographics of who actually uses the drug plan, by age, the numbers of prescriptions, and number of payments that are made on behalf of the drug plan?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes, we can provide you with the demographic breakdown. It will take a minute or two, but we'll be pleased to do that.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — While you're doing that, I'm sure the minister would be well aware that when he goes to Ottawa to make his case with the federal government in opposition to the proposed legislation, is that he would take that forward to them, as I'm sure he will — that the senior citizens of the province are going to be severely

impacted by changes that would have to take place if the drug plan was readjusted to allow for that kind of an increase to take place. On the other hand, if it comes out of general revenue, then I suppose we'll all share that massive tax increase equally of an extra \$15 million in our taxes.

I want to ask about another area while we're waiting for that number, and that deals with the hearing-aid program. And you have talked about a nine-month waiting list now for assessment and to have hearing-aids properly fitted and assigned.

I wonder, what are your expectations over the coming year? Will that number be going up, continuing to go up, because I think it's gone up fairly significantly in the last six months? And you've talked to me about a fire that occurred and problems associated with it. But will you indicate what you anticipate over the next year? Because there are many people who have seen the increase in waiting list and time period over the last number of years, and they're concerned that by this time next year the waiting time period will be a full year.

And I want you to today, if you could, give a commitment that we'll start going in the other direction — because every year since you've come to office the waiting time period has gotten longer and longer.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think we have to clear something up from the member's previous statements in trying to indicate, if there was a change to the prescription drug plan, that it necessarily would impact upon senior citizens. That's simply not the case. It would not. It may well be that there'd be no change whatsoever to senior citizens. And until we see what the changes are, it would be not in the best interest — and I think it's not really acceptable by the member opposite — to try and mislead and make that allegation, that senior citizens would be somehow hurt by this, because that may not be the case whatsoever. So certainly I would just like to lay that one to rest.

As far as the hearing-aid plan, it isn't nine months across the province. It's in some situations somewhat less than that. And as I explained the other day in our discussions, we are looking at using the nurses as doing some of the screening, doing some of the screening that would probably allow people to pass through quicker than is the case at this time. So I think with that new initiative I would hope that the waiting lists for the hearing-aid plan would reduce, so that the time that a person who is having to wait for a hearing device and a proper screening by the audiologist would decrease.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The minister is well aware that when I was referring to the changes to the federal legislation on generic drugs, what I was saying is that, if the increase were passed on through the drug plan, obviously it would have a big impact on the senior citizens of the province — if it were passed on. Now you as a government, or whoever takes over from you, will have to make that decision. And much better that it be shared, if the federal government puts its head down and bullies its way through with it, that it would be shared by all taxpayers. But what I'm saying is that if you as Minister of Health

were to pass this increase on through the drug plan, then everyone would have to pay more, including senior citizens, who are the main users. And I wonder if you have that list ready yet of the demographics of who is using the drug plan, if we could just have a quick look at that.

Another question that I had in terms of especially senior citizens is in the area of eye care, and I wonder if you can outline any changes that have taken place in the area of eye care when it come to seeing the doctor about having glasses changed. Is there any change that has occurred in the last couple of years in terms of payment? It's my understanding that people had their check-ups paid for once a year, and that has been changed to once every two years. When did that change occur, and who is affected by it?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — There have been some changes that came about through negotiations with the optometrists this year in the agreement — and I should say on the recommendation of the optometrists — who felt that we could improve our plan by changing some of the methods of payment and delivery that had existed before. So the major change is that now partial examinations are insured. They were not insured previously. They were not insured, so now they are. So there's a benefit. Test for tonometry, which is the pressure on the eyeball, which was never insured and has to be done in many cases, is now an insured service.

For the people in the 18 to 64 age group, they have one refraction every two years insured, unless for medical reasons they need another one. Then that one would be provided free. For seniors, 64 and over, or 65, there is no change, and for young children up to the age of 18 there is no change.

So basically there have been benefits added to the plan that were never there before; new services insured, which the optometrists of the province indicate should be done to improve the plan; and as I say, if there's someone in that age group who through medical necessity needs a check of their eyes, they would get it also.

(1545)

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The minister has stated — and I want to get you clear on this — that optometrists were suggesting that the change from one examination each year to one examination every two years . . . was the optometrists' suggestion. Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes. The total package with these extended insured services that were not there previously, that total package, the optometrists of the province supported that and have agreed to that — that that would certainly be an improvement to the plan if these things were added.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I asked one specific question. I'm not talking about the package now. I'm talking about the change of check-ups being changed from one year to two years for people between the age of 18 to 64. You implied that that was a suggestion of the optometrists in negotiations. I want to get you clear on the record that

that, in fact, was the case, and that's what you said.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — You, in your first question, asked me about changes to the service of people for optometry. I explained the total package. I told you that the optometrists are in favour of that total package, and they certainly are.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, now I'm asking you about the issue of . . . the one narrow issue of the change that affected people between the age of 18 and 64, that being the change of having an examination paid for every two years instead of once a year. Whose suggestions was that change?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — It came about through discussion and consultation with them, of methods in which we could improve optometric service to the province. The total package of these added, and I want to repeat again, that the services today that were not previously insured are added. There are added services in the optometric plan that were not insured previously — the test for glaucoma, for one. These are things that were not there previously that now are there. Partially insured test. Not always that everyone need a complete test; just partial. Those weren't insured before. Now they are insured.

So taking all this together, with the change in the yearly refraction to one for every two years, except — let me repeat — except for individuals who, because of medical necessity, will then also get their refraction on a yearly basis; those services and additions, taken all together, are supported by the optometrists, and they feel it is a superior package to what existed before.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, I have talked to a number of those optometrists who don't agree that this was their suggestion or their position. And you can be telling them that when you meet with them. Because there are many who don't agree with you that that was their suggestion.

The other thing is that as the Minister of Health you will have a hard time explaining to the taxpayers of this province how changing the formula, where they have to pay for their examination every other year if they're having an examination every year, is in the best interest of the health care of the province.

Now you may believe that that's in the best interest of eye care, but I can tell you that there are many people out there, who are 55 or 60 or younger, who need a check-up every year and have to pay for the odd year, who don't agree with you that you improved the program when you made the changes. And I think to try to put that one onto the back of the optometrists is not fair, because I don't believe that you're accurate in saying that that was their suggestion.

I think that it was on your part, that you were trying to save a little bit of money, and you said: look, how about if we delete this out of the health care program? And I think it came from you, out of your department, and from you yourself, that this change took place. At any rate, if you hadn't been in agreement with it . . . Because it does impact on many people in the province, where they have to pay more.

