

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Draper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, sir. I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this legislature, three people from Gravelbourg. They're members of the Gravelbourg School Board. Keith Brown, the chairman; M. Armand Martin, a member; and Mrs. Marion Piché who's the director. They've been in Regina here meeting with the education local government committee. And I'd like to ask you to join with me in welcoming them to this Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to echo the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg's invitation to the people from the Gravelbourg School Board. And I'd like to thank them for having joined me for lunch today. I'd ask the members to welcome them to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, following the precedent set yesterday by the member from Moosomin, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce to this Assembly a well-known Saskatchewan senior citizen who lives in the riding of Regina Elphinstone, Catherine Berry, who is watching the proceedings at home today. I know that Catherine is watching these proceedings because she has apparently been able to pick up on the antics of the members opposite, and her remarks are quoted in the *Leader-Post* in today's edition.

Mr. Speaker, protocol prevents me from echoing Catherine's sentiments in this Assembly, but I . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I do believe that I don't have to remind the member from Saskatoon Broadway that she was totally out of order. Order. The Government House Leader, please come to order. Order. Are there any further introductions?

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like today to introduce to you, and through you, Mr. Speaker, visitors from all around the province who are here to express their opposition to Bill 38. They are the people in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, who are wearing the large, white ribbons, symbolic of their cause. And I would invite the members to join with me in welcoming them today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to introduce, on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Health, the member for Hillsdale, Regina Hillsdale, a group of 45 students from Massey School in Regina from the constituency of Regina Hillsdale. They're grade 4 students.

I understand that the minister will be joining them after the question period. And I know that I speak for her in welcoming all of you here today, and in asking all members, Mr. Speaker, to join with me to welcome the students here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Purchase of VLTs

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for the Gaming Commission. The NDP (New Democratic Party) government opposite have refused to table a security report which was apparently conducted by two members of the security branch of the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation. A letter referring to the report says that the investigation, and I quote:

... was directed at issues which ... (would) cause embarrassment or reflect poorly on the integrity and credibility of the government . . .

That's an interesting mandate, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, and I'm sure it made for an interesting report, a report which is being kept secret by the members opposite. My question to the minister responsible for gaming is not an onerous one. Can you supply me the names of the two individuals from SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) who were responsible for that investigation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In response to the member's question, I think he's quite well aware of the fact that Mr. Egan, who was the former superintendent of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) in this province, headed up the investigation on behalf of the Property Management Corporation and I am satisfied, to reiterate, that what I have said before, that Mr. Egan has done a competent job.

I would just want to say, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the member's question, I think he would want to acquaint himself of the process with respect to freedom of information. It's open for any person to ask the Gaming Commission, the chair of the Gaming Commission, for a copy of the report. I understand that that process is available to the member. I would also want to indicate to you, sir, that I have contacted the Department of Justice with respect to whether or whether not this report would or may be released by the commission and it is indicated to me that their understanding is the commission would not be willing

to release the report for the reasons that I have outlined to you on many occasions in the past.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Well that, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, is a very interesting observation. And I want to ask you: would you supply the names to this Assembly of those two individuals who were asked by SPMC to do the investigation on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan? Would you supply those two names for me?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I would be more than willing to put together a list of people who have been involved in the investigation and pass them on to the member opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, will that list specify, as it says here in the document you tabled:

The security review was completed with the assistance of two members from the security branch of SPMC and was directed at issues which . . . (would) cause embarrassment . . . (to the Government, etc., as I quoted earlier.)

Will you provide those two names of those two individuals specifically? I don't want all of the others; I want those two names.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of openness I have indicated to him that I will supply a list of all of the names of the people who were involved in the investigation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, you told me that . . . or you told the media outside of this Assembly on Monday that you had not personally seen this report. That's what you indicated to the media. I wonder then, Mr. Minister, what report you referred to in this House when you were avoiding questions on Monday.

Why don't you table that report for us today as outlined . . . Why did you have to go to the Minister of Justice and ask him whether that was reviewed and could be let . . . by the commission to this House or to the people of the province of Saskatchewan? We want to know, as a member of the opposition, why you won't provide that document to us today. We want to know why you don't want to supply that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, I would share the names of the people who were involved in the investigation on behalf of the Property Management Corporation. I intend to do

that. As a matter of fact, I'll do that now: Colleen Galenzoski and Doug Porter, along with Mr. Egan. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I believe it is the prerogative of the member opposite to ask the Gaming Commission for a copy of the report. And I ask him to do that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, I want to know, if you did not see the report, who gave the authorization in cabinet to allow the Gaming Commission to proceed with the purchase of the video lottery terminals from these two companies? Which one of the ministers gave that authority, that authorization to do that?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Well, Mr. Speaker, in answer to the member's question, I'm not sure if he's familiar with The Saskatchewan Gaming Commission Act, but under that Act, the responsibility of administering the Act is quite clearly the responsibility of the commission. And in doing so, they have the ability to employ staff, to acquire property, to enter into contracts, and do other business arrangements and other business things, and I believe that that's exactly what the commission has done. It's within the purview of their mandate. That's what they have done.

If you're interested in information with respect to the investigation, perhaps you would do what I have asked you to do, is contact the chairman of the Gaming Commission and ask for a copy of the investigation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, I want to ask you whose responsibility was the Gaming Commission the day the order was given to have VLT (Video Lottery Technologies Inc.) and GTECH supply the machines for the province of Saskatchewan? Who was the minister of the four that have been there since you took over; which one of the ministers was responsible for that decision?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, in response to the member's question, I'm not sure who was the minister at the time that the Gaming Commission embarked upon this, but I can find out what the time was and find out for you who the minister in charge of the Gaming Commission was at that time.

Future of Rural Health Care

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, last night the member from Moosomin and I attended a joint meeting of the Moose Mountain Health Steering Committee and the Estevan Steering Committee. This group was made up of representatives from Maryfield, Wawota, Arcola, Oxbow, Gainsborough, Moosomin, Redvers, Lampman, Estevan, Benson, Stoughton,

Fillmore, Bienfait, and Carlyle.

These people are extremely concerned about the systematic dismantling of rural health care by your government, and they are afraid of the devastating impact your so-called wellness plan will have on their communities.

Madam Minister, you keep saying that communities are free to make their own decisions on the health care districts. However, based on the comments of the health official at last night's meeting, a Mr. Rus Duncombe, it is clear that your government has its own hidden agenda and you are prepared to impose your destructive plan on anyone who doesn't play ball with you.

Madam Minister, the communities I have just listed want to form their own health care districts, but they were told by Mr. Duncombe that the new districts should consist of at least 40,000 people, and he pushed them to join the Estevan district.

Madam Minister, it's becoming more and more apparent that . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Does the member have a question? I want the member to put his question.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, my question is: will you bring forward your hidden agenda for Saskatchewan health care, bring out the map that you have drawn, bring out the list of hospitals that you intend to close, and quit trying to get the local people, the local hospital boards, to do your dirty work for you?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, there is no hidden agenda. And if the member opposite had followed health reform over the last seven or eight months with a legitimate concern to determine what is occurring, he would be saying different things today, instead of being involved in meetings for totally political purposes, which obviously he is.

The member opposite knows that the department and the government have put out guidelines for forming districts. There are 25 to 30 planning groups in the province that are now working and talking about districts. We have set out some very specific guidelines as to the amount that should be in the district, and we have recommended basically 12,000.

The districts can be larger. They can have 20,000; they can have 40,000 if they want to associate with a larger centre. That's okay. But we're hoping they will be at least 12,000. And there is no other criteria with respect to the size of those districts.

Mr. Speaker, he's asked me a whole range of questions here and I want to deal with them. Now with respect to a map and boundaries being set out, that has not been predetermined. We are waiting to see what the planning groups want to do out there.

Now because this has been in process for several months, we are getting a better idea as to where the lines are going to be because the groups have been telling us since last August, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, at least I am going out and meeting with the public at these hearings, which is more than you're doing. And the people are asking, have we not been wasting our time for the last seven or eight months? Madam Minister, this charade that you're carrying on is just an elaborate public relations gimmick designed to deflect responsibility from you for the dismantling of rural health care.

The comments made by your official last night prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that there is a plan in place for the destruction of rural hospitals. It's all but decided, Madam Minister, and you continue to say that the local boards have the right to determine their own fate. This is like giving a condemned man the choice between the gas chamber and the firing squad and claiming he has the right to determine his own fate.

Will the minister, the Dr. Kevorkian of health care, bring the plan into the open and tell the people who attended the meeting last night which hospitals have been targeted for your government-assisted suicide program? Is it Wawota, Oxbow, Lampman, Gainsborough, Stoughton? For once and for all, Madam Minister, give us a straight answer. Which one is it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — The members opposite try so hard to be mean and witty, Mr. Speaker, that it's rather hilarious sometimes. The members opposite know that what we did a couple weeks ago was put out an institutional package that set bed targets for the province. It was open; we spoke to the press about it; we sent it out to all the boards. It's not hidden; it's not in secret. It is open and it is all there as to what the bed targets are for the province. We are asking people so . . .

And the other interesting thing is the inconsistency in the members opposite who have been saying all spring: you've got to give more guidelines, you've got to give more directions, people don't know what they're doing. And as soon as we do that, they say: you've got a plan, and you're doing this and you're doing that, and don't give us guidelines.

Mr. Speaker, boards will have the opportunity to make decisions in the context of a district. The government will set the funding. We will set guidelines for getting into districts. We will set provincial standards. We will set bed targets, and we will provide districts with an evaluation system as they deliver health care services.

But it will be a partnership of more control and flexibility in communities than what has happened in the past, but a partnership with government working towards a better health care system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, your targets for beds and your funding cuts don't amount to much of a partnership for rural Saskatchewan. Madam Minister, your official, Mr. Duncombe, made one more comment on behalf of the government that the people in the meeting found very disturbing. He said that there are two classes of citizens in Saskatchewan when it comes to health care — one rural, one urban.

This is what he said, Madam Minister, and this shocking statement. But I at least give him credit for being upfront and honest and open, which is more than can be said for yourself.

Madam Minister, if you implement your master plan for destroying rural health care in this province, it will be easy to tell the difference between those two classes. The people in rural Saskatchewan will have a much lower life expectancy.

Madam Minister, do you support the comments of your official? Do you intend to create two classes of health service in this province? And how do you justify this complete betrayal of rural Saskatchewan on the issue of health care delivery?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, right now in rural Saskatchewan we have an average rate of something like five beds per thousand for primary care. In urban Saskatchewan we have 1 to 1.5 beds per thousand for primary care.

It is therefore necessary — And also in addition to that, rural Saskatchewan residents have access to city hospitals and use the base hospitals to a large extent — it is therefore necessary, since we are facing a \$15 billion debt in this province that was left to us by the members opposite and their mismanagement and incompetence, because this province is in such a dire financial situation, it has to take a look at the institutional sector and put money where there are needs.

No longer can we fund wants. We have to fund needs and health care needs. And our dollars have to result in positive health outcomes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, the people in urban Saskatchewan are only minutes away from their hospitals. Under your proposal the people in rural Saskatchewan will be hours away from a hospital.

Madam Minister, you say that you are giving the health districts the right to determine their own fate. But everyone at the meeting last night said that the process was moving too fast. They're saying they need

more time. They're saying August 17 deadline for district formation is much too soon for such a dramatic change. These people are making decisions that involve the very viability of their communities and you are giving them only a few short months to do it in.

Madam Minister, will you extend the August 17 deadline or is this deadline just another part of your hidden agenda? Has this hasty deadline been put in place to allow you to impose your master plan on the destruction of Saskatchewan health care before the local communities get the opportunity to become organized?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the local communities have been organizing since last August and they've been given a year within which to do it, and many of them are saying it's not moving fast enough. They wanted it to move faster. Now I know there's some communities that are not as far ahead as other communities. That I'm aware of, and we're prepared to help.

Now with respect to being hours away — hours away — from hospitals. That is simply not true. There will be accessible acute care services within a district that are reachable within a period of time that's safe, Mr. Speaker.

