

## EVENING SITTING

## SPECIAL ORDER

## APPROPRIATION BILL

**Bill No. 86 — An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 1993**

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before the break for dinner this evening we were discussing the interim supply Bill, and the lack of opportunity for the opposition members to ask questions. The Minister of Finance is asking the people of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, for 400 approximately million dollars to finance the operations of government for the next month.

Normally the procedure is that the government puts forward this interim supply Bill and the opposition is given this opportunity to ask a number of questions on it. That's how it would work under normal circumstances, Mr. Speaker.

This is not normal circumstances. They have imposed closure on it and we are not able to ask questions on it even though we have a number of questions that we would like to ask. We have questions with respect to all the economic development type of projects in this province that we think should be moving forward — Saska Pasta, the AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.) agreement, the upgrader, the Piper deal, Promavia — things of that nature, Mr. Speaker. And we're not able to ask a single question about them.

The Saskatchewan Pension Plan, the government made . . . first of all outright cancelled the plan and then brought it back in a fashion, I guess we would say. And we feel that it's relevant that the opposition has the opportunity to ask the minister questions with respect to the pension plan, and the costs associated with making the changes in the Saskatchewan Pension Plan. We think we should have the right to be able to ask this government what they need the money to operate . . . what their plans are for this amount of money. Is it to ram through unpopular pieces of legislation? Is that what they're going to use the money for, Mr. Speaker? Are they planning on ramming through Bills in other areas like they're planning on doing with the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) legislation? Is that part of where the money is going to go to? Will it also, the money, be directed at legal proceedings against farmers?

They've got a court case pending right now, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the GRIP legislation and the GRIP changes. Is that what they need the money for, so that they can fight the farmers in court? The Minister of Justice, is that what he's using his allocation — one-twelfth — for, to fight the farmers of Saskatchewan in court? I think that's exactly what his plans are. And the Minister of Rural Development, he knows very well that that's what they're going to be using the money for, to fight farmers in court — fight the farmers of Saskatchewan in court.

Will they be using some of the money for ripping up

highways, Mr. Speaker? Is that what they're planning on using the money for? Well apparently they've changed that policy now. They've finally come into the 20th century. They were dragged by the bootstraps into the 20th century by the folks of Saskatchewan and told them, they said to them, we don't want to go back to the '40s or '50s. They didn't want to go back to the '40s or '50s. We want to live in the '90s, and at least have the opportunity to travel on a highway and not on a gravel road. Is there a cost associated with making that change, Mr. Speaker? I think that's a relevant question that the people of Saskatchewan want to know. Is there a cost to deciding to make that change and not rip up the highways? That's something that I think the folks of Saskatchewan would like to know.

Is there a cost associated with closing the rural hospitals — the wellness plan? Sixty-six hospitals have been identified in the province, Mr. Speaker, as hospitals that could be slated for possible closure or conversion. Is there a cost associated with that? And in the ministry of Health's department, we would like to be able to ask some questions with respect to that, Mr. Speaker.

Are they planning on closing rural schools? Is that the next step in this evolution of turning Saskatchewan into a hinterland? Is that the next step, Mr. Speaker?

One of their pieces of legislation we think they need money for will be the amalgamation of rural municipalities, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Rural Development, he said at the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention that he would go ahead with the amalgamation of RMs (rural municipality) whether they liked it or not. Is there a cost associated with that, Mr. Speaker? And we want to know that. We think we should have the opportunity to ask that question to the Minister of Finance. Is there a cost associated with that?

And the minister says ask away. Well we can't. You've put closure on us, sir. We can't ask you questions. We can't ask the Minister of Energy questions. We'd get one opportunity in this interim supply. You want to spend \$400 million of the taxpayers' money, and you don't want one single question asked about it.

The member from Swift Current and the Minister of Energy says, let's get the estimates. Don't you think the people of Saskatchewan have the right to know what you're going to spend \$400 million on, sir? Don't you think they should have that right?

Well, I do. I think they should have that right, Mr. Member from Swift Current, whether you think so or not. I think the people should have the opportunity to know.

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

**Mr. Roy:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd ask leave to introduce a guest.

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Roy:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature, seated in the government gallery, Mr. Miles Kroll, a constituent of mine. He's a farmer out in the constituency. He's in Regina on business. I'd ask all the members to give him a warm greeting. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## SPECIAL ORDER

### APPROPRIATION BILL

#### Bill No. 86 (continued)

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was saying I think that the people of Saskatchewan should have the right to know what this government plans to spend its money on in its Appropriation Bill, interim supply.

Mr. Speaker, I think it'd be interesting to know about the cost of travel of ministers these days. I think it'd be an interesting question. How much did it cost the Minister of Rural Development to fly over the drought zone? How much did it cost? I think that's a relevant question that should be asked of this minister and the Minister of Finance . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . He says again, ask it in estimates. Every single time we get the same answer, ask it in estimates, Mr. Speaker, but when we get to estimates they say ask it in the Committee of Finance.

We don't get an opportunity to ask the questions, Mr. Speaker. We don't get an opportunity to ask questions of these people. They don't want answers. They don't want to give answers to our questions, Mr. Speaker, because they're incriminating, the type of answers that they'll have to give. That's the kind of thing that we're concerned about with respect to closure in this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

What is the cost of the constitutional negotiations that's going on in the province of Saskatchewan? I think it's a relevant question. The Minister of Finance isn't prepared to give us answers on that as well as a number of other topics. Is there any kind of an industrial development strategy that you people have? And there must be a cost associated with that, Mr. Speaker. I am sure there is no industrial development strategy. They simply don't have one, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen this government, Mr. Speaker, go through several series of special warrants. We've seen them . . . This, I believe, is the third interim supply Bill — all of the types of things they would never do. They campaigned during election on it, said they'd never do it. Here we are, third time around, and they're on it again. And yet this time, a little different this time though, Mr. Speaker. They put closure on. We don't get an opportunity to ask them any questions. Interesting developments in Saskatchewan these days — two closure motions in one day, yesterday.

That's the type of thing that we've come to expect from this government, Mr. Speaker. We aren't going to be given the opportunity to ask questions in the future, it's obvious. When we finally get to the legislation dealing

with other things that are of importance to Saskatchewan farm families, we aren't going to be given the opportunity then either, I suspect. They will close off debate when we get to those as well, the same as what they're doing on this, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's important that we were able to ask these types of questions. Are they going to be . . . What is the revenue-sharing grants for urban municipalities? We haven't been able to ask a question about that, Mr. Speaker. Not a single member has been able to ask any questions. And when we do ask them — the member from Arm River asked a number of questions the other day — the Finance minister, what did he do? He sat in his place and wouldn't get up and answer the questions, had all his officials around him. They were all there, all of the smart guys that could have give the answer to him. He didn't ask them for it, though. He just sat in his place and watched the clock. That's what happened, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's incumbent upon this government to open this closure motion up, and give us the opportunity to ask questions with respect to this Bill, Mr. Speaker. It's always been grievance before supply. They want to turn that around — supply before grievance. Mr. Speaker, I don't think that's the way a democracy is supposed to work.

We haven't heard a word from this government, with respect to this interim supply, about the federal offer of farm help — not a single word, Mr. Speaker. We don't have the opportunity to ask them whether they're going to accept it or not in this. They have no plans with respect to drought. They have told us that time and time again.

They have no plans with respect to the court case with the farm families of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. What happens if you lose it, Mr. Rural Development Minister? What happens if you lose it? The judge has identified the cost at \$27.20 per acre in this province as the identifiable hurt. That's on 31 million acres, roughly \$900 million. Is there any provision in this interim supply for losing that, Mr. Speaker?

They arrogantly sit there and say, Mr. Speaker, we have no intention of losing it. We're going to ram the Bill through this legislature at all costs and take the court case away from the farmers, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that those farmers can afford to take these folks to the Supreme Court. I sincerely hope that they drag these people into the Supreme Court and squeeze out that money for Saskatchewan farm families, the money that's most desperately needed, Mr. Speaker.

I think a large part of the motivation for what's going on here in the last several months, Mr. Speaker, is they've got a minister that's on the ropes. He's punch-drunk, Mr. Speaker. He's had time after time after time . . . he's been hit in the head with what's happening on the GRIP legislation. And they realize and they're rallying around him to try and hold him up, Mr. Speaker. And he's wobbling, literally wobbling. The farmers of Saskatchewan see him every day standing in the legislature wobbling and waffling on his answers to the farm families. But, Mr. Speaker, that's why we're faced with this type of thing, of closure after closure after closure, because they're trying to protect the

punch-drunk Minister of Agriculture.

But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the farm families of this province want to see him go down for the technical knock-out. I think that's what they want to see. They want to see him set aside and hopefully they can bring in a Minister of Agriculture with some sense that realizes that you must uphold the law in this province, Mr. Speaker. Must uphold the law, Mr. Speaker. Must uphold the laws with respect to the GRIP contracts, must uphold the laws, particularly the laws of democracy which relate to this interim supply Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite here are chirping about the law. Well the law was broken. They have no respect for farm family contracts, Mr. Speaker. That law was broke. And you people know it as well as I know it. And that's why people are asking us to be able to have the opportunity to ask questions with respect to interim supply. They want to know where this government plans on spending its money. They want to know what their plans are for the future. They want to know whether there's any plans for drought. They want to know whether there's any plans if the possibility of frost exists in this province. In a large part of the province right now the crop is very underdeveloped, two weeks behind approximately, Mr. Speaker. Is there any provisions in it, in the interim supply Bill, for those eventualities? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker, none whatsoever. Not one thing are they planning on doing with this.

(1915)

They're looking towards the federal government. Every opportunity they get, Mr. Speaker, it's the federal government. I'm surprised they aren't looking to the federal government for \$350 or \$400 million for this interim supply. That seems to be their answer for everything else in this legislature, Mr. Speaker. Call on the federal government. Call on the federal government. It's not our responsibility. Call on the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, we had a number of questions with respect to health care that we wanted to ask. We had a number of questions with respect to Education, Rural Development, Agriculture — all questions that I think were relevant to this interim supply, where they're planning on spending their money.

Mr. Minister, or Mr. Speaker, pardon me, I think the fundamental question is grievance before supply. And that's been violated, deliberately violated by this government, Mr. Speaker.

And we can only conclude from that is, what are they trying to hide in all of this? There's \$400 million approximately that they want to spend in this next 30-day period. What is it about that 30-day period does the Finance minister not want us to know? What is he planning on doing that he has to be so secretive that he doesn't want to answer say 50, 60 questions, or something in that order. That's about all that ever is asked in an interim supply motion.

What is so much of a concern to him that he's concerned to the level that he has to impose closure, Mr. Speaker?

What is it that is holding him back from offering us the opportunity to ask questions? Mr. Speaker, we would have only, under the rules that we're currently operating under, would only be able to ask the minister one question a piece. Ten questions to cover every single department of government. And he wouldn't answer them even if we did give them to him.

Mr. Speaker, it's absurd what has gone on here in the last few weeks. The government's simply unwilling and Finance minister's simply unwilling to answer questions. And he realizes it's absurd. In fact he just finished saying he's going to answer that. And we'll be happy to hear his answer to that, Mr. Speaker. Because we agreed what you have done here in the last couple of weeks is absolutely and totally absurd, Mr. Speaker. The Finance minister sat on his hands while we asked questions — a few of our members asked questions — and wouldn't answer them.

Why wouldn't he? He's getting a little bit pinched here the last week or so. They want to get out of here, Mr. Speaker. They've got a couple of weeks left. They feel that they want to try and wrap this sitting of the legislature up. Two more weeks approximately is all they can take. They've got a few members that want to go home and do some harvesting probably. They've got a few members that are looking for some holidays. Half of them haven't been here anyway, Mr. Speaker. Most of the time they've only got approximately 50 per cent of their members here. We don't think that's right, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Shaunavon, he should be interested in asking some questions with respect to interim supply. Is there any problem with drought down in your area, Mr. Member?

**An Hon. Member:** — No.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Oh, that's right. You get down to the southern part of Val Marie, there's no problem with drought down there.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the farmers down in that area would be interested to know what this government's plans are, if there is any provision in this interim supply for drought aid. I'm sure they'd be interested in knowing. Health care, I'm sure, is a pretty big concern down there. I'm absolutely astounded, Mr. Speaker. I'm . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I'm sure that when the member from Kindersley is finished, I hear two or three other people who will be standing up at that time I'm sure who will be participating in this debate. But I would hope that at the same time that they would let the member from Kindersley have his say. He has the floor.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's interesting the member from Shaunavon again pipes up about the concerns down in his area. Interim supply has no provision for drought in it. Interim supply has no provision in it for the concerns of health care in Eastend. And that member should be well aware of those concerns. There was a public meeting down there and 500 people turned out and they were concerned about what this government's plans are for the future with

respect to health care.

And what did he do while he was there? What did he do, Mr. Speaker, while he was there, that member? He stood up and said, you people should get behind your board and help close this hospital. That's what he did, Mr. Speaker. That's what he did, Mr. Speaker. And the people of that area down there, they're pretty concerned about their member, pretty concerned about him.

There's been two of the largest rallies in the last year have been in the member from Shaunavon's . . . and he still stands up . . . well not very often, but he occasionally makes remarks at least across the floor to us from his seat. Never stands and voices his concerns, never asks any questions of the Minister of Finance. I think if I was him I'd be standing up and asking him, have you made any provision for closing of the hospital in Eastend? Have you made any provisions for drought in my area? Have you made any provisions for the critical wildlife habitat down in my area? Is there any provisions with respect to that? Farmers down there and ranchers are closing their property off. They're closing their property off to hunters, Mr. Speaker. There's no provision in the budget for none of that though — absolutely not a nickel.