Obviously there are a good number of people who think that when their families' eyes are changing on a regular basis, that they should be paid for. And I don't know that there are any optometrists who were suggesting this, and I'll be doing further checking to see whether or not you're accurate in saying that it came from the profession. Because the people I talk to in the area say that it was a cost-saving measure on your part, and when we look at the many areas where you're wasting money, it's hard to believe that the health of people's eyes in the province would be sacrificed so some of the other expenditures you're making could be carried on.

And I would just say to you that we would let it be known now that we were opposed to that change, and that we would look seriously at changing it back, because there are many, many people who are concerned about the change between 18 and 64 and the fact that many of the people are not covered when they go to get their eyes checked.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The overall increasing cost of the program is 4.9 per cent this year, so for you to stand and say it's a cost reduction is simply not true. And secondly, the overall package was endorsed by the membership of the optometric society, strongly endorsed. So I just point those points out to you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I wanted to go back to where we left off on an issue of funding from the federal government. And when we left off last week, you were telling us that you weren't sure about the amount of money that was going to be deleted from the transfer payments from the federal government in years to come. And I wonder if, over the weekend, you had an opportunity to study the numbers or talk to some of your colleagues in Ottawa and would be able now to tell us in the coming years whether you have found out what the federal government is proposing to cut from federal health care funding.

You will know that over the last number of years, both with the federal Liberal government and the federal Conservative government, that the amount being transferred to the provinces for health care has gone down, and gone down significantly. If I remember correctly, in the early '70s that number was close to 50 per cent that was being paid for by the federal government.

I wonder whether the minister could tell us, as of this year, with the \$9 million that the federal government is planning to cut out of their health care budget for Saskatchewan, what percentage of our program will now be paid for by the federal government — and if you could give me the numbers for the last four or five years on what that percentage has been, and how that decrease is taking place.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think I have the figures that you would want here which is EPF as a percentage of health spending, and for '82-83 it was 42.6 per cent; for '83-84, 36.4; for '84-85, 36.6; for '85-86, 38.2; and for '86-87, 35 per cent.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — For clarification, the '86-87 number,

is that with the 9 million deleted that we had talked about last day, or with it included? I guess that's the point that I want to make. Have you taken into consideration the fact that the federal government is proposing to cut \$9 million out of the funding formula for this year?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — That's with the 9 million deleted, but as I said the other day, that isn't a firm figure yet. We're going to see if we can improve that. But for comparison sake and so on, that's with it deleted.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's interesting that even though you keep up the brave face of saying that you hope that the 9 million isn't going to be deleted that you're numbers that you're working on already have taken the 9 million out. Now that doesn't show a great deal of confidence that when you go to Ottawa you're going to be successful in your argument, which leads to the next question and where we left off last day.

Given the fact that we are now assuming that the \$9 million is going to be gone this year, what are we saying and predicting that it's going to be in '87-88? How many dollars will be lost next year in your planning that is going on? And as well, you're saying that the EPF has gone from 42 per cent in '82, when you became minister, down to 35 per cent. What is the total loss in that time period from the federal government?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well certainly, as I said, the figure that I gave you for estimate's sake and so on, that it is out of there. But I stand on the same position that I did on Friday, is that we're going down there, and if we can negotiate a better deal certainly we will do that. We will go there to try to get the best deal, not only on the drug plan, but also on EPF funding — the best possible deal we can for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, I think that it's not credible that you would stand here in this Assembly and not tell the people of the province what cuts have been proposed by the federal government for next year. They've proposed this to all of the provinces for a five-year period, and in the real world they've announced it. They stated it in their budget. All we're asking you is what it will mean to Saskatchewan if Michael Wilson and Brian Mulroney are successful in the cut-backs that they talk about. They've announced it. They wrote it into their budget, and as late as last Friday or Saturday, in talking about help for farmers, the Prime Minister was saying that the integrity of the budget took precedence over the needs of farmers and other people. And I'm sure he's going to say the same thing to you when you go to meet with him. He's already saying it to people. The integrity of his budget which talked about a \$2 billion cut in transfer payments is sacred, and he's going to go ahead with it. He's told us that already.

And the question that we're trying to bring to your attention, because obviously you're not aware of it, is that this is going to cause a great deal of problem next year when we do the budget. And what we would like to know is: what is the proposal for cut-backs in the coming year? You've admitted that you've already factored in a \$9 million cut for this year. You've just given me that number. And what are we talking about when we're

looking at setting the stage for next year's budget — which will already be starting out in the early stages — and you're going to have to take this fact into consideration: what cut-backs are we looking at next year from the federal government?

You simply can't go on stonewalling the committee by saying that it's not going to happen. While we agree it might not happen, but then, again, the world might end. But the simple fact is there's a proposal that the federal government has put forward for some major cut-backs. The Manitoba government fought an election on these cut-backs, or against them. What we want to know is what we're dealing with here. For the next year, the coming year '87-88, what cut-backs are Michael Wilson and the Premier Minister talking about taking from Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Chairman, again let me restate it to the House and to the committee here, the position I put forth on Friday. Certainly we are not sure at this point in time that the 9 million is a hard figure. We've put it into our estimates as a bench-mark, but we don't know if that is going to be correct or not. I'm going to go down and try my best to have it reduced.

(1600)

This type of speculation for next year . . . I mean, how is one to tell? It's EPF funding. The amounts for post-secondary education and for health could change. I don't know what the figure is. They may have a figure in their mind, but certainly until we have this year's figure hammered out firm, then I can't see where there can be any degree of accuracy to make a speculation of what the next year's figure is. I think this is just a waste of time.

I think we should be looking at this year's figure. That's what we're doing. That's what I'm going to Ottawa to do. And I don't know for sure if it's going to be 9 million. I said before, it could be less. I hope it is less. I certainly hope it is less. But to sit here and try and wonder what it's going to be in '88 or '89, when it is EPF funding — that's established program funding between higher education and health care — and to try to get a hard and firm figure of what it is for health care, I simply don't know.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, you're a very naïve man. I think we can take two answers to the question: one, you're naïve; or one, you're not telling the truth. One or the other.

Obviously the federal minister has outlined to all of the provinces, the Minister of Finance has outlined to all the provinces, what they intend to cut back on. They announced it in their budget. There are reports floating around of what it is going to be, the proposal for cut-backs to health and continuing education, and you are the only minister in the whole world, obviously, who doesn't know. Either that or you're not willing to tell the public because you're embarrassed about the fact that your federal Conservative colleague would do something this ridiculous so short before your provincial election.

And I get back to the same point as we were on Friday, where I believe you have a hidden agenda to cut back on

health spending, and you're not going to tell anyone until after the election.

Now obviously the five-year plan that Michael Wilson has outlined includes a cut-back, very substantial, to the province of Saskatchewan. You have already indicated that since 1982 the federal government has cut their cost sharing from 42 per cent to 35 per cent. The Nielsen report says they're going to cut it altogether, that they're going to take away all the federal funding. And Michael Wilson has said he's going to take 1.3 billion out of the health care funding before 1991.

