

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Tusa: — Today fellow colleagues I would like to introduce to you 96 members of the Canadian Club of Canada — Regina, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw branches — who are seated in the Speaker's gallery.

The Canadian Club is an association of men and women who strongly believe in Canada and who organize theme speakers to talk on topics of interest to Canadians. The men's Canadian Club, Regina branch, was formed in 1909, and the women's Canadian Club was formed in 1921. These two clubs amalgamated in May of this year and together will promote their goals with greater strength.

Would you please join me in welcoming the Canadian Club members to this Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tusa: — It is also my distinct pleasure today to introduce to you, in the Speaker's gallery, six legislative interns from the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

These interns will be with us for several days for meetings with members and officers of the Legislative Assembly. Accompanying the interns is Mr. Michael Ritter from the Alberta office of the Legislative Council and Law Clerk.

Please help me welcome our visitors from Alberta.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ratification of Free Trade Agreement

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier, and it has to do with the question of free trade and in specifics the question of ratification, or namely how it is that Canadians can either approve or reject the agreement which has been negotiated between Mr. Mulroney and President Reagan's administration.

And I refer you, sir, to a statement on September 28 in this legislature, made by your Minister of Economic Development and Trade on this issue, where he said as follows:

... any agreement that was struck ... would have to be acceptable to all regions of the country — the western region, Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime region — and through consensus. And without consensus from each of the regions, the deal would not be acceptable.

My question to you, Mr. Premier, is this: in light of the fact that the province of Ontario has rejected the deal,

according to the press reports, and similarly the province of Manitoba, in view of the fact that the provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island have serious reservations if not rejecting the deal, is this ratification formula enunciated by your Minister of Economic Development and Trade still applicable, in which case there would be no deal, or is the deal going to be imposed upon us by the Prime Minister of Canada?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the hon. member for his question. The opportunity before Canada with the trade deal that has been initialled by both the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada is one of the greatest and historic opportunities for Canadians that we've seen since we built the railroad over 100 years ago.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I was asked this morning if indeed the Prime Minister would call an election on this issue so that the people of Canada can express their opposition to, or express their support for, this new and exciting opportunity not only for Saskatchewan but indeed all of the country.

And I would say yes, the Prime Minister will call an election on this issue. And, Mr. Speaker, he will call the election obviously within the next six months or 18 months with respect to his time frame because, Mr. Speaker, this is an historic opportunity. And those that oppose this ...

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Those that will campaign against it, Mr. Speaker, will have to face the facts that they will deny Canadians an opportunity to receive tremendous benefit in terms of new job opportunities, consumers' significant benefits, and deny Canadians a very effective leadership role in the world today in setting an example for trade and for commerce and for peace, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker, for generations to come.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. I must say to the Premier that you must feel good in getting a standing ovation inside this legislature because I can assure you, given your popularity of the government standing, you won't get it outside this legislature, that's for sure.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the Hon. Premier, I would appreciate very much if you would answer the question which I shall repeat to you again, sir. The question is, what effective means do we have, do you have, as the guardian of Saskatchewan interests in farming, in energy, in investment — what mechanisms do we have for the acceptance or the rejection of this deal and the debate about the deal?

Because your answer to my last question implies that the ratification process might be a general election. And if that's the way the Prime Minister is going to seek ratification of this free trade deal, what chance does a small province, rurally based like Saskatchewan, have against the interests of Ontario and Quebec who might in fact vote for this sell-out of Canada?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting to watch the new future leader of the opposition first of all say that Ontario is against it, therefore we shouldn't do it, and then says Ontario might go for it and maybe we shouldn't. I mean, it's clear, Mr. Speaker, that he doesn't know what side of the fence he's on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I will say very clearly, very clearly, Mr. Speaker, that the safeguards and the benefits of a trade pact with the United States, if there was any province in any region or any group of people that would benefit, it would be the farmers and the ranchers and the oilmen and the pulp and paper people and the steel people and the potash people in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, to have access to the U.S. markets.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, all provinces have met, and I believe I've been in nine meetings with the Prime Minister and with the first ministers — something like from 70 to 100 hours of negotiations and talking and briefing and examining the entire issue, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say to the hon. member there is absolutely, without any doubt, absolutely never been an opportunity for Canadians and Saskatchewan people like this for the last 100 years in this country — absolutely, Mr. Speaker, the best opportunity. And the final decision, the final decision does rest with the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister of the country has the final decision, and he will speak for the country, and I will speak for Saskatchewan, and people in western Canada will know when the final analysis is over that, finally, we will be on an equal footing with Ontario — and we haven't been for the last 100 years, and it's about time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. Obviously, Mr. Premier, and Mr. Speaker, there is no ratification process in place which would permit the people of Saskatchewan to protect their interests. And surely we can't rely on you, sir, because you have sold out the interests of the province of Saskatchewan on this free trade deal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And I want to preface this question, Mr. Speaker, very simply and very quickly getting to the point. The Premier himself talks about the greatest thing

that this free trade deal means in, among other things, we'll talk about agriculture in a moment. He mentions steel. If that's the case, I want to ask the Premier of this province how in the world does he explain the important criticism of Mr. Roger Phillips, the chief executive officer of Ipsco, of probably one of the most important industries in Saskatchewan if not Canada — steel — who once was a booster of a proposed free trade deal and now says that you and your Prime Minister friend, Mr. Mulroney, have betrayed the interests of the steel workers and the people of Saskatchewan. How is that in the best interests of our province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, we can go through this commodity by commodity, and I'll start with steel. And we can go into agriculture and we can go into oil and we can go into pulp and paper and all the things that we want to be able to do.

There are three opportunities, Mr. Speaker, three choices before Canadians — three choices before Canadians, and I'll start with steel and we can through the rest of them.

The first is, Mr. Speaker, is that we live under the existing laws which are designed and interpreted by Americans and say, no deal, you just keep telling us what to do. That's the first choice, that we just leave it; say we'll back away; you can keep imposing your laws because you set them and you interpret them. That's the first.

The second choice, Mr. Speaker, is to ask Americans and Canadians to change all their laws immediately, just like that. Well I'm sure the hon. member knows, not only in Canada but in the Congress of United States, it is not possible to change all the laws immediately.

So the third choice, Mr. Speaker, if you don't want to leave it the way it is, and you know you can't change all them immediately — I mean we couldn't even solve the beer business because Ontario wouldn't let us do it — is to design a mechanism that allows you to change the laws. And that's exactly what this is, it's a bilateral binding dispute-settlement mechanism, binding — and United States has never had that happen to them before — and an agreement, Mr. Speaker, to change the laws and harmonize them over the next five to 10 years. Tariffs will come to zero and Canadians and Americans can build the strongest free trade agreement in the history of the world, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. With the greatest of respect, he's long on rhetoric and short on facts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — He says . . . Clearly, Mr. Speaker, there is a dispute between the Premier's interpretation of this so-called binding dispute-settlement mechanism which would guarantee access of Canadian and Saskatchewan product to the United States, his interpretation and that of Mr. Roger Phillips. I'll tell you, Mr. Premier, we'll take the

word of Mr. Phillips on this one before we take your word.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I want to say this. My question to you, Mr. Premier, is this: part of your rationale for this free trade deal has been that in order to stop the United States omnibus trade Bill which has been represented by the Minister of Economic Trade and Development as blocking the borders to the United States of Canadian products, part of the explanation and rationale for the free trade deal has been to stop that initiative by Congress.

Will you please tell this House how in the world this free trade deal will achieve that objective, since the removal of tariffs won't take place until January 1, 1989, and the U.S. omnibus trade Bill is likely to be law before that time. How are we going to guarantee access under those circumstances?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just falls into the trap. He says that he doesn't like the trade Bill before the United States and he's got a resolution before this House — the member from Riversdale who said, let's not cut a deal with the United States on trade. That's what the resolution says. So you are saying, let's live with U.S. law and let them interpret it. Don't deal with them. Hide. Go back to Riversdale and stay there. Hide. Because you are not prepared to go and fight for Canadians; you'll just hide from them because you introduced in this House a resolution that said, don't deal with United States.

Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is we have the courage to do an historic deal with United States which says we'll play, not by their rules but by a new, binding dispute-settlement mechanism which is not their country and not ours but a third party judging those rules, Mr. Speaker. That's never, ever been done before.

And, Mr. Speaker, if I could say, the hon. member has his claim to fame, his negotiations on the constitution. I think we should remind this House and remind the rest of the country that he carved out the province of Quebec, Mr. Speaker. He carved it out and the people of Quebec regret the very fact that he wouldn't have the courage to include us all in one nation, let alone negotiate with another one.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. Fighting to get Quebec into Canada is one thing. Fighting with respect to the trade markets of the United States is another thing. We're for fighting for improving the trade opportunities of this great province and this great country. What we're not for is a sell-out of Saskatchewan. That's what we're not for.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — A sell-out. And I ask this question, Mr. Speaker: how in the world is it that you can go through 20 minutes of question period — will you please tell us — and not answer one specific with respect to the dispute

mechanism, with respect to the question of how steel is going to be protected, not one question? Will you, Mr. Premier, table after question period all of the documents, including the legal texts and the fine print pertaining to this free trade deal, because if you won't answer it, maybe those documents will? Will you do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I will certainly be prepared to table the document that outlines the agreement in considerable detail. If the hon. member will let me . . . Let me remind the hon. member a couple of things with respect to this pact.

Why is it that the province of Quebec in central Canada, and the Premier, who's had years and years of experience, stands up and supports this wholeheartedly for the opportunities it will present, not only to the province of Quebec, but indeed all of Canada? And I can take you through all the provinces and, yes, we have the classic position of Ontario. They want cheap fuel from us. They want to be able to manufacture cars, Mr. Speaker, and charge us a great deal more because it's behind a tariff wall. They want to be able to manufacture clothes, refrigerators, stoves, microwaves, all those things, and charge the West a great deal.

And the NDP defend them, Mr. Speaker. We know that the province of Quebec, the Maritimes, Mr. Speaker, western Canada — not Mr. Pawley, and I'll give him credit; he's the only NDP premier in the country and he has to take that line because philosophically he's boxed in — but Canadians, Mr. Speaker, Canadians from Quebec to Alberta to B.C., right across the piece, know the benefits to consumers, know the benefits to the commodities, and the benefits to all Canadians for years and years and years, if you have the courage, Mr. Speaker, to go out and fix it and not hide or not just nationalize it because you don't happen to agree.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have another new question to the Premier. The Premier, in his answer to me in the last question, asked the rhetorical question, presumably in defence of this deal: why was it that Quebec has accepted the deal?

Well I want to tell you something, Mr. Premier, Robert Bourassa is more than capable of looking after the interests of Quebec. I don't want that explanation. I want you to tell us who's been minding the Saskatchewan interests in the story, not Quebec's.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Bourassa, Bourassa and Quebec . . . or can look after Quebec's interests well enough, thank you, without taking you and your government to the cleaners.

And my question to you therefore, Mr. Speaker, is this . . . and Mr. Premier: why is it that people talk about those who are hidebound or stuck by political ideology? Why is it that Mr. Peckford, a Conservative, Mr. Buchanan, a Conservative in Nova Scotia, together with Mr. Peterson

— why is it that they too know that this deal is fraught with so many short-term and long-term dangers to Canada that they're going to oppose it, but you have been asleep at the switch and not looking after Saskatchewan interests?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, two observations. You look at seven out of the 10 provinces, Mr. Speaker, and their premiers, and you will find that they will endorse that, and over the next little period of time you may even find more premiers endorsing it, and I'll say that quite clearly. So let there be no mistake that all the provinces are against this or all the Maritimes are against this.

I will say . . . I'll give him that Premier Peterson has his concerns because he's worried about Ontario, who happen to have the biggest trade deal in the history of United States and Canada in automobiles. We just want the same opportunity. He's a little afraid to give us the opportunity. We want the same thing here.