Mr. Speaker, they're concerned about the environmental Bill down in that area as well, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker. No provision in that in this interim supply for it — not a nickel. Not 5 cents, Mr. Speaker, of money available in this interim supply Bill for anything that is a critical problem right now in this province, Mr. Speaker — not 5 cents.

And even if there was 5 cents dedicated towards anything, we couldn't ask about it. We can't ask about the kinds of concerns that are of interest to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Where's the industrial development strategy? Where's the economic development strategy in this? What are they going to . . . how much money have they been spending on economic development? Have they spent anything? Have they dedicated 5 cents in this Bill towards economic development in this province, Mr. Speaker?

Is there 1 cent allocated towards looking into an AECL agreement? Is there? I don't think there is. Not 5 cents dedicated towards any of that type of thing. Could have brought hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars of investment into this province and they don't want to look at it. They don't want to look at it. They don't want to look at it.

They're more interested, Mr. Speaker, as we've seen in recent days, in regulating spandex. That's why they seem to be interested in these days. They went out to the exhibition and told the exhibition people that that's what they were interested in. And the minister's had to retract a lot of his comments; the minister's had to retract a lot of his comments with respect to that.

But the critical issues that are facing this province right now aren't being addressed, Mr. Speaker. It isn't being addressed in their budget; it isn't being addressed in this interim supply Bill; and it isn't being addressed by the pieces of legislation that they're putting forward. They're

stripping the rights of individuals one after another. One only has to wonder where they're going to stop. One only has to wonder where they're going to stop.

We've gone through environmental legislation; critical wildlife legislation; all of the farm Bill legislation — different types of legislation, Mr. Speaker. They've stripped the rights of public servants. They've taken the rights away from Saskatchewan Pension Plan holders, Mr. Speaker. And all they can chirp about is stripping spandex. That's what they're saying over there right now, Mr. Speaker.

But where is there any allocation towards the critical issues that are facing the province? Where is it? They haven't put anything towards it. If you would consider for a moment putting your collective thoughts into the development of this province and not into trying to strip rights away from individuals in this province, Mr. Speaker, I think we'd be a lot better off, and I think the taxpayers of Saskatchewan would be a lot better off.

They're intent on ramming through legislation, absolutely intent on it, Mr. Speaker. We've seen that in every area. We've seen that in every area, Mr. Speaker. Legal proceedings against farmers — again another infringement on personal rights in this province, Mr. Speaker.

The Saskatchewan Pension Plan, they're taking the . . . they're literally taking the rights of pension holders in this province away, Mr. Speaker. We had a number of questions that we wanted to ask about that, but we haven't been given the opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's . . . In closing, Mr. Speaker, grievance before supply. Why will you not give us that opportunity to ask the questions, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, why won't the Minister of Finance offer up the opportunity to ask questions of him?

I think, Mr. Speaker, it would be an important step forward in this province to show some co-operation, if that Minister of Finance would stand in his place and say, I've decided that I'm wrong. I've decided that I'm wrong, and we'll give you people in opposition the opportunity to ask questions.

**An Hon. Member:** — Why would he do that?

**Mr. Boyd:** — Why would he do that, Mr. Speaker? I think because before people in this province want to give him a blank cheque of \$400 million to spend on whatever he wants, they want to ask a couple of questions about it, Mr. Speaker. We had questions with respect to what they are planning doing with the one-twelfth of the budget, the allocations that were over one-twelfth in each department. Weren't offered the opportunity, weren't given the opportunity. The only thing we were given was closure — closure, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the fundamental principle of democracy is grievance before supply. That has been denied the opposition. And I don't think the people of Saskatchewan will be soon to forget it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Stanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to bring some reality and sensibility into this debate.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Stanger:** — I'm pleased to stand and support this Appropriation Bill. The interim supply is needed to run government and the members opposite should understand this. The PCs (Progressive Conservative) were not responsible in government, so I guess it shouldn't be a surprise that they aren't responsible in opposition.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Stanger:** — It has been increasingly clear that their only motivation in this legislature, in this legislative session, is revenge for losing the election in October. I remind them of the words of Sir Francis Bacon: a man that studies revenge keeps his own wounds green. I've listened to these folks ranting and railing about democracy, taking part in personal attacks and obstructing this legislature from doing its work.

But we are doing first things first. We are trying to get our finances in order so that we can have choices in the years to come. The people of Saskatchewan want the Minister of Finance to put our finances in order, and they want him to get on with the business of governing.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(1930)

**Ms. Stanger:** — The former government has followed a policy in recent years of supporting commercial ventures by offering government guarantees of their debt. From March 30, 1990 to March 31, 1991, the government's guaranteed debt was increased by 75 per cent and is currently at \$1.693 billion. This level of debt guarantees exposes the province to significant financial risk.

And we sit here day after day listening to the opposition railing about responsibility. We want to run a responsible government. Several large projects have been undertaken without documenting full and clearly understood business and public policy objectives. This lack of documentation has made it difficult to evaluate the success or failure of these investments, and the impact on the overall economic well-being of this province.

Government spending has been at levels which cannot be maintained based on the province's revenue-generating potential. To re-establish a more secure financial position the government must bring its spending back into order.

And the Minister of Finance is trying to do this, and he's trying to get an interim supply through, and you're only interest is in obstructing this legislature. And I respect the people of Saskatchewan. And I know that they will be able to see clearly through this.

My friend sitting next to me . . . both of us were looking through *Hansard* today, and it is clear, if you take the patience to read through *Hansard*, you can see the obstruction going on. And I know that the people of my

constituency have the patience to read through *Hansard* and they will see it.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Stanger:** — The Consolidated Fund will be restored as the primary means through which the legislature can maintain its control of the province's finances. Legislature and procedural changes should be made to curtail the government's ability to use alternate, corporate structures, just like you boys did over there, and like the Crown Management Board, and special funds to bypass the legislature and to avoid disclosing certain activities and transitions.

You have the nerve to stand there and talk to us about responsible government? Where were you for nine and a half years? The reporting requirements of Crown corporations will be changed in order to ensure that their financial statements as well as those of their subsidiaries are available to the legislature. Timing of financial reporting and disclosure to the public will be improved in order that it can be effectively utilized to evaluate the performance of the government. Those are the things that this Finance minister is trying to do.

And for people using quotes: I was very interested in this quote made by Bob Andrew in the budget speech of March 21, 1984.

We believe that all governments must work in concert to reduce budget deficits. Failure to accomplish this will force harsh financial penalties on our children. It is inevitable that mounting deficits will result in unwanted reductions in government services and tax increases.

I will repeat that. Mr. Andrew said:

. . . mounting deficits will result in unwanted reductions in government services and tax increases.

And the people opposite stand there and rant and rail about our inability to govern the way we would like to because of the mess that they have left us in.

How about Eric Berntson, that famous fellow: we don't have to show just cause and we didn't. This is in 1982 when he fired hordes of public servants. He said, we don't have to show just cause and we didn't. I mean if people are going to stand up and put themselves up as the epiphany of moral standards, they had better remember some of the things that happened in the past.

How about Mr. Devine: I can't go to every small town . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order, order. I believe the member should be aware that you don't refer to members, current members in the legislature, by their proper names. You refer to them by their constituency. Order. The member from Regina Churchill Downs should know when the Speaker is on his feet you don't interrupt. He's been here long enough.

**Ms. Stanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just as soon as it was out of my mouth I remembered. Thank you for bringing it to my attention.

I can't go to every small town . . . this is from the Leader of the Opposition. This is his accountability to people. Remember these are the folks that are saying, we go to every small town, we consult with everybody. Let's hear what the Leader of the Opposition said: I can't go to every small town to defend our health policy and Graham Taylor can't go to every small town just because everybody says we have to do that to justify our health policies. By the way when he was talking he was referring to the town of Estevan which is 9,500 people. I wouldn't call that exactly a small town.

So when you get all these facts together, a person sees that really the members of the opposition really don't have a leg to stand on when they talk about accountable and responsible government. I wouldn't want to bore the members of the legislature with too many statistics, but I just can't help but refer to the accountability for the spending of tax dollars which has been seriously undermined over the last 10 years. We have acted to restore public accountability by ensuring that legislative committees work as they were intended to, to publicly reveal the expenditure of tax dollars and to force governments to account for questionable expenditures.

For example, here's some examples, \$900,000 spent by the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation on an option to purchase the Regina YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) in 1988, written off the books only two years later when the former government decided it had no intention of purchasing the building.

How about \$135,250 spent by SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) in 1989 and '90 for advertising it did not receive. I mean it's bad enough they spent hundreds of thousands of dollars for the advertising to brainwash people that they tried to do, but when they didn't even receive any of it; \$10,250 a month for six months to Dome Advertising; \$10,250 a month for seven months to Roberts & Poole advertising; 60,000 spent by SPMC in 1989-1990 to conduct technical sweeps of government meeting rooms — I don't know. Who do they think was under the tables in the meeting rooms? I don't know. Currently under RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) investigations. How about the \$15,035 worth of . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. To remind the member, we are on interim supply before the House today, and I want her to be able to relate what she's saying back to interim supply that is before the House. I've not heard it. I fail to see the connection of expenditures three, four years ago to interim supply here today.

**Ms. Stanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your counsel. I guess what I was trying to show is that we, in our interim supply, are trying to be more accountable than the former government was.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Stanger:** — But I know that there are other colleagues

that have just as much to say as I have. So these were just a few examples of the actions of the former government that showed that they weren't accountable.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I support the second and third reading of this Bill, and I congratulate the Finance minister on his courage. Because, before I close, I want to say that some of the things that we have had to do in the last eight months has taken political courage. I didn't realize that till a friend said to me, the things that you are doing takes a lot of courage, Violet. It would've been much easier in a way to put this province deeper in debt and not stand up for the things that we feel are morally right.

It is much harder to stand up and say that we have to make these cuts, that we have to adjust until we can be financially free to do the things that we want to. That is hard for me. And it's hard for me to see the people of Saskatchewan suffering in many ways. But the point is, we just don't have the money. And I say congratulations to the Minister of Finance for the work he has done, and thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of the second and third reading of the interim supply motion. To listen to the opposition earlier today, one might expect the Minister of Finance to have horns. But, Mr. Speaker, this isn't the Minister of Finance that I know.

The Minister of Finance that I know has answered questions at length and has a prior history of integrity and accountability in his financial management.

To have the opposition question the moral authority of the government and the Minister of Finance has to be the most dramatic turnaround in the history of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the former premier and the opposition questions the government's commitment to democracy. This is the same member who as leader prorogued the House so he wouldn't have to pass a budget, ran the House on special warrants for months on end. He denied democracy by refusing to call by-elections. And he stands unchallenged as the only premier in history of the province to wait five years and one day into his mandate to call an election.

In fact, prior to the election, I heard he was planning to change over to daylight-saving time so he could stay in power for one more hour.

Mr. Speaker, I will agree with the members opposite that process is important. But not if it takes the place of substance. And the substance of this issue is the attempt to avoid at all costs needed changes to the GRIP Bill. Instead of . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. Again I want to remind the member from Regina Lake Centre we are on interim supply, and her words must relate to interim supply and not go back into the past which may have nothing to do with interim supply.

**Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'll attempt quickly to make a direct link. My constituents are concerned about interim supply and they're concerned about the careful allocation and management of farm protection plans. Instead of haggling over a letter of notice, let's get on with the substance of the changes and the impact on farmers and on the province's finances. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite know what's in the budget. This is the second interim supply Bill. They had five days of questioning on . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Third, third.

**Ms. Crofford:** — . . . oh, second and third reading. They had five days of questioning on the first interim supply Bill on one-twelfth of the province's budget. This is merely another one-twelfth.

So during the first questioning period, the government responded to a full week of in-depth and probing questions from both the opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party. The place to continue this questioning, I believe, is in estimates. And it's the responsible thing to do.

But why would we expect responsibility from the members opposite? Mr. Speaker, I'm a member of Crown Corporations, and I was shocked when I realized that some members of the opposition did not understand the difference between an investment and a give-away. How I wish they had applied the same scrutiny to their financial practices that they show so much interest in now, and we wouldn't be in this mess.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Crofford:** — I know that my constituents want the government that they elected to proceed with governing and expect the opposition to assume a more responsible role as opposition.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Crofford:** — So, Mr. Speaker, I support the interim supply motion, and I urge the members opposite to join us and get on with solving the very real problems in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've been listening with interest to some of the debate that has taken place, especially this evening since the supper hour. I find it interesting to hear the bouquets that have been presented and offered to the Minister of Finance regarding his interim supply Bill that we're discussing here tonight.

Certainly the budget that the government has brought forward . . . Of course, Mr. Speaker, we must always remind the government to remind their members of the fact that if the government had been a little more forthright and straightforward with the workings of this House and a lot more fairer with the people of the province of Saskatchewan, we may not be sitting here

today. We may have indeed have been able to work our way through the heavy agenda that has been facing us. And certainly one knows that there is a fair bit of the agenda that is still before us, or to come before us.

(1945)

Mr. Speaker, as we've been debating the interim supply Bill, I've been sitting here and been thinking about the fact that if the Government House Leader would have sat back and gave a little more consideration before he brought his closure motion in, I believe it was last Thursday evening, or gave notice last Thursday evening and introduced it and just allowed the normal process to evolve, chances are, I believe, that we would have had the interim supply passed and we wouldn't be sitting here continuing to debate the interim supply Bill.

However, we must bring some points up regarding the motion and the Bills that have been presented by the Minister of Finance. One of the reasons we continue to debate the interim supply Bill, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that over the period of the last two, three days — and certainly we reflect back to a month ago when the last interim supply motion and Bill was brought forward — that on many occasions the opposition attempted to derive some information from the Minister of Finance as to his reasons for certain allotments of funding that he was asking for in his interim supply Bill and in his motions.