There will also be emergency . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I want to ask the member from Souris-Cannington, he had lots of time to ask his question; he should at least give the minister the courtesy of listening to her answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the bed target . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, it's very important for communities to get organized on a district basis — it is very important because the bed targets that we're moving towards will be implemented on a district basis and on a provincial-wide basis. It's not going to be a question of looking at each institution and each community. It will be done in the context of a much larger community. There will be emergency acute care services for people in every community in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, a short question: how many minutes will people in rural Saskatchewan be away from their local hospital?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, we are asking district boards to do needs assessment and to look at those precise issues within the context of the health reform and the bed targets that are set. So it is urgent for communities at this time, not for these members

opposite to try and scare the people in their communities, because that's what they're doing. They're trying to scare people and get them upset when there's no need to be upset.

What has to happen here is people have to come together on a district basis, look at it in a rational way, and provide high-quality health care services within the context of their district. And we will make sure that people are looked after properly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also for the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, people all over this province want to know which rural hospitals you intend to close down.

Last Friday I attended a meeting in Leader in which 500 people were there to protest your changes to the health care delivery in this province, Madam Minister. At that meeting people wanted answers, Madam Minister. They wanted to know if their hospital was going to close.

Madam Minister, I ask you today on behalf of the people of Leader, Saskatchewan, do you intend to close their hospital?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the people from the Leader area and surrounding area are having ongoing discussions right now with respect to health reform and the need to get into a district. These people will get themselves involved into a district. I'm not sure just how large the district will be, whether they will be interested in being a part of Swift Current or whether it's Shaunavon, Leader, and Gull Lake — I don't know that. They will make that determination, Mr. Speaker.

Then they'll do a needs assessment. They will take the bed targets that we've set out and the funding levels, and in the context of that they will be making a determination as to what sort of acute care services they will provide within their district.

With respect to funding, we will be setting out what the funding is for each hospital in the days and weeks to come.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Madam Minister, people all over this province are concerned about your wellness plan. In Melfort the other evening 35 people stormed the Minister of Community Services annual NDP meeting, concerned about the health care situation in Melfort, the Parkland Regional Care Centre.

Madam Minister, on behalf of the people of Melfort, do you intend to close that hospital in Melfort?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — You know, Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite had had a little foresight in the last 10 years, some of the measures that we are taking today would not have been done as urgently as we are now having to do them.

The fact of the matter is, is we can't spend money we don't have, and this province is in such a difficult financial situation that we are having to make some very tough decisions, very urgently.

And the members opposite can get up and they can say, are you doing this or are you doing that, and make all kinds of accusation. But let the public remember that they never showed one shred, not one shred of responsibility in the last 10 years. They have put our future and the future of our children in such jeopardy that the people of Saskatchewan will not forget for decades and decades to come.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, people all over this province are concerned about health care. Rallies in Leader, Weyburn, Prince Albert, Melfort, all over this province, are concerned that you're going to close their hospital, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, I ask you this very simple question: will you delay passage of your damaging legislation until the government undertakes a complete series of public meetings all over this province? Will you commit to that, Madam Minister, this day?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, we have had public meetings all over the place. I've met with some 20,000 people in the last six or seven months across this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I've been to communities like Langenburg and Star City. I've been to communities throughout the entire province and talked to people. And they want this legislation and they want it now. Because unlike the members opposite, they have a vision for a future health care system that is going to improve the quality of health care services. They know we're going through tough times. They know what we're facing with respect to the debt. And they are rising above vested interests. And they are rising above petty politics, unlike the members opposite. And they are working with us to get districts in place so we can provide a more rational system that meets health care needs and not health care wants.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister says that she has been to health care meetings all over this province. Well, Madam Minister, I'd like to bring one to your attention right

now. Tomorrow evening in Eatonia, Saskatchewan, there will be a public meeting. And they have called your office and asked you to attend. Madam Minister, will you commit to those people in Eatonia for their meeting tomorrow, as well as Brock, Saskatchewan, for their meeting on Monday evening, that you will attend those meetings and hear the concerns of rural Saskatchewan and not close their hospital?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the fact is, is that we have been meeting with people throughout Saskatchewan and we will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to do that.

But I want to set the members opposite straight. There are many people in this province who recognize the need for change, who recognize the need to be able to move towards a health care system that they can afford. The people of this province have a vision of where we are heading and what has to be done. And they know that there are some tough decisions; they know that. And many of them want to participate in making those decisions and they want the right to make them themselves; others would choose the department and the government to make those. And we can work with both parties through this health care reform.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 42 — An Act respecting the Creation and Supervision of certain Crown Corporations

Hon. Mr. Penner: — Mr. Speaker, I move an Act respecting the Creation and Supervision of certain Crown Corporations be now introduced and read for the first time.

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

POINT OF ORDER

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, a point of order.

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, earlier today before question period, you sat me down when I introduced guests. And as I understand it, Mr. Speaker, I was just following a process that was entered into yesterday by the Conservative member opposite, the member from Moosomin.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, given that you did not sit him down when he chose to introduce his guest yesterday, I'm wondering why you chose to sit down myself.

The Speaker: — Order. I think the member does make a very valid point. The reason . . . I think the member yesterday was out of order when he chose to introduce somebody . . . when he chose somebody that was not in this House. That is not a precedent, but I did set the member down today because she got into political debate.

The member got into political debate whereas I believe the member did not yesterday, but both members were out of order.

Order. I do want to draw the attention to the Government House Leader that debate, political debate, during introduction of guests has never been tolerated in this House.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I have a point of order.

Mr. Minister, I will take the time to explain it. And the point of order is this: on March 29 the minister responsible for gambling directly quoted a document which is recorded on page 660 of *Hansard*. On that day the Opposition House Leader raised a point of order to have the quoted document tabled pursuant to the rules and practices of the Assembly, on which point you ruled the minister should indeed table the document.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have examined what the minister tabled and taken the time to consult the appropriate authorities and have come to the conclusion that this further point of order must be raised. Mr. Speaker, when you examine what the minister tabled, you will see at the top of the page it is clearly labelled as appendix B. This label conclusively proves that there is in fact an appendix A and indeed the rest of the document to which these are appendices.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Will the members please let the member make his point of order.

Mr. Martens: — The point, Mr. Speaker, is that the rules and practices of the Assembly do not allow a minister to table only a portion of a quoted document. The rules do not say that a minister must table only the page from which he quoted, but that indeed must table the entire document.

If this attempt to circumvent the rules is allowed, Mr. Speaker, then what is to stop a minister from simply clipping out the paragraph or the sentence that is quoted? So for example, Mr. Speaker, if you look on page 660, if you look on page 660 of *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, you will see the text of the minister's quote.

Allowing him to table only an appendix, claiming that he only quoted that appendix, would be the equivalent of allowing him to table a paragraph on page 660. Literally, Mr. Speaker, what this would mean is that the act of quoting is itself sufficient documentation, making the tabling rule completely meaningless.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a trivial point. The minister

clearly tabled only a portion of the document he actually quoted and that is conclusively proven by the content of the tabled material itself. I therefore ask you to review the document and the authorities and come back with an order for the minister to table the rest of the document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I would want to go back and check *Hansard*, but my understanding is that the document that the minister had in his presence and quoted from was in fact tabled as indicated. These briefing notes that the minister was using were tabled here in the Assembly, as per the requirements of the rules of the Assembly. We'll go back and review *Hansard* again, but my understanding is that the documents were already tabled and that the requirements were in fact met.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I do remember yesterday asking the minister to table the page that he was quoting from. I do want to refer members to Beauchesne:

Only the document cited need be tabled by a Minister. A complete file need not be tabled because one document in it has been cited.

I asked the minister yesterday to table the information from which he was citing and I would assume that he tabled the page from which he was citing. Therefore I don't find the point of order well taken. I have to assume that the minister filed the page from which he was quoting, and he does not have to file the whole file or the complete document, but only that from which he was quoting.

Order, order.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as it relates to question 92, I would request it be converted to motions for returns (debatable).

The Speaker: — Motions for returns (debatable).

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply

The Chair: — Order. I would ask the minister to introduce the officials who are here with her today.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Yes, I'd like to introduce the deputy minister of Finance, John Wright on my right; associate deputy minister of Finance, Craig Dotson; executive director of the Treasury Board branch, Rae Haverstock; and at the back, Al Dennett, director of operations, Treasury Board branch.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would propose to make a few brief comments about the general purpose of

interim supply and about this particular interim supply Bill.

Each year the annual budget tabled in the legislature is to provide funding for the entire fiscal year. The Assembly then reviews the details of the budget, department by department, and the whole budget is ultimately passed by means of The Appropriation Act.

That period of legislative review of the individual departmental estimates may take several months however, and in the period before that, expenditures are required. Provisions are therefore in place for the Legislative Assembly to approve interim supply by means of an interim appropriation Act otherwise known as the interim supply Bill.

In Saskatchewan the tradition and practice over the past 30 years has been for the first interim supply Bill each year to provide for one month's expenditures and therefore to provide one-twelfth of the total budgeted amounts.

In fact in the 33 years since 1960, there have only been three occasions when the first interim supply Bill was for some amount other than a straight one-twelfth of the budgeted amount.

The interim supply Bill being introduced today is, therefore, consistent with the tradition and practice in the legislature over the past 30 years; provides a straight one-twelfth of all the funds to be voted contained in the *Estimates* for the whole year. This one-twelfth amount will be provided to departments for the month of April in order for them to meet the urgent obligations and to make timely payments.

If members of the Assembly wish to review the details of expenditures in a particular department, they will of course have the opportunity in the Committee of Finance when that department's minister and officials are present to answer detailed questions.

In short, we have a budget before the Assembly. The budget has not been passed but there are agencies in the province who require money for the month of April. And so we have to pass interim supply to provide them with that money, and the debate is on that issue rather than on the *Estimates* of the government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move:

That a sum not exceeding \$340,881,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the twelve months ending March 31, 1994.

(1445)

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think it's appropriate that I make a few remarks before asking the Finance minister a few questions regarding interim supply.

I expected as much of the Finance minister, to come in here and give the opposition a little lecture on what

we can ask and what we can't ask her in this particular committee. But I say to the minister that there is ample precedent in the past to be quite wide and broad-ranging in this particular motion. And indeed, interim supply in the past has gone on for, in fact, days until there were certain answers provided to the opposition. So I can assure Madam Minister that the opposition members will probably all be prepared to ask her questions during this particular debate.

Madam Minister, your budget recently brought down in this province, every day has another piece pop up to the surface which Saskatchewan people are finding very disquieting. It was bad enough on budget day, Madam Minister, when you proceeded to tax the living daylight out of them, when you and your Premier had promised them in the past that you wouldn't do that.

Madam Minister, I'm not going to go back through the dozens of quotes which have been entered into debate in this legislature by your Premier and by others in your political party, saying that you wouldn't go to these extremes with Saskatchewan taxpayers, that you wouldn't offload on them, that you wouldn't up sales tax, that you wouldn't drive the Saskatchewan economy to its knees. No, I'm going to not do that at this time, Madam Minister.

But I can say to you that each and every day more and more people are starting to figure out exactly what is going on out there. And I think that's why you're seeing all around this province, you're seeing people in the health care community banding together because they're finally starting to figure out exactly what's here for them. And what's here for them is just a whole lot of pain.

What isn't here is a \$4.5 billion budget that you were going to manage in this province and you were going to manage smarter, and you were to cut out the waste and mismanagement, and you were going to keep our health and educational systems, those very basic structures of our society, in place and functioning. And what they're finding out now, Madam Minister, is each and every day that there are cost implications that these taxpayers are going to have to pick up.

Health is only the tip of the iceberg, Madam Minister. We know that education will be next. And probably the very structure of government, of local government, will be next on the chopping block once you've got done with education.

We know, Madam Minister, that the agricultural community in the time since the budget is beginning to assess the damage that you and your party have done in the short time that you've been in power. This second budget of your government has only further emphasized to everybody in rural Saskatchewan that there's nothing but hurt and pain in store for them in the future.

That with the increases in utility rates, with increases in taxes, with the offloading — the half a billion dollars in offloading which they're going to face

because of your budget over the next four years — that the property tax base of this province and particularly the property tax base of our towns and villages and our farms, is going to be under incredible pressure, pressure which your government has not attempted to alleviate in any way.

You know, Madam Minister, it's really surprising that you would come in here with a motion and say to the opposition that we should simply allow this to go through, when last year your colleague, the member from Dewdney, stood in this legislature and said that the use of special warrants was something that would never occur again in the legislature of Saskatchewan under a New Democratic Party government.

And what do we find when we get to the end of the previous fiscal year? We find your government going for special warrants for one-sixth of the entire budget of the province of Saskatchewan. Two whole months — two whole months under special warrants.