And secondly, Mr. Speaker, I will point out to the hon. member; you go to anybody that's producing red meat, beef and hogs in this province and ask them if they want access to the U.S. market, and they will say, yes, absolutely yes . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And, Mr. Speaker, he stands up and he says, well what about poultry? When I mention red meat, he changes the subject. Poultry and eggs, Mr. Speaker; there is no change, Mr. Speaker. It's as solid as you can be; marketing boards are protected.

If you look at the oil and the gas business, you go across this province and you ask them if they want access to the United States. You go to the pulp and paper business and you ask them the same thing. Mr. Speaker, we'll take commodity by commodity by commodity, and you will know that Saskatchewan is the biggest benefactor in the entire country, having an agreement with the United States, Mr. Speaker, and that's why the position we've taken is a valid position.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Now one final point. In the event, Mr. Speaker . . . I will just say this to the hon. member: if he wants to put on his cowboy hat when he's elected leader and he wants to go around in the next election on the trade issue, I look forward to meeting him on the campaign trail . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to see the Hon. Premier in a cowboy hat. He might even get it on the right way. But my final supplementary question to the Premier is this: maybe he should . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order. The hon. member is having difficulty making his question. I'm afraid he's being interrupted.

Order. Order, please. I'm afraid he's being interrupted by

both sides of the House, so I'd like to ask for your co-operation.

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I was going to say that . . . I repeat again, I'd be pleased to see the Premier in a cowboy hat, but I think he should start trying another kind of a hat, Mr. Speaker, especially in the light of how unpopular his government is and this deal is. And I think he's practising it very much. He is selling off everything in Saskatchewan and now, it seems, Canada. I think he's trying out to become the new host for the Canadian home shopping network television network. That's how badly he's selling it off. Try that hat.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, you can quickly . . . Mr. Speaker, I think the public should recognize how quickly the new leader of the opposition gets off the whole question of trade, and he starts talking about television and everything else. He was . . . no substance. Let me . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Let me add, Mr. Speaker, just for the hon. member's information — more and more good thinking, intelligent news media and Canadians, Mr. Speaker, are endorsing a full fledged trade treaty with the United States and Canada. And if he would allow me, I'll just read the last sentence in today's *Globe and Mail*:

We believe in liberalized trade . . .

This is an Ontario paper, Mr. Speaker, Ontario paper, *The Globe and Mail*:

We believe in liberalized trade, consistent with national sovereignty. This deal appears to have achieved it.

Endorsed by *The Globe and Mail*, Mr. Speaker. And let me just say this. More and more people across the country are recognizing that it takes some courage to go out into the international world and face the global village. Those that have the courage and the vision to do it and capture the opportunity are going to go down in history as those that are leaders. Those that are afraid of it, Mr. Speaker, will be doomed to the opposition for some time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order, please.

Dispute-Settlement Mechanism

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. I preface it by commenting on one of his earlier remarks about the absence of a deal with Quebec when my colleague from Riversdale and I were negotiating. And I think it's interesting to know that the Premier believes that we should have made a deal with René Levesque, and endorses René Levesque's vision of Canada. I want to tell him, and to the Canadian public, that while he may adopt René Levesque's view of Canada, I do not, and I'm proud to say I do not.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order. I'd like to ask the hon. members to give the Leader of the Opposition a chance to put his question.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Premier, my question deals with the dispute resolution mechanism which you say offers some impartial adjudication. Do you not agree, Mr. Premier, that the adjudication is entirely with respect to process and not at all with respect to content; that Roger Phillips is right when he says that this does not give us any access to U.S. markets?

And do you not agree with this statement of what the deal entails, the U.S. anti-dumping law, detailed as U.S. statutes, legislative history, regulations, administered or practice, and court decisions will remain intact and unchanged — intact and unchanged. Now this is the statement, the summary of the text put out by the U.S. government. I do not have the one from the Canadian government. If you have it, I wish you'd make it available.

And I ask you, Mr. Premier, do you not agree that that fairly states what the free trade agreement, which you endorse, enacts? Do you not agree that while it creates an impartial referee, it let's one side make all the rules and change them if they don't like the referee's decision?

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well I think, Mr. Speaker, I can only say to the hon. member that I hope he takes the time to read the agreement in some detail because it addresses the very points that he raises. And I would hope after he does read it that he will at least be consistent with what's on the table so that we all know that we're speaking about the same thing. Let me just walk through it, and then I'll just touch at the end of Meech Lake because he brought it up — pardon me, on the whole question of Quebec in the constitution.

Mr. Speaker, what we have today that we didn't have before, what we have today with respect to a trade mechanism is the following: we have, first of all, a bilateral binding dispute-settlement mechanism on old laws and new laws that we didn't have before. Now that's something United States has never done before.

Secondly, Mr. Minister, we have a fast-track mechanism that will not allow the United States to take it into their court, judged by their people, and then if we didn't like it, we'd have to take it to GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) for the next five years, but a new, binding, bilateral mechanism with a fast-track that says that they have to play by, not their rules, not our rules, but a new international set of binding rules, and that's to our advantage, Mr. Minister.

Third, Mr. Speaker, we have the reduced temptation of political interference in the U.S. laws because they don't get to judge the laws. And you know as well as I do, when you look at the potash case — and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, the political change in the United States over potash is tremendous — that temptation will be largely reduced because we're looking at a brand new mechanism.

Fourth, Mr. Speaker, we have agreed to sit down and harmonize and change our rules over the next three years to five years. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's terribly significant. Americans and Canadians are saying, we can't change the rules instantly, but let's get it bound right now — bind it so that we know that we're in control jointly, and then go ahead and change the rules over time so we can be an example for the rest of the world, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Sixth point, Mr. Speaker. We have tariffs going to zero — tariffs going to zero. We don't have that now. Tariffs going to zero means that every consumer in this country will benefit in the neighbourhood of \$300 a year in benefits, year after year after year. For a family of five that's \$1,500 in benefit because tariffs go to zero, and that is in the agreement.

Seven, Mr. Speaker, we have a brand-new example, a brand-new example to take to the multilateral trade negotiations and to GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and say to the world — because this is perfectly consistent with GATT — this is how you should be trading; take it to the Japanese, take to the Europeans, and take it to others.

Eighth, Mr. Speaker, we now have a new, binding mechanism that is as strong as the mechanism that binds the European Economic Community, in the final analysis.

And finally, Mr. Speaker — and finally — you will see that we have absolutely protected language, culture, marketing boards, sovereignty, regional development, and social programs in this country, and that's what we said we were going to do with it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Benefits of Free Trade Agreement

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, because we really didn't get a good opportunity in question period, I would like to make a statement with respect to the trade negotiations between the United States and Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I want to make six brief points, and I've extended my speaking notes to the Leader of the Opposition and to the Liberal leader.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, we have before us an historic opportunity for Saskatchewan and all Canada to grow and to build and create new jobs for decades to come as a result of the trade pact that's been initialled between the United States and Canada. It's the most exciting opportunity for Canada since in fact we built the railroad over a hundred years ago.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, this historic opportunity for Canada to play a leadership role in world events is truly exciting. It provides a liberal trading example for the

multilateral trade negotiations and for GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). And we can say, Mr. Speaker, don't just do as we say, but do as we do. And Saskatchewan people and Canadians will take a world position, a leadership position in multilateral trade negotiations for generations to come.

Third, Mr. Speaker, significant benefits for Canadian consumers for years to come will be readily apparent — an average of \$300 per man, woman, and child year after year. It'll be like, Mr. Speaker, a duty-free shop for North Americans so that we can go into the United States and buy cars, for example, in Minneapolis that would be worth \$9,000; we can buy them for four and a half. We've made the comparisons today, Mr. Speaker. Tremendous savings for Canadians, and they know what the prices are in the United States.

Fourth, Mr. Speaker, an establishment of a final — and I say this — a final, binding, bilateral dispute-settlement mechanism that has never in the history of the United States been imposed on that country. U.S. will not be setting and not be judging the rules applied to us, but a third party, Mr. Speaker. And we agree to the process of modifying and changing those rules, new rules and existing rules, over time to bring them in line with our trading objectives.

Five, Mr. Speaker, complete safeguards, complete safeguards on language, culture, sovereignty, regional development, social programs, and marketing boards as we set out to do, Mr. Speaker.

And six, this historic opportunity for Saskatchewan and western Canada to finally compete with Ontario and Quebec on equal footing. And if there ever was a reason to allow us to have access to opportunity, to a large market, and not be confined by tariffs that Ontario and central Canada has lived under for years, this is that opportunity. When it comes to automobiles, when it comes to commodities, when it comes to the things we purchase and produce, Mr. Speaker, we will now be on equal footing.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here today and say that this country has initialled one of the most historic opportunities that we've ever seen in the last hundred years. And it deserves the support of every single solitary Canadian.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of the Leader of the Opposition and members of the official opposition, Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to briefly respond to the Premier's comments on the free trade treaty proposed by Prime Minister Mulroney, and now enthusiastically endorsed by the Government of Saskatchewan and our Premier.

Mr. Speaker, this side of the House supports new trade opportunities for Saskatchewan and Canada. We want to see new jobs and new sectors of our economy created to provide the next generation of goods and services for a growing world. Let there be no doubt about that. But this

free trade treaty fails to provide those new opportunities for Saskatchewan and Canada, and worse yet, Mr. Speaker, it comes at great expense to our nation, to our province and its people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — The free trade treaty proposed by Brian Mulroney and supported basically sight unseen, Mr. Speaker, because no documents of any consequence have been tabled by the Premier, supported by his chief cheer-leader, the Premier of Saskatchewan, is tantamount to the biggest sell-out of Canada and its interests probably in our history.

It surrenders to the Americans on every major bargaining point, Mr. Speaker, and gives us nothing in return. And I say, shame on the Premier of our province for cheer-leading rather than leading on this vital interest of concern to Saskatchewan and to Canada's people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Instead of going to Ottawa to protect Saskatchewan interests, our Premier went to Ottawa to blindly endorse this proposed treaty negotiated in secret and many of the details of which are still unknown to this very day. The Premier knows that his political cousins in Ottawa saved his bacon last fall with a deficiency payment, and he knows that Brian Mulroney, in this regard and in regard to free trade, is calling all of the shots and now cashing in his chips.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is going to pay the price for a long, long time unless our people join forces to stop this plan as negotiated by the Premier of our province and Mr. Mulroney.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I say this proposed treaty is bad news for Saskatchewan on a number of counts, Mr. Speaker, very briefly,. First, with respect to our number one industry, agriculture, this treaty threatens the future of the Canadian Wheat Board and our entire orderly marketing structure in Canadian agriculture. It allows the Americans, Mr. Speaker, to begin to sell their wheat in the Canadian market, which weakens the control of the Canadian Wheat Board, and I say is the first step in its eventual elimination.

This treaty will wipe out the two-price system for wheat in Canada, and the Premier has virtually admitted that today, Mr. Speaker. That's a loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue for already hard pressed Saskatchewan and Canadian farmers. And this Premier, who says that he defends the farmers of Saskatchewan, has allowed . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order, please. The hon. member for Riversdale is making his response to a ministerial statement. I think he deserves the opportunity to do so without interruption.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, this represents an attack on the family farm and the question of orderly marketing at a time when farmers are under sufficient and serious enough attack on the economic circumstances that they face. There are other concerns for Saskatchewan farm families, especially those in the egg and poultry industry, but we'll have more to say about that in the future as this debate progresses.

Secondly, this treaty fails to guarantee Saskatchewan exporters, like our potash producers, access to the American market — one of the basic reasons for negotiating the deal. This apparently was fundamental to these negotiations. It was supposed to be a way to exempt Canadian producers from American protectionist laws like the anti-dumping and countervailing duties. It was supposed to be the protection to the ominous Bill in the United States which was going to be a protectionist matter to all of Canada. And yet it won't come into effect, the new tariffs, until January 1 of 1989, long after the new anti-protectionist laws in the United States become effective and law and, therefore, will not achieve that objective.