And on many occasions, Mr. Speaker, we were continually told that, oh that question, we can't deal with it today; I'd ask you to go to the minister responsible for that department. Mr. Speaker, I think we all realize when anyone is asking for funds, specifically the Minister of Finance in this case, that we are going to have questions. The people of Saskatchewan are going to have questions. Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition should have some questions to ask of the minister.

I believe the minister should be able to give an account as to his reasons for his one-twelfth request that he is making — where it is going to be spent; how it is going to be spent; why are the departments asking for more money than the allocated one-twelfth. Certainly we will acknowledge the fact that in certain cases there are seasonal differences that come into play and certain departments spend more money in the summer-time than they do in the winter-time and on that basis we acknowledge that and we don't discredit that fact.

But what we have seen over the past few weeks, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the minister, on a number of occasions, has refused to answer, but it appears when it was appropriate — or he felt led, or he felt the answer he could get into a political speech and felt led to — he would attempt to give us an answer, how be it in most cases basically just worked around and never really gave us a direct answer. Therefore we face the situation tonight where we continue to debate a motion which in normal circumstances would have probably been through the House after one or two sittings and the minister and the government would have been granted their interim supply.

Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns that has been raised and

one of the issues that the minister is always or has been continually raising before us, is that he has claimed on occasion that our questions have been too specific. Well as an opposition MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), I've been grappling with the question of what type of questions to ask. My feeling is, when you're discussing a money Bill, when you're asking for allocation of funding, you must inquire of the minister as to the reasons of the funding. And I realize that the Minister of Finance is asking for an allocation of funds on a global basis for all departments. But I think the minister should also, as a responsible individual, be asking some questions of the departments. Why are you asking for certain funding for your department? Why would the department of Parks and Renewable Resources be asking for X number thousands of dollars? Mr. Speaker, we all realize that it's summer-time. And in fact, probably very few people are even interested in listening to me speak. They'd just as soon be spending their time on the beach, or on the golf course, or at the lake. And I really don't blame them. I would too.

But the fact is, no doubt the minister responsible for Parks and Renewable Resources, and his department, have come to the Minister of Finance looking for extra funds because this is their peak season as far as requirements. I don't think that's a hard question, it's a difficult question to pose, nor is it a difficult question to get an answer from, because I believe department officials, or Finance officials, would have a lot of the answers regarding the funding — the requests that come from the different departments.

And, Mr. Speaker, what we have been asking through these interim supply motions, and through the Bill, is we've been asking for questions. And we trust that, whether it's later on this evening or tomorrow, that the Minister of Finance will indeed answer some of the questions we've been posing over the last two, three, or four days, and that he will give us some of the real reasons that he needs so many millions of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, the debate also has centred around a closure motion which limited the time of the opposition members or members in the House to speak to the motion on interim supply.

One of the arguments presented by the Government House Leader the other day was that there was more than ample time, and that the opposition had had plenty of time to ask questions, when in fact we had only just nicely got into the debate.

As well, the Government House Leader indicated that the House hadn't progressed very well, and so he was going to try and help it along a little bit. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that was the wrong thing for him to do. For he contradicted himself in the fact that, as we found out last Friday in question period just prior to government motions, the House Leader stood up in this Assembly and indicated that very little work had been done. And then lo and behold, about five minutes later, the Lieutenant Governor comes into the Legislative Assembly and gives approval — gives her nod — to another 27 Bills that had been passed through the House. And I just want to indicate to this Assembly, and indicate to anyone who

may be watching, that over 44 Bills have already been passed through this Assembly. They've been given Royal Assent, not just passed by the Assembly, but been given Royal Assent by Her Honour. As well, we have three or four estimates that have already been passed.

And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if the government was more forthright, and more open, and more honest, as they continually remind us that they have endeavoured to be, or as they plan on being, we would have advanced even further than that.

Mr. Speaker, I think the record can speak for itself. And in fact, I think we just have to go back to the debate that took place around the GRIP motion, and just referring to how the House could operate and allow interim supply motions to proceed.

The fact that when this House was called back into order after the 18 days of bell-ringing and a ruling was made that put aside the GRIP motion, Mr. Speaker, we all saw how the House was able to proceed until that motion was allowed to come back to the floor. And then, of course, the debate took place again. And it would appear to me that as long as the Government House Leader is going to indicate that he has really an interest in sitting down with the Opposition House Leader, the debate in this House is going to take place for another number of days.

But I believe, Mr. Speaker, and we all believe . . . and this is my second term that I've been here in this Legislative Assembly. But I believe the process of this Legislative Assembly has always revolved around the fact of all parties within the Assembly working and trying to co-operate and trying to overlook their political differences, even though it may be difficult, but realizing that we're all human and working together to come to some solution so that this House can move along orderly. And I believe we will see over the next few days, if there is co-operation on both sides, that we can move along in this House.

However, regarding the interim supply, when we talk about interim supply, we talk about the difficulty. And what I noticed again when I was visiting in my constituency over the weekend, what I'm hearing from more and more people is the concern over the agricultural question, the concern over GRIP. It's even affecting our area.

And when we ask the minister if there's any extra funding in his interim supply motion for agriculture, the minister says no. And we ask him, why not? Why not, Mr. Minister? Mr. Speaker, we were asking the minister just to . . . The people across Saskatchewan are looking for the government to make their commitment to follow up with the commitment made by the federal government and show Saskatchewan people that they are interested in agriculture because agriculture plays a very vital role in this province.

The minister has also been asking for substantial sums in the area of health. He's been asking for — I just don't have the numbers right in front of me — but many millions of dollars in the health field. And yet people across Saskatchewan, no matter where you go when you run



into people, people are concerned about the fact that services are being . . . optometric services are being cut or discontinued or chiropractic services.

And as we've seen over the last period of number of days, Mr. Speaker, the number of petitions that we've been presenting into this Assembly . . . and again a flood of petitions again appeared in our office, Mr. Speaker. And I must indicate to the House that it wasn't something that we had to run around and generate — a few phone calls and just talking to the professionals. The professionals themselves decided to start doing something. People in my constituency ask what can they do to address the concern they have regarding level 1 and 2 care funding in our area.

And it's not just in my constituency. And when a person asks of the minister, where is the health spending going and funding going through your interim supply motion for the month of August . . . where's it going to be spent? People are saying, well how come the government is talking of cutting back services in level 1 and 2 care? And they're asking what can we do.

And all . . . I indicated to them they can start writing me letters, or if they want they can take the moment and put petitions together. And it's surprising to see the number of petitions and the number of people that are willing to go out now, start taking their own petitions and getting people to sign petitions — not just in health care but in agriculture. And I find that amazing, Mr. Speaker. It hasn't taken a lot to generate this type of activity; people are willing to get out and do it themselves.

But what I find, Mr. Speaker, even though it's . . . The fact that it's August 1, the middle of summer, there are a lot of people yet who haven't had the reality of the government's budget hit them. They haven't . . . as more people run into the fact of the increased costs they are facing in drug costs, Mr. Speaker, the more my phone begins to ring, the more people call. There's so many areas that people are beginning to call on as the realities of the government's proposed budgets start to hit home.

What about the home care boards? What kind of funding is the minister making available through his interim supply?

One of the local boards that my father happens to be a part of and sits on that board drew up a budget based on the promise made in the financial statement indicating that there was going to be an increase of 19.5 per cent funding to home care boards. And this local board drew up their budget based on that scenario, only to find when the actual dollars came through, when the letter came through indicating the type of funding increases they could receive and could expect, that it was 5 per cent.

Therefore they were over-budgeted by 14 per cent. And in this case it was some \$50,000 that now the board has to go back to and find out where are we going to pare the services that we were kind of expecting we could offer people in light of the fact that the government, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Finance, have been cutting and are indicating that they're even going to cut more of the services that our seniors have been expecting

and our seniors who have worked so hard to offer and give to our province, to their communities, and to our country.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at interim supply, one must ask . . . And certainly it's August 1, but it's half-way through the summer season, and our students, many parents and many students, are all very well aware of the fact that the educational season is going to be upon us very shortly. And I look at the government's commitment to students and to student program this year. And one wonders why the Minister of Finance wouldn't have taken . . . or the, I'm not exactly sure which department it falls under . . . I believe the Minister of Justice was handling it, but the Partnerships '92 program.

Last year there was some \$6 million available to businesses and individuals across this province to hire students who would be going to university, furthering their education. It was a process whereby the government put out, I believe, \$2.50 an hour as long as a business would put up the first five. So you could hire a student for \$7.50. And, Mr. Speaker, many students across this province, that's how they derived the revenue they needed to go back to university. And I know there are many students this year who are struggling, wondering where they're going to get the finances and the revenue to get back to university this coming fall. Not only that, they've got the student loans that are now starting to pile up.

And I don't know of anyone who really wants to build a student loan because as soon as you get out of university whenever you finish and graduate from university, Mr. Speaker, you face the challenge of not only looking for work, but within six months having to start to pay back your student loan.

So it would appear to me that if the minister would have . . . and cabinet would have made a decision through their interim supply motion, they could have allocated some extra funding. Because I have had questions come across my desk: how come I was turned down? I had everything in order; in fact I talked to the department. The department indicated they just about sent my approval application out, only to have a note coming across the desk saying: don't send it; we've already spent our funds. Why couldn't the minister and the cabinet have made a decision to allocate more funding through this interim supply motion to help young people and students across this province?

(2000)

I believe when you look at the commitments the government is making as well, they've given us a lot of token commitments through speeches about how they are going to strengthen our educational services. And yet people right across this province are wondering where we're really heading in education.

I think the individuals who are worried the most are certainly the small communities and people in rural Saskatchewan. What I find, Mr. Speaker, is that many people are really wondering: does this government really care about the rural community?

And the rural community certainly, Mr. Speaker, when a school or when even three grades leave a school such as happened in the Wapella area . . . and I realize that the fact of schools or grades being moved from one community to the other lie with the local school boards. But, Mr. Speaker, if we could create the initiative that would create more jobs and more job opportunities through development in our rural communities, rather than just tying it all into our large urban centres, we could strengthen our smaller communities. We may not save them all, but, Mr. Speaker, certainly there are many communities out there that with some support from government, with government showing that they were really interested in them, that they could receive the strength they need to continue to operate as a community and to serve each other and to serve the surrounding area.

Mr. Speaker, I think one of the areas that really disturbs me and disturbs people across this province, regardless of politics, is the fact that again as we discussed and debated the interim supply motion this time, we talked about the Saskatchewan Pension Plan.

And, Mr. Speaker, many women in Saskatchewan were really counting on that pension plan as an added bonus for their retirement years; albeit in some cases many of the women who entered the plan entered with the fact that they'd only be contributing a few years. But the fact was, whether it was 15 or 20 or 150 or \$200 more a month, Mr. Speaker, that would mean a lot to a lot of people across our province. In light of the fact that even though inflation right now is in that 1 or 2 per cent, we're not always guaranteed that it's going to stay there. And many people are put in difficult situations where they may not have a large nest-egg to invest when they retire. So I believe, Mr. Speaker, we all must plan for our retirement years.

I realize, Mr. Speaker, that people are asking for fiscal responsibility. But people don't want fiscal responsibility and have it all put on the feet of those who can least afford it. And it appears that the requests that have come from the Finance department, that have come from this government, are certainly doing that.

As one elderly couple indicated, that they thought that with their pension plan, with the Canada Pension and the pensions they had set aside, that they would be able to live quite comfortably without becoming a burden to their family and a burden to the taxpayers. However as the bills started coming due for their drugs, Mr. Speaker, all of a sudden they find themselves some \$300 less a year than what they had before and even higher once they reached the maximum . . . your pay-out, Mr. Speaker, your premium due. And then they're paying 35 per cent instead of 25 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, yes many people want to see fiscal responsibility. They want to see the government setting a precedent and holding the line. But also, Mr. Speaker, I believe one thing we must remind taxpayers of is the fact that this government since October or since November 1, I think also must indicate that even the auditor, the Provincial Auditor, has a number of questions he'd like to raise with the government and has raised in Crown

Corporations Committee — questions asking why did the government transfer so many millions of dollars from a Crown corporation to the Consolidated Fund and then write that off, just write it completely off. In fact I believe the Department of Finance, their figures are some place in the neighbourhood of \$1.5 million. And then the Minister of Finance keeps coming and telling us, well he had to make the decisions that he's making because of the difficulties that his government found itself in.

Difficulties I must indicate, Mr. Speaker, are totally based on some of the decisions they made themselves, of taking debt, amortized debt, and writing all off, consolidating it into one year, writing it off, putting it at the feet of the former government and now telling Saskatchewan people we've got to hold the line and draw the reins in tighter.

And as the member from Cut Knife-Lloyd indicated tonight, there's no doubt in my mind that three years down the road as we get close to another election, who knows? Maybe the Heritage Fund that we did away with, voted a motion to do away with it because as the government indicated, it wasn't necessary any more . . . We may find that all of a sudden there's a big balloon comes out of the sky with so many million dollars more that the government's able to go to the people with and say, look what we did for you.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what's the government doing today? What's the Minister of Finance doing today? In his interim supply motion, what is he doing for people today? How is he helping people today? That's what people are interested in.