And, Madam Minister, it only shows that promises made by New Democrats are promises to be broken. That nothing that you people said in the 1991 election campaign meant anything. Nothing at all. They were simply promises made in order to achieve some political ends that the member from Riversdale wanted.

Well I can tell you, Madam Minister, that your days of being able to fudge the numbers, of blame others, are rapidly drawing to a close. I've got to hand it to you, Madam Minister, it was a very opportune time to switch from the way the Government of Saskatchewan accounted for its books to accrual accounting. People are starting to figure out, Madam Minister, exactly how that process works. It was a very, very opportune time.

It's interesting when one sits down with the heads of some of the major accounting firms around town and goes through this process. And quite frankly, they haven't all figured it out quite yet. But it was a very, very opportune time. I would say it was a political time. It had more to do with politics than it had to do with the financial well-being of the province of Saskatchewan.

And I have to hand it to you, Madam Minister, and to your colleagues and to your department. It's very well crafted. And it's going to take people a while to figure out exactly what was going on — how that sort of \$800 million once, one time over, works.

But people are starting to figure it out, just like they're figuring out all of your broken promises; how they're starting to figure out how their monthly budget as individuals is being affected; how their monthly budgets when it comes to their health care needs, their transportation needs, the needs of clothing and feeding their families — all of those things that you, Madam Minister, that your party promised wouldn't happen, are now happening. And they're happening in spades.

We're seeing school boards coming back to us, civic administrations talking about the increase in gasoline costs, how much extra it's going to be — 300, 400, \$500,000? Over and over again what we see is a pattern of offloading, downloading when you and your colleagues stand in your seats and decry that Ottawa, decry that Ottawa is unloading on the provinces.

Well, Madam Minister, just think what would have happened if that \$106 million in transfer payments would have had to be paid back this year instead of being able to use your new accounting method and put it off? Just think what your budget numbers would have looked like, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, we have 9,000 less jobs in the province of Saskatchewan today than we had a year ago. Your minister, your previous minister of Finance stood in here in this Assembly in interim supply last year and talked about creating jobs, talked about creating thousands of jobs, and in fact, he came forward and said that because of the dropping of harmonization these jobs and this activity was going to occur in the province of Saskatchewan.

And when we pressed him to bring forth the studies and the analysis that he claimed was done, that showed that that in fact was going to happen, he wouldn't produce it. And the end result, Madam Minister, instead of creating those jobs, was that we went the opposite way. We see the city of Medicine Hat and they tell me that there are more building permits for the city of Medicine Hat than the entire province of Saskatchewan.

Do you know why that is, Madam Minister? That's because Saskatchewan people are fleeing this province because there is no opportunity. They're fleeing because they don't trust you people. They're fleeing because you don't live up to your word, that the promises that you make, that the figures you quote don't come true.

And now, Madam Minister, you would have us believe, you would have us believe in this Assembly and around this province that the manufacturing and processing industry is going to jump-start our economy because you're going to harmonize their sector at 9 per cent instead of 7. And that for the next eight months that particular sector of our economy is going to grow by leaps and bounds because you have done that, but by the same token if you did that for the rest of our sector that they wouldn't grow.

And you refuse to provide the analysis, to provide the documents, that will show how this job creation is going to work; how you're going to stop out-migration; how you're going to stop this job loss. And you refuse, and your government refuses to provide that. You just tell us that by increasing taxes, by offloading on people all over this province, that we're going to get an economic turnaround and that our retail sector, for instance, is going to do better than 4 per cent. Madam Minister, that's a joke. It's a joke.

You know what's going on around Canada. It means that your projections for this year will be as badly out as they were for last year. Your budget deficit was out over nearly \$80 million last year. And why would anyone in the province of Saskatchewan, given the projections you made, think that it's going to be any different this year.

And you've had your one-time-only shot at accrual, Madam Minister. Next year you won't be able to change the numbers again. You won't be able to do it again. You've had your one-time shot.

Madam Minister, there is nothing in this budget process to give anyone, anyone at all, the kind of hope, the kind of confidence that they need to turn the economy around in this province.

Madam Minister, within a month, within a month in this province there's a megaproject that's supposed to occur. It's called spring seeding. It's supposed to occur.

There is not one thing, Madam Minister, in this budget that says that that process, which usually turns about a billion dollars in the Saskatchewan economy, is going to occur with any confidence at all. Those people don't know how they're going to put fuel in their tractor. They don't know how they're going to buy their fertilizer. And they don't know how they're going to go to their suppliers in the small towns and cities of this province and ask those suppliers to give them the credit that's absolutely necessary to put that megaproject in place.

Instead they look down the list, Madam Minister, and they see agriculture, they see agriculture cut by \$60 million. They see many of the support programs that were in place, cut. And they look to this government for leadership and direction, and there is none forthcoming. They see a task force put together by the Minister of Agriculture, running around this province asking, what should we do? But there are no solutions coming from the government. They keep saying that the federal government has to come up with the money, but they don't offer to be a partner. When the federal government comes forward and offers money, they simply turn it down. They turn it down because it might interfere with their political agenda.

Well, Madam Minister, I say to you today: a federal election isn't going to save your bacon. Your federal counterparts are so low in the polls they're starting to look under the carpet for them. Audrey McLaughlin is not going to come to your salvation, Madam Minister. And the member from Riversdale's friend, Mr. Chretien, isn't either. So you might as well forget, Madam Minister, about waiting for a federal election to solve your problems for you.

What you've got to do is start showing some leadership and direction on the economic side in this province. And it means far more than simply offloading on someone else, blaming someone else. It means that you have to put the economic tools and levers in place — the tools in place so that people can

grab a hold of them and pull themselves up by the bootstraps.

(1500)

Madam Minister, you had an opportunity in this province to show some leadership on budget day. You had an opportunity, your Premier had an opportunity, to start at the top, to cut down the size of his cabinet, to do away with some of these associate ministers that we've got hanging around — associate ministers that the member from Riversdale, the whole time he was in opposition said shouldn't be there, that they were simply appendages.

He had an opportunity to start at the top with the Deputy Premier. And I appreciate that they're old friends, that they've been together as colleagues for a long time, but I don't know how you justify \$800,000, Madam Minister, to the member from Dewdney, from Regina Dewdney, to be the keeper of the provincial seal and the keeper of the political machinery for the Government of Saskatchewan — the political machinery which you're hoping you can put to the best use for your federal counterparts in the province in the upcoming federal election. I don't think the taxpayers of this province appreciate, Madam Minister, that \$800,000.

The member from Dewdney doesn't have a job, Madam Minister, that qualifies, in my view, for cabinet status any more in a province that is so cash strapped as you're always reminding us, that you can justify increasing his portfolio by person-years and \$800,000 simply to look after the political well-being of the New Democratic Party in this province.

Madam Minister, what we're afraid of, what we're afraid of in trusting you with another \$340 million for the month of April is that we're going to see more things happen like we saw in the ag research area where you had the gall to stand in this legislature and read into your budget speech that you were increasing R&D (research and development) in the agricultural side when in fact what you were doing was cutting it from 17 million to 12.

Reading that into the speech, from the budget speech, as if you had come up with brand-new money, Madam Minister. It's just like telling seniors in this province that on budget day you were giving them another 5 per cent. And as was pointed out yesterday, Madam Minister, that was sheer fallacy. Sheer fallacy.

And seniors all over this province, Madam Minister, are figuring it out. More pieces of the iceberg are floating to the surface. More chips are coming off. And every time one of those chips floats up to the surface, more people figure it out. More people figure out it's going to cost me more; that the party of medicare is now the party of I don't care. The party of I don't care because, Madam Minister, health costs are now part and parcel of our everyday lives in this province on an individual basis — part and parcel.

Madam Minister, you're not fooling the people in

private health insurance. They're busy putting their packages together and lining up because they know now that Saskatchewan people are going to have to pay beyond their taxes for a great deal of their health care. And you know what, Madam Minister? A lot of people probably would agree with that approach if you had done it in an upfront manner; if you had said before the last provincial election, we are going to have you paying for certain parts of the health care system directly through private insurance, or directly upfront.

And you know what, Madam Minister? I think a lot of people would have agreed with you. But you didn't have the political courage to do that. You didn't have the political courage to do that.

And today, Madam Minister, you come to this House and you ask for \$340 million-plus, knowing full well that seniors, families with small children, are now going out and having to pay directly over and above, over and above what you're taxing out of their hides on a weekly and a monthly and a yearly basis.

Madam Minister, if you and your party had had the political courage to tell the truth to Saskatchewan electors a short time ago, I think people wouldn't be so cynical of the political process. The people wouldn't have to band together by the hundreds. And I'll prophesy to you, Madam Minister, they will band together by the thousands in health and education. That there will be a tax revolt in this province because you would sooner look after your political needs than you would look after the economic well-being of this province.

That everything with you people is subverted to that very bottom level and it is politics, politics, politics, and nothing else. That's the only conclusion, Madam Minister, that they can come to as more chips off of this iceberg budget of yours float up to the surface. Every chip, every chip turns into a chit that the taxpayer of this province has to handle. And they're getting sick and tired, Madam Minister, of having so many chits to pay up.

Madam Minister, one of the questions that we're going to be asking you in this interim supply, as we did last year for the member from Dewdney, is we would like you to provide the analysis, provide the analysis on how the Saskatchewan economy is going to grow, how the Saskatchewan economy is going to prosper, how cross-border shopping is going to decrease by having the sales tax at 9 per cent and the gasoline tax up to 10 cents.

And I think those are fair and legitimate questions, Madam Minister. Because they fly directly in the face of what you promised Saskatchewan people. They dramatically affect every household in this province and now that you've expanded the provincial sales tax base to include clothing, except in the case of children, I think it's only proper, Madam Minister, that you be able to come to this legislature when you come here and demand, when you come here and demand over \$340 million, that you can show every retailer in

this province, every retailer in this province how increasing sales tax to 9 per cent is going to make their business better, how it's going to make their business able to employ more people, how it's going to make their business capable, capable of handling those offloaded taxes that are going to come down on them from high in the next four years.

They're going to want to know, Madam Minister, when the mill rates for education in their community start jumping by three, four, five — as the head of the trustees association said, we could be into double digits here before we know it — they want you to show them the analysis, Madam Minister, of when those mill rate increases start to happen, how their business is going to be better off because you've increased the sales tax to help them pay, help them pay, Madam Minister, those extra mills.

And they want to know, Madam Minister, how they're going to pay those extra property taxes when their cities and their towns and their villages have to pick up the increases on fuel, when they have to pick up the increases that are being proposed with labour legislation. They want to know how they're going to pick up the increases that will show up on the health care side because you upped the sales tax to 9 per cent.

Madam Minister, your political party produced three documents while in opposition, three documents condemning harmonization of our sales tax with the federal tax system. And you did that with the research capability of an opposition party. And we expect, Madam Minister, now that you not only have the research capability of the government caucus, but have the research capability of the entire Department of Finance and the entire Department of Economic Development at your disposal, that you can put together the kind of studies, put together the kind of fact-finding material that can conclusively prove to Saskatchewan people how an increase in the sales tax from not just 7 per cent to 8 per cent to 9 per cent is going to benefit Saskatchewan families and Saskatchewan small-business people.

And we expect, Madam Minister, if you could do it in opposition with very limited resources and say to Saskatchewan people, these are believable documents that we have put together, that these documents are true, that the figures in them are reasonable and just, that with all of the people and resources and material available to you today as the Minister of Finance in the province of Saskatchewan that you will be able to table in this legislature that conclusive proof.

And we're going to be asking you about that, Madam Minister. I think every member of the opposition will probably be asking you for those kind of details. And unlike the member from Dewdney last year who claimed, well I just got here and I really don't know what's going on yet and I haven't had the opportunity to put that material together, that you're going to be able to provide that. And by providing that, you're going to be able to answer those questions.

Madam Minister, the same goes for the issue of cross-border shopping. While you people were in opposition, you stood in this legislature day after day and said that the issue of cross-border shopping, whether it be in Alberta which doesn't have a sales tax, or the province of Manitoba which has a lower sales tax, or along the U.S. (United States) border, that the tax policies of the former government were out of whack, they were out of reality, they were out of sync with what was going on in western Canada.

