

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present the following petition to the Assembly:

To the Hon. Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in legislature assembled:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly sheweth:

That back pain and other highly prevalent neuro-musculo-skeletal disorders are extremely costly to the Canadian economy;

that scientific evidence clearly illustrates that chiropractic treatment is the most cost-effective and efficient therapy for such disorders;

that in the face of an ever-increasing pressure to adopt expensive new forms of high technology treatment, chiropractic care has proven to be a low technology, low cost, conservative, and safe form of treatment, consistent with the true "wellness" model of health care;

that the government publicly asserts it remains committed to the basic principles of medicare, namely universality, comprehensiveness, accessibility, portability, and public administration;

that the government is acting to destroy these principles as they apply to chiropractic patients;

and that the government's proposed restrictions on this therapy will clearly cost more both in dollars and in patient disability.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment and that your Honourable Assembly withhold consent from any government proposal to discriminate against chiropractic patients by charging them fees not assessed for any other medical treatment.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

A few of the names on this petition, Mr. Speaker: Theresa Hitchens from Oxbow, Angela Delalleau from Wauchope, Bob Jones from Estevan, Betty Bayliss from Carnduff. Mr. Speaker, I present these petitions.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have as well petitions with regards to the same issue. I'll just read the last little paragraph to emphasize the importance of these

people's needs and wishes. It says:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment and that your Honourable Assembly withhold consent from any government proposal to discriminate against chiropractic patients by charging them fees not assessed for any other medical treatment.

And I'll just note that we have names on here from Lumsden, Regina, and Swift Current. For the Regina members you might want to note a couple of the addresses so that you know that it's in your constituency. We have Campbell Street, Lincoln Drive — well it's from all over the city basically — Montague Street. Just full of names from all over here. There's Rose Avenue. There's, well, Dalglish Drive. Just about from all over the whole city, Mr. Speaker. And I'd be pleased to present these now.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have petitions to present as well, with respect to chiropractic care in the province. They are from particularly the rural areas of Saskatchewan, might be of interest to the Minister of Rural Development, a number of petition-signers from Canora. Also it might be of interest to the member from Weyburn. We have a large number of people from the Weyburn and district that have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions here from the chiropractors . . . people who want the chiropractor care under the health care in Saskatchewan, and they come from Regina, Swift Current, Herbert, Stewart Valley, Elrose, Mankota, Shaunavon, Tompkins. And, Mr. Speaker, I present these to the Table here today.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a number of petitions with names from the Broadview area, Spy Hill, Esterhazy, Tantallon, Whitewood, Ogema, Griffin, Weyburn, Midale, and a number of other locations in the province again expressing their concerns over chiropractic services.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have two more petitions and they're right full of names. The only part I'm going to repeat is what I call a very serious part of this, that the government is acting to destroy these principles as they apply to chiropractor patients.

They're from all over Saskatchewan. These are kind of . . . There are a lot from Regina, North Battleford, Meadow Lake, Battlefords. There's some from Southey, White City, and of course there's a lot always on here from Churchill Downs. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to present these petitions.

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too am going to present petitions from people across southern Saskatchewan, and it has to do with chiropractic care, and they're asking the government, the NDP (New

Democratic Party) government, to reverse its stand. These people are coming from places like Estevan, Redvers, Bienfait, Carnduff, Stoughton, Oxbow, various places, Lampman, Craven, and various addresses in the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker. And I would ask the Clerk to please table these.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Speaker, I today have two different petitions to table with the Assembly. One is to deal with the livestock cash advance and the other is to deal with the FeedGAP program. Because both of these have been read into the record previously, Mr. Speaker, I will not go through the entire preamble. But needless to say that in both cases the petitioners are quite upset with the government over their announced policy decisions and the havoc that will occur in the livestock industry through both of these measures.

These people on both petitions are from Swift Current and area, and I with pleasure, Mr. Speaker, table them in the Assembly today.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order, the following petitions have been reviewed pursuant to rule 11(7) and they are hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the province humbly praying that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to restore the livestock cash advance program;

Of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly praying that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to restore the FeedGAP program;

And of citizens of the province humbly praying that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'm very pleased and proud to introduce my wife, who's visiting us here today, seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, in the front row.

And I'm sure that all members of the Assembly would like to join with me in welcoming my wife here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed my privilege to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, two very dear friends of mine from Assiniboia, Earl and Bronwyn Willer, who are in your gallery, and two of their friends who are visiting from Texas.

Would you warmly welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Liquor Licensing Commission Appointments

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all through this session we have seen mounting evidence that there is massive patronage by the government opposite.

People are being fired, Mr. Speaker, because their blood isn't red enough and people are being hired because of it.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly we saw the Minister of Education laugh at the fact that the president of The Battlefords NDP association was appointed a member of the North West Regional College board.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question to the minister responsible for the liquor licensing board. Mr. Minister, can you tell me if any of the five new board members you appointed on Monday have any affiliation with the NDP — any support for the NDP either through membership or financial support? Would you answer that, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, as was pointed out yesterday, something like 55 per cent of the people in Saskatchewan supported the NDP, and I suspect that number's rising all the time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Certainly I can assure that that is not a criteria for being appointed to Liquor Licensing Commission.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, that type of flippant answer doesn't square with what your Premier and your Minister of Justice have said in this Chamber previously.

Mr. Minister, your colleague, the Minister of Education, said that by pure coincidence, by pure coincidence, the president of The Battlefords NDP association was appointed. By the miracle of pure chance, the number one political officer in The Battlefords for your party was chosen — one out of tens of thousands of possible people. Now you're claiming that you have no knowledge of the political affiliations of the five new Liquor Board members.

Let's assume that you're being honest, Mr. Minister. Would you consider it a coincidence if any of your board members were NDP supporters, as did the Minister of Education?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite . . . would be a coincidence that one NDP person should be chosen to the board. I would contend that there are thousands upon thousands of NDP members, and the chances of them

being chosen are rather high.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister. Mr. Minister, you and your Premier and your party promised the people of Saskatchewan in last fall's election that the NDP government would be patronage free. No more appointments, according to your democratic policy paper. Your Minister of Labour has pledged in this Chamber, there would be no political appointments, no NDP patronage in your administration.

Unfortunately it seems, Mr. Minister, this isn't the case. You and your cabinet colleagues refuse to come clean with what is a known fact out there. Mr. Minister, you know full well that all five of the people that you appointed to your board are financial contributors to the NDP — all five.

Now, Mr. Minister, if you would like to get your foot out of your mouth, explain to the people of this province that that isn't by coincidence. Explain that this is another betrayal of the trust that people gave you last fall as soon as the member from Riversdale was sworn in.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I remind the member that he's gone on for over a minute in asking his question. I want him to put his question directly.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister explain this betrayal of trust by you and your Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, this was a . . . I have no difficulty whatsoever in defending appointments to the Liquor Licensing Commission. I think we've done an excellent job at appointing competent people.

I would like to point out to the members opposite that we have done gender parity in our boards; we have appointed aboriginal people to our boards; we have cut the size and the expense of our boards; we have appointed competent people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, Joan Josephson . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order.

An Hon. Member: — Must be hurting them, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Well the noise is coming from both sides of the House. I don't know who's hurting, but I think the floor is to the member from Thunder Creek.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, Joan Josephson, 108 bucks; Violet Kyliuk, 136; Diana Stinka, 158; Ray

Hamilton, 330; Flora Waller — wife of Tom Waller, of the NDP law firm, Olive Waller & Waller — 708.

Now, Mr. Minister, I'm sure they're all fine people, but they are all NDP supporters. All five, Mr. Minister, you appointed to your board.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I would remind members again that please no interference when the member is asking his question. And the member also is a veteran member; he knows he should be directing his question through the Speaker. And I want to remind him to put his question and direct his question through the Speaker.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for the liquor licensing board. Mr. Minister, the odds of that happening by chance I say are fairly astronomical. Please don't continue to embarrass yourself by pretending that this is some amazing coincidence that happened. Instead perhaps you should begin explaining to the people of this province and the public what your procedure on political patronage is. Can you tell this Assembly what the criteria is for receiving an NDP political appointment?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, as I have pointed out, the criteria for being selected to a board is competence. It's on a regional basis. It's based on gender parity which we have done a much better job than any former government has done. We've done a much better job at appointing aboriginal people to boards. And those, Mr. Speaker, are the criteria that we use.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, despite your denials it appears that a financial contribution to the NDP Party helps an individual's chances considerably. The donations range in this particular board's case from 108 to 708.

Now two questions for you, Mr. Minister. Was the cut-off at \$100, or was there an NDP fair tendering policy in place for Liquor Licensing Commission board appointments?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, again . . .

The Speaker: — If members don't want to have their questions answered, that's fine with me. I'll simply call a recess until I get order in the House. I'm just simply not going to put up with this nonsense.

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, I would again point out that the boards by and large are much smaller than the boards that we inherited, that the remuneration in many cases has been lowered, and that people were appointed on the basis of competence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, that wasn't the question — about the size of the board. I asked: at what level of financial contribution do you qualify, and do you have a fair tendering policy for these NDP appointments? What

costs do we have attached to . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Before the minister gets up, I've been following these questions very closely. I think the member opposite knows that ministers are not responsible for answering for the political status of any members. And if he gets back to the minister's responsibility, I will leave it in order, but I think the member knows that he's out of order with his questioning.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm simply asking the minister responsible for the liquor licensing board, the member who takes the names forward to cabinet for OC (order in council), about criteria for those eligible. And I would simply like the minister to explain the eligibility criteria. And obviously from the evidence, Mr. Speaker, it has something to do with the level of dollars expended. I just want to know what the criteria is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, I can only reiterate what I've said before. The criteria is competence. It was based on gender parity because we wanted some women on boards and in commissions which in the past have been neglected. We wanted some aboriginals to be part of our society and take part in our boards and commissions, and we put some of them on the boards. And we based it on competence.

Although the members opposite may have been in the habit of checking political contributions, I have not, and am not, and will not be doing that sort of thing. I don't have the time to run around the province deciding who contributed money to what party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One final question on this topic. I'll go to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Minister, given your responses on political patronage in this House earlier in the session, and the obvious high road that you have assigned to yourself and your government on this issue, Mr. Minister, do you agree with the minister responsible for the Liquor Board who appears has a financial criteria attached to attaining board membership on boards and commissions? Do you agree with that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Well, Mr. Minister, I don't know how many times the member opposite needs to have this question answered. The criteria for appointment to any of the boards and commissions of this government have been competence first of all. The minister has explained the other factors that are applied and they are applied. And we are proud, we're proud of the boards and commissions that we've appointed up to this point. We're very proud of that.

Now as has also been explained, it's pretty hard to find a group of five people or eight people in Saskatchewan to appoint to a board, some of whom have not supported the NDP. I also want to tell the member without fear of contradiction that no one on this side of the House has checked the contributions of anyone who is being

considered for appointment to any board or commission. That is a fact.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Status of Proposed Pasta Plant

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic Development. Mr. Speaker, this government's sorry record of economic failure continues to unravel as more and more people discover that this government cannot be trusted to keep its word, or honour a contract. We now add Saska Pasta to the list of broken contracts which include the AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.) deal, GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contracts with thousands of farm families, Promavia, the upgrader, and agreements with public servants.

Mr. Minister, will you now tell the House why you are, as a proponent of the Saska Pasta project says, and I quote: playing all sorts of games to try and control this project politically. Is this just another example of your government's partisan effort to destroy everything ever done by the previous administration?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is actually the Crown Investments Corporation which have been negotiating most recently. This project . . . Nobody has told Saska Pasta that the project won't go. The criteria, which applies to all investments, is there must be an adequate level of private investment. As soon as the owners of Saska Pasta demonstrate that that is available at the required level, the project will proceed. They were told that when we met with them yesterday and they accepted that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government doesn't care if it slanders business because it doesn't want them here anyway. Mr. Minister, your deal-making record is already dismal. We can only assume that your Social Services expert, Mr. Stobbe, who went with you on your New York City junket, must have made the recommendation to scrap this project. That's the level of competency people are beginning to and continue to expect from this government — Social Services people deciding on economic development projects.

Mr. Minister, will the minister outline why he is changing the rules for Saska Pasta after a contract had been agreed to? Why is this government now stalling on this project and demanding even more equity from the proponent? Why are you changing the rules . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. One question at a time.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, this government's record for deal making doesn't include Joytec, doesn't include GigaText, High R Door, nor is our record going to include such shameful shemozzles. We require people . . . we require a level of private investment; Saska Pasta know that. The rules have not changed. When they

demonstrate that there is a level of private investment, we are prepared to proceed. And they were told that yesterday. I have no idea where the member's getting his facts from because they certainly don't square with reality.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, what your record does include is AECL. It includes breaking contracts with farmers on GRIP. It includes the cancellation of the . . . soon-to-be cancellation of Promavia projects, includes trouble with the upgrader at Lloydminster. That's what your record involves, Mr. Speaker. That's what his record involves.