Now the question to you, Mr. Minister, is: how much is going to be cut out of the budget, the revenue sharing or the transfer payments to the province of Saskatchewan, in '87-88? Now I don't think that's an unreasonable question to be asking when it's written into the federal budget that the cut is going to take place, when the Prime Minister has said that the budget is going to be going forward as it's written with those cuts in place. And for you to close your eyes and ignore it and play naïve, or on the other hand not tell the committee — neither of those options is good enough.

We're going to be here a long time on this issue of federal funding unless we start getting some answers. Because members of the opposition are concerned about cuts that are going to take place, and we feel that in order to have a medicare system across Canada, that the federal government has to remain a major player in the operation. Because I said on Friday, if the federal government gets out of their responsibility, we're going to have a medicare system that is irrelevant across Canada because some provinces simply won't be able to afford to give a basic health care system. And therefore, we're going to continue on asking you what is the proposal for Saskatchewan. What do we intend to lose next year, in '87-88, in terms of cut-back in health care transfers from the federal government?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Chairman, again I'll go through the same answer that I've given the member a number of times. It seems logical to me. And that is that there's an estimated figure of \$13 million EPF for this coming year — estimated figure. The Health share of that is approximately \$9 million. And I say "approximately," because it has not been decided firm. I think it's important that we go down and try and see what that figure's going to be and get that hammered down. And that's the first thing to do. And until we see how we make out in this year's negotiations . . . And a lot of it will be done by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, because these transfer payments are between Finance departments. Members opposite know that. But until that has been established, it would be just speculation to look at any other type of figure. I am more intent to go and argue this year's figures and try and carve out for Saskatchewan the best deal I can for this coming year. And that's what I intend to do, and I'm sure my colleague intends to do likewise.

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. Mr. Minister, as I was looking at the Health budget — and I don't want to pretend I'm an expert on Health in the critic area there that . . . My colleague from Shaunavon is doing a good job. But under item 13, for example, Mr. Minister,

mental health services, total this year are going to be 28.9 million, down from 30.027 million. Mental health services, estimated '86-87 down about \$1.5 million. I don't know if you have taken time, Mr. Minister, to read today's paper, but on page A2, on page A2 of today's *Leader-Post*, an article appearing in the inside top corner says, "Mental health crisis reported in farmers."

Brandon. Anger, despair and depression are reaching crisis levels amongst Canadian farmers, says an official of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

"The mental health crisis is becoming quite widely felt across Canada and the U.S.," Peter Clutterbuck, a national research officers for the association, told reporters Saturday . . .

And I'll just read major parts of this article here, Mr. Minister:

"Small and medium farmers seem to be particularly threatened," he said. "They face the loss of a family tradition and a way of life."

Clutterbuck noted that a 1985 survey of 85 farm families (and this meeting took place in Manitoba, Mr. Minister, but if you check the article carefully, you'll see that) a 1985 survey of family farms in North Battleford showed that farmers are under increased mental stress.

I'm not saying this is necessarily political, but I imagine farmers there are under more stress than in the rest of Saskatchewan, seeing the good deal Peter Pocklington got compared to what we're getting.

But with that little political pun aside:

The report, entitled Work and Well Being in the Agricultural Sector, showed that 88 per cent of the respondents reported stress-related symptoms including loss of sleep, mental fatigue, depression, anger and changes in marital relationships.

And although more than 90 per cent of those surveyed said they took pride in their farm work, a similar percentage (90 per cent) said they felt that Canadians in general have little or no appreciation of the importance of agriculture and the problems facing farmers.

Clutterbuck said the report shows there is a need for increased mental health services in rural communities.

Increased mental health services in rural communities.

I had the privilege, Mr. Minister, of meeting on several occasions with some people that had gone down to a conference in the United States, and in particular, one of the candidates' wife from Weyburn is very, very interested and conscious of the problems that are caused because of the crisis centre that should be established for serving farmers.

And I'm wondering how you read this problem that's facing Saskatchewan rural people and why you would in your budget cut that much. I haven't gone and done the calculation as to what percentage of cut it is to go from 28.9 to 30 — you know, in last year's budget was that much for providing mental health services. You decided to reduce that number. A note here says that part of that could be transferred to Supply and Services. I'm wondering if you're aware of the pressure your agricultural policies or the Tory hard times are putting on farmers in Saskatchewan, if you're aware of the increased crisis that farmers are facing, and how you expect to respond to it with a reduction in the budget under the mental health plan.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well basically, as I had outlined to you previously, and I think you picked up on that, that the transfer of maintenance staff and associated costs of Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford to Supply and Services is a major part of that reduction. As you know, Saskatchewan Hospital in Battleford now houses some of the young offenders, and so on, under the Social Services. So rather than the Health department run it as in the past, a lot of the maintenance is now under government services.

Certainly we are concerned about mental health services in rural Saskatchewan, and we have put on some of these forums or discussion groups. And my associate deputy indicates to me that, in some situations, the attendance hasn't been very good. I would urge the member opposite, because I think he raises a sincere concern and you have my commitment, to see what we can do to have people attend these. But I understand there was one down and around Assiniboia there where only two farmers showed up.

So we're quite willing to do this, but it may need a little more public education, and certainly, I urge you, as a member of the legislature, to assist in that type of . . . You know, if you know of people, and from your comments obviously you do, I think it's incumbent that you try and bring it to their attention that these types of forums or discussions, group therapies or whatever one would like to call them are taking place, and if people are having these problems then they should come out to them. So we're not cutting back.

I could go through a number of initiatives that we have done in mental health services since taking over — wife batterers' programs, things of this nature, and improved resources for child and youth programs. There's a number of them here if you would like to hear them, but just simply put it hasn't been a priority.

I think the changing of the name also has had a significance. If you noticed, I talk about mental health services. It was previously called psychiatric services. I thinking the whole thing of looking at it as mental health . . . Because there are people who have physical illness and there are people who have mental illness. But I think that thrust shows the direction we're going in. I can supply you with a number of things that we have been doing as new initiatives in mental health services.

We would also be encouraging the local ag reps to work

in conjunction with these rural type of forums or seminars. They probably know firsthand some of the people who are under various types of pressure. So if there's anything you can do to help, I ask you to give me the areas or the names where you think there's a need. And also if we put something on like this, I think as rural members, my self included, there's an onus upon us to try and get people out to them.