And now, Madam Minister, we're going to want you to conclusively prove to this Assembly and to the taxpayers of this province how the changes that you have made are going to stop that outflow of dollars, are going to conclusively prove to Saskatchewan people that they shouldn't go to the new Superstore in Medicine Hat, conclusively prove to anyone that lives within a hundred miles of the United States border that they shouldn't buy their clothing in the United States. Because if you take a little tour through southern Saskatchewan right now, Madam Minister, like I did last weekend in places like Oxbow, places like Glen Ewen, places like Estevan, that's what they are saying — that there will be no clothing bought in the province of Saskatchewan in any of those places any more, that you have simply left no alternative.

And if there's no clothing bought, Madam Minister, because there is so much cross-border shopping going on, how in the world do you expect those retailers in those communities to be able to pay, to pay the taxes that you have loaded on their shoulders? How are they going to pay over the next four years that half a billion dollars in offloading?

Well, Madam Minister, those are the questions that are going to be asked and those are the questions that we expect to be answered if we're to give you another \$340 million for the month of April.

Now, Madam Minister, I'm going to run through a series of questions here, and a simple yes or no will be sufficient and then we can go back and discuss them. So if you would take note of them and then if you wish at any time to interject on a particular one, just signal and I'll be quite happy to take my seat and you can go at some length on them, if you wish.

Madam Minister, does this supply motion provide tax money to fund the Department of the Provincial Secretary?

(1515)

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — It's one-twelfth.

Mr. Swenson: — Does this motion provide more money, compared with the same period last year, for the Premier's office, also called Executive Council?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — It provides one-twelfth for Executive Council as well.

Mr. Swenson: — Does this motion provide for money

that will end up funding the gambling partnership which you have with the organizations known as VLT and GTECH?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — It provides one-twelfth non-budgetary for the Gaming Commission.

Mr. Swenson: — Does this motion provide money for ministerial travel in any different amount than it did in the same period last year?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — The budget provides for one-twelfth of the amounts to be voted for each department.

Mr. Swenson: — Could you be more specific on that, Madam Minister? Ministerial travel is not a department.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — It is included in the budget of each department. It is not broken down; it is just part of the budget of the particular departments.

Mr. Swenson: — Does this motion include monies that would be for severance or for pay-outs resulting from job terminations by your government?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — No it does not.

Mr. Swenson: — Does this money provide for government advertising . . . money for government advertising?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — The answer is the same as with respect to travel. Each department has items with respect to advertising. It's not broken down in the interim supply Bills, so it's just one-twelfth for each department. Included in that is the particular appropriation with respect to travel.

Mr. Swenson: — Does this motion provide for monies going to non-governmental organizations?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Yes it does.

Mr. Swenson: — Does this motion include money that will be going to organizations such as SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) which are then redistributed to other areas?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — No.

Mr. Swenson: — There are a number of areas in the area of health that I would like to ask you, and I'll lump them together. Does this motion include funding for chiropractic care, optometric care, diabetics and their insulin program? Does this provide funding for abortion procedures and the children's dental program?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — The answer is the same as with respect to travel and advertising. One-twelfth of the Department of Health's budget is being voted and so some funds will be directed in the areas that you mention, but it's not broken down separately.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, there are a number of things which you responded to which I find difficult to accept.

I'm wondering why you would include the advertising for departments and agencies in a one-twelfth appropriation. I mean surely, Madam Minister, the advertising allotments for departments could wait until the budget had been passed; the departments and agencies would be prepared to organize their spending in such a way that you wouldn't have to come to this House on an appropriation Bill to ask for advertising dollars; that that can't be handled after the normal budgetary process has gone through, that estimates for each department . . . don't you find that a little unusual, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — I would say to the member opposite, no, this is standard practice. This has been done in precisely this way for years and years and years. Because there is an appropriation given to a department, we do not have any discretion in this process of interim supply as to how that department spends that money. This is, as I said at the beginning, standard practice, the way it has always been done.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Madam Minister, I don't agree with that. You do have the discretion; you're the Finance minister. And when you come to this House for interim supply, I would think that you would want to keep that request to the absolute bare bones, that you're simply coming in here to get enough money to pay some very basic bills, that there are pay cheques that have to be met, and that's about it.

You've got some very basic commitments for the Government of Saskatchewan, and looking after your friends in the advertising business aren't particularly necessities, Madam Minister.

That's why you go through the process of estimates, so that we can ask questions of the departments about their advertising and about their friends. And you, Madam Minister, are saying that we should, that we should accept that as part and parcel of an interim supply motion.

One of the reasons, Madam Minister, it takes so long to get interim supply done with you people is that you don't stick to the basics, that you have to throw in all of this other stuff.

I don't think it's appropriate at all, Madam Minister, that you come in here and ask for interim supply to fund ministerial travel. And sure, I know that's part of every department, but I think those departments should be prepared to come into this Assembly, come to you as the Finance minister, with a real bare-bones request.

Because we haven't had the opportunity, Madam Minister, to go through estimates and ask the minister of department A how he spends his money on ministerial travel.

We don't have that opportunity. And if we ask you for

any of those details, you say: well, Mr. Chairman, it's not up to me to provide those details; you're going to have to wait until estimates come along so I can ask the minister.

Well I don't think that's the kind of process, Madam Minister, that we should go through when we go to interim supply. Interim supply should be the very basics. It's not about advertising; it's not about ministerial travel; it's not about some of the third-party organizations that come to government for money. A lot of those organizations can come later in the year. It doesn't have to be in the month of April for interim supply.

And as I go through this list of responses that you have given me, I see here that there is no money put aside for severance or pay-outs resulting from job termination and that is absolutely right, Madam Minister. You made the right choice because those departments and agencies, rightly so, have said it isn't proper for us to come to the Department of Finance and ask for interim supply to handle those things. Those are things that we can budget for after we've had our estimates done.

And you, rightly so, Madam Minister, said no, there is no money here for severance or pay-outs or from terminations. And that's the correct approach. And I applaud you for getting 1 out of 15. But in all the rest of these areas you, as the Finance minister, have the responsibility to say to the ministers and say, lookit, we're only going to the legislature for the bare minimums here; that things like our advertising budget and our travel budgets aren't part and parcel of the bare minimum; that maybe for the month of April we either won't do those things or we will budget in a different way to handle them.

Madam Minister, I'm going to go back to one of the questions that I asked earlier. Are you prepared now, at this time, to table in this Assembly the analysis that you have done in the Department of Finance to show how raising the rate on sales tax from 8 per cent to 9 per cent is going to achieve the result of having a growth factor of over 4 per cent in the retail sector of this province. Are you prepared, Madam Minister, at this time to give that information?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, just one final comment on the comments made by the member opposite. If he has difficulty with the process that is in place today, I would remind him that it is exactly the process that was used with respect to the budgets in 1983-84, in 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87, and the list goes on. So if he has concerns, he has concerns about what he and his colleagues on the opposite side of the House did when they were government.

I would also add that if he is so interested in getting the details of what this spending is about, the way to do that is to expedite this process so that we can get on to the estimates and we can look into the details.

He has a specific question about studies. I would say

that this government in our budget and the appended documents to the budget address has more detail, a more comprehensive plan for the future of the province of Saskatchewan, than any government in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. So I would ask him to read the appendices and he will see the projections upon which this budget was based.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Madam Minister, I have not only been reading them, I've had to go out and seek help from people who are professionals in the field of accounting to also help me read them. And after many, many hours, after many, many hours with people who are very, very learned in the profession, we still haven't been able to get through all of the material, Madam Minister, nor get to the bottom of it.

I mean, as I complimented you earlier, you have been very crafty politically in how you have done your budgeting process. And you, I suspect, Madam Minister, have pulled the wool over the eyes of a lot of Saskatchewan taxpayers who don't have access to accountants and specialized people in the field, because it's very, very difficult, Madam Minister, for the lay person in this province to understand the changes that you made in the accounting process for the province of Saskatchewan.

And if you wish to stand up in this legislature and tell me or any other ordinary taxpayer in this province that it's very simple and that there aren't things there that are quite different from what they're used to, I'd like you to explain that to them, if that's the way you feel about it.

And the fact, Madam Minister, that some things were done in the past, I don't believe is legitimate at all for you to hold up as an excuse.

You and your political party sat in these benches for nine years, and you criticized that process every step of the way and said that it wasn't applicable to the new-found Democrats in this province, that it wasn't applicable. That you didn't need excuses from the past; that you were going to do it totally different; that you were going to be totally upfront.

Well, Madam Minister, no more hiding behind the past. Live up to your campaign promises. No excuses. No blame throwing. Just stand up and come clean. Talk about your process, your process only.

And when I say to you that Saskatchewan taxpayers would have expected you to come into this Assembly asking for interim supply in a bare-bones way and not with the frills of government attached to it, not with one-twelfth, not with one-twelfth of the \$800,000 increase for the Provincial Secretary attached to this interim supply motion so he can keep his political machinery running smoothly, then you would have had some credibility. Then you would have had some credibility, Madam Minister.

But instead you tell me that yes, there is one-twelfth for the increase for the Provincial Secretary so that he can . . . I presume he's going to use that \$800,000 to

figure out a way to . . . a new way to carry the provincial seal around with him, as I understand that that's the only job he's got beyond politics, is carry the . . .

(1530)

Maybe what he's going to do, Madam Minister, is he's going to have a system of a bag situated around the province so he can pop the provincial seal in and throw it over his shoulder and carry it around with him. Like I don't know how he's going to spend \$800,000 being the keeper of the provincial seal. You see, that's the problem, Madam Minister. You promised so much in opposition and then you deliver so little in government.

Now, back to the bigger question, Madam Minister. I asked you, in all fairness, seeing as that you're giving one-twelfth to just about every Tom, Dick, and Harry that wished it, where are the analyses and the studies that are going to show the Saskatchewan retailers that they are justified into digging into their pockets and coming up with the taxes to pay this one-twelfth, based on the fact that you have upped the sales tax rates from 8 per cent to 9. You're asking the citizen of this province today to come up with one-twelfth of their taxes — one-twelfth of their taxes not yours, Madam Minister — and they want to know how this is going to help them come up with the other eleven-twelfths later on in the year so that they can meet their tax commitments to you. You've asked them for one-twelfth today. They want to know how they're going to come up with the other eleven-twelfths. Are you ready to do that?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Unfortunately my patience at listening to the criticism of the practice has ran out, and I will have to remind the member opposite that he was part of the government that had a budget that was presented to the legislature but never even passed by the legislature, and special warrants had to be used until the government changed and the new government had to bring in a budget. So please let's move on to another issue because there has to be credibility in the questions being asked.

I have no desire to focus on the past, and I would ask people who have been observing this dialogue so far to ask themselves who has been focusing on the past? I have been talking about what our plan is for the future and what our budget is about. The members opposite have been talking about the past, and I guess I would just caution them. If we want to stand here and go through several hours or several days or whatever it is that is your pleasure and talking about the past, I'd be quite pleased to do that because I think it will be very disadvantageous to the members opposite for the public to be reminded again and again of their particular past. If instead we want to talk about the future and what the interim supply is about, that I think could be more productive. But the decision is really yours.

Again with respect to the information, the budget

address has appendices. In those appendices is outlined in great detail all of the assumptions upon which this budget has been based. And I would again ask the member opposite to look at the appendices.

Mr. Swenson: — Madam Minister, I don't mind talking about the past at all. That's why in interim supply last year we asked a lot of questions of the member from Regina Dewdney about the past, about harmonization, and about his analysis while in opposition, his analysis while in government.

And it was really strange, Madam Minister, that he was quite willing to talk about the past but never about the present as the Finance minister. And it appears you're in the same vein, the same mode. And you're quite willing to say one thing in opposition, put together all sorts of numbers, throw them out there to the public and say: here it is, this is factual information. You get into government, where you've actually got some trained, intelligent people to help you, and you don't want to come up with anything. I mean I think that's a bit of a contradiction, Madam Minister. I mean you had no trouble putting document after document after document together in the past, and then you've got all of these learned people around you whose sole responsibility in life is doing that sort of thing, but you never want to talk about the future.

And I just find that a little bit strange, Madam Minister. I'd like to talk about the past. I wouldn't mind talking at all with Saskatchewan business people and retailers about a 7 per cent sales tax. I wouldn't mind it at all. As I said, I think I could go out to a Saskatchewan retailer today and I could talk about a 7 per cent sales tax with him when he's talking about digging into his pocket for enough taxes to pay your one-twelfth. And he says, you know what, I think I can do it at 7 per cent a heck of a lot better than I can at 9.