Mr. Speaker, this minister is stonewalling. This minister's stonewalling is only surpassed by his inability to help create jobs; 18,000 more people are out of work today than they were last year at this time, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Does the member have a question? Well I would like you to put your question.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Minister, will you please inform this House how long you plan to stall and politically manipulate this project, and will he tell us and the people of Swift Current when will they finally have an answer? Or is he hoping the proponents of Sask Pasta will walk away from this deal which no one could not expect them to do?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Against all temptations, I'm going to try to treat the member's question seriously. I say to the member from Kindersley, a group met with the people from Sask Pasta yesterday. It was a cordial meeting according to both sides. It was pointed out by the officials of Crown Investments Corporation that from the beginning there had been a criteria that they needed some private investment. They had not demonstrated it was available. They assured the officials from Crown Investments Corporation that that could be demonstrated, and they were invited to do so. The rules have not changed for Sask Pasta.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the options . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. If the Government House Leader wishes to answer the next question, I think he has the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with you. If the minister would like to . . .

The Speaker: — If the member has a question, I will recognize him, but I do not expect him to comment on my decisions.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, sir. Mr. Minister, maybe when you're sitting there contemplating an answer, as one of the options you might like to contemplate is telling the truth. That might be one of the options you would like to

consider, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, the minister says he's investigating other possibilities for establishing a pasta plant, which includes the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and other private sector interests. Mr. Minister, will you tell us, will you identify, who else the government is negotiating with? And if it is only the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, will he tell the House whether he has already guaranteed the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool that this project will fail? Will he give us that assurance, Mr. Speaker, that he is doing everything he can in his power with Sask Pasta to make this project a success?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, I have been telling the truth. I know members opposite have great trouble recognizing that when they see it, but I have been telling the truth from the beginning — from the beginning, Mr. Speaker, with respect to all of the development projects in which we are engaged, unlike the nonsense in which you people engaged.

We require a degree of private investment. We think that's a sound principle. We think that gives the taxpayers some assurance that they won't be left holding the bag, as they were on GigaText, Joytec, High R Doors, and the list goes on and on and on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Farm Foreclosures in Drought Regions

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Agriculture. I know that there's no one that's qualified to answer for agriculture, but whoever thinks they are can answer my question, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Agriculture knows that the farmers throughout the province are desperate, and they're definitely more desperate in the drought zones of this province, which is about half of my area and to the south-east of me and also the north-east part of this province, Mr. Speaker, are in desperate need. And the president of SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), Mr. Speaker, told the government to focus on reality. And I want to make his quote, Mr. Speaker. He says, quit the politics and meet the need.

My question is: will the Minister of Agriculture tell this House how many notices of foreclosure are currently in place and how many are new ones that are coming in now? And I'd like to have a specific answer from someone, is, Mr. Speaker, is: how many of these are in the drought area of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, we certainly are aware that there are drought areas in the province. The member opposite might be interested to know that the first crop report coming out, the first estimate places the Saskatchewan crop at 102 per cent of normal. So it's not totally across the province as he would have us believe.

There are drought areas and there are debt problems.

I know that the member opposite knows full well that the foreclosures are not related to this year's drought, that you rarely have crop to sell at this time of the year, from this crop. And the drought . . . the debt problems that are current have built up over the past 10 years and are what are causing problems with people with debt, and the inadequacies of last year's GRIP and lack of third line of defence from the federal government, and not this year's drought, that's causing these farmers to lose their land at this time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Another question. That answer from that minister has to be the most arrogant answer I've ever heard on behalf of farmers ever heard in this House. If I understand him properly, Mr. Speaker, he said that it's not really important right now because they're not selling wheat, whether there's drought or whether they're having foreclosures in those areas or not.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: how many foreclosures are going on in this province in the past and today in the drought areas of this province? That's my question. Now give me the answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, I again would reiterate that it is not this year's drought but last year's federal lack of response to our income shortfall that's causing the debt problems for the farmers. And, Mr. Speaker, that is the plain truth. And if the member opposite would quit playing politics . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I believe the member from Thunder Creek asked seven questions in the House today and I think he should let other people have an opportunity to ask questions and to answer those questions.

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — And, Mr. Speaker, I think, speaking of political games, if the members opposite would get on with the business of this House and we could get our leaseback Bill through the House, we would be able to help some of those farmers who are now losing their land.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Speaker, seeing that this minister did not answer any of my questions, I will now go to the House Leader for my next question.

I had a conversation, and so has many members of our caucus, with the House Leader in a suggestion like this. This House has been at an impasse for months over the GRIP Bill because you'll do nothing for the farmers that need the 1991. But now that there's been a little bit of rain, Mr. Minister, in this province in quite a few areas, the 1992 GRIP may not be too bad for them. But what, Mr. Minister, are the people that have crop failure going to do?

And I asked you, Mr. Minister, specifically if you would take it to your caucus and say, accept the Minister of Agriculture, federal Minister of Agriculture's new policy, his new plan for Saskatchewan to help the drought people of Saskatchewan and the 1992 GRIP would maybe . . . would be a saw-off. Did you take that . . . my question, Mr. Minister, did you take that to your caucus and get a decision? Answer me that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the member opposite that indeed what we're trying to do is to get the federal government, who have now . . . understand that there is a problem in Saskatchewan in terms of disaster and lack of money, to try to increase from 39 million, a measly \$39 million — when last year they promised \$500 million and have yet to deliver 1 cent of that — that \$39 million is not going to be enough.

And what I can't understand is how the members opposite, when we moved a motion in this House to get the \$500 million, everyone of them, including the member from Estevan, the former premier, was not in favour of the motion to get \$500 million for the farmers of Saskatchewan, and voted against the motion. And today they sanctimoniously ask, where's the money, having voted against the very motion that would have got \$500 million for the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As all your ministers answer, it doesn't answer my question.

Mr. Minister, did you take it to your caucus and to your cabinet to discuss, to consider the offer from the federal government to help the farmers in the drought areas which would help all people in Saskatchewan? Did you take that to your cabinet and discuss it or did you not? Or are you just putting it aside because it's the Tory government that asked the question and or made the offer?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I wanted to say that one of the main issues on the agenda of the NDP caucus and the government caucus in Saskatchewan in the past months has been the agricultural problem in large part created by the lack of money from the federal government that was promised and committed.

I want to make one point to you. The member opposite knows that the federal government has asked the farmers of Saskatchewan, the farmers of Canada, to pay back \$41 million in overpayment in western grain stabilization. You know that. Farmers have to pay back \$41 million to western grain stabilization.

The federal government's response is they're going to \$39 million — \$2 million less than they took back last month.

Now I say to the members opposite, where are you when it comes to supporting the plea from farmers, the Wheat Pool, and farm organizations for \$500 million? Will you today make a commitment to support us if we put a motion on the Table to ask the federal government for the

\$500 million? Will you support us?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Van Mulligen: — With leave, Mr. Speaker, to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly two visitors from The Netherlands. They're seated in your gallery.

They are Bert Broekema and Tjakko Wezeman and they are accompanied here today by Mrs. Lynn Scott from the city of Regina. And I know that all members will want to join with me, Mr. Speaker, when I say:

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Dutch.)

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 84 — An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of The Urban Municipality Amendment Act.

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

Bill No. 85 — An Act respecting Fire Prevention and Certain Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of this Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting Fire Prevention and Certain Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of this Act.

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

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Speaker, we yesterday obtained from the Clerks' office a copy of a notice of motion by the government signalling its intent to move a motion tomorrow to reintroduce the GRIP legislation.

I have two points of order on this notice of motion, Mr. Speaker. First, Mr. Speaker, your ruling stated that the Bill was suspended, and I quote, "for at least . . . two weeks." You did not say, sir, that the Bill was suspended for two weeks and the reason you gave for not being definitive was that you wanted to allow room for further effort at compromise.

I suggest to you that because the suspension of the Bill

was open-ended and not precise, no move can be made to reintroduce the Bill without a further ruling from Mr. Speaker stating that he has decided enough time has elapsed and an independent motion be entertained to determine the will of the Assembly. Failing a ruling from the Speaker, there is no limit on the suspension, and that the ground . . . the notice of motion is out of order.

While it may be argued that this is a matter of interpretation, the only officer that has the authority to make such an interpretation is the Speaker. And you must make a definitive statement either that you intend the suspension to last precisely two weeks or that the open-ended nature of your ruling was intentional and therefore operative.

If it was unintentional or inintentional, then the notice of motion cannot have been made until after the Speaker has ruled that the process should proceed. That much at least is not subject, I believe, to interpretation.

If the Speaker states that he erred in using the language, "at least two weeks", and that he actually meant precisely two weeks, then I argue that the notice of motion remains out of order on the face of it because two weeks had not elapsed prior to the notice of motion being made.

Particularly in these confused, unprecedented, and unusual times, it is the belief of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, that these are highly improper proceedings and that the process must be viewed as a single unit.

The purpose of the government is to steal a day's march on the expiry of the two weeks simply to accommodate its weekend. The manner in which notice was given, I believe, is slightly conspiratorial and without warning to any member of either side of this Assembly, of this House. And it simply reinforces our belief, Mr. Speaker, that the government must have some dishonourable motive in mind.

It is not proper, Mr. Speaker, to set in motion the process to unsuspend the Bill before the two weeks suspension has actually expired. Now, Mr. Speaker, in this case as in others, we all, as members of this House, know that absolute authority in this Assembly is in the hands of yourself. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the government MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) have indicated that to you.

Now even though that, Mr. Speaker, has indicated to you that that support is partisan, I expect Mr. Speaker is very mindful that he has charted new territory. And the ruling on my point of order will form an integral part of that new territory that Mr. Speaker has charted.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I think I've heard sufficient about the point of order that the member is raising. I do want to consult with my Clerk for a minute. I ask the Assembly to bear with me.

(1445)

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak to the point of order.

The Speaker: — Well before I recognize the Government House Leader, in order for it to be a point of order, I rule that the Assembly must have been breached. I don't find any rule in our rules and procedure that has been breached. Therefore there cannot be a point of order.

But further to the member's statement, the member, if he goes to my ruling on July 16 and on June 29, it clearly indicates that the vote on the GRIP Bill is thus suspended until I am informed that both the government and the official opposition are ready to proceed with the Bill or until the House itself makes a decision on the disposition of the Bill.

Therefore the member is in error when he says that the Speaker must make a ruling to unsuspend the Bill. The Speaker does not have to make a ruling. The Speaker left it up to the members to make that decision, and that is the way it ought to be. The Speaker has no part in making that decision.

On the second question that the member raises, that the time has not elapsed, I wish to remind the member there is absolutely nothing in our rules that prevents someone to give notice of a motion whether it is 48 hours or 5 days or 10 days. All our rules say is that we must give at least 48 hours notice. Since today is the end of the two weeks, notice was given yesterday for the motion to take effect tomorrow. That is at least two weeks.

So on both grounds I find that there is no point of order and will proceed from there.

The Speaker: — Why is the member on her feet?

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I wish to address and have stricken from the record remarks that were made yesterday about me without foundation by the member from Arm River. And although I have approached this member about this, I feel it necessary to have official action taken to strike these remarks.

Yesterday the member from Arm River indicated that I had sent out a copy or copies of the *Hansard* to people in Loreburn with the objective of, and I quote: causing some disturbance in his constituency. There is no truth to these comments made by the member from Arm River about my having circulated *Hansard* in his area.

I ask the member to substantiate his claim and provide the names of the people to whom I had allegedly supplied *Hansard*. I checked with one of these individuals who told me that it was he who had indeed obtained the verbatim of the member's comments and distributed it to other individuals . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I believe that I have heard sufficient from the member and I think, again, there is nothing in the rules that . . . none of the rules have been breached.

I think the member knows that when a member speaks in this House, we must take that member at his word or her word. Your point . . . it's really a point of debate and the Speaker really can't rule on that. It's not a point of order.

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

The Speaker: — There is no point of order.

An Hon. Member: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Okay, point of order.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — My understanding is, is that when members give misinformation about another member, there is a . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member is getting into debate. I have already ruled that it's not a point of order. Order, order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 83 — An Act respecting Pension Benefits

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Pension Benefits Act 1992. This Bill represents just one of many initiatives our government is undertaking to provide a fair deal to the workers of Saskatchewan, a deal which is appropriate for the 1990s.

In March I established a review panel to solicit public input and to make recommendations for changes to this Act. This panel consulted with the persons and organizations affected by pension reform and this legislation, Mr. Speaker, reflects the review panel's report.

The last major amendment to The Pension Benefits Act was in 1981. There have been significant developments in the pension field since then as a result of which our pension benefits standards legislation in Saskatchewan is outdated and is in need of amendment.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill proposes a number of changes. It will improve pension plan standards for plan members without imposing undue costs on employers. It will promote the establishment of new plans by accommodating non-traditional arrangements with respect to governance and solvency.