And the new dispute-settlement mechanism, Mr. Speaker, was supposed to be a way for Canadian producers to be treated just as American producers are within their own country. And what do we get? Nothing. A toothless tiger of a tribunal which can only rule on whether or not American laws were applied fairly, not whether those laws were unfair in the first place. And that's the key, Mr. Speaker.

That is why people like Mr. Phillips, of Ipsco steel, a basic industry, and other free trade supporters are saying when they withdraw their support for this particular deal — they say, and our side agrees, that Canada and Saskatchewan has given up virtually everything and gotten nothing in return for Canadians and for Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, what good is a free trade treaty which doesn't guarantee Canadian producers access to the American market. This treat does not guarantee access to the American market.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Finally, with respect to energy, agriculture energy, another essential element, Mr. Speaker, of our resources in this province. This deal is an incredible sell-out of Canadian interests and an incredible surrender of sovereignty by Canada and provincial rights. If this treaty is approved, Canada will no longer be able to charge Americans more for our oil, gas, coal or hydro power than we charge ourselves.

What good is ownership of a resource, something that we always fought for, successive governments in Saskatchewan, if we're not free to charge full value for that resource when we export it to the rest of the world and get the profits from that resource for our hospitals and our schools and our highways, and now this Premier has denied us this right.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, we lose any competitive edge our industries and our farmers and our small businesses might have had on their American counterparts with such a deal on energy. And under the terms of this treaty, Mr. Speaker, Canada would even be forced to maintain exports of oil and gas to the Americans in times of energy shortages, something which is also an attack on not only sovereignty but the economic good sense of our farmers and our motorists who depend upon secure energy supplies to keep our economy moving in this country and in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, this side stands opposed to this trade treaty as it currently stands, because it represents a sell-out of Canada. It is taking us back to a dark age. This Premier, by endorsing it sight unseen, Mr. Speaker, has sold out the future of our young men and women, those who want jobs and opportunities at home — sold them out to the United States and other parts of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — We say, Mr. Speaker, we say, let the people speak on this issue. The Premier and the government opposite does not accept. We say let the people speak on this issue. Let the Prime Minister call a federal election on this free trade treaty now, and let the people from one end of this country to the other end speak on his negotiating skills, on the process, and what it means for Ontario or Saskatchewan.

(1445)

And if the Premier is so confident, let the people speak. Let the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan call a by-election in Eastview, and let them speak at that by-election and tell us what they think about it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And, Mr. Speaker, I don't mean several months down the road, I mean now when the debate is current. Let the Saskatchewan people speak on how badly, in our judgement, our government has let down the trust, how badly the Premier and our government has failed to stand up to protect Saskatchewan's interests. We know that Quebec's interests may be protected. We want somebody to have protected Saskatchewan and Canadian interests, and from what we know, Mr. Speaker, on the limited information, this blank cheque that the Premier is prepared to sign and apparently has signed to the deal, this arrangement is bad for the future growth of this province and this country. Shame on the government opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Before we move to the next item on orders of the day, under routine proceedings, yesterday I brought attention to a long ministerial statement. Today I would like to bring attention to a long response to a

ministerial statement. I would like in the future, or like members in the future — ministers and opposition critics — to please keep in mind that ministerial statements and replies should be brief and factual.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 51 — An Act to Provide for the Imposition of Taxes on and the Collection of Taxes from Certain Purchasers of Certain Fuels and to Provide for Rebates of Taxes to Certain Purchasers

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to move first reading of a Bill to Provide for the Imposition of Taxes on and the Collection of Taxes from Certain Purchasers of Certain Fuels and to Provide for Rebates of Taxes to Certain Purchasers.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

RESOLUTION

Free Trade Agreement

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before the orders of the day I would like to move the following resolution so that the members of the House will know why I seek leave. It obviously deals with what has been the subject matter of question period today and our debate on statements with respect to free trade. And given the urgency of this, I think it should be ventilated now, Mr. Speaker, at least begun to be ventilated, the debate, and it's urgent because ratification hangs in the balance. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Regina Elphinstone, by leave, Mr. Speaker:

That this Assembly condemns the Government of Saskatchewan for having failed to protect the interests of Saskatchewan and Canada in the proposed free trade agreement with the United States; for having failed to protect Canada's future as a strong and independent nation; and in particular, for having failed to protect Saskatchewan's agricultural interests; for having failed to ensure Canada's ability to pursue an independent energy policy for our future; and for having failed to achieve an effective and binding dispute-settlement mechanism, and thereby jeopardizing Saskatchewan family farms and Saskatchewan jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of the Assembly to introduce and to debate this resolution today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — I have mentioned to the hon. members different times that when the Chair has risen I would ask for their co-operation in being silent. I do that again. Hopefully I won't have to in the future.

Leave not granted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Health Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 32

Item 1 (continued)

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Chairperson, I have a number of questions to the minister regarding a document that we obtained this spring about the possibility of limiting the number of visits that one could have in terms of seeing a chiropractor, and the possibility of doing away altogether any kind of insured services for certain physiotherapists — private physiotherapists. And I would ask the Minister of Health today to advise the legislature whether he has any plans to limit the number of visits to a chiropractor, or whether he has any plans to de-insure visits to private physiotherapists.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, as it relates to physiotherapists, first of all, as the member knows, I've been . . . The question was as it relates to private contracts that are now available in the province and the potential for those to remain.

We have nine private contracts in the province that are not very widely distributed around the province. We are in negotiations, or discussions I guess would be a better term, with the physiotherapists in the province now. And we would look at . . . I don't see private contracts being eliminated, which is what . . . You know, there was some consternation about that at one point. I don't see that happening.

I would say that there may be a move, although it's subject to significant more discussion. There may be a move to moving some of these contracts or moving to having some private contracts in some other regional centres, centres that have regional hospitals where there could be some service provided in other than the two largest cities.

So we would look to a better distribution, I guess you could say, of that. But that's . . . And there are a lot of elements to that that we could talk about, probably will. But certainly there are many elements to it that we talked with the physiotherapy profession on.

As it relates to chiropractors, as the member will know, and as a good number of people in the province will know, there is no question that there is a continuing discussion there as well with the chiropractors about some changes. And I can't say to the House, and the reason I can't say is because I don't know what form they would take.

We had said at one stage that there was a potential for limiting the number of visits because that's a direction that has been taken in virtually every other province in the country in terms of limiting the numbers. And we are in fact, I believe, the only province in the country that does

not have a limit on the number of visits. The problem with that, frankly, is that the people who have the most chronic problem, of course, are those that will have the most visits in a year, and so that's the case, and we recognize that very clearly.

We're in ongoing discussions with the chiropractic profession as well, as how we might deal with the payment schedule to chiropractors and the way in which we can deal with that. But I don't have anything more I can say. I certainly won't be able to make an announcement about it or to give you any kind of an assurance beyond that, but I would say that those discussions go on with the two professions that you refer to.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I am pleased to see that you're backing down on limitations to visits to chiropractors. I can understand why you are backing down. I'm sure that you have literally received hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of letters from patients of chiropractors telling you that they have no limits placed on the number of visits they can make to a chiropractor each year. You've also received in this legislature thousands and thousands of names of people who've advised you that they do not want to see any limits placed on the number of visits to a chiropractor.

It's interesting, Mr. Minister, that you acknowledge that to limit the number of visits has the most impact on those people who have chronic back and muscle problems, that they're the people that are going to be paying more. Now, Mr. Minister, if you admit that, if you admit that this isn't the way to go in terms of chiropractors, limiting the number of visits, will you now admit, Mr. Minister, that the way you've changed your prescription drug plan has the most effect on chronic users of prescription drugs, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — As it relates to any correspondence we may have had from patients of chiropractors, I'll just say that the correspondence would basically say, don't make any changes at all. Make sure that it's all . . . that you can visit as many times as you like, and whatever. And that's basically what the correspondence would say. But I will say to that, that there will probably need to be some changes.

But what I have said to you earlier as it relates to the chiropractors now, that the changes may have to be in some other ways. And I don't know what those are, and those discussions go on and on. In fact, you know, there's not even a . . . I would say there's not even a consensus within the chiropractic profession, certainly, on how would be the best way to deal with this. And of course we recognize that some of the practitioners deal with more chronic cases, some don't and so on, so they have their internal sort of discussions about that, and we're involved with the profession in that area.

As it relates to your suggestion about the drug plan, I have said on so many occasions in the past, and I will continue to say here again today, provisions for the people most in need are covered in the drug plan. The drug plan changes — I mean what more can we say than what we've already said on that. You and I will agree to disagree certainly, at

best, and the plan that's in place and has been in place since July is becoming better and better understood by the people of the province, and the adjustments to the new plan are going very well.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm going to pursue the drug plan at some length later on in these estimates, but I just want to advise you of this, that we are getting more and more phone calls from people as people understand the program — understand your changes to the prescription drug plan. And if you will admit that any kind of limitations on visits to chiropractors will negatively impact upon chronic users of chiropractic services, then surely, Mr. Minister, logic follows that your drug plan — your new and improved drug plan will have negative effects on chronic users of prescription drugs because they'll have to pay a lot, lot more than they did in the past.

Now you've talked about these continuing discussions with chiropractors. I'm wondering if you can tell me whether these continuing discussions with chiropractors have involved the possibility of lowering the amount of money that's available to chiropractors through the Medical Care Insurance Commission?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I would say to the . . . I won't confirm or deny that. All I want to say to the . . . because all of the things that are in that discussion with chiropractors frankly need to be just where they are within their own profession and the way in which their profession will approach the government, and in this case the Department of Health, obviously.

And so I would just leave it at that and say that we have those discussions going on, and to being as forthright as I can be with you, I will say that, as I have said, that I don't rule out the possibility that there may be some changes in the way in which chiropractic services deliver. But that's really all I can say and that's an ongoing discussion without going into the details of how that . . . you know, what is being discussed at this point.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, will these changes have any effect on a patient's access to chiropractic services in this province. Have you anticipated these potential changes, these changes that you're discussing? Will they have an impact? Will they negatively effect access to chiropractic service?

(1500)

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Access to Saskatchewan citizens to services is a fundamental principle that becomes a part of only these kinds of discussions, so that we have to ensure that there is access for those who need services in various health care branches.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, you didn't answer the question. I'm asking you whether or not your discussions with the chiropractors, if those discussions follow through and if there's any kind of limitation on the fund available to the chiropractors, will that have a negative effect on patients who require chiropractic services for chronic back and muscle problems?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I think I did answer the question; you may not have understood the answer, but anyway, the answer was that the access was there. I'll just say it clearly, whatever system is in place, and what we would always strive to do would be to put a system in place which would have no detrimental effect on patients who need the services of chiropractic practitioners.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well I guess, Mr. Minister, we'll have to wait to see whether your word is as good as your word. We'll have to wait and see because there are a number of people, including chiropractors, who are concerned about the possible or potential changes that you've been discussing with them. There are patients who are concerned that their access to chiropractic care is going to be limited, or the number of visits are going to be capped, and after that they're going to have to start spending money in order to get to see a chiropractor. They're concerned that their access will be limited because they can't afford those up-front charges. But you assure us that there will be no limitations on the number of visits of people who have back problems and muscle problems.

I want to talk about the physiotherapists. You tell me that there are nine physiotherapy contracts, private physiotherapy contracts, in this province and that they're not widely distributed. Can you advise me in what centres those physiotherapy contracts are in?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — They're in the following centres: Regina has four; Moose Jaw, one; Saskatoon, two; Watrous, one; and Rosetown, one.

Ms. Atkinson: — So when you say you're thinking of distributing these physiotherapy contracts around, are we talking about providing more contracts, or are we talking about cutting back on contracts, for instance, in Regina and Saskatoon and distributing those contracts in other parts of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Let's just go through the circumstances surrounding the whole physiotherapy thing — well maybe not the whole thing as it's obviously complex, and I know you know it, but I just want to explain it to the House.