Mr. Engel: — I think the area that you mention, that in Assiniboia, for example, only two people showed up, I think you're barking up the wrong tree if I may say so, Mr. Minister. I feel that if the farmers are under a strain and stress and under a special crisis type situation they're facing, I find they're very reluctant to talk about it. Basically this is why I was concerned with a cut-back in the mental health services branch because if you take this seminar that was conducted in Brandon, Clutterbuck says:

Stress builds up because farmers are generally reluctant to talk about their problems and they often view mental health services as being urban-oriented and unresponsive to their plight.

If through the ag rep's office you intend to second or make available to them special counsellors or a counselling device that can meet with and deal with the farmers on a one-to-one situation, I think that would be very wise. But I find that in talking with this with Mrs. Elder, particularly after she came back from that conference, and when she reported to a committee I serve in a party function, she pointed this out very much so that back in her home state in Iowa, the crisis centres that they built up were more in the line of providing a hot-line service and advertising that where a farmer in the privacy of his own home could talk to a counsellor or get some counselling or get some advice and deal with it.

(1615)

I'm basically raising this, Mr. Minister, and I don't want to relate it right across the board — it isn't always the case — but in many, many, many cases that I have personally been concerned with, the minute the pressure is really on and a farmer or a rural person or even an urban person gets involved under that kind of a stress, many times — not all the time, but many, many times — they'll go to another source for solace and comfort and bury their sorrows. And I think you know what I'm talking about. They seek some solace in a bottle. And they seek solace in alcohol. And they seek to take off that edge that's there.

And what I'm critical of . . . And I was listening and I didn't get involved the last two days when this particular problem was discussed, but I think when a farmer is sitting down in the evening and he's worried about the pressure he's under, he's worried about, how am I going to make it do; last year I borrowed some money; this year I'm going to get 81 cents a bushel less. The pressures are going to get worse. I'm going to have to pay a third of my loan back that I borrowed. And the pressure is mounting and mounting and mounting, and he's sitting at home there and he's got his feet up and watching TV and bango, what hits him? What hits him? Your sanctioned television ad that tells him, look, take some of the bubbies; get in

and have a drink. And they see this advertising of liquor that is effective, and it's generating and exaggerating the problem that's there, Mr. Minister.

And I want you to stand up in this Assembly and say I'm wrong. I want you to tell me that that doesn't have that kind of effect. And I think that you have to answer. You have to answer, not only for the problem your government is causing in not putting up a lobby and not putting up a fight for the farmers of Saskatchewan; who would rather put up a fight saying, boy, our dear friends in the oil company need more money.

And maybe the chairman thinks I'm relating to a problem here, but I'm saying why farmers are facing a stress and why they're under terrible, terrible pressure. And then you have a government that has the minister stand up and say, we're doing a wonderful job with liquor advertising because 15 per cent of it — 15 per cent of the liquor advertising — in your words, you're saying that that is going to solve all the problems.

Well I want to tell you, I don't even like the 15 per cent ads. Because some of them . . . And I could bring some of the advertisements I've clipped from the paper. And the difference between the 15 per cent ad in the paper and the 85 per cent ad was that the 15 per cent ad was a little smaller.

But even the 15 per cent of the money you spent in encouraging the moderate use of alcohol, use it in moderation, that is still . . . That's why the companies aren't reluctant to spend 15 per cent on it, because you can't get that guy to take his 20th drink until he's taken the first one.

So you encourage him with 15 per cent of your advertising to take that first drink. It's great to drink in moderation, you know, just use a little bit. And then you come along with a big ad and say, boy this is great, this is refreshing, and this is soothing, and this'll solve your problem.

Well, Mr. Minister, I want to tell you, you're creating a crisis in agriculture. You're creating a mental health crisis that's out there, and you're watering and helping it flourish with your attitude towards advertising.

And the other thing that bothered me an awful lot is the other day, the other day when you got into the debate with my colleague from the Quill Lakes, and you were trying to tie your little red wagon on to my friend, Jake Epp. I've known Jake Epp longer than I've known you, and I'd be terribly surprised if Jake Epp would disagree with what I'm saying today. I'd be very, very surprised, if he'd have a choice to say, we want to go back to Saskatchewan that has no liquor advertising, with the kind of attitude that you've created here in Saskatchewan, where you've encouraged and you've taken the pay-up from the breweries and have given a free rein in liquor advertising.

I would like you to stand up in this House and brag about the good job you're doing in that area of encouragement to farmers. I'd suggest you setup a situation where you bring some help into our ag reps and give them some

assistance in counselling, because I think it has to be done on a one to one. It has to be done on a one to one. But my sampling of what's happening and my concern with what's out there, Mr. Minister, when they face the crisis and they think of this Tory administration, they think of this little Tory operation, maybe the only solution is to drown their sorrows and forget about it. Maybe that's the only solution. I don't know.

But I don't like either solution, Mr. Minister. I don't like the idea of thinking that the only solution is to bring them together, have a little group therapy session where all the neighbours get together and try to solve their problems. That's going to work for some of them. I know when my brother-in-law joined the AA, it's done a world of good for him. He's been off the bottle for 13 years, but I'll tell you, he doesn't live in Saskatchewan. He's not bombarded by these ads that are out there and the encouragement they have. He can sit back and watch his TV and know that in his state there's no liquor advertising. And there was when we were in power here in Saskatchewan; in the '70s that state had liquor advertising. They don't today, Mr. Minister.

And I want to tell you, you've gone backwards. You haven't followed the trend that's taking place across many of the states in United States where they've decided to ban it completely. I think you should take the high road. You should admit defeat on this one like you have on many of the other areas where you've made a mistake. And it's time to take these guys on and say, we're going to wipe it right off; we're going to do away with it; and we're going to start solving the problem and get to the root of the problem — get to the root of it. And let's do away with the Tories, and then we can start solving this crisis that's facing agriculture in -Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well certainly I hope the member opposite isn't trying to indicate that all the farmers in Saskatchewan have psychological problems. I wonder. Because certainly I have a lot of friends that are farmers and I see them nightly, and I can indicate to you that they're well and healthy and doing good. They're telling me, we've got a better chance right now; we've got a government that listens to agriculture more than there ever has been in the province of Saskatchewan. That's what farmer after farmer is telling me.

So to say that there's a mass problem of psychological problems out in rural Saskatchewan amongst farmers, is simply not correct. However, certainly there are some individuals that are having some psychological problems. There always has been. There always has been, and unfortunately, I suppose, there always will be some. I believe that by working through the ag reps offices that we can find who these people are.

The member opposite, I think, supports this. A group session in some cases may be good. Sometimes it's good in this world to hear that there's other people that have some pressures and strains upon them. You mention AA who probably are world renowned for this type of group therapy. It doesn't work in every case. Some cases a person wants to speak confidentially with another person. I think this type of network that we have put out, are developing in Saskatchewan, will do a lot to try and

help that situation.