It will set out the duties and responsibilities of plan administrators for the effective management of pension plans. And it will move, wherever possible, towards national pension standards to minimize the complexities and costs for employers.

On this latter point, Mr. Speaker, almost three-quarters of the pension plans with Saskatchewan members operate in more than one jurisdiction. Uniform national standards are important to cost-effective administration and the fair and equal treatment of plan members.

This legislation will also offer employees some significant improvements. More employees will participate in

pension plans as a result of these amendments. Part-time employees will be entitled to become members of their employers' pension plans on meeting certain conditions tied to hours worked and to earnings.

More employees will receive a pension benefit, Mr. Speaker. Currently a plan member is entitled to a pension benefit on termination of employment when the member's age plus service total 45. We are proposing that a pension vest with the member after two years of service.

Employees will have greater control over their pensions. On termination of membership prior to retirement, employees will be able to transfer their pension funds to the retirement vehicle of their choosing. This control extends beyond retirement as we will be introducing more flexible retirement income arrangements, such as life income funds, as an alternative to life annuities.

Survivor benefits will be enhanced. The current Act is silent on pre-retirement survivor benefits. Our amendments not only provide such benefits, but improves the post-retirement death benefit from 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the deceased person's pension.

Mr. Speaker, there has to be a balance between the cost to the employer and adequate benefits for the member. Therefore those provisions which are most costly, such as the enhancements to vesting, are to be applied to benefits accrued on and after January 1, 1994.

This legislation also addresses one of the most frustrating issues surrounding pension plans, and that is the splitting of pension credits on marital breakdown. We will be providing clear guidance to the courts on the valuation of pension benefits. And as a result, plan members and their spouses will be treated consistently and fairly and the cost of separation and divorce proceedings will be accordingly reduced.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 83, The Pension Benefits Act, 1992.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've been listening with interest to the member from . . . the minister and his introduction of An Act respecting Pension Benefits. I know that there are many people across the province, people have approached me who have . . . people themselves who have already become eligible to receive their pension — have retired. A number of people are certainly interested in the Bill before this Assembly. I think there are a number of things we must take note of.

Notably, I think, one of the things that most employees that I have talked to or that have approached me like and have asked for, have been asking for, the fact that they have control of their plan and that when they retire they can take and invest their plan. And rather than just leaving it as straight annuity, look at investing it in a RRIF (registered retirement income fund), and I think that is something that is positive.

I'm not exactly sure what the minister talks about when he talks about marital relationships, and it's something that I think we'll have to look at a little more closely. And if it's a

way of setting out some guidelines that make it much simpler for the courts to address the problems that arise in marital break-ups, especially when pension plans are involved, I think that would be appropriate. And certainly we will follow the process that the minister and the department have laid down. And if we feel that we should have some amendments or strengthen this process, we certainly will be willing to do that as we get into committee.

The one thing, and I'm not sure and we'll get into this more as we get further into debate, is the fact that the Saskatchewan Pension Plan is an area that we must raise especially the . . . some 48,000 individuals who were on the pension plan for the first time in their lives. The minister talked about working towards national plans rather than a group of small, individual pension plans right across this province or right across Canada. And I believe there's some merit in looking at a national program so that everyone at least have the same avenue and access to a pension plan.

We also, I think, must address the problem that small businesses have and people working in small businesses, especially on minimum wage — the fact that many of these individuals do not have access, who aren't involved in any kind of a pension plan.

There are a number of questions here, Mr. Speaker, and as we get further into the discussion and the debate on the Bill, we'll be bringing forward. But at this time I would adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1500)

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply

The Chair: — I'll ask the Minister of Finance to introduce his officials and move the resolution.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to introduce my officials who are with us here today, Mr. John Wright who's the deputy minister of Finance; Mr. Craig Dotson who's the associate deputy minister; Mr. Roy Hynd who is a senior analyst in the treasury board branch, seated behind me, and that's the total extent of my support staff who are here today. Glenn Laxdal, senior analyst sitting behind the rail. I usually introduce them when they get in front, we'll dispense with that. Can I proceed, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman, as is the usual custom, I am pleased today to move a motion to deal with an interim supply Bill which is required for the month of August. And after moving it, I will want to provide some explanation and I also want to provide some information to the members opposite so they can have it in writing.

And I therefore move:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$371,537,300 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 1993.

Just a brief explanation, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the House. This interim supply Bill is the usual scheduled one-twelfth, but there are also some extra monies provided in seasonal areas such as fire fighting and highway construction. As well extra monies are provided to fulfil commitments and meet the payments schedules.

I want to point out to the legislature that the Legislative Assembly approved the report of the Standing Committee on Estimates which met on Thursday, July 23. And the remaining estimates of the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Auditor — less the first and second interim supply and special warrants — are included in this Appropriation Bill. So that is for . . . the full appropriation will be provided there because the Assembly has so ordered because of approving of the Committee on Estimates which met on the date which I had specified.

I also want to point out for the members, and I think I'll provide this to both the Liberal member and to the Finance critic, if I can get a Clerk, and this is an explanation of where there is a request for interim supply funds in excess of the usual one-twelfth. The areas that are provided for are in Agriculture and Food, and the amount that is provided is \$12.814 million. What this is for is to cover for the Canadian crop drought assistance program. The additional funding is requested as the entire \$13,947,400, almost a \$14 million payment to the federal government is required to be made in August in accordance with the Canada-Saskatchewan crop drought assistance agreement. This is a requirement because of arrangements that were made in 1988, I believe, and now we have to pay the federal government this money on an annual basis which restricts that amount of money which we have available for something else for I think a period of five years. That's the only amount that is in excess of the one-twelfth in Agriculture and Food.

In Highways and Transportation there is \$4.752 million in excess of the amount of one-twelfth and that is the usual rural surface transportation capital, \$2.1 million more because of the activity that takes place during peak period of summer months. The same thing in maintenance for Highways and Transportation, peak periods are during the summer months when most of that maintenance takes place.

In the legislation, I have already explained that in my initial comments. We're providing the full amount as required and ordered by the legislature. So in order to make sure that it provides the total of 5.282 million, we have to provide in this case above the one-twelfth, 2.168 million.

In Natural Resources there is 2.62 million in excess of the one-twelfth, and that is forest fire operations in northern air services for forest fires because there are certain historic cash flow trends indicated which will . . . it is thought were a part of this kind of money.

The Provincial Auditor, once again we're providing the full amount to the Provincial Auditor as ordered by the legislature and that's why there's more than one-twelfth here.

Rural Development, there is \$1.122 million requested in

excess of the one-twelfth and they include three areas. Grants for rural development capital, \$878,300 more than one-twelfth is requested as the province funds rural municipalities on the quarterly basis and the second instalment of course is now coming due. Lands branch, 155,900 more than one-twelfth is requested because the community pastures operate only from spring until fall. And the ferry services, and everybody knows ferry services don't run when the rivers are frozen. So it's once again this is the time of the year.

In the Seniors' Secretariat — and I'll be finished when I conclude that one — there is 211,000 in addition provided, and that's because of additional funding of 211,000 necessary to provide operating grants to qualifying seniors' activity centres. And once more that's based on previous experience where it is found that 80 per cent of the grants are paid by the end of August.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that explanation.

Mr. Minister, I can't say it's a pleasure to see your officials back in here again. This is — what? — third, fourth time. I don't know. I'm losing count. It seems to me, Mr. Minister, that you are probably going to set a record for the number of times that this will happen. And I suggest to you, sir, that perhaps a little more forethought in the planning process prior to the House coming in would have negated some of this monthly exercise that we have to go through and hold you accountable for the expenditures of your government without a budget being passed.

And I know, Mr. Minister, that that's tough for you to accept, given the criticism that you always had of the former government about not doing things on time and that sort of thing. But be as it may, that's where we are. And I guess we're going to have to check with you now, because of all of the policy shifts that have occurred since we last met in this committee and all the things that have sort have changed, to see how they've impacted on the province's spending.

Mr. Minister, there are a number of areas where we've had indications that something different is happening out there. The Minister of Highways says that he's not going to plough the roads up now, that he's going to look at alternatives. So I think we're going to have to explore that. It's very obvious, Mr. Minister, that in the area of agriculture that there are many things brewing on the horizon that we need to discuss. There are federal offers to the province on some funding arrangements that might be necessary.

We've seen a wide strip of drought occur in northern Saskatchewan now that obviously will be impacting on a number of departments that will be needing money from the Finance department in order to handle the very serious problem that stretches all the way from Meadow Lake to Tisdale, across our province.

And certainly, Mr. Minister, there has been the government's initiative in going into the money markets inside the province with the Saskatchewan savings bond. And we're going to want to know about some costs

associated with that, and did they impact on your budgetary process. There's the whole question of interest rates and what's happened there since we last met. You kept telling us that you were doing better and better because the federal government had such a firm control on fiscal matters in this country, and that you are continuing to benefit because of that.

And obviously your Minister of Indian and Native Affairs has signified that there's a signing of an agreement in that particular area. We need to know about the impacts on the treasury in the coming month there. Your minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Pension Plan has . . . there has been a shift in attitude with the pension plan since we last met, Mr. Minister. And we need to know if those 54,000 pension subscribers are now going to get back to where they were, getting on with life and what that means with the provincial treasury.

So I think, Mr. Minister, as you can see, there is a lot for us to discuss because of these policy shifts that have occurred in the last month. And we need to know how these shifts are going to affect things in the future because I'm sure that we'll have this opportunity to get together in another month's time and see how well we're doing. And unfortunately, we're expending very large chunks of the provincial budget here without the budget being passed. I believe we've only got three estimates passed in the House, maybe only two. And it's very difficult to understand exactly what is going to happen because we haven't had an opportunity to see those estimates.

So perhaps, Mr. Minister, I'll start out with some easy ones. I'm sure it's an area that you're going to want to talk about to us. And I would like to know what the recent offering of the Saskatchewan savings bonds, exactly what you think you achieved. Perhaps you could give us some comparison costs of how that borrowing would be against other borrowings. Were there opportunities in the money markets that were cheaper than the 7 per cent paid to Saskatchewan subscribers? What kind of terms would have been attached to those cheaper rates? Has the Government of Saskatchewan, in its own words, sort of mortgaged some of the future for the present?

How do you feel about it, Mr. Minister, and would you sort of fill in that financial information as you go through your delivery.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member asks very appropriate questions on this. How do I feel about it? We feel very good about the success of the Saskatchewan savings bonds.

Quite frankly the amount that was achieved was beyond what I would have expected, although I'm not surprised because everywhere I go I hear people from this province tell me that it is important in their opinion that they be given an opportunity to help rebuild Saskatchewan. And therefore, although borrowing through Saskatchewan savings bonds doesn't reduce the amount of borrowing, we have a certain borrowing amount that is established in the budget and that target will be reached. And as far as I know, that will not be exceeded because it's a very important part of the budget in getting our credit ratings back to where we think they need to go.

But the important element here is that we are internalizing the borrowing. And as much to the extent that we can do that under reasonable terms, I think we should do that. I don't think the member from Thunder Creek will disagree, for the money that was borrowed through the Saskatchewan savings bonds only through agencies and people in Saskatchewan. What that will mean is that the interest paid on the money — some \$60 million or less, but around there — will all be paid back in Saskatchewan and will circulate in the Saskatchewan economy, rather than that kind of money being paid to people who buy the bonds in another continent or south of the border or in eastern Canada. That is, I think, a very important aspect of this approach that is being taken here. I want to admit it's not different than what the former government did. They had SaskPower bonds and other kinds of bonds. But never in the history of this province — with Saskatchewan growth bonds or Power bonds — have the people responded the way they responded to this one.

And admittedly, part of it was because of a commitment to the province. I think there's no doubt about that. And also part of it because they looked upon it as a good investment and it should be a good investment for a Saskatchewan citizen.

And with that I want to mention to the members opposite that the terms of the rate that was established are very good terms because you have to . . . it's a five-year instrument we're using here. It's a five-year savings bond. It can be renewed every year. It can be passed onto somebody else during that period.

And at the time when the interest rate was set — and you have to set it at some time — we set it at 7 per cent on the advice of outside advisors, RBC Dominion Securities and Richardson Greenshields. They recommended that that's what the rate should be.

(1515)

Other five-year instruments to which you could compare this makes the rate very, very good from the purposes of the overall Saskatchewan taxpayer. Because a five-year . . . the other one is the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right. The issuing five-year debt on June 11, when we set the rate of 1992, would have cost 8.75 per cent. So by setting it at 7 per cent, we actually did pretty well.