The contracts that are in these centres, these five centres, are . . . Obviously that does not constitute a well-distributed system around our province. We have, you know, places like Yorkton and Swift Current and Prince Albert with regional hospitals — excellent regional hospitals — North Battleford, examples where, in a move, any move that would be made, or any kind of encouragement that would be out to the regional hospital centres and the regional hospitals themselves for enhancement of the kinds of services that come from regional hospitals.

One of the things that we hear often, and I'm sure you hear as well, is that we need increasing physiotherapy services in those areas so that much of that service can be done there rather than going to the big cities or the other places where these are. Obviously the largest of these contracts are, I believe, in Saskatoon and Regina in terms of the number of visitors. And in many of those, the

visitors are coming from wherever else across the province.

So what we will contemplate doing . . . and like I said before, we're in the discussion stages with the physiotherapists, and it's oh, I don't know, I won't say they're preliminary because we've been at it for some time and there's some disagreement. And obviously there are many physiotherapists who would like to be private practitioners and haven't been allowed to with the closed shop system that's been there for a good number of years. Like this system we're talking about is one that's been there a long time.

So we have two things which we will want to address. One is distribution of these contracts, and that won't preclude, you know, additional contracts being given out, but the giving out of additional contracts won't necessarily mean that there will be that much more money spent on physiotherapy private services. It may be a distribution of those services. Now obviously that will have implications for some of the very largest of these contractors. But that wouldn't preclude some of these same people who have some excellent staff and so on from locating in other places where their services are needed.

Ms. Atkinson: — So I guess what we have here, Mr. Minister, is a potential warning from you that Regina, which has four private contracts, may or can or should expect perhaps that they may only have two or three down the road, and that that contract will be given to some other centre. A private physiotherapist in Regina will have his contract or her contract cancelled, and a contract will be given out in some other location. Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — To some extent it is, but I want to just clarify one point. It doesn't necessarily mean that there are . . . the example that you use is Regina, and I'll use that as well. We have four contracts now. It doesn't necessarily mean that that could become two contracts or three contracts. It may mean, and that's not for sure either because we have to look at distribution of where the patients that are being served and where they're from and so on — and if there's a percentage, a significant percentage that come from, say, Yorkton area and the whole, you know, the north-east or something like, those are the kinds of things.

So what we're talking about is taking the services closer to the people, and it may well mean that the contract, an individual contract in Regina for example, may have a smaller volume in its Regina location, and if that same person could continue with that same volume if he had a satellite office in Yorkton or in Swift Current or whatever . . . I mean those are all possibilities that could be there, and that's really what I'm saying.

But I can't go much further than that because we obviously are into those discussions and will continue with them until we can have some reasonable consensus between ourselves and the profession, always remembering the one guide-line which we will want to adhere to, and that is distribution of the services closer to the people rather than concentrated in the areas that they

now are.

And the way in which they've grown up is just more of a . . . it just sort of happened in a haphazard way, and they've just been allowed to continue. We believe that services should be provided in the regional areas, as I've outlined earlier.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, coming from a rural background myself, I can understand the need and the request on behalf of rural people, or people living in rural Saskatchewan, to have health services available to them in centres that are fairly close.

But I want to caution you, Mr. Minister, we have a shortage of physiotherapists in this province, as you well know. We had a situation last winter where the School of Physical Therapy was requesting additional spaces in order to train physiotherapists to meet the needs of Saskatchewan people. Our population is ageing; our population has more requirements for physiotherapists and occupational therapy professionals. It took your government some time to get around to getting those 10 additional spaces into the School of Physical Therapy.

There is a report that was put out by Flora MacDonald a year and a half ago that indicates that by the year 1995 we will require 5,500 physiotherapists in this country to meet the growing need. And it seems to me, in an age when we have students being turned away from the University of Saskatchewan because of enrolments, and it seems to me when we have the minister of advanced education talking about meeting the year 2000, Mr. Minister, that your department and the advanced education department, or the Education department, should be talking about more than 10 spaces at the School of Physical Therapy. We should be talking about 20 or 30 or 40 spaces, Mr. Minister, because it doesn't matter where I go in this province, there are citizens after citizens talking about problems in attracting physiotherapist. They can't get them.

They also have a problem, Mr. Minister, in terms of your funding cut-backs. Now, Mr. Minister, you have received, I know, a number of letters from parents of children who have disabilities, and they are concerned about the Children's Rehabilitation Centre in Saskatoon and the cut-backs in services to their children. I'm wondering if you could advise me whether or not children in this province who go to the Children's Rehabilitation Centre in Saskatoon are getting the same level of service that they got last year in terms of the number of visits that they can make to a physiotherapist or an occupational therapist at that centre.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — A couple of points to the hon. member. In your preamble to this specific question — I'll come to this specific question in a minute — you talked about the need for physiotherapy services, that need. I want to remind you or inform you, whichever is the case, about the circumstance that surrounded physiotherapy. And I remember it being a very significant political issue when I first ran for office in 1978. And in 1982 it was a political issue as well, and I heard about it in my constituency of Meadow Lake, about physiotherapy.

Physiotherapy was a significant issue, and I have some personal experience in the physiotherapy thing in the 1979-1980 area — spent about eight months in Saskatoon, with a home in Meadow Lake, taking therapy and so on because it was not available and was nowhere near the area that I'm from. It had been a chronic issue for a long time. You will remember who the government was and what the response was. We all remember what the response was — zero, nothing. Okay.

In 1982 when we came to power we initiated the needs study on that directed by Mr. Earl Dick of Saskatoon, and the most significant recommendation that came out of that was for the implementation of what is now called the community therapy program, and that is in place. That's a significant move. I will . . . you know, it's . . . I admit to you that because of the shortage of therapists that you've outlined, and that shortage of therapists is certainly not something that's unique to this province, it's . . . as is the case with audiologists, who we talked about last night, and several others of these professions, they're just not available.

(1515)

But anyway, the community therapy program is there, and it's working rather well, and it could use, you know, some more resources, certainly. And I understand that.

The second thing that you mentioned is with regard to the training of these because that's . . . obviously my first point leads to the second. We need more people, so let's train more. That was a question back as far as 1978, and in '82 and in the years in between. That was a major issue and the answer was always no, there will be no positions.

The fact is in 1987 we have included in these very difficult times — remember the context that I'm talking about in terms of the ability of this society to pay — we have implemented through the department of advanced education and manpower at the University of Saskatchewan 10 extra spaces, which has been extremely well received by both the university and the physiotherapist profession. Ten extra spaces. You said it took us some time to do that, but the fact is it was done in time for those spaces to be up and on stream during this academic year.

So I just want to make those points because it's important that we do. In 19 . . .

You asked about the services at the Children's Rehab Centre, I believe. The Children's Rehab Centre is paid for from the University Hospital budget who in turn receives funding from the government. And in 1986-87, there were five positions added to the Children's Rehab Centre to increase, increase the services available to young people who need that service.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, there may have been five positions added, but we have received a number of letters, and I'm sure you have received the same letters from parents who advise us that they used to have their children seen by a physiotherapist and an occupational therapist one or two times a week, and that they've now been informed that their physiotherapy will be reduced to

two times a year.

Mr. Minister, when you have a child who is severely disabled, may have cerebral palsy, may have blindness, and a number of other disabilities, it's important that they have this kind of therapy in order to avoid some chronic problems as they get older, in order to avoid orthopedic surgery which, I'm sure you're familiar, is very, very expensive and costs the taxpayers a great deal of money. And it seems to me that it's important that we have physiotherapy services and occupational therapy services available to disabled children so that they can keep learning, Mr. Minister.

We call it rehabilitation, but they've never had the opportunity to be habilitated. They are learning new things. Rehabilitation implies that they are re-learning. Well, Mr. Minister, that's not the case. They are learning new things, and they require physiotherapy services and occupational therapy services.

And you may have created five positions last year, and you may have those five positions filled this year for those kids, but the point is that parents are telling us — and I know they've told you; I know that John Dolan School, the parents' group there, has told you that there have been cut-backs in services to disabled children.

And my question to you is this: what are you doing about that? What are you doing to ensure that the disabled children in this province have access, and have weekly access if that's the need, to physiotherapy and occupational therapy services?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Okay, just the . . . You know, the member makes a point about the . . . You know, the member makes a point about the . . . And I understand as well what it means when you need the services, you know, and when a member of the family, a young person is in this need, you have a, you know, considerable concern, obviously, and the letters will be written, and so on.

But I want you to know and I, you know, I don't want to get into this comparative thing in a major way, but I do want you to recognize, and everyone in the committee should recognize today, that we are, and have been, responding to those very needs of which you speak. We've been responding to those needs, and I went through the things.

The community therapy program has, in fact, you know, I will admit, to a limited degree, but the community therapy program has, for some people who don't live near Saskatoon, has in fact responded to some of the need and for some of the young people and for some of the children to have services at home or very close to home. So that has happened, and that's taken some of the pressure off.

That's not to say there isn't continuing pressure for these kinds of services, because there is. We know that. But what I want to point out is that, you know, there's no sort of . . . every year is not a new starting point in terms of being able to allocate the funds or the necessary funds for these. You have to go with what has historically been neglected or whatever, whether it's been by you or by us in earlier years or whatever.

But the fact is, community therapy has done some good things. Ten extra spaces at the university is significant, there's no question. The five new positions are significant, and what I'm concerned about frankly is . . . And I understand what the parents would write to you, and whether they used the word cut-backs or whether that's your word, because I believe it may be, but they are not cut-backs. Okay? They are not cut-backs, just to the hon. member.

Let me just add another point that goes into this whole area in the broadest sense. Because of that need that you've outlined, which still exists but which was more intense a few years ago, the Wascana Rehab Centre which is being built for the citizens of the province, very close to the building where we now debate this issue here in Regina, is a response to just that, in terms of children's rehabilitation for all of southern Saskatchewan, and compensation and workers' rehabilitation and from accident victims and so on.

So the area that you've touched on here and the area which we now talk about is extremely important. It's an area that we have been very sensitive to. It's an area that I, frankly, wish I had more money to allocate to. I wish there was more money to allocate to this. We will strive to do that on a continuing basis in terms of recognizing those needs.

And you know, I'll give you that commitment, that it's be an ongoing thing, and I'll continue to do that because I believe in it as my predecessor believed in it. I only wish the member from Saskatoon South, who was the minister of Health just prior to that, believed in it as we do and we would have not had such a backlog.

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Minister, you know, you talk about money and the future, and you don't have the money today. And all I can tell you is that yes, it costs money today to habilitate children with disabilities, but it is going to cost this province a lot more money in the future when the state has to look after them, Mr. Minister, when the state has to pay for orthopedic surgeries, Mr. Minister, and when the state has to pay for all kinds of other operations because they haven't had access to the needed physiotherapy and occupational therapy services today, now.

And you talk about money, Mr. Minister. You talk about how you don't have any money. But, Mr. Minister, I think you do. You have money for George Hill and his \$200,000-a-year salary; and you have money for Paul Schoenhals, the defeated Conservative candidate and his \$100,000-a-year salary, plus perks; you have money for Peter Pocklington — 10 million bucks for him; you've got money for your political appointees and your political aids, some \$20 million; you've got money for political advertising; you've got money for the kinds of things that are the priorities of your government.

And when you decide not to fund physiotherapy and occupational therapy services for disabled children in this province, you're making a choice. So don't tell me, Mr. Minister, you don't have money.