And when he's talking about the other eleven-twelfths that you're going to come in here and ask for, I suspect if I went out to that retailer and I said, how about we compare a 7 per cent sales tax to a 9 per cent sales tax and how he's going to come up with that other eleven-twelfths to pay you, and I suspect he would come to some conclusions, Madam Minister. You know what he'd say? He said, I think I can do it at 7 per cent easier than I can at 9. I think that's what he'd say. I think I can go on to Main Street, Saskatchewan, and ask that question just about anywhere I wanted to.

And, Madam Minister, all of the other things that you've done to him since 7 per cent, as far as all his utilities and his taxes, his other taxes, and the offloading that he's going to feel over the next four years, and I suspect he'd say, I could really make it at 7 per cent a lot better than I could at 9, with everything else loaded on top of it. I just suspect that's what he's going to say.

So I don't mind talking about the past at all, Madam Minister. What I want you to do is show me that he's wrong and I'm wrong for asking that question; that he's wrong to suspect that when you come in here and ask him or her for one-twelfth of his taxes on a yearly

basis in order to fund your government.

So I think it would be fairly incumbent upon you, given that you said so much in opposition about how detrimental 7 per cent was on that business person or that family member, how you would be very pleased to show them how your 9 per cent and everything else is going to make it easier for that person to come up with the twelfth today and the other eleven-twelfths down the road. I think that would be a pleasure for you. You would take a great deal of excitement in doing that because you certainly did it in the past where you said, uh uh, it won't work at 7, it won't work at 7. Madam Minister, show us how it works at 9.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm saying to the member opposite, the choice will be his. If he wants to stand here and he wants to go through the past, I will read into the record again what happened in 1982 when the members opposite promised to get rid of the sales tax.

In the course of their term, what they managed to do was to bump the sales tax up two points. They promised to reduce income tax by 10 per cent. Instead what they added was a flat tax. They promised to get rid of the gas tax. By the time they had finished, the gas tax was increased. So as I say, I have files of information here and if you want to go through this, we can carry on in exactly this vein.

Now what I'm suggesting is that this government's real desire is to be more forward looking, to look to the future, and to be less petty in our politics and less partisan, and let's talk about the plan that this government has for the future of the province.

But again it will be the member opposite who will decide the tone of this debate, whether we want to take a high road or whether we want to get down into the low road.

He says that he would like to know the information upon which these decisions were made. What I would say to him is that this government has laid out what its projections are for real growth in the provincial economy for the next four years, and the next four years, assuming all of the changes that are involved in this budget.

And what we have projected is that in 1993 there will be real growth of 2.8 per cent. In 1994 there will be real growth of 1.6 per cent. In 1995 there will be real growth of 2.7 per cent. And in 1996 there will be real growth of 2.2 per cent.

The process by which those figures were arrived at was taking external agencies' projections for the growth of the province, factoring in the changes that result from this budget and laying before the people of Saskatchewan something quite unprecedented. No government in the history of this province has ever laid out projections across the piece. I've only read one set of the projections.

Here's our budget; here's the effect it's going to have

on the economy of the province; here's the growth we project.

So we've been open, upfront, absolutely thorough in laying before the people of the province a plan for their future.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, don't stand in here and lecture me about political ethics. Every time you get the opportunity outside of this legislature to be partisan as can be, you do it.

You did it on Barry Burgess's phone-in last week and you got caught at it. I mean you had the gall to go on there and say that Saskferco was a total write-off. That the Saskatchewan taxpayer was down the tube for 360-some million bucks. And you wouldn't explain the rest of the deal until I happened to come on the line, Madam Minister.

You didn't want to talk about the hundred-plus jobs; you didn't want to talk about 20 per cent of all the natural gas in the province being used in the royalties that you were getting; you didn't want to say that you had less than 60 million bucks in cash in the deal and that after two years time you can take the rest of your share and sell it to whoever.

But you get on a radio phone-in show with Saskatchewan taxpayers and out and tell them that the whole thing is a write-off, that it's shot. So don't stand in here, Madam Minister, and lecture me about political ethics. Every time you get the opportunity out of this building you're in it up to your hips.

And if that's going to be the attitude that we're going to have in interim supply, yes we probably will be here for a long, long time. Because, Madam Minister, you play in it, I play in it, we all play in it, we're all politicians.

At the bottom, at the end of the day, what the taxpayers of this province want are some reasonable answers. You're the one in charge of the provincial economy; I'm not.

I'm asking on behalf of the people out there that tell me that they are ready to revolt; that they feel they are taxed to the limit. So you go out there and start telling the truth about Saskferco, I'll be very happy to stand in here, Madam Minister, in a reasonable way and debate economic issues with you.

Now, Madam Minister, once again I'm going to give you the opportunity to tell the taxpayers of this province how they are going to meet their requirements at 9 per cent rather than 7 per cent. You told me that you have some growth projections. Well, Madam Minister, there are a lot of people around the piece that take a great deal of issue with those projections.

Maybe we'll just start real small here. You said that there were a number of outside agencies and groups that gave you those projections. Okay? Let's assume

that no one in your department does that sort of thing. Let's go out to those outside agencies, let's start at square one, and you just give me a list of who those people were that gave you those projections. Let's just start there.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, as it says in the material provided with the budget address, the main external estimate that we relied on were the Conference Board of Canada estimates. So I would turn the member's attention to the material and he would find written there the agency that we relied on.

But I would say that we also took into account other projections for the future growth prospects for the province. Conference Board's projections were somewhat more optimistic than ours; we scaled them down some. We also relied on the Royal Bank estimates and other financial agencies, but the key one was the Conference Board. And as I say, that's quite upfront in the material that is included with the budget address.

(1545)

Mr. Swenson: — I'm sorry, Madam Minister, I couldn't hear. Beyond the Conference Board, you said there were other agencies that gave you information, and I would just like you to table the commitment that you'll table in the Assembly that list of people that you consulted with in setting those projections.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Certainly we will be sure that the information is tabled. They're public forecasts available to any member of the public. Banks come out with forecasts, Conference Board of Canada comes out with forecasts, Burns Fry, Wood Gundy — they all come out with forecasts about the growth prospects for Canada and particular provinces within Canada.

We looked at all of them. But as we say quite upfront in our information, the one we relied on was the Conference Board of Canada as the main indicator.

Mr. Swenson: — Madam Minister, did those same agencies say to you that unless certain things performed at a level, that you were going to have difficulty, that you were going to have difficulty in meeting your projections?

Are those the same agencies that say to you, Madam Minister, unless you get your deficit below a certain figure, we're going to downgrade you? Or unless you do certain things in the housing industry, we aren't going to agree with you? Are those the same agencies that provide also the downside information, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, no. The Conference Board of Canada has given us no advice about our deficit or what we should do in housing. The Conference Board of Canada makes projections about economic growth across Canada and in particular provinces.

But now that you have mentioned the agencies, I would like to read some comments into the record about what the agencies have said about the prospects for the province and for our budget.

I notice that Burns Fry, in analysing our budget, had said that, with respect to our deficit reduction program, it appears attainable.

I also would note that Burns Fry . . . the president of Burns Fry last Friday when in Saskatoon told a group of business people that this budget was a leadership budget. He said it's a leadership budget within Saskatchewan because it has shown leadership in Saskatchewan and it's a leadership budget because it'll be seen across Canada as something to follow.

You would like some more information? I will quote from Wood Gundy's analysis of our budget:

Given the limited capacity of the province to raise the personal income tax rate further, the Government of Saskatchewan did well to raise the retail sales tax and fuel tax.

With respect to the projections and the success of the strategy, the plan that we've outlined and the reliability of our revenue forecast, they say this:

The success of Saskatchewan's medium-term strategy hinges on its ability to generate sufficient revenues over the next three to four years. The province's forecast of reasonably strong growth, average real gross domestic product of 2.3 per cent over the next four years, should be enough to generate the necessary revenues. Saskatchewan's balanced budget efforts send a strong positive signal to financial market participants.

A Canadian Bond Rating Service says the province has taken stern but positive measures in order to cut both its deficit and its debt.

And the list goes on. This article in the Regina *Leader-Post* . . . no, *Financial Post*, March 20, saying that bond raters back Regina. So the message from outside the province is quite clear from financial agencies. It's a model budget. It's a budget that shows leadership. It's a budget that looks toward the future.

Mr. Swenson: — I'm glad, Madam Minister, that you did read those in, because almost in each and every instance they are talking about the ability to generate new income. They are saying that your government has a very stern task in front of it, and that is to provide the tools to Saskatchewan people to generate that new income. And the Conference Board is forecasting real economic growth: 1993, 3.5 per cent; 1994, 3.8 per cent; 1995, 2.8 per cent.

Madam Minister, given where the Canadian economy is today and the fact that the whole entire agricultural sector of this province is wondering how they're going to put the seed in the ground, I would say those are

pretty heady figures that you're going to have to come up with. That means that there's going to have to be a real incentive for Saskatchewan people to go out and provide employment, to invest new money, invest new money in capital projects, job creation, in order to achieve these figures.

These figures, Madam Minister, haven't been seen in this country of ours in probably four or five years. This is heady stuff here that you're projecting in order to meet your requirements. Each and every agency — and I've read them all, Madam Minister — every agency is saying to you that if those tools aren't in place to meet these projections, then we're not going to come close.

Now what we're saying to you, Madam Minister, is that we're finding some inconsistencies. You're saying this is where you're going, and by going there you're going to satisfy your creditors, and that this rosy picture that you have painted is all going to come to pass.

But in order to get there, people like Isabel Anderson are saying to you, you've got to provide the people that are going to generate the growth with some tools — not take them away. Don't take their tools away. I mean it's what you've done to every farmer in this province. You've basically taken his tools away. Now the rest of the people in the province are saying, don't take our tools away, let us try and come somewhere close to these figures.

Most people don't believe you, quite frankly, if you go out to Main Street, Saskatchewan, and say there's going to be that kind of growth, but they're going to give you the benefit of the doubt for a little while.

Madam Minister, we just asked some simple questions about analysis on a very, very narrow part of your budget, that narrow part being the sales tax sector. And given what you said in opposition about 7 per cent and what reality is today, I want to know how those sales tax projections mesh with growth projected by the Conference Board of 3.5, 3.8, and 2.8.

I mean there's a lot of other stuff here, Madam Minister. You've got, I understand, a long-term interest figure of 9 per cent set on all of your long-term borrowing. About what? — 60, 70 per cent of your borrowing in the province, I think it'd be in that range somewhere. You've set that at 9 per cent and the rest of it would be a little lighter.

I mean, Madam Minister, you've got some real heady stuff here. We just want to know about one very narrow part of that game plan. And I don't know why there is so much reluctance to throw that out there to Saskatchewan people when they come in here and you ask for one-twelfth of their tax dollar and they're wondering how they're going to get to the other eleven. It's very academic.

Madam Minister, would you try and give it another shot?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would ask the member opposite to read the right figures. He unfortunately is reading the Canadian forecast, not the Saskatchewan forecast. So he may want to adjust his line there; he's on the wrong line.

But to get back to his question: of course we have provided incentives in this budget to small business and co-ops, reduced their tax rates over the next few years by 20 per cent.

An Hon. Member: — Yes, but if you tax them before they can get a profit, how are you going to get any benefit out of having a profit? You don't get a profit that way.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — The member from Morse is talking about the budget. I would remind him that the measures taken in this budget are necessary because of the financial situation in which your previous government left the province.

Now to move on to your question. What we have done is we have projected what will the real growth of the Saskatchewan economy will be with all of the changes in the budget taken into account. We did not break them down individually, so the information that you request does not exist. There is no individual study about what this particular . . . what decreasing the small business, the tax for small business and co-ops, what effect that will have on the growth of the Saskatchewan economy. Did not break that down separately.

So we didn't do it line by line because as you can imagine that's not a realistic way to approach it. What we did was we took the projections for the growth of the economy, factored in the changes that this budget represents in total, and had come out with a plan for the people of Saskatchewan. We've laid out the assumptions, growth in the real GDP (gross domestic product) over the next four years, as I've outlined to you previously.