Now I don't know, I think I've addressed all of the questions that the member asked opposite. Finally I just want to say that I think it's a good way to raise money providing that the interest rate that is being charged is comparable. We don't want to get carried away with it, providing that it's a safe investment for the citizens of Saskatchewan. It is. It's guaranteed by the province. And it's also good because it enhances the Saskatchewan economy because a lot of . . . well all of the interest will be paid back to the people of Saskatchewan and will work in Saskatchewan rather than work somewhere else.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I appreciate your information. There is some criticism I've seen in the media and from people in the investment community that

you were more interested in a political fix than a financial one and that the actual cost to the province will be more significant in the future than might have been possible had you been going for straight interest savings, rather than sort of your longer-term view that you've presented to the province.

Would you care to comment on some of that criticism?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Sure, I would love to comment on that, Mr. Chairman, because there's no validity to that at all. First of all, let me make a correction. I said interest of \$60 million. It's more like \$40 million of interest paid back, and I just want to put the record straight on that, and I've done that.

The rate that was established was 7 per cent. Some major people who are in this work on an ongoing basis were consulted. RBC Dominion Securities and Richardson Greenshields — we made sure we had more than one source — recommended that that's what the rate should be. So these are major financial institutions that said this is the right way and the right time, and here is the level of the interest.

Also they compare favourably to Alberta and Manitoba savings bonds established about the same time or a little earlier because they were at seven and a quarter per cent. In Saskatchewan we set it at 7 per cent. So I think by any measurement, it was a good deal for everybody concerned: the treasury, the public, and all those who invested in the bonds.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, what would have been the average, say, one-year investment rate for the average subscriber in Saskatchewan the time you went to market. That would be a combination of, say, banks, trust companies, credit unions. What would have been the average return on yield for you or I to have gone and invested money through those particular institutions at the time?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — You got to be careful here, Mr. Chairman, that one compares apples to apples and not apples to oranges. And I know that the member's probably referring to a certain article in the *Leader-Post* that I read with some care as well. I don't have it with me either, but I have a good memory on these kinds of things.

On a five-year instrument, which is what this was, all of the other options would have been at eight and three-quarter per cent pretty well. We were at seven. On a one-year basis, which is what Mr. Eisler wrote about, it was at around six and three-quarters. Now I'll verify that when my other official gets here, who's on his way from the department; it takes about five minutes. But that's what it would have been. But you can't compare the one-year to the five-year and be accurate in the analysis or the comparison that one makes.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, would you say that your instrument, as you call it, is more generous to subscribers in its portability and its ability to transfer and that than you would find anywhere in the private sector?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, the answer to

the question is that we made a change in this one as opposed to the ones that were done by the previous government. I'm not saying this in a critical sense. What was in the . . . in the case of previous savings bonds, whether SaskPower or others, is that you could do this on a semi-annual basis. You could exchange them.

We said in this one you could do it on an annual basis and not semi-annually. In exchange for that we increased or enhanced the portability of the bonds and we thought that that was a pretty good exchange. So getting away from the semi-annually when you could turn it in to the annual so you have your . . . you're locked in for the whole year. But in exchange for that we felt it was important that there be an opportunity for the member from Thunder Creek or the Minister of Finance, who may have bought bonds, to be able to have more portability in selling it off to somebody else, if that was so the wish.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm a farmer. I couldn't afford those things. But anyway, would you care to explain to the Assembly why you thought that was an important criteria, why your department thought that was an important criteria.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Two reasons: one, it was more attractive for the individual who might want to invest; and secondly, because it was far more . . . or far less costly in the administration side from the point of view of the government, which obviously is the taxpayers. Those two reasons.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, I can understand why the attractability, because it goes along with the political ability of certain things. Would you care to elaborate on this cost differential between semi-annual and annual? I think that's important that we understand this clearly.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well the answer is simply this: that if you do it on a semi-annual basis, you're going to have higher transaction costs because there'll be greater volume so you will have to a higher staff over a longer period of time, higher systems costs. On an annual basis, your transactions costs are lower because you're not doing it twice in the year; you're just doing it one time. And that's where the basic savings are.

Mr. Swenson: — Okay, Mr. Minister, could you provide those figures to us? They don't have to be today, but you'll assure us that we can get those?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — No problem at all. In fact, I have Mr. Jones, who is known to the member opposite, who is on his way. And if he's got them with him on paper that we can give you, we'll give it to you today. If not, then I'll give them to you tomorrow. I'm sure we can probably get them ready by tomorrow. But yes indeed, there's no reason why we wouldn't want to do that.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, you say that you used RBC and Richardson Greenshields, obviously two investment houses that have been used in the past by the province of Saskatchewan to a great deal. For the kind of advice that they provided to you on this instrument, what kind of costs are we looking at?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Once again, as soon as our other official gets here, I'll have that for the member. I could make an estimate, but I'd rather be . . . rather than making an estimate, I'll give him an accurate answer.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, there is another area that we have seen significant policy shifting occur. And looking through the information provided on departments with different expenditures more than one-twelfth, I find it strange that Health isn't here. Health was here in a fairly big way, I think, when we last met.

Since we last met we've had the document, the wellness model document by your Health minister, leaked to the public, and it has a large number of ramifications in it. I'm sure there have been a lot of concerned calls from the public as to how that affects their particular institution or area, and certainly how the funding requirements will be met.

There has obviously been presented to the Saskatchewan public some very major policy directions in health care. And I'm wondering why, given all of this, that we don't see anything on health here. Summer-time seems to be an area that requires expenditures. Would you care to elaborate on the whole health area?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the reason that health is remaining with the one-twelfth is because they don't require any additional funding from the normal budget provisions that were provided to the Department of Health.

The wellness approach and the wellness model that is in the process of being developed — but which people all over Saskatchewan are talking about and it's a very important and useful debate — that is something that will have an impact in the future. Because rather than imposing something like this, it is the desire of this government to consult with the people of the province, the people in the . . . the care deliverers and the public, the users, and others. Because it is, in our view, an important way to move.

The document that the member opposite speaks of, he knows very well that is not the wellness document; that was a working paper that I understand was in the Department of Health. The paper which will be the wellness paper is . . . which will be the framework for a discussion of the wellness approach is something that the Minister of Health will be releasing in due course when the appropriate time, in the view of the government and the minister, comes. So there is no need for any additional monies in this interim supply other than the usual one-twelfth.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, it would appear from some of the information obtained from within areas of government, it would almost take a special warrant to handle the Minister of Health's mailing costs alone, as she tries to get herself out of the bind that she finds herself in. I don't know what the expenditures were on that volume of written material, but I suspect that it was significant. Does that budgetary expenditure come out of the Department of Health for all of this mailing that the minister is now doing, or does that come from another area?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well any correspondence or any other publications that come out of the Department of Health under the Minister of Health's name comes out of the Department of Health general administration. Obviously there is nothing unusual in the amount of correspondence that's going out because the Department of Health is not requesting anything in excess of one-twelfth. They're living within the budget that was provided for them.

Mr. Swenson: — I suppose, Mr. Minister, the appropriate place for us to ask about those things would be in the minister's estimates. I am sure it is something we'd like to ask her. That volume of paper we hope didn't necessitate the cutting back of a few beds here or there, or laying off of some nurses, or anything like that. It's very environmentally dangerous to the forest too, because you've got to produce all of that paper that the minister has to now mail out. But we'll leave that for the moment, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, there is another area that I'm sure some of my colleagues will have comments on, but I think it's important for us to discuss and that is the whole area of agriculture. And I can see that in your Agriculture and Food budget you have indicated to us that you have to have more than one-twelfth because of some prior agreements between the federal and provincial governments that go back some five years ago.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if your department is preparing any contingency plans in case of a signing between the province and the federal government on a contingency that would involve the very large drought area that is in the province of Saskatchewan?

(1530)

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The answer is no, there are no contingency plans that are being prepared because there is nothing concrete around which we could be preparing such plans. We have a budget plan that's in place. We think it's very important. The House and the members of this legislature, as does the public, knows the kind of financial situation that this province faces. It is not something that we can, or anybody should take lightly. When we set a budget, it is important that we try as hard as possible to stick within that budget. That is something that I think is crucial here.

But even if that were not the case, we would not be dealing with contingency plans and looking at additional monies until we knew what we were working with. And at this point in time, we don't know what we're working with, if in fact anything to be working with other than the debate that's been taking place across the airways and through the media.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, I would think that with a fairly concrete offer from the federal government — X number of dollars — someone in your department would have taken notice of that and said, this is the ramification: with those amount of federal dollars in place, what would the bigger picture look like?

I mean, Mr. Minister, since we last met your budget has been affected in many ways. We have discussed already that there has been different policy shifts within your administration in the last month. We've acknowledged that interest rates are continuing to drop. You have just told the Assembly about the wonderful response on your financial instrument, the Saskatchewan savings bond, and how you have immeasurably enhanced the position of the province by this smart piece of business.

Now we've got interest rates dropping. You've pulled off what you think is a good piece of business with the savings bonds. We've had other policy shifts. You obviously must have a ledger that looks slightly different than you did a while ago. And if that ledger is looking more positive, Mr. Minister, I would think that you'd be thinking about the potential problem that exists.

The drought isn't going to go away as much as you or I would wish it, and I would think a prudent Finance minister would be saying, boys, what if this happened, or what if that happened, or how much money do I need from the federal government to make certainly things happen. Now that there is a concrete proposal, what analysis have you done to say, yes, it's tracking with the dropping of the interest rates, or it's not tracking. I mean, how does it fit in with the overall game plans, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I can't speak for the Department of Agriculture or for the Minister of Agriculture, so I don't know what follow-up, if any, there has been taking place on what the federal minister has said about the \$39 million, which is \$460 million short of the \$500 million in third line of defence, which the federal government made a commitment to in an agreement signed by the Province of Saskatchewan and the federal government last year, or is it 1990.

Now when you have that kind of a spread, surely, Mr. Chairman, it's not unusual for the Department of Finance, or the Minister of Finance to say, I don't deal in if's. I deal in knowing what is the real thing. If we tried to budget on the basis of if's we would have a budget that I would be the first to have to admit is an unbelievable budget. We're trying to deal as best we can with the realities and the facts that are before us.

That is not to say that throughout the course of a whole year some things may not change which were unanticipated and unexpected. But I can assure the House and the member for Thunder Creek, and you, Mr. Chairman, that if that happens I will stand up if the House is still sitting and report to the House. If the House isn't sitting I will report through the usual press conference so that the public will know as well.

It is too early in the fiscal year, even though we're now into a third interim supply Bill, it is still too early in the fiscal year as things go to know precisely or even closely how the expenditures and the revenues are going to come out at the end. There's always some variations from both of those throughout the whole year.

As I indicated in the budget speech, we will have a midterm report for the first time in the history of this

province in November in which we will give an update of where we are financially, where we may have to make some amendments if we have to make any. If there is an arrangement with the federal government on the issue we're talking about and the federal government provides the required money that we believe they should provide, we will report on that at that time. But at this point in time, I really have nothing I can add because it is just too early in the fiscal year.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, it saddens me that you haven't been keeping track of the Minister of Agriculture, because I think that's one of the biggest problems that your government has, is that the Minister of Agriculture tends to free-lance a lot. That gets everyone else in the soup, so to speak. Maybe as the Minister of Finance, who will ultimately have to bear the responsibility for the member from Rosetown-Elrose, that a little closer leash in certain things might help out a little bit as far as your planning process.

Mr. Minister, I remind you that yes, this is the third interim supply Bill but we had two special warrants before that, so in effect we are on our fifth . . . either our fifth special warrant or our fifth interim supply Bill, however you want to word it. And we're darn near at half-way through a 12-month period of time, and we aren't a whole ways down the road. Maybe an interim financial statement at the end of August would be more appropriate than one in November, given the way things are going.

But anyway, Mr. Minister, back to some specifics. I don't take your analogy well at all. We aren't talking about \$500 million here. There is a specific offer, as I understand it, on the table from the federal government — a very, very specific offer right down to the dollars and cents. And I would think, Mr. Minister, that given an offer that specific that your people would be doing some type of analysis, if nothing else to cover your political backside if you didn't wish to cover the economic agenda.

So I think it's appropriate, Mr. Minister, that you give us an indication of where the province would fit in that scheme, and you can be as partisan as you wish in it. But I think it's incumbent that you give to the Saskatchewan public, and particularly those that are faced with a very devastating situation, where their Minister of Finance and his department officials are as far as placing them because they are in a very difficult time. And I think they need some kind of assurance that you at least are doing your homework.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, for the purpose of the interim supply, there is no provision for anything that may come out of this. The analysis that the member asks for is very straightforward. The federal government has said they are talking about \$39 million that the federal government wants to put in. But they are saying but the province should put in \$23 million.

That would mean that if that was accepted, the province would have to, and the taxpayers of Saskatchewan would have to, find \$23 million in addition to the budget which is already before the House.