Why don't you put \$20 million into physiotherapy, Mr. Minister, instead of your political advertisements that do nothing else than bolster up your sagging image, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I notice the hon. member . . . some of her colleagues respond to that sort of political rhetoric that comes. I'm going to resist; you, know I've been here for a few years now and I, you know, I could, I suppose, determine that well, that merits the same kind of response. But I'm going to resist opening this book and reading to you all of the member from Quill Lakes, all of his relatives that work for the government, and all of the stuff that went on, and all of that sort of thing, so we can compare patronage notes and all of that kind of political stuff that has gone on here so often and will again. Not that I say it shouldn't. I don't mind that, in fact I very much, on some occasions and in some circumstances, I rather enjoy that type of debate, and the member will know that.

So I'm going to resist that and put this book down for now and ask the member if you will just come back to talking about . . . if the member will come back and talk about the . . . because it's a serious subject we're talking about — physiotherapy, occupational therapy, the needs that have been there for a good long time and the needs which continue. There's no question.

Your points about the costs in the future, when this sort of preventative medicine is not provided, are valid points. If you had just stopped there we could have continued with that sort of . . . so I'll say let's carry on in that vein because it's far more reasonable for the health of our citizens. So we'll go on to that, but I would just say once again we have Wascana Rehab Centre, the community therapy program, implemented by this government, not by your troops over there when they were here, 10 extra spaces at the physiotherapy college implemented by this government, not by your troops when you had power.

All of those things are extremely important. Five new positions in the Children's Rehab Centre, even though you will stand here and say that there are cut-backs at the Children's Rehab Centre. There are not cut-backs at the rehab centre. Here she says from her seat, there are cut-backs. I've said there were five positions put in last year, and there are not cut-backs at the rehab centre. Now you will stand and say, oh yes there are cuts at the rehab centre; well I'm telling you that there are not. Even in some very difficult times we recognize that this is an area that deserves attention. This area has received attention from this government, and this area will continue to receive attention from our government.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, when parents write you and when parents write me and say that their kids used to get two visits to the physiotherapist each week, or occupational therapist each week, at the Children's Rehabilitation Centre, and they no longer get those visits — they might get the visits twice a year, Mr. Minister — and when they say to me in letters, Mr. Minister, that the service has been cut back because their kids don't get the

same kind of service they used to get, Mr. Minister, I don't care how you slice it; you can say there hasn't been a cut-back, Mr. Minister, but these parents' letters bear out the fact that there has, because their kids aren't getting the same kind of service that they used to get, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — As I said before, when a family has a child in that circumstance, I understand how they can be concerned if there's a change, you know, if there is a change of any kind.

What I say to you is that there has not been a reduction in the number of people providing that service; in fact there was an increase. I know of a couple of cases where people have talked to me about this, and I'll just give you . . . There are some folks who once visited the rehab centre and who are now being asked to take physiotherapy service from the physiotherapists who are available in the community physiotherapy program, who believe that that is not as good a service, even though they're just as professional and so on, but it isn't the Children's Rehab Centre. You will know that.

Well I don't know if . . . you know, I see the member shaking her head. But the fact is that I've had a couple, and upon investigation this is the kind of thing I found out. I don't say that that's the case with everyone who has expressed a concern either to you or to me, but that is the case in a couple of cases that I know of, that I have looked into.

You know, while everyone would like to have, because the Children's Rehab Centre has an excellent reputation — everybody knows that — and it's tied to the University Hospital which gives it that aura of perfection, or whatever, that surrounds the University Hospital in the minds of many people in all of northern Saskatchewan; so some would say, well I don't really want to visit the physiotherapist in North Battleford. I'm sorry, but I want to be into Saskatoon at the Children's Rehab Centre. And I'm saying, if the professional service is there and I can be told by people who know and who I must rely on as professionals that it is an equal service, then I have to encourage people to take the service at the location closest to them.

Now I don't want to dwell on that point too long, but there's no question that your work "cut-back" is an inappropriate word when you look at the . . . it may be for you because it serves your political ends, but it is not an appropriate word when you deal with this.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, just a couple of questions in regards to the Children's Rehab Centre. It was some time ago that I drew to your attention of a particular family in rural Saskatchewan who had been very accustomed to getting services at the Children's Rehab Centre on a very frequent basis. When my colleague is talking about . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I talked to you about that one. It's from Lake Lenore. I think you probably know the family. I don't want this specific family, Mr. Minister.

(1530)

When my colleague says that there has been a cut-back, what we're talking about, Mr. Minister, is somebody has

been accustomed to seeing a physiotherapist once a month and then they find that either through more people needing the service of the Children's Rehab Centre and therefore they can no longer get that service once a month and are told that they're getting it once every three months or once every four months, that is a cut-back. It's a cut-back to those people; a service that was there before on that frequent basis is no longer there. And whether or not you have cut back staff is immaterial. What is important, Mr. Minister, is whether or not those people are today getting the same kind of service that they were accustomed to some short time ago.

Will you admit, at least to that extent, there has been a cut-back in the services of those people who require the physiotherapy services? Will you at least admit that? I'm not talking about staff cut-backs. I'm talking about the cut-backs of services that people were used to and can no longer get now.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Oh, I hear then. I recognize the point the member makes. I will say this though — and I know the member from Saskatoon South knows this well, having occupied this chair at one time — there is a matter here of assessment, and you will know that, of the assessment done by the professional staff. And you will also know that there's a matter of while the professionals may say, Johnny needs to see the therapist, you know, actually visit the therapist this often, this many times per month or whatever, and while the people in the earlier stages of the rehabilitation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Regina Centre, I welcome you back to the . . .

But in any case, to get back to your question, the assessment is done and if the assessment professional says that the requirement is for less visits, often — and you will know this — often the parents will not want to accept that, and they will say, you know, I think that Johnny was progressing better when he had the 10 visits rather than the five visits, of whatever.

I mean, that is a factor, and I know you'll be aware of that side of the factor. So I don't say it is in the specific case that you outline, and I certainly don't want this to be interpreted as my response to that case that you raised from Lake Lenore. I don't want that to be the case, but I want to make that point because it's important for members of the committee to know that that is a significant point in all of this.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, I know the point that you are trying to make, and it's unfortunate that in today's society we can't mention individual's names, employees of government, for fear that they may lose their jobs. And, Mr. Minister . . . now don't shake your head. I phoned people in your department, and I will not mention those people because . . . for fear that there will be repercussions. And I've also phoned people in Saskatoon and, Mr. Minister, on this particular case alone they told me that the staff simply wasn't there. The required staff wasn't there to meet the needs of those individuals who require that need.

And it was not because of the assessment done on these particular individuals that they no longer required it. But

the yardstick, Mr. Minister, was we don't have the physiotherapists available in order to deal with all the needs that come to our attention. I'm not going to mention those names, and it's immaterial to me. I'm not going to put someone's job in jeopardy. And what I'm saying to you is, Mr. Minister, I talked to those people individually. They asked me not to give their names for fear of repercussions, and I said that I would not, but that I would bring it to your attention in estimates, that there is a need, an additional need for physiotherapy. And I think my colleague makes the point very appropriately when she says that you're going to pay for this; we're going to pay for this later on in life.

I remember, Mr. Minister, and you well remember when you were on this side and I was on that side, and I was the minister of Health and I talked about preventative services. I want you to go back in Hansard and see what the former minister of Health said, the member from Wolseley, what he said about preventative services at all; criticized me very severely on the preventative services, saying that what we need right now is people who take care of active health needs.

I'm saying to you, Mr. Minister, every dollar that you put in preventative services will pay you manyfold later on in life. It may not at the present time, but certainly later on.

Mr. Minister, we can discuss this back and forth, and I think I've made my point and you can either agree or disagree, I really don't care. That's your prerogative.

An Hon. Member: — But you care.

Mr. Rolfes: — No, that's your prerogative. And either you're committed or you're not committed to the idea.

Mr. Minister, I have talked to a number of people about the Department of Health. As you know, in Saskatchewan we have taken a real pride in the Department of Health. It is, and was, one of the shining star departments in this government — I mean in this province — for many, many years. It always could be counted upon as being one of the best in delivering services and meeting the needs, the health needs of the people of this province.

Mr. Minister, I find it a little difficult to talk on this topic because I know some of the people in your department very well. And I want to say to those people, now I want to say to those people, this is not a reflection on any individual in the department. But, Mr. Minister, one of the problems that you have in the Department of Health today, twofold: one, is that you got rid of a lot of good, experienced, very capable people. They either left on their own volition because they couldn't stomach what was going on, or they were forced out. Now, Mr. Minister, these very same people hold high position jobs in other governments or in other provinces. They obviously weren't good enough for this government, but now they have high-paying jobs and jobs of high responsibility in other governments and in other provinces.

I refer, Mr. Minister, to such people as the former deputy minister, Ken Fyke; I refer to people like Dave Kelly; I refer to people like Peter Glynn; I refer to people like

Duane Adams; I refer to people like Rick Roger; I refer to people, and I may have the first name wrong, but Don Philippon, I think it's Don. All of these people are gone. I don't know the reason why they are gone, but they were very capable people.

And now, Mr. Minister, they are holding, many of these people, the vast majority of these people are holding very responsible jobs in other provinces . . .

An Hon. Member: — Where? In Manitoba?

Mr. Rolfes: — I don't think, Mr. Minister . . . not in Manitoba as the Minister of the Environment . . . I want to tell you where they are now and thank him very much.

Ken Fyke is in Victoria running the hospitals in Victoria, the three or four hospitals — a top-notch job, a very capable individual. Dave Kelly who's now working for the Government of Alberta — a very capable individual. Peter Glynn, picked up by Ottawa — very capable individual. Now I could go on and on with these people. Now I don't know where Rick . . . I think Rick Roger also is in B.C. I don't know where Don Philippon is, but the point that I want to make, Mr. Minister, in your blind partisan political moves that you made, you got rid of some of these people, either made the working conditions so impossible that they couldn't stay — because I can well remember when I was minister of Health, there was no indication from any of these people that they weren't satisfied working for the Department of Health.

They were very proud about the department. They were very proud of the programs that they were delivering and the services that they were rendering to the people of this province. Why is it that suddenly, in the '80s when the government changed, that these people either were told to leave or found it unfit to work for your department? I think that's one of your problems — that's one of your problems.

And I would like the minister to just comment on why these very capable individuals . . . and hopefully, Mr. Minister, as I look across, I still see some very capable people there who were there before '82, and that there will be no need for these people to look elsewhere, to search for work elsewhere. Because I'll tell you, the people in the Department of Health in the '60s and '70s were recognized as the most capable individuals, future-looking individuals, and it's no wonder that other governments, when they found out that they were dissatisfied here, picked them up very quickly.

An Hon. Member: — Why did they turn on you?

Mr. Rolfes: — Why did they . . . the member from Lloydminster said, why did they turn on me. I'll tell the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster that they didn't turn on me, because we didn't politicize the civil service. They did take it upon themselves to either vote against us or work against us, and I hope they don't, the same thing that will apply with the civil service that you now have.

I say to the minister that one of the problems I think that he has today, and when I speak to hospital administrators and I speak to people who receive the services of your

department, they simply say that the quality of service — the quality of service — is simply not there. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it's twofold. Not that you don't have any capable people there now, but because you're understaffed, you're overworking some of your people. They simply can't do all the work you're asking them to do and which they must do in the Department of Health.

And secondly, because of their experience. Some of those people are inexperienced that you brought in and it'll take time. It'll take time before they get to know their job. And I think that's one of the problems that you've had. And I wish the minister would make a brief comment on that.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I will. I promise the member I'll make a brief comment on two or three of your points. I want to go back to the initial stages of the former minister's comments and the member for Saskatoon South. He talked about his record as it relates to his comments that he had made in this House at some past time about his commitment to preventative medicine and preventative services and so on, which I would take in the context of our discussion earlier. It dealt with physiotherapy services, for example.

The member was not in the House a few minutes ago when I was discussing with his colleague about some of the services which have been added in the physiotherapy and some of the initiatives that have been taken in the physiotherapy area since this government has come to office, under the able leadership of my predecessor, the member from Indian Head-Wolseley, and continuing under the Department of Health now.