They're interested in knowing how . . . not specifically whether the government's just going to put a dollar in their hand, but the fact that the government isn't going to take two out of their hand, two out of their hip pocket while they're putting one into their hand. And that's what we find so disturbing in what seems to be happening in our province today.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, as I've been reviewing *Hansard* over the past number of years, we find that the interim supply motion has varied and the debate has varied from everything from agriculture to health to education, and one begins to wonder whether or not we are really specifically . . . what's the specific debate on interim supply is.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, when a person looks at the motion before us and looks at how government spends money, it seems to me that, as I indicated earlier, we must continue to raise the questions of how government is spending money, where they're spending money; why are they spending so many million of dollars in this field?

Why is the minister asking for funding right now? I'm not exactly sure why the minister didn't come to this Assembly two months ago asking for two months of interim supply if necessary. Certainly we realize that the interim supply motions come forward because the government hasn't had their budget passed yet.

But I must indicate, Mr. Speaker, that very few of the

estimates have been raised or even brought forward to the Assembly. And if we haven't got the ability to discuss estimates, how are we going to ever reach the end of the day whereby the budget is eventually passed so that the government has their allocation of funding to carry them through their fiscal year?

Yes, Mr. Speaker, when we discuss interim supply we find that it has been, as my colleagues have indicated, has been traditional to have grievance before supply, and it has been traditional over the years to be somewhat wide-ranging in the debate on the interim supply motion — not just on the interim supply motion but on any motion bringing forward, whether it's talking about a government's record, or whether it's talking about an opposition's record. But we must, we must know how the government is spending its money.

I must indicate, Mr. Speaker, that when we are talking about estimates . . . And certainly many members in this Assembly will be aware of the fact that as we were discussing estimates with the member from Regina Churchill Downs, the fact the member made a commitment to the opposition to respond to a number of questions. And he's responded directly and we appreciated that. On other questions, Mr. Speaker, the member referred us to another part or another minister and his department, and then when we got to that minister, we found out that we had to go back to him. It's been a circle, a broad circle we've been going in.

Mr. Speaker, I think when we talk about interim supply, one must wonder what effect the 1 per cent sales tax increase has on the allocation of funding. Is the revenue going to come in, that the minister expects to spend? Certainly he's asking for one-twelfth through his interim supply motion, but how much of the . . . how much revenue is the minister expecting from the 1 per cent increase in sales tax? Certainly many people across this province would feel that there has been a substantial increase in the taxes they are paying and the cost for them to live in this province.

We've seen . . . Additional revenue must be being generated because we've seen increases in fuel taxes; certainly, as I've indicated, in prescription drug changes, chiropractic services, power bills, and our SaskTel bills. It doesn't matter where you look. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I can't help but think that the minister is definitely going to have a little balloon in his budget because the last cheque that came into my possession, I automatically filled in my bank book only to find out when the notice came out that it was \$30 over, \$30 extra disappeared in taxes. So I think that's an indication that we're all facing the fact that if we're going to expect the services, we're going to have to pay for them.

And we need to know; we must know; people across Saskatchewan want to know how their tax dollars are being spent. They want to know if their tax dollars are being spent wisely or not. And we can debate whether tax dollars are being spent wisely or foolishly. People have different ideas of what is wise and responsible spending on taxes.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think that and I believe very sincerely,

that one of the areas that . . . and I'll come back to it for a minute. The Saskatchewan Pension Plan, by helping people plan for their future, would be a benefit to the province of Saskatchewan and to the Minister of Finance in the fact that he wouldn't have people coming and people needing the services of government, because they would be able to build for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, we can go through all kinds of scenarios as to the extra costs that people are facing. But I believe in the end the Minister of Finance will have to answer to the people of Saskatchewan as to how he is spending his money, whether it's through the interim supply motions, the interim supply Bill that we're presently discussing right now . . . And as I indicated earlier, I believe, Mr. Speaker, that if the government would give the opposition even a bit of a chance and come and sit down with the opposition and we could start to work together, with the government, asking the government to help us out by bringing forward estimates on the basis of the availability of our members — as we have worked with the government when we've asked them for certain estimates if they'd like to bring them forward, only to find that ministers weren't available; and we said fine, let's move on to another estimate — Mr. Speaker, I think there is room for this House to work. There is room for this House to operate.

But we must have to, we must ask the minister, we must ask the House Leader, we must ask the government members, to certainly work along with us. And we, I believe, can work along with them.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I just want to . . . I think, Mr. Speaker, I have brought forward all the points that I feel that should be addressed through the interim supply and that I'd like to raise in the House. And at this time I will allow other members to speak in this Assembly.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to rise tonight to speak on this motion, this Bill by the Minister of Finance. But I would much rather have spoken before it reached this stage when we had time to ask questions and receive some answers, if we can, from the minister. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that's no longer the case.

What has happened in this House and why we feel that this Bill should not be read a second and third time is that because we did not get the opportunity to ask the questions that we rightfully should have had the opportunity to ask and that we should rightfully have received some answers to.

Through the use of closure twice in the same day, we have reached the point where we cannot ask those questions. Some of the questions that should have been asked dealt with the interim supply of Education. I looked over what has been done in the past during this session, and just prior to it, for the Education estimates or the spending for the Education department.

We had a special warrant for April, Mr. Speaker, for \$69.646 million. In May we had a special warrant for \$106.358 million. In both of those cases, because they were special warrants, Mr. Speaker, we did not even have

an opportunity to ask a single question on that because the money was spent, in the case of April, before the House was called, and in the May special warrant, because the Minister of Finance didn't come forward and give us that opportunity. We had the opportunity to debate the larger budget after it was presented but not the specific items for each department.

Interim supply was first presented to this House for June. The member from Cut Knife-Lloyd mentioned that we debated the interim supply for the June supply for five days. Well, Mr. Speaker, we debated it for three days: May 28, May 29, and June 1. Three days only did we get a chance to question the Minister of Finance on that.

(2015)

And it's very interesting, when I looked at the Education estimates that was presented in that Appropriations Bill, \$156,566,700; more than double what was asked for in the April special warrant; \$50 million more than was asked for in the May special warrant. In the July special warrant, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance asked for in his Appropriations Bill, \$76,685,300 for the Department of Education. This August, the Bill we're debating today, asks for \$76,685,200; \$100 less than was asked for last month.

If you total up all those numbers for the five-month period, you come up with \$485,940,500. Mr. Speaker, that works out to 52 per cent of the budget to be allocated for the entire year. We've gone through five months, Mr. Speaker, two months of which is the summer-time and when the schools are not in session. Universities are in session to a limited amount with summer classes. But we already spent over half of the budget, and I would like to have had the opportunity to ask the minister to explain that a little bit.

Why has he allowed the Department of Education to spend 52 per cent of their budget in five months? What's going to happen in February or March next year? Are we going to run out of money for the Department of Education? Or is he going to have to go back and ask . . . is the Minister for Education going to have to go back and ask the Minister of Finance for some more money? If you take the supply that's left, it works out to an average of \$62 million a month, a little bit more than that, Mr. Speaker, but not a lot.

Now the spending that has gone on in the first five months of this fiscal year has been very large. If that carries on the Minister of Finance is going to be very short of money to supply Education at the end of the year. And I think we needed that opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to be able to ask some questions as to where that money has gone to, what has it been spent on, and what is going to happen in the future. What is he going to ask for next month?

This possible shortfall is going to have some serious ramifications on what happens to the education facilities in the coming school year. It's going to have some very serious ramifications on the number of students that are eligible for student loans. They may be eligible, but they may not receive them.

In estimates, the Minister of Education the other night, I was asking her about a program dealing with disabled people who would like to have the opportunity to attend secondary education. I mentioned a constituent of mine who was in a wheelchair, was looking forward to the opportunity to attending university. But because of funding restraints, she could not do so.

I asked the minister to review that situation, and she agreed that she would. Then I get looking through the newspaper, Mr. Speaker, and I find another young lady that's in the same position, a Jennie Link, from Prince Albert. Her back was broken in a car accident two years ago. She's paralysed from the neck down. And she would like to take advantage of this program, the vocational rehabilitation for disabled persons program, Mr. Speaker.

And I would liked to have been able to ask the Minister of Finance whether or not he was going to supplement the Department of Education's budget to be able to provide my constituent and Jennie Link with the opportunities to attend an educational institution to further their education and to provide for their future.

We have seen a number of changes in the government's program. And because we have seen these changes in the government's program, we should not be passing this Appropriation Bill tonight, Mr. Speaker. We should have the opportunity to go back and question the Minister of Finance on the policy that is . . . where the government is spending their money.

Because the government has changed their ideas on highways, that's going to cause some more money to be spent, because if they're not turning highways into gravel roads — if you're putting pavement on them instead, doing repairs — that costs money. So the Minister of Finance is going to have to have that in the Highways department budget some place. Because it's going to be happening this summer — you can't do that in the fall or in the winter — we needed the opportunity to ask the Minister of Finance questions as to whether or not . . . what he was spending.

The Saskatchewan Pension Plan, as my colleague mentioned earlier, the policy on that was changed. It's going to make it necessary that the government have new funds available to spend on this program. If the government is prepared to change their policies on highways and on Saskatchewan Pension Plan, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, they are already changing their policies on some of the items in education. Perhaps they are already changing their policy on the vocation and rehabilitation of disabled persons program. And perhaps, Mr. Speaker, if we could have asked the questions, we could have found out whether or not that was the case and whether or not people like Jennie Link are going to have the opportunity to attend for further education, to attend a university or a technical school.

When we look at the portion of the Education budget which will be spent this August — 76 million-plus dollars — I would like to have had the opportunity to ask the Minister of Finance whether any of that money was being spent on additional repairs and renovations to schools. The Minister of Education stated that she was still looking

at further renovations to schools, that she had 64 schools that were initially on the list and that she was looking at additional schools. Well it would have been nice to have been able to ask the Minister of Finance whether or not he was budgeting for any additional funds to do exactly that. But unfortunately because of the use of closure, Mr. Speaker, I will not get that opportunity. And the people of Saskatchewan will not be given the opportunity to find out whether or not it will be in this appropriation until such time as we get the opportunity to talk to the Minister of Education. But by that time, Mr. Speaker, the money will be spent. What the government is actually asking for is that, let them spend the money and then at some point they will tell us what and why and where they needed it.

The same questions, Mr. Speaker, come up when dealing with the education. That's why we should not . . . No, excuse me, not with education but with the environment. Because we haven't had the opportunity to ask questions from the Minister of Finance with his appropriations for the Department of the Environment, I believe that we should not be passing the second and third readings of this Bill, that somehow some mechanism should be in place to allow us to have that opportunity to ask those questions.

We have seen Bill 3, the environment Bill from the Minister of the Environment, come forward in the House, been debated in Committee of the Whole. She has in there a provision in the explanation notes, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to read to you because it deals with financing. And I quote: firstly, the ability of the minister to prescribe fees and charges for a number of activities will allow the department to become more self-supporting.

Well once this Bill becomes law and receives Royal Assent, Mr. Speaker, reading from this and from what's in the Bill, it would seem that the Department of Environment will be able to generate some of its own income through its fees and charges. If that is indeed the case, has the Minister of Finance taken that into account in his appropriations for this interim supply for August? We should have the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to be able to find out whether or not that is indeed the case.

The Minister of Finance is supplying \$897,000 to Environment and for Public Safety. If the department can generate some of its own income, perhaps they don't need that much. If they do, then what additional things are they spending that money on? And those are the kind of questions we need to be able to ask when the Minister of Finance comes to the House and asks for interim supply.

Most of my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, did not have the opportunity to stand up in this House and ask any questions dealing with their areas that they are critic for. I didn't have the opportunity, and I would have liked to have had that opportunity, Mr. Speaker, but it was taken away from me.

There is quite a concern dealing with some of the Bills that are before the House that are being funded by the Minister of Finance, and the Environment department is one of them. There are things happening out around Saskatchewan where the Bills are having an effect on the

people. The Minister of Finance is supplying the funds to carry out those procedures, and yet we can't find out exactly what's going on. I'm hearing one story from the public as to what the Department of Environment is doing. I ask the minister, and she has a different story dealing with funds coming into the department.

So if we could have asked the Minister of Finance whether or not he was actually collecting any income from the public dealing with the Department of Environment and how he was spending it, then everyone would have had an opportunity to know what is actually happening out there. As it was, we don't know yet. Hopefully at some point in time, Mr. Speaker, we will find out.

Mr. Speaker, when closure was used on this Appropriation Bill, the House Leader stated that because of the obstruction of the opposition it was necessary to do so. He stated again today that we have held up this House for some 57 days in dealing with GRIP legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure everyone in this House knows and everyone in the general public knows that that cannot be the case. I would like to be able to take credit for having held up a Bill for 57 days in the House when we have been sitting for, I believe, 58 . . . this is our 58th day. But we could not start filibustering on the GRIP legislation before the Speech from the Throne came down, and that was the first day of this session.

In actual fact, when you look at the length of time that we have held up the GRIP legislation — we rang the bells for 18 days; the member from Morse spoke on the motion to return the GRIP Bill to the legislation for one day — if you take the days out of that 18 days that were holidays or that were a weekend when we would not have been sitting, it works out to 11 days. So a total of 12 days, Mr. Speaker, that we have held up a piece of legislation.

Now that may seem excessive to the government, but I don't believe that's where the fault lies, Mr. Speaker. If the government wished to get their appropriation Bills through, their other Bills through this House in a timely manner, perhaps the place to have started this process would have been the middle of February rather than coming into the House at the end of April. An extra month and a half would still put us into the middle of June today, and then perhaps the members of the House would not feel this urgent need to get back out, to have their summer holidays, to visit their families. We all would like to have that opportunity, Mr. Speaker. We would like to have had the opportunity to discuss the interim supply Bill, but as it turns out, that is not to be.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne talked of open and honest government, of co-operation. All those are very fine words, and they should be part of the operations of this House. But, Mr. Speaker, when an appropriations Bill is rammed through the House with one day . . . less than one day's debate, it makes it very difficult to be co-operative.