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Madam Minister, if I remember back to my days of doing budget deliberations with the same gentleman that you have there with you today, there used to be this explanation on most things called diminishing returns. There was always lots of data on the various sin taxes, like if you take the price of cigarettes up to here, it'll be the law of diminishing returns and your revenue will drop off. If you take the price of alcohol up to here, and then it'll start to tail off because people will do other things. And there was always that sort of information available because that's part of the budgeting process, and cabinet has to make a decision to increase the price of cigarettes and alcohol.

Now, Madam Minister, I think that there's a law of diminishing returns as far as how far you can take sales tax. And I suspect, as part of your deliberations, that that number was arrived at, Madam Minister, because once you hit a certain figure it starts to evaporate on you. Cross-border shopping comes into effect,

consumer resistance comes into effect, how much inventory people put in place comes into effect.

Now, Madam Minister, I strongly suspect that during your budget deliberations the law of diminishing returns was talked about when we talk about sales tax. Are you going to stand here in this legislature and tell me that that wasn't talked about, that there weren't numbers set by your department officials on exactly where you sort of max out on sales tax. Or was it simply because you were hidebound by some political decisions that you couldn't move in other directions that would have been a little more comfortable. Which was it? Was it the political considerations or was there still room on the law of diminishing returns as far as sales tax? Does that mean that we can expect it to go to 10 per cent next year, or 11, or 12? Is there some place where it tops out, Madam Minister, where there'll be less coming in because of your onerous schedule? I suspect that there is.

Maybe you should share that information with Saskatchewan taxpayers, so that they know where the law of diminishing return starts to take effect, as far as sales taxes go.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess I would ask the member opposite what precisely this has to do with interim supply.

But to answer your question, what we did is we did a comprehensive analysis of what all of the budget changes would mean for the province of Saskatchewan — what it would mean for growth in the economy, what it would mean for inflation, what it would mean for job creation.

And we have laid before the people of Saskatchewan that analysis. No individual analysis exists with respect to the sales tax measure or with respect to the fact that we didn't put a tax on cigarettes. What we did was in this budget we took the long-term overview and provided a comprehensive analysis.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Minister, I wasn't in the House for question period today, but I was listening to question period from my office. And I was very upset with the attitude of the Minister of Health today when she was talking about these rural hospitals, and there was a lot of questioning going on about it.

And it's a sad story out there, Madam Minister. People are talking about schools closing, and farmers losing their land, and the hospitals closing. And all we've heard from you people is balanced budgets, which is a great idea if you can do it. But on the backs of whom?

But I'd like to . . . I want to ask you a direct question. It's a very . . . I'm not going to ask many questions today. I'll be back in tomorrow, Friday, Monday. We'll see how long this lasts — depends on how you answer questions.

And the question I'd like to ask, that I understand — and I've been in 45 to 50 interim requests for money since 1978, so I know how it works — and in Department of Health, you've got a reduction. And I'd like to ask you, how much of this one-twelfth will be going towards balancing the budget? Could you answer me that question, Madam Minister.

(1600)

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess I would make one general comment. If the members opposite are saying they want the people of Saskatchewan to have the facts about this budget and the details, what I would remind them and the people of Saskatchewan is that if the members opposite really do want that, they would expedite this process — because this is not a detailed process — so that we would get on to the other process.

I'm prepared to stand here as long as you want. But please don't say to me then that I'm not being open and upfront with the people of Saskatchewan. I would like to be open and upfront with them because I would like to get into the detailed estimates in which we can go through the kind of detailed questions that people want. But again, it's your choice. You will decide how quickly the people of Saskatchewan will be allowed to move to that process.

With respect to the deficit, this is expenditures that we're approving today. So these expenditures bear no relationship to the deficit.

Mr. Muirhead: — Madam Minister, I don't know what you take me for, but you're having . . . the Department of Health has lowered their budget and their estimates. And in this you're going to be one-twelfth — that's what you're asking for — so a percentage of the one-twelfth must be going to try to balance that budget, towards that deficit. It has to be or otherwise it would be more money. It can be no other way.

If you'd come in here and they were going to be building hospitals and building schools and giving money to farmers instead of giving them nothing, then you'd be asking for a larger figure of that one-twelfth. It'd be more money, wouldn't it? Would there not be, Madam Minister, be the one-twelfth be a larger figure? So the one-twelfth — how much of that money that you're . . . on the Department of Health is going to go to the deficit? Now that's very simple. You should be able to answer that.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I would say to the member opposite is the way that we are reducing the deficit of the province is by reducing operating expenditures. Last year we were the only government in Canada to reduce operating expenditures by 3 per cent. We're reducing them again by another 3 per cent.

Now with respect to the Department of Health, all we're providing for here is \$124,665 so that this department can pay only the expenditures required for one month. And the process is simple. It's because

they have a budget before the House, but the budget hasn't been passed yet, yet the operations of government have to continue. And I think the people out there watching this or reading this want the operations of the government to continue. They don't want the government to grind to a halt until the budget is passed. And that's what this interim supply is about.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, I understand what it's all about all right. So when you . . . I went through the book, through the *Estimates* quite carefully. And approximately — it's not right on, but approximately — that'll be what she'll be asking for is likely one-twelfth of these estimates.

So let's assume that it's twelve-twelfths, that we're at the end, 12 months. It would be the same thing. You're just asking for interim supply for one month.

Well the twelfth month would be exactly the same, or very close to being the same, so there must be a ratio here some place that relates back to cutting down in the Department of Health, Education, Agriculture, all the departments. So unless you can . . . There has to be. Your operating money is going to be . . . Unless you people are going to do exactly the same thing as you did in 1982. You come in with a balanced budget and told everybody it was a balanced budget and hid all your debts in the Crowns. We're going to get into that later on. And that's what you did then; maybe you're doing that again.

But you must know, you must be some figure. I don't think you do know. But I think you've got some people around you that should be able to tell you. How much was one-twelfth of the Department of Health one year ago when . . . one year ago right now?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — I'm sure the information can be gotten for the member opposite, but we don't have it right here. The point is a simple one: we're reducing the expenditures of the operations of the government by more than 3 per cent. That will be reflected across the piece in the different departments.

If you would like to get into this, what I would suggest is that we move to the estimates and then we will be able to go through the Department of Health in great detail and show to the people of Saskatchewan where the expenditure reductions are occurring, why they are occurring in that particular area, and why they're not occurring in other areas. And that process is one that we welcome.

Mr. Muirhead: — Madam Minister, you're doing the same thing as the minister of Finance did a year ago: oh, let's just move to estimates for all the answers. Of course, we're not going to go through estimates with you, but we're entitled to ask some pretty broad questions. Because if you had've sat in this House from 1982 when we were in government to 1991, which you were not here, and go back and look at *Hansard* and see how much our ministers had to stand up here and ask questions.

One year ago, I was the one standing right in about this same place when I read right out of *Hansard* where your now Premier of the province, the then . . . the member from Saskatoon, the now Premier, was asking in 1991 to Lorne Hepworth, the minister of Agriculture, every detail about the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program — pages and pages. Because how I fooled you and what we did is I started asking the same questions to you. Oh you can't do that. You can't do that. Then the questions turned out to be the ones that the Premier was asking a year ago.

So I want you to give me some . . . 3 per cent, you at least moved on a little bit. When I started out you didn't know anything. So you're getting a little bit better. I want the dollars and cents that you're estimating that Department of Health will be going towards balancing your budget in so many years or whatever.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would remind the member opposite what the minister of Finance of the day, Lorne Hepworth, responded when that issue was raised. His response was, let's get on to estimates so that we can deal with these issues.

The reduction in the Department of Health will probably be somewhat less than the overall reduction. It will probably be in the nature of exactly 3 per cent, and when we get to the estimates, we will be able to go over that in detail with you and you can ask your specific questions.

Mr. Muirhead: — Yes it's easy for somebody to tell you that . . . how Mr. Hepworth answered the questions when I have *Hansard*. Just looked through it again this morning in my office. We went on for pages of *Hansard*, answering questions in detail about the GRIP program. So don't you stand up and tell me that he said, oh we'll just move on and get your answers from estimates. He might have said it, but you people wouldn't let him do it. So he had to keep on answering, because we weren't like you people. If you demanded answers, we gave them to you.

Now I got Department of Health, Department of Education, and Social Services, and Agriculture. I want those approximate figures, not just the 3 per cent, because it varies. Because in Health . . . you didn't abolish Health 100 per cent. Agriculture, you abolished it. So I want know, is that money that you abolished Agriculture and said to heck with the farmers in Saskatchewan, is that money that's for Agriculture that's not here for a one-twelfth . . . There's no one-twelfth for Agriculture in here, only to pay the department people. But there's no money for farmers. And I want to know if that money's going to go to balancing the deficit.

So there's going to be a difference. You can't tell me that it's 3 per cent from Health and 3 per cent from Education and Social Services. We got to get in some details here. And you have to know them. You must know them. If you don't know, you have no idea where you're going. If you don't know what

one-twelfth of your spending is and where it's going, you have no plan and no idea where you're going.

So you may as well make up your mind that I want a figure and it had better be right. It better not be four days and four hours it took your minister of Finance last year to tell us what the deficit was.

And it shouldn't be very difficult for you to tell him . . . I'm not going to go through all the departments. I want it in Health and Education and Social Services and Agriculture: how much money in the cut-back of this one-twelfth is going to balance your budget?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, just with respect to the process. The Associate Minister of Finance and I are quite prepared to stand here for as long as you want, days or whatever. But please be aware that the people of Saskatchewan then have to know that they're not going to get the detailed information about the budget that they require.

With respect to your question, all of the savings that occur from reducing government expenditures go to the deficit. You want detailed numbers; they exist. They are in the material that was handed out budget day. On page 77 are all of the different expenditures of the departments done in a comparative way with the estimates and the forecasts and the estimates for 1992 as well.

So I would refer the member to page 77 where the information is laid out.

Mr. Muirhead: — Come on, Madam Minister. You're saying all the money, that's where it goes. Then where is your money coming in? You've raised taxes; you raised the price of everything in this province of Saskatchewan. There's got to be a balance some place. There has to be a balance.

You've raised everything. Absolutely everything you could possibly raise has been raised. You've gouged every taxpayer in the province of Saskatchewan. You've taken pretty near everything away from them that pertains to life. That's going a little too far to say everything, but you've sure gouged into their lives and you've changed the whole format of this province around.

And what you do is to try to say every time . . . I've been away from here quite a bit, and every time I've had that radio on or this television I'm watching, all I heard is this sickening story about: we have to do it because the Tories left this province in such a mess. And we heard the Minister of Social Services stand up here yesterday and said that we came in in 1982 and we left the Tories with a plus figure.

Boy, we all know better than that. We know there was a deficit, and we're going to get into that later on. But I want you to give me the figures after you've got . . . You must, your people in Finance must be working this all out or you couldn't tell the people in Saskatchewan, you could not say to all the individuals in the province of Saskatchewan, in four years we're

going to balance the budget, without having some figuring done.

And you should have it right now when it comes to the one-twelfth, how much it's going to do. In dollars and cents you should be able to stood up and told me right in the very beginning one answer for all the departments; that of the one-twelfth we're asking for here today on this here Bill, that here's how many millions of dollars is going toward balancing that budget. It should have been all figured out in your department right down to the dollar and cents. Otherwise how could you put it in your budget speech and how could you tell them when you go throughout Saskatchewan . . . How do you possibly go out and inform all the people that we're going to do this, exactly so many dollars each year, and we're going to do it by cutting back here and we're going to cut back on this hospital and we're going to cut back on this school; we're going to cut back on approximately everything — cut back, cut back.

Now you should know. So can you or can you not give me a figure. Can your people — if I just left it — can your people come back tomorrow with an approximate figure about what one-twelfth of this, what you're asking for here, what one-twelfth will do towards balancing that budget? Or are we just having less money for every department just for laughs and fun, or is it really going to do the job?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very difficult to understand exactly what the member opposite is asking. If he wants to ask the Finance officials for information, they are quite willing to meet with him and discuss the information. But of all the experts we have here, we cannot figure out exactly what your question is.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, and Madam Minister, I can tell you one thing, I'm not going to meet with your officials. That's up to you to meet with your officials. You're with them every day; that's your job.

I'm asking you very simple — and don't sit there and smirk at me in that there smirky manner of yours. Because that's what you do. You think you're really something, Madam Minister. You come in off the street and you're an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) in 1991 and you're the Minister of Finance in 1992. Well I feel sorry for you because there is nobody in all of Canada or the United States can walk in off the street, regardless of how clever you are — which I give you that credit, you're an intelligent individual — but you could not possibly be . . . do a good job as the Minister of Finance in this province when you've only been an MLA for one year, a little over a year.