We have to either find some form of new tax increases to

raise that money, we would have to find some expenditure reductions — and I'd be prepared to listen to where they might be — or we'd have to borrow more money. I mean those are clearly the options. That's a pretty straightforward analysis.

What the Minister of Agriculture has said to the House and what the Premier has said to the House, is that we're not agreeing to this although we are prepared to discuss with the federal people, the federal government, what might be the direction in which this should take. That's where the thing is at right now.

Now the member said, if I wish to be partisan. I don't wish to be partisan. I'm quite capable of being partisan if the need arises as I think most members of the House will know. But I have no desire of being partisan in this issue or most issues that we're dealing with. My desire is to be responsible because I think that's what this province needs more than anything else right now — a responsible management of the public purse, accountability about how the taxpayers' dollars is being spent, openness in decision making. All of those things I think that this government is achieving, and we're going to continue to work on that into the months and years ahead.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, those are good words, but words and deeds are two entirely different matters. And unfortunately the words don't match the deeds. I mean, Mr. Minister, we've seen a clear indication that partisanship from your government is high on the agenda. Otherwise we wouldn't have had the rules of this Assembly change unilaterally and rammed down our throats. So obviously partisanship was somewhere high up on the agenda in the recent times.

Now, Mr. Minister, you have an item on here that requests more than one-twelfth in the Department of Agriculture and Food. Are you absolutely sure, Mr. Minister, that there are no negotiations going on between say, the department officials in Agriculture and the federal people to say, look at, we'll work out something, basis this payment that we owe back to '88, if you do something in '92 because this is a very large sum of money.

I know you said you don't keep track of him very closely but, you know, isn't it a possibility that that is a very good negotiating point, that the crop drought assistance program from 1988 could be mitigated in some way and we work in something for '92?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Clearly if there was a negotiation, and I suspect there will be some . . . in fact I know there will be some discussions, we'd be prepared to consider anything. If the federal government wants to forgive the 13 million . . . I shouldn't say the word "forgive" because it really was a considerable amount of off-loading by the federal government onto the provincial taxpayer, is why we're paying the 13 million, almost 14 million, for five years.

If the federal government in those discussions offers that up as something as part of those discussions, we'd be more than prepared to look at it, as we were prepared to look at anything. We're reasonable; we're not

entrenched.

The only thing that I want to make it very clear that we are going to be very firm on is the budget target. I don't think there's an option there. There's not an option there for all of the reasons which have been discussed in this House many times before. We have credit ratings which has dropped and I hate to even talk about credit ratings because I don't like to be dependent on New York credit rating agencies or New York financiers. It's something that goes against the grain, all the kind of things that make me proud to be a citizen of Saskatchewan. But we face that reality.

Our budget target is firm. Where some adjustments in the budget are made or will be made or have been made, they are being made within the context of the budget, and funding has to be found within the budget which is already there and redirect it from other expenditures. That's the rule of thumb which, as the Minister of Finance, I'm trying to apply to all of the departments. Because it is important in order for us to rebuild Saskatchewan and get the finances under control, is to set budgets and stick with them.

Well there may be exceptions in extreme emergencies. If the whole North broke out in a forest fire, we couldn't do anything about that. We'd have to fight the forest fire. Fortunately there's been enough rain up there this year that that's not the case. I just hope it continues to rain.

Mr. Swenson: — But you see, Mr. Minister, you're not being straight with the folks about the goods. We have had changes here even since we last met in this exercise.

Your interest rates have continued to drop. The interest rates that you pay on various things have continued to drop. You have admitted in this Assembly that you did very well on the Saskatchewan savings bonds; on a half a billion dollars, you did very well.

But your response to me is that I'm not willing to try and negotiate about this nearly \$14 million that we owe the feds from a past program. I'm not willing to negotiate anything with the offer that's on the table — I won't even have my officials look at the federal offer on the table. And that above all, my budget number is more important to me than perhaps thousands of families in this province who have the potential to be devastated by drought.

And I don't care about you, Mr. Farmer at Star City. I don't care about you, Mr. Farmer at Meadow Lake. I don't care about you because my budget number is sacrosanct. And even though I'm making some gains in certain areas through circumstances beyond my control, I don't care. You can simply dry up and blow away because my budget number is the most important thing in the world right now.

Well, Mr. Minister, I find that kind of an unfeeling response to people that may be, and some already are, in a very desperate situation. And I'd like you to comment on that.

(1545)

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I have said consistently, and the same thing as the Minister of Agriculture and the Premier and others have said, that we are prepared to discuss with the federal government the proposal which they have made. And that's where we're at now.

For the purposes of the interim supply, there is no money that is required for those purposes because there is no agreement of any kind. We simply have a proposal by Mr. McKnight in the form of a letter in which he makes no reference to forgiveness or delay of the drought payments, which the member opposite suggests may be one of the things we should talk about. There were no details or specifics.

Clearly, what one of the things that clearly comes out of that is that it would be an additional cost to Saskatchewan taxpayers, both farmers and the province overall taxpayer, of \$53 million. That's what that offer of Mr. McKnight's of \$39 million means to the Saskatchewan taxpayer as a whole. Surely that's something that needs to be discussed with the federal government before we agree to it.

But for the purpose of interim supply, it's not relevant because nothing will be required, if anything is required, in the month of August for which this interim supply Bill is being provided.

Mr. Swenson: — Well I don't subscribe to that, Mr. Minister. You're here with an interim supply Bill that says in the Department of Agriculture and Food you're over the one-twelfth by nearly \$14 million; that's a lot of money. And I'm saying to you, sir, that that very well could be an item that is on a negotiating agenda. But you insist on telling this Assembly that there's nothing going on, that not one official in your department has lifted a pen and even analysed the federal offer, and yet you're going to write them a cheque for 14 million bucks.

And I don't accept that, Mr. Minister. You have people in planning, and you have people in research. You have people that do contingency planning all the time. You have people that borrow in marks and switch them to francs and switch them to American dollars and switch them back into Canadian funds so that you come out ahead of the game. And they're doing that months in advance. So don't stand here, Mr. Minister, and tell me that there's nothing going on in your department, there's nothing going on in government as far as analysis and looking at various alternatives.

At the bottom line, Mr. Minister, we had a phone call from an RM (rural municipality) councillor in an RM north of Star City who said there's been 5,000 acres worked down in one RM division. An RM division, if you have forgotten since your days as the member from Humboldt, is six miles by six miles. Now that's a lot of crop, Mr. Minister, in one RM division. I suspect that indicates significant hurt. So don't tell me that there isn't a problem and that somebody in your department hasn't been thinking about it. If they haven't, then I suggest you maybe go look for some people that will. That is a significant problem, Mr. Minister.

Would you please tell the Assembly what analysis and planning you people have done in regards to this situation.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, clearly the negotiations and discussions that will take place will be taking place with the Minister of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture, and that's where it's at now.

As far as . . . I know that there has been some correspondence. I believe there has been some correspondence between the provincial minister and the federal minister, but that's the extent to which any discussions have taken place.

We've indicated to the federal government we're prepared to talk. We're prepared to negotiate. The Minister of Agriculture will be doing those negotiations. Obviously when he feels it is necessary, he will consult with his colleagues in the cabinet of which I am part as the Minister of Finance. But until he is ready to do that, all I can say is that that's where the responsibility for this will lie.

Mr. Swenson: — Okay, Mr. Minister. And what day in August are you going to write a cheque to the federal government for \$13,979,400?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Normally that's done in the third week.

Mr. Swenson: — Normally that's at the end of the third week. Would the minister care to be a little more specific so that this House kind of knows where we might have a negotiating time line involved?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — We don't have that kind of information. If the member wants, I'll provide him that information. I don't know if there is a precise date but the general area is the third week. If there is a precise date, we'll find out and I'll let you know.

Mr. Swenson: — Well I think, Mr. Minister, given this amount of money that you're going to pay out of this interim supply Bill before you have a budget passed in this province, of \$14 million nearly, to the federal government — and your Minister of Agriculture is off doing something, we hope, in regards to the federal offer — that we should have some continuing follow-up on this item from yourself because you're the minister that writes the cheques here. In all due respect to the minister from Rosetown-Elrose, I don't know as he writes cheques this big to the federal government.

So I would think that you would want to keep the Assembly informed as this cheque date gets closer and closer, what the process and the negotiations are, and maybe some of the data that your department is putting forward to . . . All I'm asking, Mr. Minister, is some simple analysis that I'm sure someone in your department has done.

Given the federal offer of nearly 40 million bucks and given the structure that is in place, what would be the overall financial commitment of the province of Saskatchewan if all of the present criteria are in place and that commitment would lever X amount of dollars? Can

the minister just at least give us that?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I've already answered that. The federal government talks about their \$39 million. The total cost of a province would be \$53 million — 23 million of that which the provincial government will have to put up.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, you said the total cost would be \$53 million, of which the government would put up 23. How does that square?

An Hon. Member: — Pardon me?

Mr. Swenson: — You said the total cost to the province would be \$53 million, of which your share would be 23. How does that work?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — It's a combination of treasury and the farmers.

Mr. Swenson: — But, Mr. Minister, I must have missed something here. I understand the agreement says that the farmers don't put any money up, that it's done out of the future cash returns from the program which can go as far as November 1993, Mr. Minister. Is that correct? Do I understand that correctly?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Once again I'm getting into a debate which really should belong with the Minister of Agriculture who will have the particulars on this. But in general terms, I can respond in some ways. The way it works — and I think the member knows this — is the costs are at 33 per cent farmers, 25 per cent the province, and 42 per cent federal government.

Mr. Swenson: — No, no. Mr. Minister, that's not the question I asked. We're back to the analysis now on the federal offer, the recent federal offer that we're talking about now. And I asked you a clear question in that regard. Are the contributions from the farmer to be paid up front, or can they be deferred to a later date?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, the offer by the federal government, to the extent that it's a legitimate offer, is that the federal government will put up \$39 million. The province of Saskatchewan will put up \$23 million. They're forgetting the \$500 million of third line of defence which was committed to two years ago. So in our opinion there is a lot of room here to talk to the federal government about.

Now when it comes to the farmers, because the system is under the GRIP program, normally the farmers would have to pay 33 per cent. That's the way the GRIP formula works. The member knows that. That's all I can say on that. That's the kind of offer that's there, Mr. Chairman.

The Minister of Agriculture will be discussing with the federal government what that is all about. And until those discussions start, there's nothing more I can add. I can only continue to say what has been said here in the House during question period which I have said already. We're prepared to talk to the federal government. We're going to remind them about their commitment. We're going to ask them all kinds of questions about what kind of

arrangements can be there. We're quite open. But those discussions are only beginning or about to begin.

Mr. Swenson: — But you see, Mr. Minister, that's the problem that we have here. As I said, we had a phone call from an RM councillor, and in one division, 5,000 acres worked down. Now, Mr. Minister, the crop's already black; it's summer fallow. It's done. It's toast, okay? And you're only starting to talk.

And I guess, Mr. Minister, we find some difficulty that the reaction time is so small when your Minister of Agriculture and your Premier trundled off to Ottawa with a whole bunch of folks in tow last fall and said we're going to come back with the dough, you know; we're making a commitment.

I was in the Agridome that day when I saw the premier-elect stand up and say, boys we're going to go to Ottawa, and we're coming home with the money. And, Mr. Minister, I haven't seen any money, and I haven't seen anybody paying any attention to the problem. And that's the problem, Mr. Minister.

Now back to what we were discussing, because we've got a cheque going to the federal government on approximately August 20 for 14 million bucks. And the feds have an offer on the table, as we understand now, of about \$39 million, and it involves 23 million from the province. And it also involves a whole bunch of Saskatchewan farmers, that my quick arithmetic here says, stand to benefit about two-thirds of a hundred million dollars.

Now, Mr. Minister, this is the five . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the minister says that at some point in time the farmer will have to pay his share, and I agree with that. But you see, Mr. Minister, at present those people with those 5,000 acres worked down in that one RM, that one division, are out 40 bucks an acre, Mr. Minister. And you know what, Mr. Minister, their share of the federal offer, even though they might have to pay something after harvest, is a lot more than they're going to get right now. And that's our problem, Mr. Minister.

And we need you to put that in more perspective for us about how these people are going to deal with that. Because you're going to write a cheque to the feds here pretty darn quick for 14 million bucks, and we want to know what this negotiation and this process is about. Because you, sir, will write the cheques; it won't be the minister from Rosetown-Elrose.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, this has got nothing to do with interim supply. And you may want to make some judgement on that, but I simply want to respond to the member this way. The offer of the federal government only came on Friday. The provincial government responded on Monday indicating that we were prepared to discuss with the federal government what their offer was. The \$14 million, which is in the interim supply for August, is there that has to be paid because of an agreement signed between the former government and the federal government.