I noticed you mentioned that the man was speaking in Brandon. From my understanding, certainly we have a far better network than Manitoba, and I say that, in a non-partisan way, we have a better network in mental health services in Saskatchewan than is the case in Manitoba.

You mention Jake Epp. I don't question how long you know Jake. If you know him like I do, you think he's a very admirable fellow. And as I outlined in some detail in *Hansard* the other day, that I think — and I take some satisfaction in the fact that Jake would look at the programs of provinces on alcohol, educational type of ads, and say the best blueprint is Saskatchewan's, and thereby have approached the CRTC to try and bring in what we have in Saskatchewan. I'm not saying it's perfect but it is probably, as Jake is looking at it, the best one. In some cases it's over 15 per cent. I don't know if you were present when I read the letter to Jake where I told Jake: I support you and I will do whatever I can to help you bring this across, through all the CRTC.

So I would say that I think our positive ads are probably the best in Canada. And I think the very fact that the federal minister whom we both know has chosen that route to go, lends support and credence to the position taken here.

Mr. Engel: — The point I was raising is that, as good as a positive ad might be, if the 85 per cent of the ads were cut off you'd make both me and Jake Epp a lot happier. That's the point I was making. I was going to tell you, that by trying to tie him in to saying that he agrees with alcohol advertising with the 85 per cent of the ads that are spent encouraging the use and consumption — you can call it brand selection or what you want — but those kinds of ads don't sit well with the present minister, nationally. I know that. And I wish you'd be on that same wavelength, you'd both get involved in saying, let's spend the 15 or 20 per cent on the negative ads; we'll agree to that.

And we had an excellent Aware program out there. The Aware ads, and you'll have to admit, those Aware ads were excellent and they were good, but they were run at a time when they didn't have a competition. They didn't have any competition from the 85 per cent that you have today, when the Aware ads were run. There was no interference in the ball games and in the hockey games. There was no interference. There was no interference by the other ads at that time.

So the point I'm making, Mr. Minister, the medical profession are encouraging you to cut and ban liquor advertising. The teachers are telling us, ban liquor advertising. Churches all over the country have written thousands and thousands of letters and yes, you said that Don Faris orchestrated some of that. I appreciate the worked the guy did, trying to bring you guys to your senses and cut off liquor advertising that you instituted.

But I want to tell you, people right across the piece — and when I meet with people that are meeting with the AA and when they ask me into talk to them, they're trying to encourage me and saying: can't you do anything with

these guys? Can't you encourage them to ban liquor advertising? It's a concern right across the piece, except amongst the 55 of you sitting over here. You seem to be the only ones in the whole country that are in favour of liquor advertising. I can't find another person, I can't find another person that'll write me a letter or indicate to me that it's a good thing to have those 85 per cent of the ads on there. And yet you think . . .

An Hon. Member: — The distilleries will write you.

Mr. Engel: — Oh, the distilleries say it's great; I believe so. But they know they can sell it to you by giving you a little campaign funds and you leave it on the air. And you'll even have all the free-wheeling advertisements they can have. And, Mr. Minister, I think you're going to be accountable for what's happened. You're accountable for this crisis facing agriculture.

The man I referred to wasn't from Manitoba. He was speaking at a seminar in Brandon, and he referred to a survey that was done here in Saskatchewan. He referred to a survey that was done on Saskatchewan farmers, and he referred to the 90 per cent of the farmers that were surveyed from the North Battleford area that were facing those problems. And I think the area and the point I want to make with you, that when farmers have a problem it's an individual problem and it's not something they want to share with somebody else. I find that when people face . . . are up against it, have their backs to the wall, they think they're the only person that's in that kind of trouble. They don't realize that that's a thing that all their neighbours or 90 per cent of their neighbours are facing the same problem, the same trouble.

But when the ad comes on, that liquor ad, and that enticement to enjoy a drink comes on, it affects him more, it affects him more than it does the average person that can go right along and can afford to have a social drink, pays for it out of funds that he has, that doesn't put him into more serious situations. In many, many cases money is spent on liquor that should be spent on children's clothing and on food and on better diets, because of the pressure they're facing and because of the problems they have. And you're adding to that problem by encouraging further use.

And I would like to have you respond to me and tell me if there are not more people facing problems today in the agriculture community than there were five years ago. I would like some statistics on that, because I believe in the last four years the problem has escalated more than a hundredfold. I believe that that problem has gone up in the last years.

(1630)

The crisis centres that have been established . . . I was to a meeting in Swift Current with some of the people that are involved in working in a crisis centre there and a hot-line service they're providing. And their calls have escalated in the last years, more than doubled every year in the last three years — the increase in the work-load that's on them there. And they tell me that a big percentage of their calls are from rural areas and from farmers around the area.

And I think the problem is growing, the problem is getting worse, Mr. Minister, and it isn't one that's been around for a long, long time. It's something that is getting worse, and part of that happening is because it's only in the last four years that we've had liquor advertising. That's part of the problem.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, again I kind of get the feeling that the member opposite thinks that every farmer out there has got an alcohol problem, and I rather dispute that. But you know, if the devastating effects are such as he outlines, then it would seem strange to me, Mr. Chairman, why in the adult per capita sales of alcohol in Saskatchewan, they've declined over the past five years, including a drop of 3 per cent between 1983-84 and 1984-85.

And I think these figures might be very interesting for the House here, because I'm not sure everyone's aware of this. This is the per capita consumption levels, as compared to 11 other jurisdictions. And in '79-80, for spirits, we were the sixth lowest. Now in '83-84 we are the eighth lowest. In beer and wine it has remained the same. But here is an interesting statistic: in absolute alcohol consumed — this is per capita consumptions, comparison of 11 other jurisdictions — in 1979-80 we were the third lowest. In 1983-84 we were the fifth lowest.

So actually the per capita consumption of pure alcohol and of spirits is declining, is decreasing in Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman, rather than going up, as the member opposite would like to indicate.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Minister, if you'd talk about disposable income in those two brackets, and you'd take the percentage of disposable income that was spent on alcohol and compare it for me with the percentage of disposable income that was spent on the two years you make — use those two points — what was the disposable income for farmers in the years you mentioned in the '70s, compared to the disposable income in the years you mentioned in the '80s? And let's have that little figure. Give us that little number while you're on your feet.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I don't know how they use the rest of their income. I have no idea. But I can tell you, for spirits we were the sixth lowest in '79-80. But for spirits we were the eighth lowest . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . for absolute alcohol . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, it doesn't matter how I say it. If the person bought another car or another truck, whatever he did, this is the consumption of alcohol. That is the point that you were raising. It has nothing to do with the disposable income. This is how much he drinks . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, it certainly does. Absolute consumption, we were the third lowest; now we're the fifth lowest.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Minister, when you talk about pricing, when the price of alcohol goes up, how does it affect consumption? Will consumption stay the same if the price of alcohol goes up dramatically, or will that affect consumption? Will that affect consumption?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I'm wondering if the member's line

of logic is that he opposes . . . I believe from his logic he opposes . . .