(1615)

Now let's get serious. You don't understand what this is all about. Your officials can tell you by tomorrow exactly what this one-twelfth . . . how much in all the departments together . . . They should be able to have

a calculation from every department and say how much money is going towards balancing this here budget, and that's what I want.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm really disappointed in the member opposite. You know, I really don't think these sorts of personal comments are necessary. The people of Saskatchewan will judge the job that I'm doing. But you know, when we have to descend to this level it really doesn't do a great service to the legislature.

Your question is very difficult to understand. I can give you the deficit of the province in 1992-93 was \$593 million. We're projecting a deficit of 296 million, a reduction of 50 per cent, about 50 per cent. If you wanted to take the reduction, divide it by 12, that would give you 24.8 million in savings for this particular year.

But when you say, how much of the savings is going to the deficit, well obviously, all of the savings is going to the deficit.

I would also point out to the member opposite, because of what happened to this province in the 1980s, interest costs have gone from 735 million last year to a projected 847 million next year. And so some of the money will also have to go to pay interest.

But please, Mr. Member, let's try to elevate this beyond personal remarks.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, you're finally giving me some answers. Why didn't you do that the first time?

But going back to the personal remarks, I thought I was quite nice to you, saying you're a very intelligent person. And you came in off the street being an MLA for one year, somebody's asked you to do the impossible — to be a Minister of Finance. The people that's against you will soon tell you that. But that's nothing against you as an individual.

I gave you the benefit of the doubt that you're a very clever individual. You're even nice looking, Madam Minister. So I'm being very nice to you.

I'm just saying that it is impossible. You've never known it in any place and you won't find it in United States or Canada where someone is an MLA — if you can find me that, and we're not going to get into that — is an MLA for a little over a year, and the Minister of Finance. You won't find a province in Saskatchewan or United States. So you've got a big job. You've got to depend on the people around you.

And one of the reasons why I wanted to get into this here department by department, because a year ago in estimates we couldn't get the proper information.

I sit here and argue with the Minister of Education for day after day after day about the Loreburn and Elbow school. And there's a new school being built right now, or additions to the school in Loreburn. And this

is going to come right into this, Mr. Chairman. This will fit right into what we're talking about here today.

The critic for Education and myself argued with the Minister of Education that they could not rebuild the Loreburn School for \$438,000.

And I'm going to quote, Mr. Chairman, with your permission, is what the hon. minister says, and this is after days and days and days. And then I'll have a question pertaining to what we're talking about here today.

Mr. Chairman, the estimate of the facilities branch was that for a capital project for the Loreburn School — I repeat — to repair the roof and provide relocateable class-rooms which would accommodate . . . (and) transfer the K to 6 students from Strongfield, Loreburn, and Elbow, if this was the wish of the school division, the cost would be \$438,000. Whether someone else came and said that to build a whole new school, which didn't include relocateables or whatever the . . . (hypocrites) are, would cost more than that, I have no idea.

So she admitted that's what it would take.

Well now they are building at Loreburn and somehow or other . . . That's why we can't wait till estimates, because they've got a contract out for exactly that same . . . not exactly that same job, for 1.4 or 5 million dollars. The Loreburn School has a contract out for 1.4 or 5 million dollars, some place in there. And it doesn't include . . . they have to have something in this here budget, some more money, to even handle Elbow because they have to have more relocateables.

So how much of this . . . Hammers and nails are going now, Madam Minister, at Loreburn. How much of this one-twelfth is, in Education, going towards that extra million dollars that was spent on us? It was never asked permission; it was never in last year's budget. The minister said we could do it for \$438,000. We took her word. The people from Loreburn took her word. The people from the whole community took their word. Even the people in Loreburn that wanted the school thought it was going to cost us 438.

Well you ought to be on my telephone now and have to listen to the complaints from that area. The whole line, when it's a contract given out with nobody knowing about it, for 1.4 or 5 . . . I haven't got the exact figures, Madam Minister, but 1.4 or 5 million. So you can understand why we can't wait till estimates, because we don't get the right answers there.

How much money? Does anybody know? Any way of finding out? Is this here one-twelfth have anything to do with that extra million dollars that's being spent there today and . . . (inaudible) . . . Elbow School. Is there anything to do with it whatsoever?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would say to you that in this interim supply, \$72,591,000 is going to the Department of Education.

The question the member opposite answers is exactly the kind of question that we are very anxious to answer for the people of Saskatchewan. It's this sort of information we want to lay before them. And there's a process by which that will occur, and that process is when we go through the detailed estimates. So if in fact you really do want that sort of question answered, what I would say is that you move through this process so we can get on to the estimates, which is where that question can be answered.

Mr. Muirhead: — But, Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, it would be nice if that's the way it could be but that's what you did to us last year. The Minister of Finance wouldn't answer our questions. We finally, after a few days of it, he gave in and did give some proper answers. But then when we got to the ministers and the estimates, we didn't get these answers. We had many, many things like the Elbow School giving us wrong information, absolutely false information — \$438,000 — it's right here. There's pages of it, I'm not going through it. But \$438,000 said by a minister and a contract goes out for one million four, and doesn't even house Elbow School.

So then if we let you go, we don't get you back until the closing days of the House. We won't get your estimates back here until the closing days of the House and then you're going to say: oh, you should have asked that in the Minister of Education's estimates, or all the ministers.

That's why we're trying to get some answers out of you in interim supply. We want to know. We've got to start right now, whether it be interim supply or estimates or back to you in your own estimates. We've got to start asking questions because we've got to ask and ask because it takes a long time out of you people to get answers. It takes a long, long time.

Somehow or other before we leave this Bill, you're going to have to explain what the minister of Finance said a year ago in June — that's the first time this here Bill went through the House — when we talked about the deficit and how much it was in 1982, and then we have to have the minister stand up here and say that all of our problems were the Tory's big deficit in 1982.

So that's why we have to have answers straight because we don't get them straight in the street, we don't get them straight in this House. And your ministers day after day after day . . . that's all we hear, that that's the reason why we have to close the facility in Weyburn; that's the reason why we have to close these hospitals; that's why there's something supposed to be closing in Estevan. And they're talking about they're scared they're going to close the hospital in Davidson. Well that's all we hear. And probably Craik, Outlook, Imperial — they talk about it all over the province.

Well we've got to start asking you questions and we've got to get answers. Because if we don't get them here, all the way through from interim supply to the ministers in estimates back to you, on the closing day

of this House that's when you'll come back. We'll get you back and you're going to say: well why didn't you get the answer from the minister.

So you're the minister, and you're responsible. Can you come back with the exact figure tomorrow . . . not exact, but a pretty good approximate figure in dollars and cents, tomorrow, telling me what all departments . . . never mind this here what's written in that such and such a page. Give us a dollar figure, so it's on *Hansard*, the people of Saskatchewan to know that this here interim supply is cut down this much, so the people say, yes, that's how many dollars and cents goes towards balancing that budget.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just quoted to you the number — \$24.8 million. If you want to break it down on a one-twelfth basis, that's what the deficit reduction number would be.

Mr. Muirhead: — In the Department of Agriculture, let's take the Department of Agriculture where there was . . . there's still a Department of Agriculture, thank goodness; but they're not spending any money on farmers, so there has to be more money in the Department of Agriculture than there is in some other departments.

Like in the Deputy Premier's department, he had an increase of pretty near a million dollars. Now his department is not going to be the same. His one-twelfth is going to be a little different, isn't it? His one-twelfth isn't going to have nothing to do with helping to balance a budget.

So can they not give a breakdown of the departments that the twelfth is down. If even, Madam Minister, I'd be satisfied if you'd even say, this department is down this X amount of dollars and cents going towards the deficit; and this department is up, and it will be going to make the deficit higher. I want a department-to-department answer. And I'll be satisfied if you can bring it in tomorrow.

Bring me in something that will satisfy us a little bit on where are we going, so the people in Saskatchewan know where this interim supply is going to, and how much it's going to help the people of Saskatchewan be able to sleep at night, when they know they're losing their schools, and losing their hospitals, and losing their farms. And they're going to have their health in jeopardy because you've taken some life-threatening things away. When you start talking about taking . . . people got to pay for insulin, have to go without, and they do. It's happening all over. And you've got to pay for drugs. And people are not buying drugs. In the drugstore in Davidson, he said, soon as your budget came out, his drugs just went down. And that'll be all over Saskatchewan. People are going to go without.

So for goodness sakes, tell us the figure, department by department. Which department is going to be sacrificing to help balance this budget you say you're going to balance in several years.

The Chair: — Order. Why is the member for Biggar on

his feet?

Mr. Whitmore: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask for leave to introduce a guest.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Whitmore: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce a guest today that we have in our gallery, Mr. Roy Atkinson, a very prominent member and distinguished member of many farm organizations in Saskatchewan and also the father of our Minister of Social Services. And I would like this House to welcome Mr. Atkinson here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply (continued)

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to welcome the former president of the National Farmers Union to the gallery, and I hope he enjoys the afternoon here.

I want, Mr. Chairman, first of all to let the people watching understand what is happening here in this process. Being new to politics as of last year, I found myself somewhat confused as to what we were doing at times, so I know that the viewing public is often a little bewildered at what we're up to.

The government is asking us, Mr. Chairman, to give them the right to spend tax dollars. They want to spend money. They don't want to just talk about it, they want to actually spend this money. And that's important, Mr. Chairman, because there's quite a distinct difference here. Once the money is spent, it's awfully hard to run out and gather it back together. It's going to be gone.

Now in government, grievance before supply means that the opposition has the right to demand answers — answers to questions before the money is spent, not after the money is spent and gone. That's what the term "grievance before supply" is defined as meaning to me.

A few minutes ago the minister said that if you want the answers, wait until later. Then, our experience already has indicated to us, even though we've only been here for a year and a half, that when later comes members of the government will say to us: well it's a little late now; you should've asked us that before.

And it seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that we are being given something of a run-around here. And I suppose that's good government politics, but it isn't good accountability for public money. And I put it to the minister that the people will judge whether you are being honest with the expenditures of their dollars, or whether you are playing games to try to cover up the

choices that you're making of where you're spending money.

(1630)

And so, Mr. Chairman, so that the people can understand why this is so important, let me explain to the public what kinds of things the government wants us to agree to by this Bill coming to a vote. They want us to provide them with money to use to pay for things like the Tetzlaff brothers' legal fees in fighting the Rafferty-Alameda project which apparently adds up to \$250,000. Obviously this one-twelfth share must include that, or at least a portion of it, depending on what kind of an arrangement was made for the payments to be made.

Government lawyers who are fighting farm families in court have to be paid. They're fighting against the farmers who wanted their fair share of GRIP payments. And we'd like to know how much of this one-twelfth is going to go to pay those lawyers and their research and all of the things that go into it. We want the people to be able to judge whether or not that is fair and reasonable.

We find \$800,000 to the newly created Provincial Secretary office, and we wonder if that payment is going to be split into twelfths, if one-twelfth of that money is going to be paid out at the present time out of this allotment of money. And if it is, I think we have some right to know what that money is going to buy for the people of Saskatchewan, what advantage.

What are they going to get out of it? Where is the return for the investment to the taxpayer? Ninety-nine thousand dollars, we find out, is to keep snowmobilers in Saskatchewan. Now that's a good one. I expect that that has to be built into this one-twelfth as well, and I'm sure the minister will want to explain that.

We see \$20 million to buy video lottery terminals from American companies that are presently under criminal investigation, not only in one country, but in two countries, under criminal investigation — companies which the government still refuses to release details on.

But this is \$20 million of taxpayers' money. Is that all included in this one-twelfth appropriation or is it just one-twelfth of the 20 million; is it paid over a period of time?

The people of our province have the right to know how that money is being paid out to and who to. They have a right to know whether or not there are going to be follow-up legal implications when monies are paid to companies that are presently under criminal investigation, Mr. Chairman.

Will there be repercussions for having done deals with them? Will there in fact maybe be lawsuits following up later on that people will have to dig in their pockets and pay more taxes to pay for? This is quite serious stuff when you get right into it.

We have a lot at stake in the government asking for an interim payment of one-twelfth of the whole budget, especially when that budget now goes up to 5 billion and taxes are continuing to increase and all of the utility rates are increasing, not only once last year, but twice, and who knows how many times more. And with all of these increases in taxation, the minister stands here and said, give me the money; it has to be paid; nothing we can do about it.