And you have to wonder, when a government does this, what are they trying to hide? Where is their open and honest

government? Where is their open and honest debate? The members, over the last few days, have demanded debate. Well, Mr. Speaker, we have been up on our feet today providing some debate. Some of the members opposite have had some of their first opportunities to stand up and provide some debate. And that's all well and good, but we needed the opportunity; the people of Saskatchewan needed the opportunity; and if the government back-benchers wanted, they would have had the opportunity to ask questions on the interim supply, had closure not been used.

(2030)

How do the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, find out exactly what the government is spending the money on? By the time the final reports come out of this House from each department, the money will be gone. Nobody will have had an opportunity at that point to have a say on where the money is to be spent and how it is to be spent. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have the debate on interim supply so that the public, through the opposition, through the answers from the Minister of Finance, actually find out what is going to be taking place in the province for the next month, what is the government going to be spending their money on and how are they going to be spending it and what programs they're going to be putting it into.

Now estimates are a good opportunity to find out what's happening in each individual department, but that doesn't tell you necessarily what's going to be spent at a certain time and when. An estimate from a department is a global picture of each department, rather than letting somebody know that next month there is going to be so many dollars allocated to construction of schools or repairs to highways or whatever it may be; perhaps even what kind of money is going to be supplied to farmers in cases of drought, in cases of frost.

Mr. Speaker, when will the people of Saskatchewan have the opportunity to find out how much the Minister of Health is spending? We can find out what her global budget is because it's in the budget that came down on May 7, but we don't find out what is going to be spent for the next month, in this case for this month. We don't find out whether or not each individual hospital around the province is going to be funded properly, whether some hospitals are not going to be funded, whether some hospitals are going to be forced to close because they have not received that funding. And, Mr. Speaker, that's why we oppose this second reading on the Appropriation Bill, second and third readings on this Bill. We need to have the opportunity for the Minister of Finance to stand up and give us his answers to the questions that we do have.

My colleagues have all asked a number of questions, and yet yesterday, when the Minister of Finance had the opportunity to stand up, he did not do so. My colleague from Arm River spoke and asked a number of questions, but the Minister of Finance did not respond to those questions because the closure Bill that was placed on this appropriations didn't prevent him from asking the questions but it limited his time to respond, and the minister did not desire to take that time.

Mr. Speaker, it's my hope that if we go through another interim supply in another month or less than another month that the Minister of Finance, when he brings it forward, will bring it forward in such a manner at such a time that will give the opposition and the government back-benchers the opportunity to ask the questions that we deem appropriate. The Minister of Finance, if he wants to get his Appropriation Bill through in a proper time, should bring it forward on the 15th of the month rather than the second-last day of the month. He knows how much he's going to have to have. His ministers should be providing him with the information of how much each of their departments need, and what they need to spend it on. He should be able to bring that forward to the House, and present that here, and ask for interim supply.

That way, Mr. Speaker, the whole idea of grievance before supply will be enforced and have an effect. The public can find out what the minister wants the money for, he can answer the questions, supply the information, and then we can pass the Bill. If there's any particular items in there that we have some serious concerns about, we can question the minister and get an explanation on it. But as the case is today, where the Bill comes forward at the very last moment in the month, it makes it very difficult for everyone involved.

By doing so, Mr. Speaker, I believe the government is trying to put pressure on the opposition to pass the Appropriation Bill in a hurry without asking the proper questions. If the minister would bring the Bill forward at an earlier date, give everyone the opportunity — the opposition as well as the government back-benchers — the opportunity to ask questions necessary, I believe we would have a much smoother functioning House, Mr. Speaker. We wouldn't have to be using closure on an Appropriation Bill.

And that's what the problem is here, Mr. Speaker, and that's why I feel that we should not yet be passing this Bill. We need the opportunity to speak on it. We need the opportunity to ask questions. The government back-benchers also need that opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe I have anything else to say on this issue but I'm afraid I just cannot support the idea of allowing this Appropriation Bill to pass at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed with a great deal of sadness that I rise to speak on this particular subject, Mr. Speaker. Often we rise in this Assembly over the past few months and find ourselves discussing matters that we take rather great pleasure in discussing and working on, but passing this interim supply into second reading tonight makes me feel as though the people of this province have been betrayed because their questions about where the public purse is being spent, these questions are not answered and the people feel betrayed, Mr. Speaker, because they want to know where their money is being spent. The tax dollars are the dollars that we're talking about here.

And in all fairness, I think the people of Saskatchewan have learned that they have some rights to know, in a

democracy, where their money is going and what it's being spent for. And in all fairness, I think that they should have the right to know where, at least in a rather general way from the minister, where these dollars are going to.

And that process has been stopped here. And not having been in this Assembly for a long time back, I have no personal experience as to whether or not these types of conditions are normal. But the people that we work with assure us that this is quite unusual, that in fact it has never happened before that interim supply has been granted without the opposition having a more lengthy time to discuss those things that are pertinent to the spending of the tax dollars.

We have, for example, a quite a long list of things, Mr. Speaker, that are not really accounted for. And I believe in all seriousness that the Minister of Finance should take a step back and look at what he's doing and perhaps change his mind about going on to second reading with the forced situation.

He ought, at this point, Mr. Speaker, to reconsider and go back into a discussion and allow the opposition to ask the questions that the people of our province want to have asked on their behalf.

I have become somewhat amazed at the number of people that follow the workings of this Assembly. And that's good. Because like so many other things, the more the people are interested the better chance you have of preserving something that is good and proper and necessary.

There are an awful lot of people who watch the proceedings in our House now through the cable networks throughout our province. We have a lot of people that read the newspapers and get the commentaries there. And, of course, we have the coffee shops where folks who have watched and listened pass on the information.

And right now they're passing on the information that the government has become a dictatorship of secrecy — the very thing that they themselves said in the election last fall, Mr. Speaker, that they would never do. They were going to be an open and honest government. They were going to be totally above board. They were going to give access of information to people in all areas, in all fronts.

And here we have a simple matter of interim supply, the money that is to be spent for one-twelfth of the year, one month of the year, and the government refuses to answer the questions of the opposition as to where that money is going to go.

And I suppose in fairness to the minister, he thought that he would simply not answer any longer because he felt our questions were unimportant or perhaps he thought they were frivolous. But that is a determination that he shouldn't make because what is frivolous in his educated mind, having been a minister of Finance in a past government as well as this one, those things might be commonplace to him but they are not commonplace to the ordinary person who votes in the election. The ordinary person who might be watching this on television

might, for example, want to know why there are overruns in some of the departments in interim supply, why is there more money being spent over the one-twelfth allocation in the Department of Highways at this particular time of year. And as the critic for the Department of Highways, I would like to have had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to ask the minister about the generalities of where that money is going to be spent.

Certainly it would seem frivolous to him that we would ask this. In his opinion it would look frivolous because we have a knowledge that most highway work has to be done in the summer-time, but at the same time there are many jobs that maybe are done by choice rather than by necessity.

For example, when the interim supply Bill is not provided to us in such a way that we can ask where the money is going to be spent, we don't now know whether or not there is a change in policy. And I heard one of my colleagues discuss this yesterday to some extent. But it's important as the critic that I find out whether or not the change of policy to not tear up the gravel roads . . . or the paved roads rather, and turn them into gravel roads, if a change in policy now affects the interim supply. And then if that change in policy does change the interim supply and part of the overrun accounts for that, then, Mr. Speaker, there's a good possibility that that is a matter of choice of what kind of work is going to be done or how extensive that work is going to be done. And I believe that we have the right to ask the questions of the minister in charge just exactly, you know, where these monies are being allocated and for what reason.

We heard, for example, in the area of highways, again, yesterday in the news, it was reported that the Premier has now decided that we're going to have a long-term plan to double-lane the Yellowhead highway. And that's fair ball; that's well and good. He says, of course, that the government's broke and they won't be doing it right away, but at least they have a plan for the future. And that is good. We should plan for the future. We've been trying to tell this government for a long time that it should set up long-term plans.

But the question of bringing up this particular issue on the Yellowhead begs of us to question the minister about other roads that are equally important to just as many people. For example the Highway No. 1, past Maple Creek going to Alberta, Highway No. 1 needs to be rebuilt too and double-laned. There are just as many people that use that road I'm sure as the Yellowhead. Although I don't have the traffic-count numbers, I would be willing to venture a guess that it would probably even be more.

The number of accidents of course are again something that are statistically recorded, but certainly there are more accidents on No. 1 Highway than anyone would care to see. And we wanted to ask the minister in interim supply, if he were carrying that long-term plan into those areas and if in fact that long-term plan might be shortened up a bit in order so that we could get some of this construction going.

We also have a large stretch of the No. 1 Highway east of Regina to Manitoba that's very, very important to those

folks that travel through that part of our province. And I'm sure that those folks that have accidents on that road would certainly be happy to no longer have to endure those kind of accidents if they could be prevented by having a double-laned highway.

And then you will say, well the Premier said that we couldn't afford it right now, and therefore you would conclude that it shouldn't maybe be involved in this particular interim supply. But then you see there are ways that you can alleviate accident problems with lesser amounts of money being spent.

(2045)

For example, you could build passing lanes along the No. 1 Highway and the Yellowhead highway, and you could put them in in such a way so as to complement the construction of a new road when it is built and the passing lane would become a part of it. And you wouldn't in fact be wasting any money at all. You would temporarily though, be alleviating the problem in some degree.

And we had hoped that this interim supply would carry in it some expenditures in that over above the one-twelfth amount of money that's being spent. We were hoping in all sincerity that there would be some commitment to those kinds of projects because they do help especially in the heavy traffic seasons of the summer when campers are out on the road and trailers run a little slower than the normal traffic. Those passing lanes do help to alleviate the problem of accidents.

And it's not a bad idea, and I hope that the Minister of Highways is listening, and I hope that the Premier is taking note of these things because we haven't been able to ask the Minister of Finance the questions as to whether or not this overexpenditure over the one-twelfth might possibly include some of those measures.

And we seriously hope that maybe he will consider doing some of these things and getting them done. It not only would help to alleviate, Mr. Speaker, the problems of the accidents that are happening out on our roads and the need to facilitate the traffic so that it can speed up in certain areas . . . And just to dwell on that for a minute, we could even suggest some of the locations for him that would help him a lot in picking out the spots that need to have these kinds of improvements. I'm sure that the construction industry would have been quite happy if we could've asked the question and found out the answer that in fact there was some plan for some of these projects to go ahead. We have an awful lot of our road-building equipment in the province that is standing idle right at this moment. It's a sad situation that it's happening that way, especially out in our area. Much of the equipment has already been parked for this year. There are no more tenders being let out and no more work is being planned for the rest of this year, and we're really only about half way through a construction part of the year for highway building and for contractors who normally don't work in the coldest winter months.

And we had seriously hoped that some of these plans to build some of these passing lanes that don't cost a whole bunch of money but would provide so much safety and

provide some of these contractors with some work so that they could finish out the season at least, paying for their fuel bills and perhaps the mortgages on their machines . . . But we haven't been allowed to ask those questions, so we still don't know the answers. We don't know if there's any money in this interim supply for that.

And what I fear, Mr. Speaker, is that when the members opposite say to us, well wait around, you can found out in estimates; or wait around, you can talk to the minister about it later; or wait around, we'll get around to it — by the time we get around to it, the year might be too far gone to be able to actually get any of this stuff implemented. And there is a need, a very serious need, not only for the construction contractors to solve their problems, but also for them to supply jobs for the young people who work with them in the summer months and earn enough money to go back to high school or university.

And so the whole system is having a tendency to back up in our province, and we can blame the recession for that, and that's fair ball. But we had hoped that the government might be looking at the possibility of expending a few dollars in those areas to try to keep this summer flowing through so that those people involved would at least have a chance to get some dollars to keep on their lives with. And right now, we just don't know if that's going happen or not. And that's serious, serious stuff for the people that are involved.

And we hope in all sincerity that they will look at things like explaining to us, Mr. Speaker, where the money went to that they've saved in projects like cutting back in Rural Development in the grant structure. I think I've mentioned in this Assembly before that the folks out there didn't mind so much the fact that they're being cut back, as they wanted an explanation to know why they were being cut back. They want a fair, honest assessment of how much it really is, and they want to know where that money's going to and where it's going to be spent.

If in all sincerity the government showed rural people that by cutting back Rural Development they might in fact be using some of this money to build passing lanes on the heavy traffic highways, I think the rural people would say, well we don't like being cut back but we'll accept it because it's for the right reason and it's for a good reason, so we'll learn to live with it and we'll go along with it.

That's the way country folks are. I've said that before and I can say it again. In all sincerity, they are willing to pull more than their fair weight always.

And I know that the folks in Regina and Saskatoon, the big cities, are exactly the same way, Mr. Speaker. I know for sure that when the urban people find that they're being cut back on some of their grants, even in spite of the fact that we can make political hay out of saying that they've increased your taxes enough to earn 200 million more dollars and still they're going to have a \$517 million deficit, even though we can say that and be accurate, according to the budget report originally, I'm sure that when we cut back the people in the urban centres through their grant structures, to the urban municipalities, that the people in those cities would say, we don't like that either, but if it's spent in the right place for the right



reason, we can live with it. We'll tolerate it too. We can do as much as rural folks, and we'll go along with it. And we'll do it for the good of the province and the good of our young people and the good of keeping the system working.

I know they're that kind of fine people. And they would work hard. But how can we expect them to be comfortable in accepting that role if the government isn't open and honest, as they said they were going to be, and allow them to know where these dollars are in fact going to be spent? And right at the moment, we don't.