Let me just go through a couple of those. Community therapy program was an extremely significant initiative. I want the member to know that. It was extremely significant. And it was as a result of listening for a good, long time, all of us on this side of the House who were running. And I go back over this, back as far as my first time running in 1978, I heard this in the most remote parts of my constituency in Meadow Lake, about the lack of physiotherapy services. I heard from people who said, well I write to, you know, the Minister of Health, which I'm sure you'll hear and obviously I know that you can't respond to every request.

But when an issue was building like that, what was your response? It's find for you to hearken back to *Hansard* and you say, it is shown in *Hansard* that you said at one point that you have a commitment to preventative services, but when you had the opportunity to do something for physiotherapy services, now you, you who were the Minister of Health, what did you do in the area of community physiotherapy? Zero. Nothing. That's what you did, but you talked about it in the House, certainly you talked about it here.

(1545)

What did you do in the area of adding extra spaces at the school of physiotherapy at the University of Saskatchewan? Nothing. Not anything. And that was an issue as far back as 1978, as far as back as my memory goes, and probably before that, probably before that. But

certainly during your term of office as Minister of Health, did you do anything about adding extra space at the school of physiotherapy? No, you did not. You listened to that stuff and you came into this House and you said, oh, I'm committed to preventative services, and your answer on every occasion was no, there will be nothing. That's what you said. That's not what you said; that's what you did or did not do. So we have added these.

Let's talk about the Wascana Rehab Centre, for example, a need that has been around for a good long time. Wascana Rehab Centre, as the former minister of Health will know, is located very close to this building, very close over here. And people in need of rehabilitative services, either accident victims or injured on the job, all of those kinds of things, and young people, children, children of families who have had to bring them for a good long time into Regina to very bad facilities. I will say to you they have not been good facilities for a good number of years at the Wascana Rehab Centre over here, not good facilities for a good number of years.

You know what I hear when I go to the Wascana Rehab Centre now, while there's construction going on around them and obviously we all know what happens when you're trying to conduct the services that are provided with construction going on, you know what I'm hearing? You know what I'm hearing from those people now? Because what did they see when they made those kinds of requests for the kind of facilities, and first-class facilities, which are now being built for them? What did they hear from that same member who once was the minister of Health and who got those requests? He said no, we will not build a rehab centre in southern Saskatchewan; we will not join with DVA (Department of Veterans' Affairs); we will not join with the veterans to build a facility which will be the first-class facility in western Canada — and it will. He didn't build it. No.

What did he build? What did those people see? What did they see from the windows of that substandard facility that that member left there? What did they see? What construction did they see going on then? They build the T.C. Douglas Building, that big white monolith of a building which is there for what reason? For the greater glory of Tommy Douglas. But did it do one thing for one person in need of rehabilitative services? No, not one thing for anyone who needed services.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — But the people in wheelchairs sat in the doorways of that play, and what did they see? What did they see? They saw the smiling former minister of Health over there saying, no, we will not build these services, but we'll build a big fancy building for Tommy.

Well I'll tell you, the people in wheelchairs now look and they say, we will have the services for ourselves; we will have the services for those who follow us and in the need of the kinds of services that we're in the need of.

And I'll just say to the former minister, don't stand here and tell us about your record as the minister of Health in days when potash prices were high, when agricultural prices were high, when oil prices were high. You had

those kinds of opportunities with the Health budget in those days, and what did you do with it? You blew it. You blew the opportunity, and along with blowing that opportunity you blew yourself and your colleagues over to the opposition benches, and in your case you weren't even there — 1982.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Now let's talk a little bit about the former member's comments as it relates to the Department of Health. And he mentions some of the individuals, which I would be reluctant to do, but he's mentioned them. He mentioned individuals like the former deputy who is now in Victoria, Ken Fyke. You go and ask Ken Fyke if he left this province because he was upset with any direction of anything. You go and ask him that question. He will tell you that that's not the case. I'm sure you have.

The things that Ken . . . All I'll say is this, and I could expand and I won't. The things that Ken Fyke has said about the relationships that he had as a senior manager in the Government of Saskatchewan with that member who once was a minister of Health, do not and should not ever be repeated in a public forum that we're in here.

And he mentioned Don Philippon. Don Philippon left here on the best of accord. Don Philippon was an excellent public servant who will serve his new government well. He went there because it's a career path.

The member may not understand it. His career path is, come to the legislature of Saskatchewan, stay here for ever and ever, amen, and talk on a daily basis almost of what will my pension be. Well the pension is not part of what goes on around here. This gentleman that you talked about took a career path decision to go to another government so he doesn't stay working for the same place for ever and ever, amen. I commend him for that although I wish he hadn't gone because he was a good public servant.

So don't tell us about that and bring peoples' names up here and say they left because of your innuendo about some kind of political interference. It did not exist and it does not exist.

Now let's talk about what we have in the Department of Health for public servants now. We have excellent public servants in the Department of Health and we have excellent leadership in this Department of Health — excellent leadership in this Department of Health. And you can say what you like if you want to, but I will tell you that there's excellent leadership. And as time goes on, and as more people come to this government, and as people leave this government and change their careers and move to other places, which is the way of the world in the late 1980s I should remind the member, the way of the world, people do change positions and locations, and so on, and they follow a career path, and I commend people who will do that.

But don't stand in this House and tell me that the Department of Health is in disarray because of some political interference, because it is not the case. And I

certainly, certainly will not nor should I ever be expected to take that from that member who was the minister of Health in some good times, and provided what for leadership? Zero. That's what he provided.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, somebody once said the member does protest too much, and when you have a weak case you shout and foam at the mouth and make irrational statements.

I challenge the . . . and in fact I give the minister permission here and outside the House, without any repercussions from me, to repeat any accusations made by the former deputy minister of Health of the poor relationship that he had with me. I give you permission outright, now, Mr. Minister, to say to the people of Saskatchewan that the former deputy minister of Health made those derogatory statements about me and the relationship that I had with him. I give you that permission right now and I'll give you an opportunity to comment.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — the only reason that I would not take the temptation to do that is for this reason, Mr. Chairman, and I want to be very clear. It's because of my respect for the former deputy minister of Health, not because of my respect for the former minister of Health.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Chairman, yes, I called his bluff, and we know exactly what the minister is spouting about because there are no such derogatory remarks made.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Well, when it comes to facts, Mr. Minister, I think, yes, you take your leadership role from the Premier where facts mean very little but rhetoric and emotions means everything. I want to say to the Minister of Health that if he told the people correctly, the Wascana institute or the Wascana hospital was included in the 1982 budget that was brought down by the NDP government when we were defeated. That was in the budget, and if you're honest with the people of Saskatchewan . . . and ask the people, ask the people of the Department of Health. They will tell you that sums of money were made available to the Government of Saskatchewan. I see the member from Wascana wants to jabber again from his seat. If he wishes to get into the debate, then stand up and say so . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, he's doing an excellent job of being irrational and emotional, and not addressing the problems.

Mr. Minister, I didn't say, I didn't say that the Department of Health was in shambles from my own experience. I am telling you what people out there who are receiving services, or are not receiving the services, are telling me. And I'm talking about physicians who have worked in this province for some time. I'm talking about hospital administrators. I'm talking about people who are in charge of physiotherapy and occupational therapy services in this province, and what they tell me about the Department of Health.

And I indicated to you that maybe you were overworking

the people in the Department of Health and you don't have the manpower or the womanpower to do the kind of job that should be done. Mr. Minister, can you tell me now, how many vacant positions are there in the top echelons of the Department of Health? Let's say director and above.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — If I understood your question, you said, director and above, just so I know where the cut-off line is? Okay, director and above. We have two executive director positions which are filled now at the present time in an acting capacity, one at the SHSP (Saskatchewan hospital services plan), and strategic planning branch has an acting executive director. But all positions are filled and we have two people who are in the acting capacity. Otherwise, all of the positions are filled.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Minister, the last question. I just want to ask, are you contemplating doing any major shuffling or reworking of the people in your department in the next little while? And I'm thinking about the director levels, up. Rumours have it that there are going to be some major shuffling in the Department of Health. Are those rumours correct, or are they simply unfounded?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Okay, we have . . . just as you . . . the two positions which I say are now filled in an acting capacity will be filled soon, you know, on a permanent basis, and just two days ago, so this may make the currency of this sort of rumour that you may have heard.

John Heath, who is now the director of MCIC, has been appointed associate deputy minister of acute and long-term care. That's to take effect on November 1, but he's an employee, obviously, and here today as the head of MCIC, but he has been appointed and it takes effect on November 1. So in terms of . . . I'm not sure what else you might like.

Mr. Rolfes: — In other words you're not contemplating any other changes in the immediate future of your upper staff. Thank you, Mr. Minister, that's all that I have.

(1600)

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I would like us to move into another area of your concern — the important area of home care in this province. Mr. Minister, you've just said that I tend to be a reasonable member, and I hope that you will act as a reasonable minister over the course of the next hour. And please spare us, please spare us any more of those rhetorical flights that we witnessed a few moments ago.

Mr. Minister, I have the annual report of the continuing care branch, and I'd like to just bring this discussion into focus on home care. I'd like to read from that report, describing the purpose and the objective of home care in Saskatchewan. The purpose and objective of the home care program:

To preserve and maximize an individual's ability to remain independent at home by offering services that provide needed care and support, and by fostering the widest possible use of available individual, family and community

resources.

The program is founded on the beliefs that:

— individual can usually retain greater independence and have more control over their lives in their own homes rather than in an institution, and that

— most individuals prefer to remain at home and to receive any required services at home.

Mr. Minister, just as we start this, may I ask three simple questions. Do you, as minister, fundamentally support the philosophy, the purposes, and the objectives behind home care as they're outlined here? Secondly, when did the home care program begin in this province? And thirdly, who was minister of Health at that time?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — The answer very simply is . . . and you can rest assured despite . . . Before I get into this, you can rest assured, as I think you've called them rhetorical flights or whatever, you can rest assured that you will be saved that if, you know, if you continue to conduct yourself as you have since you've come to the House. It's the member from Saskatoon South that brings that out in me. I'm sorry. I apologize to you.

The answer is yes, I support the philosophy behind home care. And you said, when did it start in the province, and I know that you know the answer. But sure, that's fine. It started in 1981 under the former government and it's been continued under ours.

An Hon. Member: — It wasn't '81.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — '81, was it not?

An Hon. Member: — No, it wasn't.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Excuse me, Mr. Chairman, 1979, I erred. It was 1979, not 1981.

An Hon. Member: — Who was the minister of Health?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I'm not sure who the minister of Health was, but it may have been the member from Saskatoon South. The department that he spoke so highly of must have got something by him if they put something good in.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, in the constituency that I represent, and in constituencies across the province, home care is a very significant program of your department. As you well know, home care provides nursing, nursing care, home-making care, meals, minor home maintenance. It allows seniors and the disabled to remain in their own homes.

It was at the outset, and remains to be, an innovative program. It's a very cost-effective program, as you well know. But it also provides something that I believe no prescription drug can provide; it provides something that no medical treatments can provide, and that's human companionship. And a key part of home care and a key part of the success of home care, it seems to me, is in the

friendly visit and the human companionship that it provides.

It is filling, in our province, an extremely valuable need. Mr. Minister, I submit that home care clients, home care boards, home care workers are being given a bad shake by your government, and particularly by the budget that we are dealing with now.

Mr. Minister, I want to go to these *Estimates* — because that's what we're here to do — I want to go to these *Estimates*, and I read that in 1986-87, you budgeted \$22.9 some million for home care. Will you tell the House today how much was actually spent in 1986-87 on home care?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — If you're . . . On page 49, if I just go with the member, and we'll just kind of walk through this now in terms of these numbers. The estimated 1986-87 was 22,928,400, as you will see in there. We did in fact spend 23.5 million. We spent very close to \$700,000 more than that because of the pressures on the system that you've outlined and so on. And so we spent more than that last year.