The reality, Mr. Chairman, is that a lot can be done about it. Choices are where the money goes to. Choices by the government determines who gets the money. Don't tell me that you're committed absolutely to spending \$5 billion over the year. You make a choice of where that money is spent. Most of it is spent by choice, by the determination and the direction of a government with a particular philosophy of what they support and what they don't.

Unfortunately for me and people like myself, people in rural Saskatchewan don't figure into the equation with this government. And for that, of course, the government will be judged later, that's if there is anything left of rural Saskatchewan to express an opinion when the time comes. I somehow expect, Minister, that most of the people from rural Saskatchewan will be living in Medicine Hat by the time the next election comes and it probably won't make much difference to them what happens here.

We see that there's 150,000 extra to be paid for the highest bidder on the budworm contract. And while the government has explained to us that they think they've done the right thing, the taxpayers of this province have a right to know whether you're paying for that entirely out of the first one-twelfth that you're taking or if you're splitting that up into segments and going to be paying it off over a period of time. Will you be asking for one-twelfth of that money now or will you be asking for it all? Are you paying the whole thing or part of it?

And I believe that that's a legitimate question. It's a legitimate question that needs to be answered in spite of the fact that it still does not require you to explain your contracting policy, which in my opinion is the wrong part of this whole deal. But at least the people have in this process the right to know how you're making those expenditures and at what times and in what procedures you're doing it.

Somehow I think the people of Saskatchewan will be unhappy when they find out that in reality the airport in that particular project that was supposed to be built by the government presently consists of a road that many airplanes have landed on supposedly before, according to the people who were interviewed by the news media yesterday. And according to those same people in those same interviews, no new airport was ever required or needed, and that this is all just a subterfuge and a cover-up.

And when those kind of allegations, Madam Minister, are levelled about a project, then it becomes even

more important to the people to have an opportunity to question how and when and where those monies are going to be spent.

Will there be countersuits and lawsuits as a result of that process? Have you figured into your one-twelfth appropriation the monies required if litigation is brought against you because of those misguided decisions, the choices that you've made, choices that apparently might be questionable, that might in fact turn out to be not only the wrong choices, but choices that have actually cost Saskatchewan people jobs?

Taking American airplanes into Saskatchewan when there are planes already here available? It is a very questionable move, especially in difficult times. I would have to say that it must be hard for a government to do that even if the contractors here weren't particularly politically friendly, because they must employ some people besides themselves that would justify spending that money.

We have extra money, Mr. Chairman, for increased staff in the Provincial Secretariat's office and the Premier's office. And that is an obvious, clear indication to us — and I think to the people of Saskatchewan — that apparently the government really does have money to spend. The great, huge deficit that everybody keeps wanting to talk about on that side of the House and wants to impress the people of the province with as being the reason that choices have to be made not to spend money, that great argument seems now to fall apart because here we do have dollars.

All of a sudden the reality is that there's all kinds of money if you have a Provincial Secretary's office or if you have a Premier's office that needs more dollars. There suddenly seems to be lots of money around. But when you have to make a choice to put some money into saving a rural hospital, then we're broke.

And that doesn't make any sense. You can't be rich today and poor when you go to the country — rich in the cities and then poor in the country. You can't have it both ways. You've got money for one thing and no money for the rest. So it's not a question any more of whether or not we have dollars to spend. It's a question of where you are choosing to spend them.

I was rather annoyed when I heard the minister replying to the questions by the previous member. In fact I could even say that I was more than rather annoyed; I was quite annoyed.

She replies that interest on our debt is going to go up from 135 million to 847 million. That's a projection, and I understand that projections can be wrong. And in fact they'd better be wrong. We've gone from 22 per cent interest rates in the middle 1980s down to five-point-some per cent at the national level.

Surely you can't be so foolish as to be borrowing money for 15 and 20 per cent. Surely you can't be saying to us that with interest rates dropping on the money that you borrow, that you're going to have a

hundred million dollars more debt on the same . . . or more interest rates to pay on the same debt.

What you have to be saying to us here is that you're going to increase the debt. And in order for that to increase at lower interest rates by a hundred million dollars, you're going to have to increase this debt very significantly. And that's got people worried.

How much would you have to increase the debt in order to cost yourself an extra hundred million dollars at lowering interest rates? Aren't you also saving some money? Aren't you also saving some money on the total debt?

Now suppose the debt is 15 billion. How much money are you saving by doing some good financial wizardry and going out to the banks that you borrow from, or whoever you borrow from. I suppose the Saskatchewan power bonds and all those things must be included.

But you must be saving some money by having some of those loans come due and refinancing them at lower rates. You must be able to finance now at, well, at least, what, 7 or 8 per cent? The national level is at five-point-something, dropping every day. I'm quite sure it will be below 5 per cent before long, the way it's going. I think I heard 12 weeks in a row now the interest rates have dropped.

Surely there has to be not only hundreds of thousands of dollars, but millions of dollars at stake in these interest rates going down. And where, where is your good management if you can't capitalize on that? And how can you possibly be saying that we're going to have an increase projected of over a hundred million dollars on the same debt with interest rates dropping and plummeting daily?

It doesn't make any sense. And of course, Madam Minister, your whole budget doesn't make very much sense because it's got the wrong choices in it. All of the wrong choices are in this thing.

Well you can see — and of course if you can't, I know that the people watching through the country can see — why I get a little bit annoyed when I take out my little calculator and can soon figure out that something is terribly amiss in all of these figures of doom and gloom that are sending my people from my constituency scrambling to Alberta as fast as they can go. And that's what you're doing with your budget. You've almost written them a one-way ticket to get out of Saskatchewan. And to tell you the truth, there have been lots of days when I've told people, if you can get out, you'd better.

Well, Mr. Chairman, the list does go on and on of the places where money is being spent. And there are many questions that must be answered with regard to these very important issues and as well with many other issues. And I want the answers, Mr. Chairman, to many of my questions. And, Madam Minister, I hope that you will have the patience to try to answer some of the questions. Because if you don't have the

patience to answer our questions, then we will have to be here a very long time because it only requires then that we become more . . . well better, I guess, at the way that we ask our questions, more determined to rephrase them to bring them out in another way.

(1645)

You force us to go into a long litany of different approaches to try to achieve the result of getting the answers. It's our job; we have to do that. And we will do that job and we'll do it well and we'll do it for as long as it takes to get the answers. So what it means is that if you don't answer us forthrightly and honestly, then we will be here for a very long time. And I want to remind the minister that I don't have any summer vacation plans, so I might as well be here as anywhere else.

First of all, I want to ask the question, Madam Minister: why are you waiting until the last minute to ask for interim supply to be passed? It seems to me that it's irresponsible that if you need money one-twelfth of all of the budget — a budget that hardly anybody in this province would agree with — why would you leave that until this day, the last dying hours of the month? Why wouldn't you have done this at least a week ago or two weeks ago? Why would you have tried to put pressure on the opposition to get money to pay the workers of this province that you are dedicated and responsible to paying?

People's pay cheques, I am told, can be in jeopardy after some period of time goes by if these supply Bills aren't passed.

So where is the rationale? Perhaps you would like to explain to the people of this province, Madam Minister, why you didn't do a responsible thing and ask for this money some time ago so that we could have debated it without feeling that pressure of obligation to help the people that you are going to not be paying.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to the timing, the debate on the budget speech only ended last week. We had to serve notice with respect to the interim supply Bill coming before the legislature. It is here.

It's really the opposition that will decide the timetable of the legislature and how the time is spent. If in fact you're saying that you did not think that the time was well spent in the last session, well then I would say that it was that side of the House that makes the choices. If in fact you want to debate in detail how we're going to spend the money before we start spending it, you've got 10 minutes. Pass this interim supply through quickly and we'll get into the detailed estimates before a penny of the money is spent.

So it will be the members opposite who will decide when the people of Saskatchewan will get the detailed information that you say they are asking for. We can spend . . . the Associate Minister of Finance and I have booked off the next 10 days. We're prepared to stand

here as long as you want and talk about generalities. But if in fact you want us to be open and accountable, as we would like to be, then you have to move to the next stage of the process.

Mr. Goohsen: — Well, Madam Minister, I think the people of this province know full well that you're the people that called the legislature together on February 25; I didn't do that. You didn't ask my opinion. You could have called it on January 25. That would have given you a whole month for the process of budget and throne speech and all of those things to fall into place — long time ahead. So this line of argument that it's our fault now that you're running late, that's the most laughable thing I've heard since I got here.

I was getting paid my wages as an MLA in January. I didn't go skiing, I could have been here. Maybe you folks ought to try earning your wages and start a month earlier and get things done before we get so close into the spring so that everybody's budget in the whole province is so badly off track that nobody knows what the dickens they're doing any more.

And you pulled that trick last year too. You scheme and you fret and you make sure a big to-do about your political manoeuvring to try and gain ground, you've forgotten how to get down to the basics of the honest truth of just running the province and designating where the money's going to go and making your decisions and doing it.

You're so busy playing games that you're outsmarting yourself. You're tricking yourself into places where nobody ever, ever tried to put you. You're the master of your own fate, which is that you're always running late because you just won't get to work and do things. Start a month earlier.

Don't lecture me about how we cornered you into taking too much time debating the budget. Those kinds of things are all set down in the rules. You know exactly from year to year every year when you call the Assembly together how many days you're going to have to spend debating it. It's written in the rules. I didn't write the rules. They were here long before I got here. So don't hand us that crap.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I have another question. And, Madam Minister, what is the total dollar amount spent on paying off the legal bills of the Tetzlaff brothers in relation to this one-twelfth? You could outline whether you're paying one-twelfth or whether you're paying the whole amount. Is any of this money going towards this cause — the one-twelfth appropriation? Or are they to be paid later?

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

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — I'd like leave of the committee, Mr. Chairman, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you, to members of the Assembly two guests in the Speaker's gallery.

The first one that I'd like to introduce is Mr. John Amagoalik. Mr. Amagoalik is a very well-known, very famous Canadian who has spent the last 20 years of his life in pursuit of the dream of Nunavut, a province in Canada to be created, populated almost entirely by John's people, the Inuit people of Canada.

It has been my pleasure to have known Mr. Amagoalik for the past 12, 13 years, and to work very closely with him in connection with land claims some time ago, and then most recently in connection with the constitutional discussions leading to the Charlottetown accord.

With Mr. Amagoalik today is his assistant, Michael McGoldrick. I would like the Assembly to join me in welcoming Mr. Amagoalik and Mr. McGoldrick to the Assembly this afternoon. They were meeting with me, discussing aspects of the Nunavut proposal, which is before the House of Commons, and briefing me on recent developments. And I would like to have you join me in welcoming them to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to join with the Minister of Justice in extending congratulations and best wishes from the official opposition to our two distinguished guests.

I know that the Inuit people of Canada have benefited from all of the years of hard work, John. And I can say to you, just keep up the good work because there is a brighter future, and just don't let up.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply (continued)

Mr. Pringle: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I've been listening . . . Point of order, if I might. Point of order, yes.

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

Mr. Pringle: — I've listened very carefully all afternoon, Mr. Chairman, to the member from Maple Creek, and the minister is answering questions to the best of her ability. And the member just said, don't give me that crap. Now I would ask you to make a ruling on that. I think that's unparliamentary, Mr. Chairman, and I would ask you to invite the member to withdraw that statement or apologize.

The Chair: — Order. The member for Saskatoon Eastview-Haultain has raised a point of order with respect to language used by the member for Maple Creek. Now the Chair did not hear the remarks which

the member for Saskatoon Eastview-Haultain alleges that were used by the member for Maple Creek, and I would ask the member for Maple Creek if in fact he used those words, and if he did use those words, to retract them and to apologize to the House.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't recall whether I used the word or not. But if I did, I certainly would retract it and apologize to the House. And I would certainly use the word garbage from here on. I'm sure that would . . .

The Chair: — Order. I asked the member a question as to whether or not he used the words which the member for Saskatoon Eastview-Haultain alleges he used. I asked the member, did he use those words, and if he did use those words, would he retract them and apologize to the House.

When the Chair asks a member to retract and to apologize it should be done unequivocally, without any further comment.

Now I ask the member for Maple Creek one more time.

Mr. Goohsen: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I will retract those words.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.