We just simply don't know where the 500 billion . . . or the \$5 billion, rather, is going to be spent. We don't know where the \$517 million deficit really is caused from. We don't know if this money's going to create any jobs or if it's going to help any people because we haven't been allowed, as an opposition, to delve into this.

We could have, in interim supply, we could have gotten to the roots of some of it if the minister would have seriously answered some of the questions. But he refused. He wouldn't answer. He said, you can go to supply . . . or to other areas of government business. You can find out not from supply, but you could find out from the estimates.

And the reality is that we keep getting put off and put off. And I suppose that's good strategy for a government, and maybe every government does it that way. But having been here just for a short while, it certainly is a frustration never to be able to finally get to the point where you ask a straight question and get a straight answer.

For example, we find Rural Development was brought in here with the Rural Development minister and his experts and aides with him to help him with the answers, and we were into a discussion about how the allocations to rural municipalities were made. And I questioned the minister as to how he had come up with the figure of 7.4 per cent average reduction in grants to rural municipalities. And you will recall, Mr. Speaker, that the minister was good enough to send me across some papers that gave all of the figures from all of the municipalities on that day.

The result was that when you totalled up all 298 municipalities and their cut-backs, the average cut-back was 18.3 per cent, not 7.4. And when I asked for the formula and wanted to get some more answers on how this thing works, we found ourselves at the end of that particular day and the next day, lo and behold this subject is no longer on the order paper, and lo and behold we've never ever been able to find this minister in this Assembly in a position where we could ask him the question in a manner that he would be required to give us an answer. And we've never gotten the answer, and municipalities don't still to this day know why they are being cut back 18.3 per cent instead of the 7.4 per cent that the government said all through last winter and all through the spring and all through the summer that, in fact, it was supposed to add up to.

And then you find the government saying, like a used-car salesman, trust me; don't ask any more questions; trust me; the old car was driven by the little old lady from

Pasadena. And I suppose the budget may fall apart about the same way.

In reality, Mr. Speaker, in reality the people of this province don't know where the money is being spent. They don't know where the money has been saved in certain areas is going to be spent, and I can't blame them for not knowing because I'm in this Assembly, where I'm supposed to be able to find those things out, and I can't tell you where it went. I don't know where the money's being spent. I've spent weeks and weeks studying this thing through and I find many, many questions and no answers because there are never any details in any of this budgetary stuff — none whatsoever. You have to ask questions and get answers to find out where these dollars are going to go or where they have gone. And if nobody answers, then you simply can't find out.

And that's not what the government campaigned on. They said they were going to be open and honest with the people, and yet the people know less about what's going on in our province today than they have ever known. There's mass confusion in the country as to where the dollars are going or why their taxes are so high. And certainly it must concern everyone involved, Mr. Speaker, that we would have a decision to go into the second reading of an interim supply without at least some of these questions being answered in somewhat of an even general or broad way.

It would be nice if we could get into some detail. Certainly it would be a lot better. But even if we couldn't get the absolute detail, we might be able to get some kind of a general feeling for what's going on and where the money in fact is going.

We've got all kinds of concerns. The other day my colleague was talking to the Minister of Education about the expenditures that go on in the Department of Education. And that of course is part of the interim supply, and I guess education takes up one of the bigger amounts of money that we spend in this province. My colleague just noted that it's the second largest part of our budget.

And certainly when we have situations like my constituency where there was some threat this past winter that some of the schools might in fact be closed and a very controversial report came out that suggested that in fact might happen, the people wanted to know then — as they want to know now — are these plans totally on hold? Or are there dollars involved in this interim supply that might be going towards that kind of a project? Would there perhaps be money saved and show up in interim supply as a result of a program or a plan to close some particular schools?

I've had people phone me up and ask me, is there any possibility that our school will be closing up? And I've said, well none that I know of, but I'll try to find out from the ministers in charge. And one of the places we could do that of course would be in a discussion about the finances and where they're going to be spent. We haven't been able to tie anybody down in any other area of the workings of this Assembly to get answers that can be depended on.

And I guess while honour is not the only thing that binds people in this Assembly, probably that is the most important part, the reality being that if you say something in our Assembly and later on explain to the people that you made a mistake, we accept that as being an honourable thing to have happen. But most members, I think, take a serious look at wanting to be as close as they can to being right when they set up an explanation of whatever is going on. So when we ask questions and they answer them and they say we're going to spend so many dollars on education, we're not planning on saving any by closing such and such a number of schools, we pretty well think that we should be able to, on the face of it at least, take that as an honourable commitment — somebody's word that can be counted on.

I guess it's a little bit like the old days, Mr. Speaker, when we didn't know about fancy things like written contracts, when people went around and made their deals and they shook hands. And that was your oath and your bond in a contract that was even more binding than anything that you'll ever see written on paper today because these days when contracts are written people find loopholes in the law. They use the system to break contracts. But in reality in the old days when folks shook hands they stuck to it because they had a code of ethics and a code of honour that would never let them sleep at night again if they ever backed out of a deal that they had made with a handshake.

That's the kind of honourable ethics that this Assembly has stood for, in my mind, in the past, and that's what it should get back to, Mr. Speaker: a code of ethics, a code of honour, something that the people can depend on.

When the government runs in an election and says, we will not increase your taxes, there ought to be an honourable reason for them to stick to that. And there must be a very compelling reason to break that kind of trust. And there may be some good excuses for the government to break that trust that they made during that election. But let them stand up in this Assembly and say what those are. Let them explain themselves so that the people can understand it.

(2100)

I wanted very, very much, Mr. Speaker, to discuss with the minister where the costs of the Constitutional Committee and those kinds of things were going to be coming from. We have, as you know, Mr. Speaker, set up a Constitutional Committee in the province that has a mandate, as I understand it, to go out to all of the various areas of the province. My understanding is that they will be flying to some of the outer regions of the province and that they might in fact then be taking buses to some of the closer locations.

No matter how you do it, no matter how much it can be justified to do it, it will cost a lot of money. I'm wondering if this interim supply had included any costs for that to happen. Is the money allocated or will this cause a deficit in our budget? We haven't been able to ask those questions even in a very general way. And without being able to do that in a very general way or any specific way, it just simply is not something that we can find out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will note that when the Constitutional Committee was struck, it was struck with a particular mandate. And by the striking of a particular mandate, it determined which branch of the government's monies that would come out of. For example, the committee that goes out from the Legislative Assembly to discuss the constitution on the basis of asking questions from the constituents would be paid for, I understand, through the legislative monies, the monies allotted to the legislature.

On the other hand, if the government were going to take the already-arrived-at constitutional package that they have arrived at through the negotiations at the Ottawa level, and bringing that package back to the province, and then if that committee's mandate were to take that package out and to show it to the people, my understanding is then that it becomes a different area for the money to be taken from.

In other words, the government should pay for it from some other location other than out of the legislative monies. I'm not sure where that would be, but it's just my understanding that it has to be out of some place else.

And I wanted to ask the questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we were in this interim supply, before we started going into this second reading, I wanted to ask how the Minister of Finance was going to handle that, where in fact those monies were going to be taken from, if it would be still considered to be a Constitutional Committee that was consulting with the people, or if it was a Constitutional Committee that would be going out and showing a package to the people so that they could make a decision on it, perhaps in a referendum.

I also had the concern whether or not there was in fact any monies laid aside for a referendum. I expect that such a manoeuvre in the province would be expensive. I'm not sure how expensive, but I know it's got to cost some dollars. And I did want to ask the minister, in all sincerity, how many of those dollars were allocated or are being allocated, or if there is a provision . . . if it would be coming from the legislative account or if it would be coming from the government's account, some other branch of government. And we just don't know. And the people of our province are asking those questions, and now, because we don't know, they obviously can't know either.

So we'll speculate. And that's unfortunate, because we should not be speculating, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the dollars that we spend out of the public purse. We should have a pretty accurate knowledge of what's going on.

It has been my experience that when you don't know what's going on, that's when you run into deficits. If you've got a pretty fixed focus on where dollars are and how they're being used, you usually can determine where to spend the next ones in order to stay within a budgetary system. But if you haven't got the foggiest notion how much the last project cost you, and you don't have your books kept up to date, and you haven't got any idea how many dollars are already gone and how many dollars are going to be spent, pretty soon you find yourself

in trouble because you end up having this notion that, maybe I should just have that one more thing, or maybe I could just fix some other little thing up or . . . You know, I suppose at the government level you could be more specific and say, well maybe we could build a school over there or a hospital over there. It seems like it'll be all right. The money seems to be flowing along, and then all of a sudden, bang, it hits you — we've overexpended and we got a big deficit.

That's probably the fundamental reason why you get big deficits, is because we don't keep close enough track of the way that we spend our dollars in the province. I think that's been a kind of a chronic problem all through the years. As I grew up as a kid, I think I had that perception that government was always about two years behind with their books.

For example, we find committees sitting, from this very Assembly, at this very time, that are discussing expenditures of two and three years back. Well if you don't have your books caught up to within at least one year, how can you possibly know what direction your spending is taking you, how much it's going to cost you to run this fiscal year? It's just impossible for anybody to balance a budget. I don't think it matters which political stripe the government was. If the books aren't up to date, how could they possibly know where they're going with the spending of their money?

If a farmer or a business man or a person on a job didn't keep his records up so that he could do his income tax at the end of the year, and he went on without ever figuring it all out, how long would it be before he probably would think things are rolling along pretty good, I'll just use that plastic card, buy one more thing over here, another thing over there, and the next thing the roof caves in. And you see examples of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all the time, of people that don't keep track of their expenditures properly, and the next thing you know, they're having to declare bankruptcy because they spent so much that they can't possibly ever repay it.

And that's what happens with governments that aren't keeping up with where the money's going and how it's being spent. That's why it becomes so ever, ever important for us to be able to get this government, not so much through discussions of interim supply as to finding out all the answers for us, but also for them to find out the answers for themselves. Because when they're looking up the answers for us, they're educating themselves and finding out where that money's been going and how it's going to be spent and where it's going to be used. And then they have that idea, that perception of the dollars and where it's going to be used and spent so that they can keep within a budgetary frame.

I think that this is the essence of how budgets can be balanced at the provincial level, even though the numbers are big, even though it takes a few more zeros behind everything in order to get the kind of mammoth amounts of dollars that we talk about. Even though it's big, it can be done if we keep current and keep up to date.

And that, it seems to me, is why we ordinarily should be doing this on the basis of the whole budget. It would be to

bring the government itself into a position of educating themselves as to how many dollars they have spent already, where they're going in direction of planning. It would keep them on their toes so they'd know and understand what's going on. They could therefore have a really good chance to balance the budget. The intentions, I think, are good. I really believe this Minister of Finance is determined to balance the budget.

There are some who would disagree that that's the best thing to do. They would say — in fact some of my constituents approached me not long ago — that perhaps it would be better to run a little deficit and have in a recessionary time some dollars spent to keep people working. And you can debate that back and forth, but the reality is that, with all the good intentions in the world, he will not be able to balance his budget if he's not on top of the figures and knowing where that money's going. Now he may have a pretty good perception himself. But at this level, when you have ministers in charge of different departments and money being spent under other people's authority, it becomes extremely difficult, I'm sure, for one individual to keep a total handle on what every other minister is spending.

And that's why it's so important that we be able to sit here and get his concentration for a little while while we ask questions because it also brings his ministers into line of thinking about what they're doing. I don't think that anybody in a three- or four-hour debate is going to get very serious about looking at very many problems. But once somebody has asked a question and gotten an answer and repeated another question and got another answer for three or four days, those ministers are going to start taking note of the fact that there's something going on here we'd better pay attention to.

They might even take time off of a fishing trip or a golfing trip and go down to one of their departments and say, hey fellows, what's happening with your expenditures in your department? In your lesser departments, are things up to par? Are we on target, or has something happened that maybe we should know about?

And it's that kind of vigilance and only that kind of vigilance that can create an atmosphere where you can get a balanced budget. Each time you move up the steps of the ladder of levels of government, it has to become more difficult to balance a budget because you have so many factors involved. And I never said it was going to be easy. But I did say that it is obtainable and attainable if the Finance minister is determined enough, is up to date enough, is on top of his figures enough to be able to realistically keep a handle on what's going on. But even he, with all of his good intentions, won't be able to accomplish that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if he does not have to be accountable to those folks in the opposition who will ask the questions that can jog his mind and keep his memory working.

Mr. Speaker, we wanted to know how much this interim supply Bill was going to be allowing for a lot of different things. And I want to just go through a few with the hopes . . . And I want to tie this together for you. I want to do this with the hope that the ministers in charge of various departments will take note of these concerns and they

might in good conscience answer these questions. If they in good conscience answer these questions, Mr. Speaker, to themselves, even if they don't answer them to us, it may help to save the province from going into a serious deficit.

We wondered how much it would cost the government in interim supply if things like changing the GRIP Bill go through in the next few weeks. How many dollars would be available there if interim supply has covered that area? We wanted the government, as much as ourselves, to know whether or not they are on top of this situation, on top of the number of dollars that it might cost them, so that they in effect . . . or in fact can balance the budget at the end of this year.

I seriously doubt that this budget is going to be balanced even with the predicted \$517 million. Because I perceive that even with all of the good intentions that the members have opposite, that the thing is going to get away on them. The costs are going to sky-rocket in areas that you never anticipated.

We've talked about things like the challenges that we have these days to democracy. And that's important. Because it's necessary in the democratic process to take some time. It's really frustrating, I'm sure, for the members opposite to have to take that time to listen to a lot of the debate. But democracy works on the basis of time.