Mr. Chairman: — If we could . . . Gentlemen, if we could stay on topic in the debate between the minister and the member, please and the rest remain out of it.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Minister, the point I'm making, that as the price goes up, if the income stays the same, the consumption will go down. And the only reason you lost . . .

The only reason the consumption went down a little bit in those two numbers you happened to pick out of the hat is because the farmer had about 10 per cent, 10 per cent of the disposable income, in the year you gave, compared to what he had in our best year in Saskatchewan's agriculture.

The very best year farmers ever faced was when we were getting \$7 wheat. That's the number you used. And they will buy more when they have more money to spend. But the point I'm making: when the heat is on, the farmer is facing with a zero income, that's when you advertise and get him to spend that last little nickel — get his nickel.

You better get some help from your colleagues and not listen to me. You better listen to some of these guys because the oil men are keeping those numbers up, but they're the only people.

I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, your advertising has adversely affected the amount of money that's being spent by people that least can afford it. People that can least afford it are the ones that are going to get hurt by advertising because they'd like to have a drink. They refuse to go and buy some. They refuse to spend some money.

But then they sit there and they watch their TV and they see this encouragement and they feel the depression that's on them because of your agricultural policies that have taken their disposable income away from them. And then when the things are tough, they'll spend a buck. When things are tough they spend the money on booze that they should be spending on milk.

And I'm telling you, Mr. Minister, the studies that have been done and the reports that have been made indicate that there are more farmers facing medical stress. It was on page 2. It was on the inside page of today's *Leader-Post*, right at the top. The study that was done indicates that 90 per cent — 90 per cent — although more than 90 per cent of those surveyed in North Battleford, showed that farmers are under increased . . .

Are you listening, Mr. Minister? Maybe I should wait until you listen. He's sitting there laughing. In this report the study that was done, particularly in the North Battleford area, showed that;

. . . 90 per cent of those surveyed said they took pride in their farm work, and a similar percentage (90 per cent) said they felt that Canadians in general have little or no appreciation of the importance of agriculture and the problems . . . (that the individual farmers are facing.)

Stress builds up because farmers are generally reluctant to talk about their problems and they often view mental health services as being urban-oriented and unresponsive to their plight . . . (that farmers are facing.)

And the point I'm making, Mr. Minister, is that those people, when the heat is on and stress is on, and like Mr. Clutterbuck noted, that mental stress relates to mental fatigue, to depression, to anger, and to alcohol consumption. And I'm telling you, Mr. Minister, that is the problem that develops because of that.

I think you are not aiding those people by allowing your friends that are paying for your political campaigns to advertise as much as they'd like. That's the point I'm trying to make. Stand up; show us some leadership. Show us you're the man you are, and tell your colleagues that if they want to save your position — if they want to save your position — you'll ban liquor advertising before you call this next election.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Chairman, if there's somebody that's an expert on mental fatigue, it's the member opposite. I would never dispute and argue that with you.

But he mentioned that I was smiling, I was smiling at the inconsistency in his argument. When he rose to speak he said the farmers in Saskatchewan are all sitting in front of the TV consuming liquor because they're hard up, things are tough. That's what he said. Then when I indicated to him, Mr. Chairman, that the figures indicate that the per cent consumption of true spirits is decreased, he said, well, that's because they used to drink more when they had more money.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I've taught a lot of kids in my day. But I always was able to get rid of those inconsistencies. Now I ask you, my friend: which way is it? Do the farmers drink more because they're hard up or do the farmers drink more because they have more money? That was your argument. And you can look back in *Hansard* tomorrow, and you will see that.

Now I would like you to stand and say which one is it, because I'd like to know which one to address. You said, oh no, when they had more money, they bought more; they drank more. Then you stood up and said, when they're broke, they drink more. Well goodness gracious, it can't be both ways. And I maintain that a lot of the farmers are out there tonight and they're having supper now and they're drinking milk, and they don't have a bottle of booze. It may be in the cupboard, and if their neighbour comes over, they sit down and have a drink. Some of them don't even touch it. But to stand up here and say, they're all broke, and they're all sitting in front of the TV with a bottle of whiskey in their hand, is simply not true.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — Cheer, boys. I want to tell you the only way that former minister of Justice, the present Minister of Finance, is going to hold his seat, the only way he'll hold his seat is if he can get you to stand up and say that we're going to cut liquor advertising. Any other way, he won't

even win his nomination. And he stands and cheers. He stands and cheers here tonight. He stands and cheers here tonight for liquor advertising.

And, Mr. Minister, I'm not going to get into a little debate with you, but I want to tell you this. Give me a good reason, give me a good reason other than to fill your political coffer, give me a good reason why you, as Minister of health, support 85 per cent of the ads. Why are you supporting them? What's good about them?

If you're saying it's not having a negative effect, let's have a little run-down on this liquor ad where you have five or six young people who are driving a truck similar to the one Young drives from Saskatoon. I'm sorry. What's his constituency? But anyhow, it doesn't matter. But this little Lincoln truck he's got out here, this old grey one, there's one just like it, only it's painted orange, on TV. And how these happy guys are pushing it to the pub.

I watched them sit there and laugh away. They remind me of the same crew that's pushing the little truck up to the pub, and they're going to forget if this truck starts or not. They're going to have a drink and celebrate. That's what you do when you've got trouble. That's what you do if you can't afford something better to drive. You push it up to a pub and you have a drink. You push it up to the pub and you have a drink. You don't bother with battery boosters and battery chargers to try and crank that old thing up. It's an insult to have it parked out in front of here, but you don't solve the problem — you go and get drunk, Mr. Minister. That's what your ads tell these guys to do. That's why they act the way they do when they come back from supper. They'll likely push an old truck around town.

But I'm going to tell you, Mr. Minister — maybe you join them, maybe you don't; I don't know — but I want to tell you, liquor advertising hasn't solved any problems. Tell me one. It's maybe helped your budget for getting ready for your election that you might call sometime in the next year — you might get up your nerve to call it.

But I want to tell you, the only good that you get out of liquor advertising is the good the Tory party reaps. There is no other good, not one reason that's good for anything in society. It doesn't do anything for society, and the only person in that whole caucus that will agree with me is the guy that's quitting, my good friend from Rosthern. He agrees that liquor advertising is no good, but he's about the only one. He's about the only one, because the rest of you think it's a good thing. The rest of you think it's a good thing.