And just to give you a little bit of a perspective of where this has gone and how the . . . well certainly the need and the acceptance of home care and all of the factors that's come into this across the province. In the last two years we've increased home care funding by 4.1 million or 20.7 per cent in a two-year period — 20.7 per cent increase over what was there, so certainly significant increases.

And I will say, just as a general comment, there's no question that that pressure continues. There's no question that there is a need for home care services, those kinds of services. Because there is no question, as well, they take pressure from the institutions and the speed with which people will need to go into institutions if we can conduct this preventative type of care. So I recognize that, and we're making every attempt we can, as these numbers will show.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, you indicate to me now that last year, in fact above and beyond the \$22,928,400 estimated, you spent an extra \$700,000, bringing the total to 23.5.

Mr. Minister, then may I ask, why is there not some accounting of that in the supplementary estimates? Why does that extra \$700,000, which you say that you spent last year, why does it not appear in the supplementary estimates? And it does not.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — It's because the moneys often comes from one subvote to another through a process called a virement, and it comes from the special care homes budget to home care where the increased pressure was. We were trying to emphasize the home care side in that year.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I'm new at this. You're telling me now that what you did was to short-change special care homes by \$700,000, taking money from their budget, to add money to the home care budget; that it wasn't new money; it was just money from special care

homes transferred over to home care.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — That's a normal practice, a normal management practice, to see where the priorities are as the year goes on and where the pressures are. Because I want to remind the hon. member that one of the major arguments that is made by home care people, and legitimate arguments, and I've told them had a legitimate — one of the major arguments that they will make is that with an increase at any time in home care funding you should be able to, you know, to decrease the need for institutional care.

Now that's obviously a very general sort of statement, but that's always the argument that's advanced, and I'm sure one that's advanced by yourself and by me. If we were starting from a perfect world and building, we would certainly build in a major way on the home care side and try to diminish the need for institutionalization. That's where we would start if we were starting from scratch, which we never have the luxury to do. And I know you agree with me.

But the money that's there, various projects within, you know, which are under way in special care or whatever, depending on when they come on stream or how the cash flow will work, there will be a few dollars here and there that can be pulled from that area. And they are pulled that way, and that's what we did, and we found enough to be able to deal with the significant pressure in the home care area, which is . . . it's not insignificant amount when it turns out to be very near \$700,000 which was added to the home care funding last year.

And I might add, in this year's budget, that that \$700,000 is recognized and that kind of amount or that magnitude of amount remains in the system.

Mr. Calvert: — I want to spend a little time on this, Mr. Minister. First of all, you've taken the \$700,000 from special care home funding. You seem to think that that was okay. I suggest if you want to do something like that again this year, if you want to transfer some money into home care from somewhere else, a more appropriate place you might go to look for it would be in the cabinet ministers' travel allowances and air flights part of your budget, somewhere like that. Special care homes need all the money that's budgeted for them. I don't think they would suggest they need less than what is budgeted; in fact, I hear they need more. So this taking from . . . robbing from peter to pay Paul is inappropriate, to say the least, in my opinion.

Mr. Minister, you did then in fact — and I take your word for it — that you did in fact increase the funding to home care by \$700,000. But that's about \$2 million less than commitments that were made by the former minister throughout the course of last year. I have in my hand a news release dated July 23, 1986, and if I may read from the release, directly from the news release, the headline is: "Two million funding to boost home care districts."

Health Minister Graham Taylor today announced that more than \$2 million is being provided to 32 home care districts where there is a great demand for high need services.

Note these next words, Mr. Minister:

The additional funding is targeted at districts that are facing unique service needs.

The additional funding. So I take that to mean that's additional to what was originally estimated in the 1986-87 budget. An additional \$2 million. And then we come to the month of September, September 15, 1986, which if my recollection serves me right, that's about four days before the election call, we get yet another news release from the former minister. Headline: \$700,000 additional funding to the home care districts."

Health Minister Graham Taylor today announced that \$700,000 additional funding will be provided to home care districts to help meet the increasing client demands for high need services.

So we had two commitments, two commitments of additional funding beyond that in the budget. First of all a July commitment of \$2 million, and then a September, four days before the election, commitment of another 700,000. So that's a total commitment of \$2.7 million. Will you explain to me, Mr. Minister, what happened to the other \$2 million?

Mr. Chairman: — I'd like the member from Moose Jaw South not to use members names. The Speaker has ruled on that in the last few days, so I'd ask him to refrain from that.

(1615)

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — A couple of points. I want the member to understand it clearly, and it's important that we both do.

First of all, the money that I talked about, when I say it came from the special care home side, it did not come from the operational, you know, in terms of cutting back in any way on the operational.

Let's give you an example. If a home was scheduled and in the budget to come on stream, let's say, on the first of a given month, the 1st of July, and so the money would be in the budget for the operations of that home with this many beds for the month of July. But if in fact the home did not open until the 1st of August, there's one month of operational money which is not required by that home that had a budget. That's the kind of money that we're talking about in terms of these virements.

That's a very normal practice, and that's gone on for ever. And I'm sure it needs to, because in dealing with the very large numbers that you do, obviously you will know this book is called an *Estimates* book for a very good reason. It's a very educated guess, certainly, but . . . you know, not just a guess, but it's a very educated sort of estimate of what will be the expenditures in the various branches of government.

And just so I put it into perspective here, last year in the special care home area there was \$174 million. This year it's 190 million. I mean, it's not as though the special care

home area is suffering as a result of this other initiative in the home care area, because it is not. Okay?

Now I just want to . . . you mention in the release that I believe you were quoting from about an amount 2 million or 2.1 million, or whatever. Now in the budget for home care, whatever amount is there, this year's amount — 23,628,400 . . . Okay, we'll use this year's number for these estimates which we are now dealing.

There is a certain amount of that which is known, and all of the home care boards will know this, which are called targeted funds. How much would that be? At about the \$2 million range . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . In this year's . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, 2.1 million in this year's, out of that 23.6 million that we're talking about here, 2.1 million of that is called the targeted fund.

And that will be based on areas that will experience some shift in their need, according to various factors — maybe some nursing home beds open in that area or whatever; changing in the census of their elderly people, proportion of elderly people in the home care district; the experience of the district in serving clients at immediate risk of requiring a hospital or special care home admission; the availability of hospital and special care home resources in the area; the financial resources available to the district through formula grant funding; and the overall provincial needs, which will be where they are in relationship to other home care districts who may not have the same kind of need.

So there is some targeted funding, and 2.1 million of that 23 million is that. And that targeted was also in the case last year. Okay? So as long as you understand it, I think we're off to the races.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, we're off to the races all right.

Mr. Minister, last year in your estimates you estimated \$22,928 million for home care. You, through a virement, added — taking money from special care — you added \$700,000. So totally last year you spent \$23.5 million.

We had a minister of Health going around the province saying, but we need more money for that. We see the need so we're going to add that money. We're going to add, he said in July, we're going to add to that money. We're going to add, he said in July, we're going to add \$2 million. Reasonable people, in hearing that, would assume the money is coming right now. In September, four days before an election call, he says, well we see the need; we're going to add another \$700,000.

From your answer I'm still not sure where that money went. If what you're saying now is that somehow it's included through targeted funds in this year's budget, if when the minister in July last year and September was talking about the budget for this year, well, Mr. Minister, then in fact they shouldn't be called additional funds. And if the budget for this year as it's indicated in the estimates is \$23.6 million, and last year you actually spent \$23.5 million, then we've seen an increase of \$100,000. Now that's nowhere near 2.7 million additional funds.

And so, Mr. Minister, please explain this to members

present; explain it to the clients of home care across this province; explain it to the home care boards.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I'll just go through this and I'll give you the numbers and if you write them down because they're going to need some . . . as I have needed to write them here.

In 1986-87 what I have said is that of the amount spent, which I said was 23.5, right, 20.8 was the regular base, 20.8; 2.1 was targeted and that's just in the normal process, 2.1 is targeted; and the 0.7 or 700,000 was added to the targeted funds. Okay? And it was, in fact, targeted last year.

Now we come to this year, and in the development of this year's budget, and in consultation with the people out there in the home care districts and so on who feel the same pressures that you and I know exist out there, they said the best way to deal with the 700,000 which we put in last year and which we said would remain this year — because you will remember we said, you will maintain the same money this year as you did last year, okay? — they said the best way to deal with the 700,000 is not to add it to the 1.2 and make it, let's say, 2.8. They said add it to the base, but add it to the base in those districts who have the very oldest population — in other words, the highest percentage of people over 75. And that is what was done. Now that was done in consultation with the home care association and the districts out there, okay?

So this year . . . I'll just go through it again. Last year, 20.8 regular, 2.1 targeted, and 0.7 or 700,000 which was added as a result of significant pressures in some areas, certainly in some areas. Well we won't get into the specifics of where they were. We may, but not just now. And that was a total of 23.5.

And this year, 1987-88, in these estimates we're dealing with regular of 21.5, which goes up, and the reason that goes up is because of the money I just mentioned. And the targeted remains for budgetary purposes at 2.1 million. Well it just remains at 2.1 million and it is targeted, and for a total of 23.6 that you see in your Estimates book. Okay?

Mr. Calvert: — No, Mr. Minister, it's not okay, because I have in my hand a news release under the name of the former minister of Health, dated July 23, 1986, in which he promised the people of Saskatchewan an additional \$2 million — an additional \$2 million for home care funding — additional funding. Mr. Minister, I've asked it three or four times; where's that \$2 million? Where is that \$2 million?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well what the former minister did in July was announced the distribution of the \$2.1 million which was in the budget and which was distributed. Okay . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Now listen, because I want to make it clear, I want to make it very clear. The regular — what I've referred to for these purposes as the regular fund — and in the case of 1986-87, 20.8 million, that was the regular which was dealt with in each of the home care districts. This was the money that was distributed to them according to the base that's been established in each of their cases. Okay? 20.8. The

targeted 2.1 was for the certain areas that had the various needs according to the criteria that I've outline a few moments ago. Okay?

The minister, for reasons that fail me just now, but has a news conference, or probably issued a release, I don't know that he had a news conference; he probably didn't, but he issued a release to say, now the 2.1 — which all the home care district knew were in the budget — he said here's the 2.1 and it will not be distributed. That's the fact. It's not a bad idea. I may do that this year, I'm not sure. But in any case, that's the case — 2.1 million was there and that was what the announcement was, but it's additional in the sense that it's over and above the regular base line budgets which they had. But that's the . . . well the member will know what I'm speaking of now, I'm sure.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I can see we're not going to agree on this. Mr. Minister, you publish estimate figures for the spending of your department in given area. In 1986-87 you've published the figure saying that you were going to spend \$22.9 million. That's the figure you published . . . not you, the former minister. So after this is all published and public, and everyone is aware of that figure, along comes the Minister of Health and has a new release and a news conference, likely, that says I'm adding an additional, an additional \$2 million. He didn't say 2.1, he said an additional \$2 million.

You suggested a moment ago that the reason that he might do that escapes you. The reason that he might do that does not escape me. We know that we were all waiting for an election, and so what we're having here is press release politics, press release politics. We get announcements of \$2 million, and the \$2 million never appears — \$2 million additional dollars.

Any reasonable person listening to the former minister make that announcement would assume, if they could trust their government, that this money is new money, in addition to the published figure.

So, Mr. Minister, I do not suggest that's a good idea for you to follow, and I certainly hope we're not going to hear announcements to the middle of this year where you lift figures out of here and announce it as new money.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I'll take your suggestion. I won't do that this year. And the reason I won't is because I'm informed the allocation of those funds was done at the end of June, and it would be just a little late, and it just goes to show the reason that . . . that reason escaped me, I'm just not as political. I just wouldn't have noticed that that would be a political thing to do, and it went by me. You were political enough to pick it up, and I guess that's the difference between us.