That's how democracy has always worked the best, is by having people take the time to talk to one another. Even sometimes if it gets a little foolish. And it's bound to. There's no question in my mind that occasionally we will say things and talk about things that won't be relevant in the total scheme of how the budget will balance or how many dollars will be spent.

But that is too, I think, part of the democratic process. Listening to all of the angles, all of the perceptions, and taking the good and sifting it out from all of the straw. Sifting the wheat from the chaff has been an expression used by a lot of folks over all of the years.

(2115)

We wondered, Mr. Speaker, if legislation that is retroactive in other areas — for example, the energy and mining Bill that we talked about earlier in this session — we don't know if there are any financial implications to the retroactive clauses that are in that Bill. In fact we haven't even heard whether or not the negotiations have been going on and that Bill might in fact be changed.

We thought we might be able to determine out of this document an analysis of the departments requesting more than one-twelfth. And questioning the minister in charge, we thought we might be able to determine whether or not there were any expenditures going to result from that.

But of course we won't know that and we don't know that, and we won't be able to find out until we get into probably committee now. And in all fairness I guess if committee is treated anything like the interim supply Bill is treated, we won't find out there either.

And now we have another problem developing, and that is a lack of trust by the people that this government will be honest and fair and forthcoming with answers later on as they have said that we should be able to get. We just don't know if that's ever going to happen. And the peoples are starting to wonder if there's any commitment to them to be open and honest as was promised in the past election.

The perception out in the province, as much in the cities now as in the country, is a perception that maybe these questions will never be answered. Maybe no one will ever be allowed to know where the taxpayer dollars have been spent or will be spent.

I've talked to people who are workers on work crews, who have told me things like, my isn't it nice that we're going into the end of July. We have now been working two weeks for ourselves, because the rest of the year we were working to pay somebody's taxes.

Apparently somebody did some kind of an analysis and discovered that it takes until the middle of July for people to pay their taxes in this country. And they're worried. They're extremely worried out there that when the end of the year comes there won't be enough dollars left to pay for the things that they need to survive in this province. And they worry out loud about whether or not they should stay in our province. And we haven't given them any comfort. We haven't given them any reason to be optimistic.

It is time for the government to start answering the questions that are asked, in order to give that perception of some kind of a future for people who might stay in this province.

I've talked to contractors who are extremely worried. They don't know if the direction of this government is going to eliminate them, cause them to go bankrupt, if they are going to be allowed to continue to work in the province and prosper or if they will simply wear out their machinery and go broke.

Farmers have already had a lot of attention from this Assembly. And their concerns are still not alleviated. They continue to be concerned and to worry about trying to recover enough dollars to pay for all of the increased costs that have resulted from this administration to date — taxes being charged, increases in power rates and telephone rates. All of those things that we've listed off — and I think there was four pages full of small print, of increased costs to people in this province as a result of this administration.

And people are genuinely worried that at the end of their year, at the end of their fiscal year, that their budget won't be able to be balanced any more, with the kind of wages that they are earning.

Take a person living in Regina who happens to be on minimum wage, or maybe something even in the \$10 an hour category. Can you imagine how much money you'd have left? Think about this. Forty hours a week you're limited to, because the unions won't allow you to infringe on somebody else's work. And that's fair ball, because you need to protect jobs for other people. But think about

working in that wage range and having to rent an apartment for 750 or \$800. Isn't that going to be tough at the end of the year to balance your budget?

Mr. Speaker, these people are as worried about their budget at the end of the year as they are about the government's budget. And if the government's budget can't be balanced unless taxes go up, then they're going to have a real, serious concern to figure out whether or not they're going to survive in our province.

We should not proceed to the second reading of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, at this time. We should reconsider what we're doing so that we can get a perception of some kind of optimism out to the people in our province.

We should go back to discussing where the monies are going and try to alleviate the fears that the working folks have got; try to alleviate those fears that at the end of the year, taxes won't again be going up, eliminating totally the possibility of them being able to get their budgets balanced.

I suspect that if you were working on \$10 an hour in the city of Regina, paying maybe \$700 a month rent, buying groceries — I'm not just sure how much it would cost, depends I guess on whether you have a wife and children — but it must be really difficult for a lot of people in this city to make ends meet. And their power bill went up the same as the farmers did. Their telephone went up just the same as the telephone costs to the rural people did.

And I'll admit that we are, in our opposition, somewhat at fault for spending a lot of time talking about rural problems. We are a little at fault there, because when you think about it, and drive around the city, there's a lot of people in this city that have got real, serious problems just the same as the people in rural Saskatchewan have. The increased taxation has hit them, and hit them hard.

And we have to take a serious look at whether or not, when we destroy people's optimism, when we destroy their ability to balance their budgets, if we are hurting not only the people but the whole province, and the perception as to whether or not this is a good place to live or a place to leave.

I think we've got to get some serious consideration from our government about the moral position that they are taking and the lack of confidence that the people have in the moral direction that the government has been moving in the last few days.

Serious supporters of this government might say: well use closure; get it over with; we trust you. But most of the people in the province don't support one political party to such a great extent that they're quite willing to accept anything they do, no matter what it is, no matter how bad it would hurt anybody. It's just a reality that most people aren't tied to a political party at a partisan level to that extent, that they would support them no matter what they do — not even ours. They want the government to be up front, honest, give them a reason to live, provide them with answers, and let them know what's going on.

And as I mentioned before, when the going gets tough,

the tough get going. And people in urban Saskatchewan are just as willing to pay their fair share of the load as anybody else if the government is open with them and lets them know that this money is genuinely going to be spent for some good reason. I think we should seriously consider tonight backing away from passing the second and third readings of this Bill and go back to interim supply and answer some of the questions so that the people will know where these tax dollars are being spent, so that they will know that there is something useful going to happen out of them, so that they can get their confidence back that there is a rational reason for what's going on, especially in this Assembly and the happenings that come out of this Assembly.

We've had so much talk about catchwords and phrases, Mr. Speaker, like deeming legislation and retroactive legislation. The whole thing gets you just feeling kind of pessimistic after a while. And at this point in time, I think the government could do a lot of good for people — people like nurses and doctors and health care workers — if they'd answer a few of the questions and let the folks know that they're not getting the wool pulled over their eyes. If this government is truly spending this money in a helpful way so that it can improve our life here in Saskatchewan, why would they be afraid to come out in the open and say so? They wouldn't at all, I don't think. And I think the people are saying that too. They're saying the perception now is that this government no longer wants to answer questions about where the money's going so maybe there's something wrong with where it is going.

In all fairness the government might have all the best intentions in the world, but this is automatically the kind of perception that people are going to have. You've got business men, administrators, teachers — all kinds of professional people that don't know whether, in the end of all of this talk about balancing budgets, if when we finish this year, we won't need a huge tax increase to pay off yet another huge deficit.

We're getting close to half-way through the fiscal year of the province, and we have no idea whatever, Mr. Speaker, of whether the books are balanced in this province or not. No department of government has come out and shown us any figures whatsoever that gives us any indication that they are on target. They may be only taking so many dollars from interim supply to pay off things, but they might be running up debts in the bank. How do we know? Maybe they're borrowing thousands and thousands of dollars to pay for things that they're spending money on. And at the end of the year they'll come in to the government and say, well oops, we spent too much; you'll have to run a bigger deficit; you'll have to truck somebody down to New York to get us another half a billion dollars so that we can pay off the mistakes we made.

You can only stop those mistakes from happening if you stay on top of things, currently, day by day — especially in big government. And the province is not a real big government, but it's a lot bigger than a municipality, so it's going to take a lot more, a lot more attention than you would give to your own personal budget or to my personal budget or to a municipal or to a town budget.

And I'm just worried that going into this many months with interim supply, where the minister only answers very vague, broad answers of questions with no detail whatever on anything, that we may be heading for a financial wreck in this province. And we've got some serious financial problems already, but to have them get any worse would be terrible.

And there's ways that we can get on top of this — vigilance. That's the number one key, having people alerted in time to head off high spenders or fiascos that can go on in administrations where hundreds of people are making decisions on where dollars are spent, where many, many people who sign their name commit the government to the payment. It's so easy for things to become a wreck if you are not vigilant. And that's what's wrong with things like running special warrants for a long time, followed by interim supply for a long time, and the budget not being passed for such a long time. We've got to get to the point where we start the year in January, and by the end of February we know exactly where we're going financially so that there can be some genuine planning.

I mentioned to these folks a few minutes ago about how many contractors are sitting idle in our province, and they think it's a great joke over there. They always think things are very funny when people are hurting. I fail to see the humour in this. But anyway, it's that way. We've got all these contractors without work. And why has that happened? Ask yourself the question. How is that this happened? We're spending \$200 million more that we're taking in with taxes, plus the 400-and-some-million dollars that we collected the same as last year, plus we're going to run a \$517 million more deficit. We're going to spend over five billions of dollars in this province and yet contractors are sitting idle. How did that happen? I'll tell you how it happened. Municipalities and people who hire these contractors went into the spring into their budgetary process and said, we don't dare commit ourselves to building or constructing roads because we don't know for sure how our budget will turn out as long as the provincial government doesn't give us some absolute assurance of where it's going or what it's doing.

We therefore got to get back to a system where we have our budgets provincially in place at least by the first part of March so that those kinds of planning for the year . . . In our province, where winter pretty well slows everything that is productive down, that's a reality of life, Mr. Speaker, that nobody can deny, that a lot of our work has to be done in a certain few months in the summer-time.

(2130)

And it just can't be done if people haven't got the time or the confidence to make those plans ahead of time. How many people were confident this spring that they could go out and hire a contractor to build ten miles of road? That's not very much. That's about say 14 kilometres. How many people in our province, in municipalities, had the confidence to hire contractors to do those kind of projects? Very, very few. Many years that happens.

And even though the Minister of Highways is sure that we don't have to build so many roads any more, and is sure in

fact that lots of the ones we have can even be tore up and we wouldn't miss them, the reality is that roads that are used wear out and they do have to be replaced. And you have to plan ahead. That's why I was so happy when the Premier announced the other day that he was looking at a long-term program of rebuilding and double-laning the Yellowhead highway, and it's why I'm so happy to have been able to stand in this Assembly and point out to him that there are other roads that he should be planning about in the same way, especially No. 1 Highway, which I am very familiar with, and where I know that there's been so many people ask for that to be done.

Now if we were to back up and start straightening things out right from this point now, if were to back up and say, second and third reading won't go ahead now, we'll actually get down to business here and we'll answer some of these questions, then I believe we could start building that confidence. Even though we can't save a whole bunch of this year yet, we could start building that confidence in the province that people need in order to start planning ahead.

If we don't get that confidence rebuilt, we will sit here in stagnation. Our population will continue to go down. Our tax base will continue to be eroded and we will continue to slide into a recession even though the rest of the country may come out of the recession. There's an old saying that Saskatchewan is the first into a recession and the last out. Why do we accept that? Why should it be that way? Why shouldn't we change that? Why can't we be the first out of a recession? It's because we don't give our people the confidence to plan ahead.

And now is the time to start the process. Even if you couldn't solve the problems today, even if you couldn't make it all right for this summer, you could start giving that confidence so that next year on January 2, we'd be in this Assembly working on next year's budget — next year's budget drawn up in time to give people a fired-off start with a new hope and a new vision to create and build and go ahead and get this province back on track.

Why couldn't we show Ontario that we could be out of the recession ahead of them? All it would take is some confidence and some building.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the problem that we have by not going back on this decision of second and third readings being done tonight, the problem that we have is that people are starting to fear that we genuinely do have a dictatorship forming in our province. We can say that quite flippantly and quickly, and it may not have much importance if you say it that way, but this is a very serious, serious charge that's being made out in our country that our government in a province would suddenly be classified as a dictatorship.

If in fact you have a dictatorship, then you'd better hope we have a benevolent one because the people will no longer have access to determining from the government what they are doing. Access to information, access to answers about the interim supply, access to anything that you can think of from government, will no longer be there.

In fact, in a period of time, this very Assembly would have to close its doors. There wouldn't be any sense to having it here. The biggest saving of money we'd have . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. I had hoped that the member would get back to the motion. I've been listening for the last 10 or 15 minutes, and I want to remind him that we do have a motion before the Table in interim supply. And I'd just ask him to get back to interim supply again. Okay?

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was hoping that you would get me back on the topic, because I didn't know how to quite get around to stopping where I was and getting back there. Now I can start with a new direction.

I want to know quite seriously, though, how do the people of Saskatchewan find out what this government is spending before the money is spent? How do we have grievance before supply when the members opposite stop us from asking questions? I know that some of the members, Mr. Speaker, want to get into the debate and I'm hoping that they will. I talked earlier to some of them out in the hallway, and they said they were going to, and they did. And I was really happy that they got into the debate because it made it more of a two-way flow rather than just the one-sided approach. And I think that two-way flow is important.

When those members stand up and talk about this issue, they will be convincing themselves in their own minds how important it is to go back on this decision and rethink their position and not do the second and third readings just now, but to return to answering the questions that the opposition has legitimately put forth to you.

I was pointing out, Mr. Speaker, before I got so far away from my topic here, that the ministers opposite we were hoping would take note of our discussions, that we would formulate into this discussion a lot of the questions that we wanted answered and that may be, in all honesty, they might feel a moral obligation to answer those questions, not just to us here in this Assembly, but perhaps put out a news release or some kind of an answer sheet so that the people of this province can find out, in fact, where the money is going to be spent. Or perhaps we could jog their minds a little, Mr. Speaker, on where they might be considering to spend some money to help the province.

We've had some astonishing things happening in our province in the last few days. I heard on the news media that closure had been used only five times in this province's history, twice by a Conservative administration and now three times by this administration that isn't even past its first year of mandate.