And, Mr. Minister, I want to tell you: if you want to get elected and if the Minister of Finance wants to get elected, cut the ads. What is positive about the liquor ads? What good comes of it other than filling your coffer?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well there's no relationship between coffers and liquor ads. But I just want to indicate to you that studies all over the area, across North America, have never been able to prove that advertising ups consumption. And all I can do is refer to the figures that are here, in that consumption patterns in Saskatchewan have gone down. They've gone down. I think that speaks

for itself.

Mr. Engel: — So that 15 per cent of negative advertising, you say, has cut down. I want to know the positive aspect of the 85 per cent of the ads. Do the TV companies need it to survive? Weren't they getting along and weren't they making any money? What's the problem? What is good . . . What's the positive aspect you're trying to develop from your liquor advertising? Why did you decide to allow liquor advertising in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well I would think the very fact that the Minister of Health for Canada is accepting the Saskatchewan model of at least 15 per cent positive — and I believe we'll build in more — certainly that the Saskatchewan situation . . . If you look at these, Mr. Chairman, that our model is being adopted for all of Canada, take that as one, take that as one point. Secondly, take the figure that the consumption is decreasing in the province, and take that figure that we're much better off today than we were in 1978-79. Therefore I think the policy that we have adopted with those positive ads is certainly the best in Canada.

(1645)

Mr. Engel: — Well I'll tell you when it was the best in Canada. Up until 1982, prior to your advertising of liquor, Saskatchewan had the best model, like we had the model for medicare, like we had the models for everything we've started and thought of and done in Saskatchewan, started here as a model. But the one you destroyed was the model we had set up in saying that, in our commercial stations that operate and are generated and start in Saskatchewan and that are played in Saskatchewan, have zero booze ads — zero.

I hear the medical association across Canada saying that the only way we're going to lick the health problem with smokers is to stop advertising smoking. Do you agree with that aspect of it? And if you want to control the consumption of alcohol, you got to stop liquor advertising, like it was before — like it was before.

We had a model. We had a model. Now you brag about a model — that 15 per cent of the ads is a model. No, that's not a model at all. That's a failure, because that isn't something new. We had Aware ads that were greater, and had a greater impact, because they didn't have that competition from the other 85 per cent. They didn't have that competition. Aware worked, Mr. Minister. Aware was doing its job, and they were good. They were powerful ads, and people want them. And maybe some of your 15 per cent are coming close. Some of them are coming close.

Herman Rolfes did a good job when he introduced the program of Aware ads, and Herman Rolfes is going to be back here, be back here cutting off the ads on the rest of liquor advertising, because you're too chicken to show some leadership. You're too chicken to stand up and say, the money we got from Peter Pocklington, and the money we got from Weyerhaeuser, and the money that George Hill's contributing, we've got enough to win an election; we don't need the money from the booze people. If you'd have the guts to stand up and have some leadership, and if

you'd stand up to those breweries and say, we don't need your money — sorry, boys; we're not going to have any more booze advertising. We're going to fill the air waves with our election ads anyhow. The television stations and the radio stations will get enough advertising money from all these political announcements. We won't need the booze announcements to survive.

Have the leadership to stand up and cut the ads off, Mr. Minister, like the medical health association is telling you to do with smoking ads; like the doctors are asking for the booze ads; like the municipal government are asking us; like the people that are working in welfare; like the schoolteachers that are teaching grade 12 kids; and all the other people that are working with young people. The church people, the educators — everybody in the country is telling you to cut the ads out except the little 55 crowd you've got sitting here. They cheer. They cheer.

I see the member from Morse cheering when you're talking about booze advertising, but I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, his days are numbered. His days are numbered because when Reg Gross gets in here he's going to help me cut off liquor advertising. He's going to help me cut off liquor advertising. He doesn't stand up against liquor advertising. He cheered just a minute ago when you thought you had a good one on me.

Well I'll tell you, the last good one I'm going to have on you is that if you want to win your seat, stand up and tell us you're going to cut the advertising of liquor. And you'll have some people say, wow, maybe these guys have some leadership; maybe they have some guts; maybe they know that they've made a mistake and they're doing some wrong; maybe they'll recant and retract on this one.

I think it's time you show some leadership in the Department of Health because that's the one area that you could show leadership and say, our costs, mental health costs, have gone down from . . . The support you've had from mental health services has gone down from 30 million to 28 million. But when it comes to drug abuse and booze . . . What item was that one? Grants to . . . I saw it was quite an increase here. I'll find it pretty soon here. It went from 6 to 8 million anyhow, and I'm trying to find . . . I'll find it when you answer this question if you're going to show some leadership in the Department of Health with the pressure that it's put on you to cut smoking ads. Do you feel that that would reduce the amount of smokers if the smoking ads were taken off the air?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well it's interesting that the member would ask about the anti-smoking initiatives. Certainly we have cut the numbers of smokers in Saskatchewan most drastically, and without even doing anything with advertising. I believe that the initiatives that we have taken to indicate to young people the dangers of smoking have certainly had a fantastic reduction in the number.

I'm proud to say that we have the most non-smoking schools in Canada, where schools can fly the United Nations flag because none of the students smoke and none of the staff smoke in that school. I think it's interesting to see that this year — and I wish it would have passed — that a hotly debated resolution at the

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation annual convention was whether to ban smoking in schools. It didn't pass. I would have like to have seen it pass. But the very fact that it was brought on the agenda by a provincial organization of the size of the STF certainly indicates that here in Saskatchewan we are leading with non-smoking initiatives.

So there are many ways that one can encourage and can lead with non-smoking initiatives. And I think our track record stands very strong in that.

The other thing that I'll point out to you as far as advertising . . . You've talked about the Aware programs. The other day I indicated to you the immense popularity of the Christmas alcohol advertising ads, the strong impact that they're having upon people and their choices. Also the high recognition factor, and as well, the complete endorsement by 90 per cent of those that were asked the questions, or reviewed, say, run them again. So certainly there are some initiatives that are very strong.

Furthermore, I think if you look over the general population and the attitude towards drinking and so on that has been displayed here, not only in my department but within highway traffic and so on where we have considerable crack-down on drinking drivers, a reduction of these offences at Christmas because of volunteer groups saying, look at, we'll drive your car and so on, I think we're seeing that the people of Saskatchewan — and I give the credit to the people of Saskatchewan — that many of them are taking a very conscientious look at life-styles. I go out every day here at noon and I see people jogging all through the park. Nobody says you have to go out there and jog. These are people that are concerned with their life-style.

I see a reduction in the consumption of alcohol, true alcohol experience in this province. Nobody is saying, look at, you can't drink. People are deciding of their own volition, and certainly non-smoking initiatives have gone a long way to reducing the number of smokers. I see that just today in the paper in British Columbia, for example. There's a by-law in Vancouver by which the non-smokers are going to have the majority rights in the restaurants. That's a city by-law that's coming forward. So certainly I believe people across this country are beginning to realize that they are responsible for their own health and to a great extent, that is true.