The discussions on the federal proposal will be taking

place as soon as the federal government is ready. If there's any delay, it won't be because of the Minister of Agriculture of Saskatchewan. We have indicated that very clearly, that we're ready to discuss with the federal government their offer. And we stand ready to do that.

(1600)

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to pursue this line of question with respect to helping out farmers. The federal offer is consistent with '91-92 GRIP, which you're familiar with, and you seem to be so afraid of. And in the letter that went to all the Saskatchewan farmers, the minister points out that they're prepared to really help farmers pick up an additional coverage after harvest.

And I think it's important to point out, Mr. Minister, that — and you would be familiar coming from the Hudson Bay area — what that would mean to a person. And in the letter — and I'll just quote so that you know — it says:

On the timing, the assistance will be based on the '92 yield of each individual producer. This feature, coupled with the need to fix a maximum program budget related to the premium savings identified under point one, requires all yield information to be collected prior to issuing the payments.

And here's the important part:

Yield measuring could take until December or later, depending on the timing of harvest, the number of individuals who might qualify, the speed of the yield verification, etc. As a result, payments will not be made until well after harvest, likely January 23 or later.

Then it goes on and says, you can sign up late.

A deadline is essential to facilitate identifying those potential participants and collecting yields. A deadline of, say, November 1 should allow producers sufficient time to have harvested their crops or have a reasonable idea that their yield will be low enough to potentially qualify for assistance.

Now, Mr. Minister, given that fact, which I think you'd acknowledge is a pretty interesting offer from any government, to say, you've got your harvest, you found out in Star City or in Tisdale, or in Hudson Bay, Nipawin, Meadow Lake, Prince Albert, that you had a drought or you've had a frost, you've had serious production problems. After the harvest you can go apply and get in on this relationship which you talk about, Mr. Minister, that's in the letter: producers pay one-third, province pays 25 per cent, and Canada 41 per cent. The farmer knows that he's got a crop failure. He can apply, he doesn't have to pay any premiums at all, and he can pick up an additional potential \$40 an acre.

Don't you think, Mr. Minister, that you could seriously look at a federal offer that allows somebody, in essence, to collect fire insurance on their home, only after they've

had a fire, and they don't have to pay a premium up until that point. But if you've had a fire, then you can go get insurance and fire insurance will pay for the house. Farmers are telling us in the north-east, the deep south-central, the north-west, that this is an offer that you can't afford to turn down because it gives you the real possibility of protecting yourself and not paying any premiums.

If you can get access to that kind of money, only costing you \$23 million, don't you think, Mr. Minister, that you could seriously consider it?

The Chair: — Order, order, order. Order. I'm going to suggest that the committee may want to recess so that members can continue their discussion.

Member from Quill Lakes . . . Before the Minister of Finance rises to answer, I want to ask members to come to order. If you want to ask questions, I ask you to stand in your place and be recognized, and we'll recognize you, and you can put questions to the minister. I cannot tolerate, as a Chair, members continuing to interrupt those who put questions.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have said since this discussion began that the federal government has indicated that they think they have an offer — I shouldn't say . . . I should not be unfair — that they have an offer.

We have said to the federal government, we are prepared to discuss it. We responded as early as Monday after the federal government indicated their offer on Friday. I think that that's pretty expeditious. And that's where this thing is now.

The Minister of Agriculture, who will be able to respond to the specifics of this, is leading these discussions with the federal government. Surely the member from Estevan wouldn't suggest that we should just jump every time the federal government says something or makes an offer. That would be quite irresponsible. We want to talk to the federal government to see what kind of a deal we can get from the federal government which has a major responsibility here. That's where we're at.

Mr. Devine: — That's fair enough, Mr. Minister. You've just said time and time again — and I've been listening — where you will not move from your target. But when you've got an opportunity to protect people and you can lever money to a very large extent, then we want to know and farmers want to know whether you're going to seriously consider it.

I want to read you a little bit more of the offer so that you know what farmers are talking about. This is in the letter that goes to the farmers from the federal minister, Bill McKnight — the federal government, that is:

We are prepared to contribute about \$40 million towards a Yield Protection Plan which would provide increased yield coverage for Saskatchewan farmers for 1992/93. This contribution represents the funds saved on the federal share of your premiums because of

Saskatchewan's changes to the program.

So the federal government has said that it saved \$40 million because the NDP government in Saskatchewan changed the program. They are prepared to put up that \$40 million, regardless of the fact that you changed the program, to help farmers after harvest.

This offer is being made with two conditions.

First, the Saskatchewan government must share the cost of providing additional yield protection for producers, in exactly the same way as other provinces do.

So all he's asking, Mr. Minister, is, you saved the federal government 40 million because you changed the program. He says, I'll put it back in the kitty. But I'll even do it after harvest so only those that have a drought can get in on it. And I have a condition — that you co-operate just like other provinces do.

Second, the province must work with the federal government and other provinces to design a program which ensures this situation does not arise again next year.

So all he's asking you is: one, on the money that you have saved the federal government, he says, I'll put it in, we can do it after harvest; number two, I just ask you to co-operate like other provinces. And the second thing is, would you just negotiate for a better GRIP program in the future with other provinces?

Now it goes on to say, and I think this is interesting because you've mentioned it: "The Third Line of Defence Process:"

When special farm income situations have arisen in the past, the Third Line of Defence process has helped federal and provincial governments and your producer representatives to identify them, and to design solutions. For instance, through the Third Line of Defence process, we identified the need to provide farmers with transitional assistance — through (and I point this out, Mr. Minister) through the Farm Support and Adjustment Measures (FSAM I and II) — while GRIP and the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) were starting up.

Between 1990 and 1992, Mr. Minister, over \$500 million was delivered directly to Saskatchewan producers by this process through FSAM I (farm support adjustment measures) and FSAM II.

Third line of defence up to 1992, over 500 million to Saskatchewan farmers . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. Why is the member for Regina Rosemont on his feet?

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Chairman, I want to rise on a point of order in regards to the line of questioning. The Minister of Finance has already indicated that there is no allocation of supply indicated in this Bill in terms of previous

questions relating to payments for GRIP or for third line of defence or any matters like that. And I'd ask for your ruling, sir, to indicate that supply is for those sums designated in the motion, as opposed to talking about everything else under the sun.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to respond to the point of order raised by the member from Regina Rosemont. As the member knows, there is a substantial over amount of dollars that the minister is asking for in this interim supply, and when we get to discussing agriculture as an important aspect in this province and I don't believe the member has a point of order.

The Chair: — Members must realize that this is not the appropriate place to get into detailed questions on the operation of specific departmental programs.

The purpose of interim supply is to grant money for the operation of government departments and programs on an interim basis, while reserving to the Legislative Assembly the right to complete the detailed review of estimates at a later time. And for this reason, members must reserve their detailed questions on estimates and government financial policy for the regular review of the main estimates.

Those are rulings that have been made consistently in this House over the years when the matter has been raised whether or not questions about detailed programs are in fact in order.

And so I remind members of those rulings and ask them to bear those rulings in mind and to make their questions appropriate to the matter of interim supply and not get into an examination of detailed government . . . or detailed examination of government programs because members will have that right and opportunity to do that during estimates and also in other venues.

So I find the point of order well taken.

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't need the detailed specifics. We want the overall general approach to an offer that could mean hundreds of millions of dollars. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, in your analysis that you've sent over here, Agriculture and Food requests \$12,814,400 more than the one-twelfth. That's maybe a detail, maybe it isn't, but it's quite a bit of money, \$12 million plus.

The Canadian crop drought assistance program needs another \$13,979,400 in payments. Now that's quite a bit, Mr. Chairman, and that's made out to Crop Insurance. So just in a general sense, Mr. Chairman, we want to know what the minister and the Minister of Agriculture have in mind for crop insurance generally, because we have some big policy decisions to be made by that minister and the cabinet and the NDP here with respect to agriculture that could affect one-twelfth as we . . . One bit of crop insurance is 13 million. Well the minister says, no. You handed it to me, and it says here, Agriculture and Food requests 12 million more than the one-twelfth.

So I'm asking about general policy in agriculture because the federal government has offered \$500 million now in

third line of defence for Saskatchewan, and we've already received it. It's made another offer. And if you say you're negotiating and, Mr. Chairman, it's just negotiating, if it costs you \$23 million to help farmers kick this into gear, we want to know whether you'll take that seriously because it will affect not only the overall budget, but it will affect your estimates, because this could be consummated in July or August, and we want to know.

I've read this general line of the approach by the federal government because it could mean hundreds of millions of dollars. We don't need to know the detail. It's not about detail, it's about your approach in a philosophical sense about how Crop Insurance and the Saskatchewan government could contribute so you could kick into a gear a program for farmers in Saskatchewan financed mostly by the federal government.

Could the minister answer that in general terms, given the fact that we've already received \$500 million from the federal government, and they've got an offer now on the table that would give us much more.

The Chair: — Why is the Associate Minister of Finance on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I wanted to raise a point of order with you, Mr. Chairman. It struck me that the member from Rosemont raised the point of order; you made a ruling. The member from Estevan has carried on as if no ruling were ever made. This is precisely the line of questioning which he was in before the ruling was made. It strikes me that he is blatantly ignoring your ruling.

The Chair: — Order. I heard the Leader of the Opposition try to confine his remarks to the question of one-twelfth, but then followed it up by asking the minister to generally comment on policy. The question remains that, is this the appropriate place to be examining government programs and policy? And I would again say that it is not; that the purpose of interim supply is to determine whether the one-twelfth that the government is asking for is an appropriate sum — whether there should be more, whether there should be less.

It's the Leader of the Opposition, indeed all members have the right to in other settings in this House, in estimates and otherwise, to ask the minister and other ministers about policy questions. And therefore I find that the point of order by the Associate Minister of Finance is appropriate.

(1615)

Mr. Devine: — I just want to get this straight so that we understand what's happening here. You're saying that we can't talk about policy in interim supply, and we can't talk about specifics in interim supply . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm just asking for clarification.

So if I can't talk about what the one-twelfth might impact . . . It's one-twelfth of what, Mr. Chairman? One-twelfth of a crop insurance policy that could influence a lot of lives in Saskatchewan. I'm just asking. I'm not on specifics. I said, one-twelfth of agricultural policy . . . one-twelfth of what you might do in a relationship that could cost

hundreds of millions of dollars.

Now not necessarily you agree or not, but we could get in a conversation of your general approach to what it might be. We have, Mr. Chairman, the Agriculture and Food requests here, according to the minister, is \$12 million out because of crop insurance.

An Hon. Member: — Where does it say that?

Mr. Devine: — Well it says here, Agriculture and Food requests, \$12,814,400 million more than the one-twelfth for Canadian crop drought assistance program. Now that's drought and drought assistance. And Agriculture and Crop Insurance are significant expenditures.

And we're asking, one-twelfth of a policy . . . I mean, it's one-twelfth of what? We need to know generally where you're going with one-twelfth.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — . . . question related to the interim supply Bill, and I want to straighten out the member from Estevan's confusion. He has totally confused himself or deliberately has done so by not understanding what's here. He takes a word, and then into that word he reads all kinds of things that don't exist.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, that for Crop Insurance the request is for one-twelfth of the amount that is been budgeted in this budget. The item . . . and therefore there was no information provided to the members opposite because there was nothing in excess of one-twelfth. The item that the member refers to is in the Department of Agriculture and Food. It has nothing to do with Crop Insurance. It has everything to do and it only has something to do with an agreement which he signed, as the minister of Agriculture, two or three years ago with the federal government, 1988, committing the provincial government to pay the federal government \$14 million a year for five years.

No relationship to Crop Insurance whatsoever, Mr. Chairman, every relationship with an agreement that he signed as the minister of Agriculture requires us to pay the federal government. The two are not even related.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Minister, by the time we get to estimates, you know that this money will already be spent. And I say to the minister and I say to the chairman: Mr. Chairman, if I could just have a point, is that I believe that we have a right to grievance before supply. And grievance before supply is asking questions about what the government has in mind before it spends the money.

We haven't passed the budget, Mr. Chairman. And grievance before supply is saying, what's your policy? General policy outlines? I don't need to know all your specifics about highways and health care and the wellness program, and I don't expect you to know. But your general approach to health and highways and agriculture, as Minister of Finance, is pretty important before . . . So we can discuss grievance before supply. Maybe we'll find out you don't know what you're doing, or you have no flexibility to negotiate at all. And that's fairly relevant.

So I'm just asking the minister then, in the light of the fact that he's going to pay Agriculture an extra \$12 million . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . from Agriculture. Agriculture's going to be paid . . . is going to pay the federal government another \$12 million. Can he foresee, in a general sense, Crop Insurance participating in a program that comes out after harvest to help farmers that have been hurt because of drought and frost?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, no, not in this interim supply.

Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Minister, just so that the farmers know that when you are putting together your plan for Saskatchewan, this is one-twelfth of what's coming down, you're saying it is not under consideration. There's no financial consideration for it. It's not under consideration, and it's set there, and we're not going to consider it.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, that's not what I said. The member wants to put wrong interpretations on what I said. I said that in this interim supply Bill there is no consideration. There is no provision because there is no kind of an agreement.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Minister, obviously if you make the decision to participate, it's going to affect one-twelfth of whatever happens. Are you seriously going to give this consideration? Would you acknowledge in the event that you participate in this that it's going to have an impact? And could you tell farmers that you were seriously considering it and that it will affect your overall budget? Can you acknowledge that to the farmers of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Chairman, just trying to keep in keeping with your ruling because I want to stay within keeping of the ruling, within this interim supply Bill there will be no impact. This interim supply Bill very clearly spells out the amount of monies being provided to each of the departments. We're prepared to stand by that. There will be nothing that will change.

If at some future time there is some change, we'll discuss it at the appropriate time, and there will be such a report to the legislature, and one of those times might be the estimates themselves. But right now we're considering interim supply, and the things that the member talks about are not relevant to interim supply.

Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Minister, you are prepared to talk about the bonds, the savings bonds the Saskatchewan people participated in, in some detail and the effect that that might have on a twelfth?

You're prepared to talk about lower interest rates and the effect that that has on the estimates. But you're not prepared to talk about a big number in the province of Saskatchewan which is agriculture, drought, federal offers, and how it might affect your interim supply.

You say no, it has no effect. How can you go on and talk about lower interest rates, about bonds, about combinations of changes in the economy — and freely talk about them in specifics — and yet you're not

prepared to talk about agriculture even in a general sense when it could cost you money. It could cost the farmers money. And there's a big impact, potentially large impact that you just found out here from the Canadian crop drought assistance program — a \$12 million impact in one-twelfth? Why can't you talk about agriculture if you can talk about those other issues?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, strictly speaking by the rules of this House, I suppose one could say that it is not appropriate to talk about those other issues, but I think you can defend it this way. The Saskatchewan savings bonds are a past event. They have taken place; it's a *fait accompli*. What the member wants to talk about is a hypothetical situation for which there is nothing that's been transpired and has nothing to do with this interim supply Bill. Therefore it's out of order.

Mr. Devine: — Well here's a couple of past events, and maybe you could get into this. We tried it the last time we were in these estimates, and you said you could go get the information. And you would, last time we were here.

You said on June 23 that the gross revenue insurance plan by the federal government would cost Saskatchewan 2 to 300 million extra dollars and that would have to come from the taxpayers. It says, quote:

Saskatchewan does not have the \$200 million to \$300 million extra we would be at risk for by going back to 1991 GRIP.

That's in the past. Now that's past. And it is relevant, and it's significant here. Now your own estimate for Crop Insurance — you have and I hear — is \$108.604, and you've got one-twelfth in there for interim supply. At least the last time around was \$9 million. All right. You have an estimate of 300 million it could cost you in '91 GRIP, and you said this one's going to cost you 108. You're only \$200 million out. Have you squared that circle yet with Crop Insurance, Agriculture, and other people because you put out the release?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, this is interim supply. The budget for Crop Insurance is clearly spelled out in the budget. We're asking for one-twelfth. That's there. The amount budgeted for the GRIP program is also in the budget, and that's there. And we're asking for one-twelfth in Crop Insurance and nothing more and nothing less.

Mr. Devine: — Okay, we've made no progress since from the last time you were here. You said you would go get the information that would specific . . . Crop Insurance designed it, but you said it came out of Finance, and it was on your letter-head.

So again, I stand here with two estimates at what it might cost. And this is in the past. And it's general. And it could make quite a difference to one-twelfth. So you see why we're a little worried about your one-twelfth is that your estimates range by 2 to 300 per cent — 2 to 300 per cent on the variations.

Now on top of that, and I'm sure the Chairman understands, we have a federal offer that would allow you

to adjust these numbers. And if you adjusted those numbers to the federal offer, which you say you're negotiating, I'm sure the people in the Legislative Assembly would like to know what you might have for a number. So both of these are in the past, and there is a 300 per cent variation. You've got a new third number in there now that could affect the one-twelfth. You're out by \$12 million from the last time you were here.

Couldn't you give us a little bit more information on how you might negotiate for the farmers and what it might cost you?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, relevant to interim supply, the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance, the total to be voted is \$108,647. One-twelfth allocation for that is \$9,054. That's what's being requested in this interim supply Bill which is before the House today.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, clearly, when we started this process, we're into the fifth one of these. We've had two special warrants, and this is the third interim supply Bill. And when the Leader of the Opposition says grievance before supply, I think the questions that we're asking in this committee are very valid. We have some very serious concerns from Saskatchewan people. We've got people facing devastation in the farm sector, and this minister wants to hide behind the narrowness of this thing.

Mr. Minister, I have before me today a document, the Farm & Food Report out of Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food. It was issued today, so I suspect it's part of the twelfth that you're looking for in ag and food. And just to give you a flavour of the difference between your government and some of the questions we're asking, I'm going to read this into the record. This one talks about chickens. It says:

One of the most common fatal diseases of young broiler chickens may be easily diagnosed by a producer: typically, the dead bird is found on its back.

But that's the only simple aspect of the disease. Even its name may present confusion. It may be called acute death syndrome, ADS, sudden death syndrome, SDS, heart attack, flip-over disease, (or, Mr. Minister, Mr. Minister, maybe this applies to your department) or dead in good condition.

Or dead in good condition. Mr. Minister, this is what your department is putting out with the one-twelfth that you're asking us to okay in this legislature. Mr. Minister, a dead chicken is a dead chicken. I don't know how you get to be a dead chicken in good condition.

Now you're asking us, you're asking us as an opposition to okay a minister's expenditure that's doing this kind of garbage when we've got municipal divisions with 5,000 acres of crop worked down in them already.

(1630)

You have been given an offer, and all we're trying to find out, Mr. Minister — given the fact that you're going to pay

the federal government \$14 million on or about August 20 of this year as part of this Appropriation Bill — some of the negotiations, some of the studies that you've done, some of the positioning that economically this province will have to get into. And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that is important to Saskatchewan people — not whether a dead chicken is in good condition or not. And your minister is spending the taxpayers' money on this kind of garbage.

Now, Mr. Minister, let's talk about something serious.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I'd be pleased to talk about something serious. And I want to talk about this serious topic. And that is the need for this legislature to do some serious business.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I think, Mr. Chairman, it is clear — and I think the members opposite understand — that the public of Saskatchewan is tired and fed up with the kind of display which the member from Thunder Creek has just shown in this House, the purpose of which has got nothing to do with interim supply. It's got nothing to do with interim supply, got nothing to do with dealing with the issues that are before this legislature which is the people's business. It's got everything to do with wasting the time of this House, which the opposition has done since May 7 when this legislature budget was introduced.

Now I'm not going to speculate about the reasons, Mr. Chairman, and I'm not going to make any accusations. I could say that because the opposition does not work hard enough to do their research. I'm not going to say that. That's for the public to judge. I'm not going to say it's got something to do with some members of the opposition who simply want to waste time in this House for no good reason.

All I'm saying, Mr. Chairman, is once again the member's comments and the member's question is out of order because it's not relevant to interim supply.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, something else that is deadly serious that is covered in this Appropriation Bill, because it is paid on a monthly basis, is the question of legal costs for the Government of Saskatchewan. You were involved in a legal proceeding against Saskatchewan farm families over this issue. You're asking for one-twelfth for the Department of Justice in those legal proceedings. Would you tell the Assembly what the costs are?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I can tell the legislature that we're providing one-twelfth of . . . as is the interim supply requirement. As to the specific costs of any particular program or expenditure, the Minister of Justice will have to respond.

Mr. Swenson: — Well you see, Mr. Minister, that's the problem. We don't have a budget passed. We keep coming back in here on a monthly basis. Your government makes policy shifts all the time. You make policy shifts which obviously influence the spending. We don't have any estimates passed, and yet you want to hide behind . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well we got one or

two. We got two.

You want to hide behind the narrowness of this procedure all the time. I mean, Mr. Minister, theoretically we're going to go through 12 of these things between special warrants and interim supply. And at the end of the day we won't be able to ask any questions because, well you got to ask this guy; you got to ask that guy. What's problem with coming through with some answers? This House has been in session for four months, Mr. Minister.

I mean you're expecting us to approve money in this interim supply, one-twelfth of the Minister of Justice, so that you can go and fight farm families in court. And you say that we have to grant you this money because the Minister of Justice isn't here for us to ask; therefore we're going to grant you this money so you can turn around and do that. And I don't think that's appropriate, Mr. Minister, considering that we're five months down the road and we don't have a budget when you promised this Assembly that wasn't going to be the case.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, the member just exposed what really he's up to. The point of the matter is that the Department of Justice estimates have already been before this committee, and the members opposite did not ask this question. They had . . .

An Hon. Member: — They'll be back.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well I agree with the member from Estevan who says that the estimates of Justice will be back. Absolutely, and he should be making sure that he asks this question when that department is here since he and his colleagues failed to do so, even though this was the paramount issue in their mind when the Department of Justice was here just a few days ago.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you would on your one-twelfth give us a little bit of information on your sales tax increases in terms of you've added a point to sales tax, which is about a 15, 16 per cent increase. How many items did you raise the sales tax on, and how many items did you reduce it or take it off of when you decided not to harmonize with the GST? Could you give us the number of items that you raised the taxes on and the number you reduced it on?

The Chair: — I find the question is not in order. The member is putting a question which can be put during estimates. The member has a right to expect an answer during estimates. But it's not a question that the Chair deems appropriate for consideration of interim supply.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, I'm just trying to get at the general attitude towards the one-twelfth here. The Minister of Finance has increased taxes. And we talked about that the last time he was before it and there was no problem. How did you degenerate the money? And he says well, it was important for us to raise sales tax but not harmonize.

Now that's part of . . . it's part of his whole budget and this is the interim supply for that and I'm asking, just asking how much money did you raise or do you forecast to raise through the sales tax increase which was about a 15 or 16

per cent increase? How much money do you expect to raise from that? And it must be reflected here in the one-twelfth . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and the minister says that budget estimates aren't in here, so that he doesn't know how much money's in here. So if he hasn't got any tax revenue in here, could he explain where the money comes from then.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, I will answer this question keeping in mind the ruling. This Bill does not deal with revenues or tax revenues or tax provision. In this legislature we have had for several days all of the questions which the member just asked answered when we considered the amendments to the E&H (education and health) tax Bill.

So those questions have been addressed. And this is simply a repetition and a delaying tactic by the member from Estevan. The question is out of order, Mr. Chairman, because we're dealing here with supply which is for expenditures. We're not dealing with revenue or Bills pertaining to revenue.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Chairman, the minister has put forward a budget. Now we're into a second interim supply or third interim supply, and your numbers are different than your budget.

An Hon. Member: — No, they're not.

Mr. Devine: — Well they are. You've got different numbers now than you did a month ago. You've got more . . . You've got changes in interest rates, you've got changes in the savings bond, you've got changes in drought, you've got changes in economic conditions, and they're different.

And we're asking you: has it affected . . . or what's the effect of your sales tax increases on your estimates? This is an interim supply, and we have grievance before supply. Where's your money coming from? Has your estimate of what your 16 per cent increase in sales tax had . . . has it changed at all? Do you have any information that would help us be more confident that your one-twelfth or your two-twelfths or your three-twelfths are any more accurate than they were three months ago?

The Chair: — Order. At present we are not dealing with the estimates. We are debating a resolution as it pertains to an interim supply Bill, an appropriation. We are not voting individual departmental estimates.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Chairman, what a bunch of chickens. This is absolutely ludicrous. The Minister of Finance could bring these things in every month from now to infinity and not answer a question in this House under that type of ruling. We could have taxes going up, taxes going down, interest rates going up, interest rates going down — all sorts of things happening. And the minister expects us not to ask questions?

I mean, Mr. Chairman, theoretically we may be, I don't know, December before we get to his estimates. And so you expect the taxpayer to go through this. The minister wants a charade, and I don't find that acceptable.

I've reviewed *Hansard* over the years; other interim supply Bills went on for days and days and weeks and weeks and weeks.

Mr. Minister, Mr. Minister . . .

The Chair: — Order. Order. Order. I just want to caution the member to not reflect on the ruling of the Chair. If the member has a question with respect to interim supply, he should put the question, but not reflect on the actions or the rulings of the Chair.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, already in this House today we have established that you are in a different fiscal regime than we were a month ago. You talked at great length about the gains made with the Saskatchewan Pension Plan offering. You have talked about lower interest rates. Those, sir, are gains for the province of Saskatchewan. I suspect that your officials are doing things in the international money markets to accentuate those gains.