But in any case, I think the explanation of the money is there, and you'll see where it is.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, if I've learned anything about politics, I've learned the worse about politics by watching your government.

Mr. Minister, we'll leave that and we'll go on to your fee

increases this year, fee increases for the clients of home care services in Saskatchewan. It's my understanding, Mr. Minister, that prior to your April announcement of the fee increase, that the poorest of the poor in our province receiving home care services — and by that, those who are fully subsidized under the system — their maximum fee for home care services was \$30. You changed that, Mr. Minister, so that the poorest of the poor in our province now who receive home care services are obliged to pay up to a maximum of \$50. That is, in one jump, a 66 per cent increase — a 66 per cent increase. And, Mr. Minister, I ask you why you made that decision and how do you justify it?

(1630)

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Okay, just an explanation. At the time that the \$30 per month maximum fee for fully subsidized clients was established, which was — I'm sure it was at the inception of home care in '79. That fee, that \$30, represented 8 per cent of maximum of OAS-GIS (old age security and guaranteed income supplement) and the SIP (Saskatchewan income plan) benefits for a single person. Okay? Just 8 per cent — it represented 8 per cent of those benefits. The revised charge of \$50 which is now in effect, represents 7 per cent of the maximum of those three benefits that I mentioned before.

In terms of having some type of bench-mark, some type of comparative figure, it makes sense, and in fact it's less than what it was when this thing started in 1979, charged 8 per cent of the maximum OAS-GIS and SIP, and now we charge 7 per cent of the maximum of those. We think it's not onerous, in fact, we don't believe at all that it's onerous and the home care people don't believe that it is either.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I'm going to ask you, because I didn't quite catch your last statement: did you say, in this House, that the home care people are not opposed — that the home care people are not opposed to this 66 per cent increase?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well I'm sure that you will find home care people who are opposed. But as a general sense, there are many people in the home care system who are not opposed to an increase in these fees. Remember that fees for nursing and some of those services are not charged for and they believe that this is a reasonable thing, given the economic circumstances this province is in.

Many of the thinking people within the home care districts and on the home care boards in this province, and there are many of them, believe that this is a reasonable rate, given the sort of bench-mark that I've laid out to you.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I have a copy here of a letter that went out to all the home care clients in Saskatoon. And I want to quote a sentence from that letter. I will quote two sentences. This went to the clients of home care:

Please note that this direction (regarding the fee increases) comes from continuing care (comes

from your government, Department of Health) and there is nothing we can do about it.

We would, however, like you to know that this board and the province home care association (the provincial home care association) are opposed to the 66 per cent increase.

So how can you stand in this House and say that the home care people are not opposed? The provincial association is opposed.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well I will say to you that, yes, that's true, there was a news release went out in — I believe you said Saskatoon. And I said to you that I know there will be . . . It wouldn't matter what any of us did there will be some people who will oppose what's being done. I mean, that's to be recognized.

But I'll say to you, as well, the home care convention in November of 1986, at their convention, passed a resolution that asked the government to look very carefully at increasing client fees. They thought client fees should go up, and that was a resolution passed at their convention in November of '86.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, who was it that suggest to you that the increase should be 66 per cent? Who was it that suggested that figure?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — I mean, you will always . . . And I know why you or those opposed would say it's a 66 per cent increase. I mean, we're talking here about an increase from an amount that was set in 1979, okay? In 1979, as I've said, it was at that time \$30, which was the fee from 1979 all the way through until this year. And at the time that it was set in 1979 that represented 8 per cent of the maximum OAS-GIS and SIP.

And what we said is . . . I guess the question is, how did you decide upon the level of increase? And that's a legitimate question. And the answer to that question is, we looked at it very carefully and said, we should use this as a bench-mark because it seems a reasonable thing to do, because that's a standard number that comes out and the people that are eligible for those benefits will receive them and they're indexed and they go on.

And so this says 8 per cent. It was 8 per cent in 1979. In 1987 these fees, even though they've increased, are only 7 per cent of the maximum available under those other three benefits. That's the bench-mark we use. We believe it's a reasonable bench-mark to use and that's how we came to the decision.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, I want to read to you from the press release that was released by the Saskatchewan Home Care Association. This is not by some small group of individuals of one community, this is the Saskatchewan Home Care Association. As part of the government's economic program — and that's what this is a part of, part of your economic program in response to the deficit that you created — the increase in client fees is viewed by Saskatchewan Home Care Association president, Shirley Williams, as:

Well beyond anything envisioned in discussions of possible fee increases.

Well beyond anything ever envisioned in discussions. Mrs. Williams further stated:

The effect of such an increase will not be to raise revenues appreciably since more people will be forced to apply for the subsidy. The Saskatchewan Home Care Association finds it difficult to support measures which disregard the frail, elderly, ill and disabled of this province, who since the introduction of home care have been afforded the support that is essential to enable them to live with dignity and security in their own homes (se concluded).

Mr. Minister . . .

An Hon. Member: — The date.

Mr. Calvert: — The date? Sometime prior May 1, '87. Sorry, this document's not dated . . . before the announcement.

Mr. Minister, no one could have envisaged a 66 per cent increase, and you may think this is small potatoes, but I'll tell you it's not small potatoes to a fair number of people that live in my constituency, and I'm sure of people who live in your constituency, and people that live across the province — this is not small potatoes.

The result is the service they are being able to support themselves are either declining or, as the home care association points out, this simply forces more people to receive the subsidy.

So, Mr. Minister, I question the wisdom. First of all I question the wisdom of this increase. How much money do you expect it to generate in increased revenues?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — You know, the member raises a point that I somehow believe that this is just a small amount and it isn't a problem for some people. I didn't say that. I just say that when you're given and trusted with the responsibility of trying to deal in the best way possible with all of the myriad of issues that are in a major department like this, you look at them all. And we looked at this one and we believe that this is a reasonable decision. Just so it's all in perspective for those who are not as aware as you and I are of what we're talking about here, and we talked about units of service and the maximum per month and so on.

What we're talking about here is that the maximum the service to home care clients was . . . there was a maximum of \$30 that they would have to pay. And it is now a maximum of \$50 that they would pay. And so no one, regardless of the level of service, would have to pay more than \$50, just so anyone who isn't sure in the committee would know that.

And also the level of payment for a single unit of service, one visit or whatever, was \$3 before and it is now \$5 for one single unit of service. An hour of work or whatever around the place, whatever, is now \$5 from 3.

That's the context within which this discussion is carried on. The question, the specific question the member asked is about how much revenue will this generate. The increase generates \$1.1 million, all of which — and this is the most important point of all of this — all of which remains with the home care boards for them to put back into the services that they provide at the local level. All of that 1.1 remains with the boards.

So we did not cut out funding to home care. We don't have less funding going to home care than we had last year. We have, in essence, the same amount, and they have access to this 1.1 million which they will get through client fees, and I think it's an eminently reasonable decision that was made, and it's going over rather well.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, what you are doing, what you are doing is shifting the responsibility — responsibilities of your department, budgetary moneys that you should be providing. You're shifting it then onto others, and in this case, onto the seniors and the disabled who receive home care. You just said you're going to take from those another \$1.1 million.

Mr. Minister, in another day and at another time this might not be such an unreasonable increase. But I ask you to remember that the seniors who receive home care in this province, and the disabled, also have to bear the sales tax increase that your government has put on them. Because many of them are living in their own homes, they're seeing their property taxes go up because of cut-backs from your government to municipal governments. They've seen their utility bills rise — power and telephone. And they asked me, just by the way, Mr. Minister, where's the free phones they were promised some years ago. If they happen to drive a car, they now pay up front the gas tax, and come the first of the year they're going to be paying 10 to 15 per cent more for their insurance. These folks are now paying a deductible for their drugs, and they're paying 20 per cent of the cost of their drugs, all of these increases put on them by your government. In addition to that, a 66 per cent increase in their home care.

So I ask you, Mr. Minister, how you believe that that's fair. How is that fair?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member can, you know, will, and did, in fact, in his outline talk about some of the difficulties and so on. And I would just say to the member, as I said in an earlier statement this afternoon, there was a time not long ago in the province when commodities, you know, which this society and this jurisdiction and the commodities whose prices will make the wheels turn in our province, had significantly higher prices. And in those days of those higher prices, you folks did not deliver — you did not deliver.

So you can say that, and you can say, why are you so irresponsible to raise this fee from \$3 for an hour of service to \$5; why are you so irresponsible to say that they will have to pay up to \$50 for a month's service. I don't say that I, you know . . . and I don't, I don't like to see that have to happen. I don't like that. But these things have to happen. They have to happen; they really do.

In the broadest sense, you must, in developing a provincial-wide budget, a budget of \$3 billion, you must look at every aspect of every department, and we did that.

And even in that kind of context, in the kind of context that I talk about in decreasing revenues and so on, in that kind of context we took this department which is the heart and soul, frankly — and it's one-third of the budget, one-third — one dollar in every three that is spent by the Government of Saskatchewan is spent by this department, this Department of Health. And I know you know that, but I just want . . . you would look into that kind of context if you're going to talk about gas tax and a lot of other things. And it's very important that we look at it in that way.

So we took this decision, we looked at it very, very carefully, the bench-mark that I just told you before, the maximum of those other benefits which will come to a single person we thought was a reasonable thing, I still believe was a reasonable thing, because you must have a starting point. I mean, on what basis . . . where did \$30 come from in 1979? Would be a legitimate question. Why in 1979 was it set at \$30 maximum and \$3 for a unit of service? That's a legitimate question. Do you know the answer to that? No, it was just pulled out of the air. I will say that to you, it was pulled out of the air. Or was it done on the basis of 8 per cent of OAS (old age security), GIS (guaranteed income supplement), and SIP (Saskatchewan income plan)? Now maybe it was. Let's say it was set at 8 per cent. Well what I'm saying is we set ours at 7 per cent.

(1645)

So we can talk about this all day. But I'm telling you, I believe it was a fair decision. It was not an easy decision as many decisions in this position of responsibility are. They are not easy, but they must be made. And those that will take on the responsibility of leadership must provide that leadership, and we're willing to do that.

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Minister, you talked about several things there. I want to refer to something you said early and something that you said late. You talked about things that are different today than they were in 1981, the early '80s. Well I'll tell you what's different in this province. In 1982 the total public debt, I think, was in the neighbourhood of \$43 million. The total public debt today is \$3.2 billion. And that means in this budget estimate, we are this year spending \$294 million — \$294 million — or better than a quarter of the budget that you administer to make the interest payments on the public debt on a deficit that your government created. Now that's something that's different. And if we weren't paying that money to the bankers and the bond dealers and so on, if we'd have had a government that in tough times could have provided some sound management, we wouldn't have that interest payment in this book.

For that money, for that money, for that money, Mr. Minister, we could have 10 times the home care program — 10 times, 10 times, Mr. Minister. So I submit to you that in fact what you are doing as a government is in fact trying to fight this deficit, trying to deal with this deficit, by attacking those who are most vulnerable in our society,

and among those are the seniors and the disabled who are now receiving home care services. And that's what I think this is all about.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Minister, can you advise me whether or not the Saskatoon district home care board received a \$74,000 decrease in their 1987-88 budget?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Just to give you the numbers on the Saskatoon home care funding if you could take your pen out. And I'm sure you were listening when I was, with your colleague, going through the . . . what we call formula funds, and the targeted funds. Formula funds, 1986-87, \$2,171,080. Okay? Formula funds: that was last year; '87-88, formula fund, 3,315,537.

Okay, now targeted funds which are based on those criteria which I outlined earlier and which I will just lay out here. You know all the criteria? Okay. Based on age and so on, the opening of new nursing home beds and so on in Saskatoon, which there have been substantial: 1986-87, 960,000; '86-87, 960,000; 1987-88, 650,000. Okay? Thank you.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:55 p.m.