That's rather frightening for the democratic process, Mr. Speaker, especially when it's tied to the expenditure of dollars. I can see closure being used to get a piece of legislation through to save the government the embarrassment of losing a court battle.

But the expenditure of dollars is extremely important. We have always in our system put great emphasis on the accountability of the taxpayers' dollars — the accountability of government and how they spend those

dollars. We in fact done it to the extent that in some jurisdictions only those people that pay tax dollars are allowed to vote on certain things. That's how important our society has placed the value of being totally up front with the spending of public money.

Well, Mr. Speaker, by using closure in this matter so soon into their mandate, this government has shown clearly to the people of Saskatchewan that the normal processes of democratic system no longer work. There's no ethics here. There's no attempt to morally try to describe where the dollars are going. They could use news releases. That would help. They could print answers to hypothetical questions and deliver them to us, I suppose. That would help. Anything you could imagine that would give answers to the people's questions would certainly help.

We know that we will always have different points of view. There is no question that when you have democratic government with different partisan parties involved, there's no question that you're going to have disagreements. But we must have agreement on some of the fundamentals of rules in order for the system to be able to work. And if we don't allow that to happen, then, Mr. Speaker, a dictatorship or a form thereof starts to develop.

And if that develops, then we lose all the good things that we should have happening through the adversarial approach that we use in the democratic system of debate. You do something, and I tell you what's wrong with it. I do something, and you tell me what's wrong with my ideas. And even though we don't agree, we might find common ground some place in the middle where more people can survive and be happy.

But right now I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this province are not very happy. They're just not very happy because they have the feeling that they're being left out, left out in the cold when it comes to knowing what their government is up to and what is being done.

Now I've got tons and tons of material here, Mr. Speaker, and a hundred and maybe more questions that I'd like to include into this debate. But I know that some of my colleagues are really anxious to get into this debate. And I know that some of the opposition or some of the government people on the opposite side of this House want to get into this debate. And so as to afford them some time to include themselves and to let their feelings be known, I'm going to sacrifice the rest of my time so that they can include themselves.

And I want to thank the members opposite for their attention. I want to thank you as well, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to point out a number of things in the time we have left this evening to bring to the attention of voters and the public some of the things that I think are important to discuss in relation to this.

We have had some interesting occurrences in the past

two or three days that need to be brought to the attention of the public, I believe. Yesterday, for the first time in our history, closure was used on interim supply, allowing only 20 minutes for each person to deal with questions to the minister. The minister brought his officials in and he was not able, even as a part of the resolution presented by the House Leader . . . provided the freedom and the ability to answer questions on interim supply in Committee of Finance on the discussion of a motion, which is usually the process that takes place.

One of the things that I suppose irritates the majority of us is that the process here is a matter of debate. The process here is a matter of concern as it's raised by individuals on this side of the House to the kinds of things that are dealt with by the Minister of Finance.

We had an opportunity to discuss some aspects of the interim supply with the Minister of Finance a day earlier. And because of that, and because of the way that we presented with some force, I believe, the arguments that we made, the Minister of Finance through the House Leader, then got it so that he could impose closure, not on only one resolution, but on both of them.

Now that was a tactic that I've not seen used in this House before. However from my hockey playing experiences I never forget a person who butt-ends me. And that is exactly what happened in this occasion on the other day when the House Leader introduced the motion. So I just want to point out to the Assembly that I will not forget that tactic either.

One of the things that we deal with on a day-to-day basis is asking questions of the minister of, whoever's in the Committee of Finance, and this time it was to the Minister of Finance.

What we observed yesterday in reflecting on the process . . . Yesterday the House Leader moved the motion that we could not speak for more than 20 minutes; we could not ask a question. If we sat down, we were not allowed to get up again. We were not allowed to get an answer. The minister was not given the freedom to give us an answer. Mr. Speaker, all of this flies in the face, I believe, of a democratic process — a democratic process that was spoken about in this Assembly on two occasions that were the hallmark of what was supposed to be accomplished, I believe, by this government, and I expected it to be that.

(2145)

On the first occasion the people of the province of Saskatchewan were told, on the first occasion, that this government would set up a stringent and comprehensive code of ethics and conflict of interest guidelines — a stringent one, where the conduct of the members of this Assembly would be . . . a code would be developed for the people of this Assembly. And what have we got? We have unilateral, authoritarian control placed on this House by the House Leader of the province of Saskatchewan, of the government. And that, Mr. Minister, was evidenced yesterday. It's been evidenced throughout this session, the control that he placed on this Assembly without regard for democracy, without freedom of

speech, without offering the opposition the opportunity to speak on many of the issues that are a forefront to the kinds of things that we believe in.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we are concerned about what's been happening. The Premier of the province said that, my government is determined to restore the fundamental principles of democracy.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have a concern about that. What are the fundamentals that we have seen as a part of the redefining of what this Assembly has done? We have had significant rule changes to make this process that we are in today a part of the process that is supposed to be so much better for democracy. It's a large question we have to ask this Premier.

Is his executive branch of government running this government to the detriment of the democratic process in the province of Saskatchewan? In my view, Mr. Speaker, he is being negative to many, many aspects of the free speech and the capability of the opposition to speak. We have been curtailed in debate on many occasions, Mr. Speaker, over and over again in this Assembly. My colleague brought out — and a number have — how many times we have had closure in this session dealing with items that we have confronted the government with.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is, in my view, not a part of what this forum is about. This forum is a part for debate. This forum is a process of debate for the people and the public of Saskatchewan to recognize all of the aspects of the democratic process and to recognize what it is that the government is doing.

It is our responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to point that out to the public. It is our responsibility to do that. And if we make the decision, Mr. Speaker, to not point this out to the public, we are in fact hampering democracy in a very public way. And it is our responsibility to do that. We have placed before this minister questions in an obvious way to have him begin to answer. We've placed them before him on GRIP; we've placed them before him on health care. Oh we can't, we can't answer. We asked questions on a number of things.

What about the economic condition of the province today? Is it in a position that the revenues are going to be sufficient to provide for the expenditures of the House today on interim supply? We asked the minister that question. He said, oh no I can't answer that today. His deputy who was going to sit with him . . . when he has Committee of Finance, his deputy is going to sit with him and tell him exactly the same thing. Why didn't he tell us in this Committee of Finance, Mr. Speaker? He always alluded to the fact that, oh wait till we have Committee of Finance, wait till we have the Minister of Health, then we'll talk about the health care process in the province of Saskatchewan.

That, Mr. Speaker, is how this open and democratic government is working. It is not open; it's in fact very, very closed. This throne speech that we had in the end of April in this House said, people want my government to be open, honest, and fully accountable. That's what they said, Mr. Speaker.



And what have we had? We have had closure on a motion in GRIP, where one person has spoken on that motion to introduce that Bill — one person and you immediately reduce it to closure. That's what you did. Is that an open and honest and forthright, fully accountable government?

Who are you accountable to, Mr. Minister? And, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Finance, who are you accountable to? Are you accountable to this Assembly or only to yourself? That, Mr. Minister, is the question you have to ask yourself. Who are you accountable to? In interim supply, who are you accountable to? You are accountable to report to this Assembly. That's what you're accountable for.

And your Premier has indicated that you are going to do that. Have you been forthright? My observation on that is no. Have you been fully accountable by giving answers to the questions? No you haven't. And I believe that it's time that you become that. You've not been providing the information that we've been asking for. And I think you should be forthright and do that. It says: open, honest, and fully accountable. Not halfway, not three-quarters, not 90 per cent, but all the way, fully.

"People want my government to be fair and compassionate in all its actions." Well that's a good motherhood statement. And I believe in that. Make it fair. Make it open. Make it honest and compassionate to all the people of Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we would like to ask some questions on what you're doing in health care and ripping apart the various level 1 and level 2 care homes in the province of Saskatchewan. What are you doing with optometrists? What are you doing with chiropractors?

Mr. Speaker and Mr. Minister, I believe you have a responsibility to answer. Are the funds that are coming in, in relation to the budget, equivalent to the demand of supplying funds for various departments? Are they meeting what your budget expectations are and were? That's the question we should have from you.

You took the time out, sir, to ask the questions of the public of Saskatchewan before the budget. And we have a document that we received through the Bill that we passed a year ago to require that the government provide some of these things. You were asking the people of the province of Saskatchewan: how do you rate the overall state of the Saskatchewan economy today? You asked the public this question. Mr. Speaker, 60 per cent of the people of the province of Saskatchewan said that they believe that the economy of Saskatchewan is poor. If you add up those who think it's only fair you'd probably have very, very close to 95 per cent. Mr. Speaker, we're concerned about that.

As I watched the people on Friday last week when I drove home, Mr. Speaker, I drove behind a pick-up truck that had plywood on the sides and on the back and on the front stacked high with furniture. On the back of that they had a trailer and that was boarded up with plywood as high as it could reach. And on the back of it, it had said . . . with black crayon had written: goodbye Saskatchewan,

hello B.C. (British Columbia)

That, Mr. Minister, is the kind of questions we need to ask . . . things that we need to talk about in finding out from the minister what his economic plan for the province of Saskatchewan is. What is he doing to deliver that?

Further in this throne speech, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance outlined for us . . . He said in this House that the Crown corporations are going to deliver the fuel to the engine of the economy. Well, Mr. Speaker, there are some very significant things that I think that he should be held accountable for.

Number one, in SaskPower Corporation, we had 20 per cent of the people of the province who would be able to receive natural gas under the gas program. That government and that minister said no, I'm not going to do it. And yet he said the engine of the economy is going to be the Crown corporations and he takes and tears out the engine and doesn't replace it.

SaskTel, what's he doing in SaskTel to replace the kinds of energy that should generate from economic development? We should have the freedom to ask those questions and what this minister is going to provide in interim supply to deal with those items. That, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we want to have an opportunity to ask him questions. And we will, Mr. Speaker, in the future. We will direct those specific questions to that minister.

Mr. Speaker, another one of the Crown corporations that is a potential for generating the engine of economy in the province of Saskatchewan is SaskEnergy. Why don't you let the people of the province invest in SaskEnergy? Why don't you allow the people to invest in SaskEnergy so that you would not have to go to the banks in Montreal or Toronto or New York, to go there. Why don't you allow the people, why don't you allow the people of Saskatchewan to make an investment in shares in SaskEnergy? Why don't you?

That, Mr. Speaker, would be an engine that would drive the economy in the province of Saskatchewan. That, Mr. Speaker, is what drives the energy in the oil patch. Why don't you allow SaskEnergy through the natural gas to develop the high-pressure lines in the province of Saskatchewan? Why don't you?

Because, Mr. Speaker, these people don't trust ordinary people with their money. That's why they don't. Instead what do they do? They say, we'll have a bond. I'm not against the bond, Mr. Speaker, it was a good idea. Put it in there.

What I'm going to do is challenge you to this. Why not now, when you've got money at 7 per cent and opportunities like the Bank of Montreal are presenting to their customers at 5.75 per cent, why don't you say instead of ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan) saying prime plus 2, why don't you give the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan an opportunity to transfer their debt from a plus 9 per cent position down to a five and a half. Why don't you do that and allow the economy to be driven by lower costs to

producers. Why don't you do that?

Never in the history of the time that we were in government, did we ever have the opportunity to deliver a low interest cost loans to farmers like we have today. Never, at almost no cost, Mr. Speaker, to the province. Those are the kinds of things that would drive the economy in the province of Saskatchewan. Those are the kinds of Crown corporation activities that I believe should be made available to the people of Saskatchewan. That's the kind of engine that should drive the economy.

And what does this minister do? He sits there, brings his assistant deputy along, knows he can't answer any questions because as soon as he gets up, he has lost his position. That, Mr. Speaker, is exactly the reason why we have a problem in dealing with a process in relation to the things that were done in this Assembly. That, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we complained about it yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out a number of other things that I think are necessary to be addressed in this context. What is this government doing in interim supply and providing funds through this Minister of Finance for economic development, job creation?

Mr. Speaker, 18,000 jobs have been lost in the province of Saskatchewan, year to date, over last year — 18,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker; 6,000 to young people; 2,000 to direct farm jobs. That, Mr. Speaker, is this economic record of this government — 18,000 less people working in the province of Saskatchewan.

Where are they going? They're not staying in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They're leaving the province. And that, Mr. Speaker, if he would have followed the poll that he took before the budget, he would have found out that that was the most important part of the poll that the people wanted to have. They asked the question: what is your priority in providing new economic opportunities and jobs? And 93 per cent of the people said that was one of the most important points that needed to be addressed. That ranked higher than health care, Mr. Speaker, in economic development. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because 18,000 jobs have been lost in the province of Saskatchewan this year. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a fact. That's not my numbers. That's StatsCanada numbers, year to date. And that, Mr. Speaker, is exactly the reason why we think we need to have this Minister of Finance address the problems. That's why he needs to answer the questions that relate to the economy of the province of Saskatchewan.

People are losing their jobs, day after day after day, and this minister does nothing to defend it. That, Mr. Speaker, is why the problem is. He had an interesting observation to make at the beginning of the year, Mr. Speaker. He said that the fertilizer plant, the Millar Western in Meadow Lake, North Battleford, P.A. (Prince Albert) were going to be the engines that drove the economy . . . was not done by that group over there. Eighteen thousand jobs have been lost in the province of Saskatchewan, and that minister is responsible. The Minister of Labour should be ashamed of himself. He should come back home and do some job creation. That's what he should be doing. That's what he should be fighting for. That is the biggest problem

in this province, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. It now being . . . Order. Order . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, you certainly may. There's nobody's going to chase you out of here.

It now being 10 o'clock, however, this House stands adjourned until 2 p.m. tomorrow afternoon.

The Assembly adjourned at 10 p.m.