Now, Mr. Minister, we're just asking you some very general questions about a certain area. If you have gains and you have people in trouble, we want to know how you might match the gains that you've made to the people that are in trouble. And it's very pertinent because we are expending very large sums of money in this twelfth, in the whole area of agriculture.

We are going to write cheques as large as nearly \$14 million. And what we want to know from you is the gains that you've made. We want you to put those in the light of the problem that we've identified to you, and say to this Assembly, that given these gains, this is what our contingency plan is. Could you do that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, the answer to the member is very clear and very simple. There was a budget that has been presented to this Assembly. The one-twelfth request is within the framework of that budget — no changes from the framework of the budget. If the member wants to debate and ask questions about the overall budget and any changes that may be happening because of other changes, the place we will do that is when we consider the estimates for the Department of Finance. And I will be more than happy to provide all of the information that is available.

I was pleased to see that the member from Thunder Creek provided myself, as he did, as others critics have, with a whole list of questions that they want answered. That's very helpful. I can tell the member from Thunder Creek now that we will provide an answer from the Department of Finance to that list of questions. But we will do that when the estimates are considered, where we can talk about the whole framework of the budget.

We can't do that when all we're talking about here is interim supply, which is one-twelfth of that budget. And there is no change, which the member talks about. The member says there's some change. There is no change. Any proposal here is within the framework of the original budget.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Minister, you've already

acknowledged that from month to month the conditions change. You've said that here and you've said it before. Well it is true, Mr. Minister, that you've changed your policies with respect to highways over the last month and rural roads? Have you changed that policy, Mr. Minister, from budget day?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The only change that is a deviation from the one-twelfth has been outlined with information that has been provided, and that is additional money that's provided for highways' maintenance and transportation and rural surface transportation. There is no other . . . that's not a deviation from the budget; that is only a deviation from the normal one-twelfth which is provided in the interim supply Bill.

(1645)

Mr. Devine: — Well it's a deviation in the one-twelfth, then it's a deviation in the budget. It's a deviation. It's changed since your budget and it's changed here. You've just acknowledged it's changed here. Why did you flag it? It's changed. You've acknowledged that the highway budget and the highway policy is changed as a result of the policy decision made by the Minister of Highways. And that can affect your budget; that can affect the twelfth.

The same applies to Indian and Native Affairs. There's been a policy decision made on Indian and Native Affairs since you brought the budget down and since your first interim supply. The minister acknowledged that. There's been a significant policy change in Indian negotiations in the last two months. Will he acknowledge that?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Chairman, no, there have been no changes. This budget for the Department of Highways and this interim supply is for one-twelfth of what was originally budgeted. If there is a change in policy, the Minister of Highways will speak to the change in policy and not the Minister of Finance.

But as the Minister of Finance I'm saying this: that the budget provided to the Department of Highways on May 7 is the budget that is still there, and we're only asking for one-twelfth of that budget, other than the additional amount which is for capital and surface transportation because it's seasonal work, and because of maintenance of highways and transportation because that's seasonal work as well. There is no change other than that.

Mr. Devine: — So you're saying, Mr. Minister, that there is no change in expenditures in Highways as a result of your policy decision in this season, because you've said this is only because of seasonal changes.

Therefore what the minister said in Highways means absolutely nothing in terms of changes here, in terms of the financial contribution to rural communities. It means zero. What he just said in terms, we're going to change our mind; we're going to protect some roads; we're going to do some of these things — means absolutely nothing, or it means somebody else is going to get cut back.

Is that what you're saying? So that we know now he's going to start picking riding and roads and changing

roads. This one-twelfth that you've acknowledged here is only for seasonal stuff and nothing to do with the fact that he said he's going to loosen up and protect rural highways. Is that the fact?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — First of all, no, Mr. Chairman. I do not agree with anything that the member from Estevan has said.

An Hon. Member: — You never do.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I'm simply saying very clearly . . . Well I never do. And are you surprised? The people of Saskatchewan don't either.

Now, Mr. Chairman, all I'm saying is that the Department of Highways was provided a budget. The Department of Highways will be able to answer specific questions about that budget when they get to their estimates, if the opposition ever gets around to them in this Assembly.

Within the framework of that budget we are providing one-twelfth for the one month, plus an additional amount which is — the members have opposite so I won't repeat it — for surface transportation and maintenance. But that's still within the framework of the budget without any change on the expenditure.

Mr. Devine: — That's fair enough, Mr. Minister. Just so we can tell the people across Saskatchewan when they talk to the Minister of Highways, and they're certainly going to get this information, there is no more money in this change of policy. All it is is window dressing. No more money. Because you've just said it is not change, and any changes here are just because of seasonal operations, not because of changes in policy, that we're going to protect rural roads.

Now that's a significant policy statement. And I gather, Mr. Minister, on this one-twelfth you're saying the same thing in agriculture. Despite all the talk and all the protection and all the rest of it, we are not going to give farmers any more assistance because on this one-twelfth that reflects exactly what we said it did, nothing to do with 1991 GRIP or the offer that's coming from the federal government.

So your transportation policy and your agriculture policy, despite the rhetoric, is hollow: no support and no changes. I'm glad you've cleared that up for us, Mr. Minister, because we know that if you're sticking with this and that's your tune, that all the rhetoric to those rural people or anybody else means absolutely nothing because you're not going to change this number, and therefore you're going to have to rob Peter to pay Paul, and we knew that's what it was all about anyway.

You were going to take some money from some place else, and you are not going to make sure that you supply the same number for highways across Saskatchewan, so that in fact you're going to have to support that minister's highways or cut into that NDP minister's piggy bank, take from somebody else. You've got thousands of farmers that you're suing. You're going to have to make sure that you go get their money and go get their land to keep your budget exactly as it is on the twelfth.

And if we go through this in September and October and November as a result of drought or frost or highways being ripped up, you'll say the same thing: no more money for people regardless of any policy decisions that are made whether it's for Indians, native affairs, food banks, growing people on welfare, any of that. This twelfth is staying the same.

And all the rhetoric we hear from the opposition . . . or the government and the people opposite means nothing because you're not going to change your mind. It's one-twelfth, period. I'm glad, Mr. Minister, that you've made that clear because your example on highways is the perfect example we need to take any place across the province.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, on your Highways and Transportation allocation over one-twelfth. I see you have for maintenance of highways and transportation 2.7 million requested because the majority of the activity is performed during the peak period of summer. Your Minister of Highways indicated in his budget that he was going to rip up a thousand kilometres of pavement. I suspect that he would have to do that in the summer. It would be very difficult to do that in the winter-time in this province.

Can you tell us, Mr. Minister, given that the Minister of Highways says he isn't going to rip up that thousand kilometres of pavement now, if there isn't a mistake in the amount of money that's allocated here, because he's got a lot of ripping that he's not going to do now?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well the amount that's been appropriated here or being requested here is the amount that's been requested by the Department of Highways to do their normal surface transportation capital which is in the budget, and the normal maintenance which is also in the budget, which was allocated or announced at least in the budget speech on May 7.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, at some point in there, the costs must have been worked into the budget for the ripping of a thousand kilometres. A ripper is a thing on the back of a cat or a grader that goes along, you know, and it rips big trenches. And that's what you'd have to do to the pavement. And that would cost money, Mr. Minister. And I suspect that that was built into the budget, this ripping.

Now, Mr. Minister, if you're not going . . .

The Chair: — Order, order. Order, order. The member for Thunder Creek is asking a question. We should give him the courtesy of listening to him put his question.

Mr. Swenson: — So, Mr. Minister, what I'm saying to you is, as part of this maintenance override here, we will be out by a thousand kilometres. Now, Mr. Minister, a thousand kilometres is significant. And you can't be asking us for extra money past your one-twelfth when we're out a thousand kilometres of ripping. That just doesn't square, Mr. Minister.

Now you've got to explain that to the House how you can

be out that thousand kilometres of ripping and still want to include that in an overage of one-twelfth. You've got to do that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member wants to look on page 54 of the budget. There's an item here, subvote 16: "Maintenance of Highways and Transportation Facilities" budgeted for '92-93 — \$82,200,300. The Department of Highways is going to manage within that allocation for maintenance. Because when you have a budget, Mr. Chairman, of some \$5 billion of expenditures, surely it is not asking too much of the departments to manage expenditures within their allocations. Sometimes they may have to spend less here and some more there.

But the Department of Highways has indicated that they are prepared to live within that allocation because they simply asked for the one-twelfth, plus what is a normal requirement because of the peak seasons, peak work that is done during the summer seasons for capital and for maintenance. Nothing is changed.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, I'm only asking you to acknowledge two things, okay? You've outlined the total maintenance and repair budget for the Department of Highways. And as part of that maintenance repair, that 80-some million, included in there was a thousand kilometres of ripping, okay?

Now the fact that a thousand kilometres of ripping isn't occurring any more — okay? — means that you've got a different emphasis. Therefore, as part of this 2.7 million that is over must be partially attached to ripping, because we've both agreed that we can't rip in the winter-time. Okay? That means in this province there's only April, May, June, July, August, September, October when you can reasonably rip probably. Okay? And I would guess, Mr. Minister, that that will occur in the months that we're referring to in this over one-twelfth expenditure.

So I want you to tell me what portion of that \$2.7 million that's over the one-twelfth is now . . . should be taken out that was associated with ripping.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, just so that the record does not give a wrong impression because of the exaggerated words the member opposite is using, there was never talk of ripping up any pavement. There was some talk of some roads being converted over time.

The Minister of Highways has announced a change in that policy. But at the same time the member well knows the Minister of Highways said that they would be able to accommodate that within the existing budget, so there is no change to the budget. We're providing one-twelfth of the budget which was provided for the department initially on budget day.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, in all due respect, the Minister of Highways is not the tooth fairy. He does not take his wand and go like this and the 1,000 kilometres instantly turn into gravel. You've got a problem. It's hard. Pavement's hard, Mr. Minister. You have to rip it up to get it back to a gravel road.

Your Minister of Highways had a thousand kilometres reversion back to gravel as part of his budgetary process. And he's changed his mind now, and he said that isn't going to happen. Okay? And you were going to do it this summer because you can't do it in the winter-time because you can't rip it up.

Now somebody, Mr. Minister, was going to have to physically rip that up and grind it up and push the pavement off and put new gravel on, and there's all sorts of things associated with ripping up highways, Mr. Minister. Part of this maintenance budget that is over the one-twelfth had to be tied to that. And I want to know what portion of that was tied to ripping. Now you should be able to figure out . . . you got a thousand kilometres, and you got X number of kilometres total, you know. You must be able to do the arithmetic to tell us what portion of that was associated with it.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, maybe the former government ran government like a tooth fairy, and that's why we have the insurmountable debt that we've got. But the present Minister of Agriculture is going to run his department like a good manager and a good policy maker. And therefore, Mr. Chairman, the budget for the Department of Highways will be managed.

Now I wish the member for Thunder Creek would stop exaggerating and putting wrong information in the House. Because there was no question, there was never any talk of ripping up any roads. There was talk of conversion of roads over an extended period of time. The minister has indicated . . .

An Hon. Member: — Read your budget.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — I have read the budget. In fact I wrote the budget. So I think I know a little more about it than the member from Estevan who probably hasn't read the budget. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, the budget for maintenance is intact, and we are providing here one-twelfth for that budget.

Mr. Swenson: — Okay, Mr. Minister. I'll take you at your word. This magical conversion that was going to occur on the road to somewhere, this magical conversion was done over a period of time. But there was going to be some done this year. The Minister of Highways was very definitive that some of this conversion was going to happen this year — some of this ripping. Okay.

An Hon. Member: — The road to Beechy.

Mr. Swenson: — The road to Beechy, my colleague says, was going to happen this year. And then the people out there said, Mr. Minister, we don't like that. And we're going to write you letters, and we're going to put pressure on you, and we want you to change. We want you to change. And the minister said, I've seen the light, and I am not going to rip up the road to Beechy any more. Okay.

Now you have saved as part of this maintenance budget the ripping of the road to Beechy. And we want you to tell us about that?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Chairman, once again it's

a question . . . if the member opposite wants to deal with specifics, he's going to have to, according to the rules of this committee, deal with it during the estimates of the Department of Highways. But because it is almost 5 o'clock, Mr. Chairman, I just simply want to say that I think because of the nature of the debate here that I would want to move:

That the consideration of this supply resolution be postponed until later this day.

An Hon. Member: — Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: — What is the member's point of order?

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Chairman, I don't believe that that is a legitimate motion that the member has put forward. He has to ask for leave of this Assembly in order to place that type of motion. And I think, Mr. Chairman, you should review that procedure.

The Chair: — I've asked for the motion and once I see it then I'll determine whether the motion is in order.

Order, order. I find the motion by the Minister of Finance to be in order, and I would refer members to Beauchesne, 952. Therefore the motion or the question before the committee is moved:

That the consideration of the supply resolution be postponed until later this day.

Motion agreed to.

The committee recessed until 7 p.m.