Certainly one can question advertising. There was cable advertising in this province, there was advertising in magazines that always had been in here, and that type of stuff that came across the line with television — that had always been here. But I am pleased to see that the consumption is going down.

So to stand here and make great fanfare about farmers sitting out there in front of their TV sets with a bottle of whiskey in their hand, I think is misrepresenting the facts. Sure there's some farmers in trouble; there's people in the city that are in trouble; there's people who have always had some mental trouble. There's always been mental trouble. I can indicate that there's seven or eight fellows across the other side that have a bit of political trouble too, if the truth was known.

But, Mr. Chairman, I just want to say to you that I'm pleased to see that the consumption is going down. I'm concerned about this. The alcohol commission has been monitoring the consumption pattern. So certainly I hope that has given some answer to the questions raised by the member opposite.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Minister, I appreciate what you're saying. But wouldn't it have been nice if we could start flying some flags over a school and saying not one young person in that school is using alcohol? Wouldn't that be a good thing? Would you agree that that would be a good thing?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, I think again — and I will give credit to some of the young people in Saskatchewan because I think they are again picking up this initiative — I understand that Cochrane High School here in Regina is going to have a completely alcohol-free graduation. My colleague, the MLA from Shellbrook, told me about Shellbrook, which voted the same way — the high school. The children, the kids in the high school themselves, said, look at, we're going to have a Safe Grad and there's going to be no alcohol at this Safe Grad.

I'm concerned about the use of drugs in the high schools. I've talked to teachers. I'm concerned about this. I'm concerned about young children and young adults that are drinking and some are drinking to excess. And it is to that extent that I commissioned a study on youth, drugs, and alcohol in Saskatchewan. I indicated to, I think it was the member from Regina North East, last week that that study is in and will soon be released to the public. And I've promised a copy of that study to every member of the opposition.

So, Mr. Chairman, we're certainly concerned. I think every sincere person in Saskatchewan is concerned. And I just want to congratulate those people out there who are taking that concern personally — those high schools who are, of their own volition, saying, look at, we want to have a grad but we want it to be entirely alcohol free. I think those are things we should be proud of and I congratulate those people.

Mr. Engel — Mr. Minister, a person listening in just phoned in and said that the reasons that the consumption maybe came down is that beer-making at home and wine-making maybe has contributed to that extra consumption. Part of it is maybe that they're getting involved in swish. And I don't know.

The question I'd ask you, Mr. Minister, is: aren't people bugging you? Aren't people phoning in and telling you that you should be cutting liquor advertising? Is nobody phoning in and telling you that it's time you changed? Or have they given up on you? Have they decided that it doesn't pay to talk to these guys because they're not going to form the next government anyhow? Is that why people aren't bugging you? Because they're phoning in and they're telling us that they are finding other ways to provide the necessary solace they need to deal with this kind of government, when farmers are in stress and farmers are facing a crisis and people across the board are facing a crisis.

Mr. Minister, like I started to tell you, wouldn't it be great if you'd have a school that could fly a flag and say that there's no alcohol consumed by our young people? And yet you sponsor and support ads that are directed at young people — they're directed at the kids. The little guys before they start school know the jingles and sing the songs about: "This Bud's For You."

Mr. Minister, I want to tell you that that one item maybe doesn't show up in your polls, but it's going to come home to roost. That is the one item that people are telling me across the piece that is going to get you because that's where it started and you really showed your true colours when you knuckled under to the pressure from the breweries.

That pressure was on Saskatchewan for years. That pressure has been on Saskatchewan for years. They always begged us and they'd put on these fancy lobbies and say, it's coming in on cable and it's coming in in magazines, and it's here, and it's there and everybody's doing it. But, Mr. Minister, Saskatchewan didn't.

Roy Romanow and Herman Rolfes and those guys, they had the guts to stand up to them and say, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'd like to see the rest of Canada not advertise liquor. I'd like to see the cable televisions not bring in liquor advertising. And do you know, Mr. Minister, since we started that little lobby and since we had this little island in Saskatchewan where we didn't have liquor advertising, four states in the United States now don't have liquor advertising. They even eliminate it on the cables coming, and the channels that are directed at them are not allowing liquor advertising. And the consumption records that have come down in those states make it appalling what's happening in Saskatchewan. And they don't have the reduction and the disposable income like we do here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, your record on liquor advertising is deplorable. You have set an example and you've weakened. You've knuckled under to the pressure that the booze people have put on you. And I find that, when we're talking to people that are involved in the medical association, they're telling me how bad it is. When I talk to people that are school administrators, they're saying how that liquor is encouraging their young people to get involved.

You can talk to any group you want, Mr. Minister, any group across the board that has any clout of any concern for young people — the minor court cases that are involved, the young people, the lawyers. The bar association passed a resolution saying, quit liquor advertising.

What do you guys do? You take their money and you let them advertise. You're bought off. You take the 50 and 60 and \$70 million a year, and you buy a little campaign to think that is' going to try and get you elected. Well I want to tell you, things are so tough in Saskatchewan that you can't be bought. No amount of money is going to buy you this time around, to get you elected.

And I think my colleagues and the people are aware of

what I'm trying to say. Nobody is going to be able to believe, nobody is going to believe your ads any more when they say that you want to be a responsible government. I think that actions speak louder than words.

Your actions indicate that you're more concerned with the money and the welfare of the Tory party than you are the welfare of our young people than you are in the welfare of our people that are facing a mental crisis in Saskatchewan; than you are of the welfare of people that least want to drink in excess are encouraged to consume and use more alcohol.

I think we're facing a crisis that is too big to cope with amongst rural Saskatchewan, and you haven't got a solution. You haven't got an answer. You're saying, oh well, we've got a 15 per cent ad that's going to do it on that side.

Mr. Minister, you can save face. You can show some leadership. You can tell your caucus. And you as Minister of Health, the area that is most affected, the budget that is most affected, could stand up in this House and say, I'm going to press my colleagues, and in tomorrow's caucus meeting we're going to make a decision and we're going to cut — we're going to cut liquor advertising. Are you going to do that? No, we're going to try and convince Jake Epp that 15 per cent positive advertising is as good as the 85 per cent that encourages drinking. Well I want to tell you, it's not going to work. I tell you it's not going to work because the people of Saskatchewan know that you can be bought. The people of Saskatchewan know that you've got no backbone when it comes to standing up to Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . They can't afford four more years of this kind of administration.

Mr. Chairman, I think that I've made my case quite adequately, that we don't believe in excess use of consumption. We don't believe that we should have advertising that . . . Why are you shutting me down?

Mr. Chairman: — Being it's 5 o'clock, this House now recesses until 7 o'clock.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.