

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**April 27, 1995**

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

regarding firearm ownership.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to present petitions on behalf of the people from the Pennant and Gull Lake areas of south-west Saskatchewan. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to allocate adequate funding dedicated towards the double-laning of Highway No. 1; and further, that the Government of Saskatchewan direct any monies available from the federal infrastructure program towards double-laning Highway No. 1 rather than allocating these funds towards capital construction projections in the province.

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

I'm happy to table these on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan today, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present today. The petitions read:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

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

These petitions come from the Yellow Creek, Saskatoon, St. Brieux, Fort McMurray, Prince Albert, Melfort area, Saskatoon, Rockglen, Mr. Speaker; Fife Lake, Sintaluta, Indian Head, Marquis, Eyebrow. From across the province, Mr. Speaker. I so present today.

**READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS**

**Clerk:** — According to order, the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to allocate adequate funding toward the double-laning of Highway No. 1.

And of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to oppose changes to federal legislation

**NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS**

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day 61 ask the government the following questions:

Regarding the Department of Agriculture: what action is the department taking with respect to the following resolutions passed at the annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association: (1) Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association board of directors; (2) Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association interprovincial cattle feeders; (3) Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association value-added backgrounding; (4) Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association, Saskatchewan barley delivery points; and (5) Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association method of payment?

I shall also introduce and give notice that I shall on day 61 ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Department of Agriculture: what action is the department taking with respect to the following resolutions passed at the annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association with regards to the feeder-breeder program: (1) producer association loan guarantee program, regarding the signatures, monthly schedules, purchase review; (2) under the item #5, direction of returns on custom-fed cattle; (3) under the item #6, signatures, contract review; and (4) is the no. 7 resolution guaranteed caps; and under (5) the #9 resolution which is local supervisor signing authority?

**Mrs. Bergman:** — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day 61 ask the government the following question:

Regarding Saskatchewan Government Insurance: (1) what was the cost of sending John M. Dobie to the effective executive program at Waskesiu in 1992; (2) what was the cost of sending Margaret Anderson to the effective executive program at Waskesiu in 1993; (3) what are the names of all SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) employees who participated in the effective executive program at Waskesiu in 1994; (4) what are all costs associated with these employees attending this seminar; (5) what are the names of all employees who have enrolled in this seminar for the current year?

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — It is my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to introduce four guests from Jilin province from the People's Republic of China. I would ask them to rise and be recognized. Mr. Yanlin Wang, the chief engineer of Fisheries Research Institute, division of Aquatic Products, Jilin provincial

Department of Water Conservancy; Mr. Tingfu Ben, director and engineer, Antu Reservoir; Mr. De Yi Yu, vice-director of the Ice Festival office, Jilin City; and Mr. Cheng Dong, interpreter from the Foreign Affairs office.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that it was my privilege to visit the province of Jilin in 1981 and was treated with the greatest of hospitality at that time, including a wonderful banquet put on by the province. And we have the opportunity to reciprocate in hosting this delegation from Jilin now.

As you know, Saskatchewan has been twinned with Jilin Province since 1984. Five two-year action plans have been negotiated between the two provinces, the latest by the Hon. Ed. Tchorzewski in Jilin in June, 1994, that contain schedules of exchanges and cooperative projects.

Last year was the 10th anniversary of this relationship and celebrations were held in Jilin during Mr. Tchorzewski's visit. I invited this delegation here as part of the fifth plan of action, the purpose being the fisheries cooperation in the fish species transfer project, to learn about the culture techniques and fisheries management of walleye and other fish species in Saskatchewan, to receive 1 million walleye eggs from Saskatchewan, and to discuss further details on further fisheries cooperation between the two provinces.

The delegation will also be meeting with you later on to deliver a letter from his counterpart on the Standing Committee of the People's Congress in Jilin, and we look forward to a growing and strengthening relationship with our colleagues from the People's Republic of China. Welcome.

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

**Ms. Lorje:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the minister in welcoming our guests from Jilin province. In 1987, as a representative of the Jeux Canada Games, I was privileged to go to Jilin and to attend the 1987 All-China Winter Games.

Although this was shortly after my husband had just passed away and it was a time of great sadness for me, it was also a period of great joy to see the Chinese people organizing this splendid sporting event and to participate in their excellent hospitality.

So I thank you and all the people who were involved in the trip at the time and I wish you the best of times in Saskatchewan during your stay here.

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

**Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce some students, but before that I want to also extend a welcome to our friends from Jilin.

I was fortunate and had the honour of being in Jilin in the month of June and signed the fifth plan of action on behalf of

the province of Saskatchewan. And it's so good to have these representatives here today to visit our province and to visit Canada, because the relationship between Canada and the People's Republic of China has been a wonderful one to the mutual benefit of both Canada and to the People's Republic of China.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to your attention and to the attention of the House, a group of grades 7 and 8 students who are here from Regina Dewdney constituency from the Glen Elm School. They are accompanied here by their teacher, Liane Schultz, and I want to extend to them a warm welcome.

I hope that they enjoy their stay here today. I'm looking forward to meeting with them at 2:45 to have some refreshments and to answer all those hard questions which I know they always have — usually which makes the questions that are asked in here quite easy to handle, considering that.

So welcome, and I ask members of the House to join me in extending a warm welcome to the students from Glen Elm School.

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

**Mr. Flavel:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly, someone seated in your gallery. My son Jeff is seated there today — he's just finished writing his tests at the University of Saskatchewan and has come home to spend a couple of weeks relaxing in the cab of a tractor, I hope. So I want all members to please welcome him here this afternoon.

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

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join in welcoming the members from Jilin province. I was a member of Regina City Council when we were able to sign a twinning agreement with Jinan and was able to meet with the mayor of Jinan on a few occasions. And I'd like to say a warm welcome and extend my greetings.

I would like to introduce also to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a constituent and a friend who's seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, Norm Huber. Norm and his wife Jenny have had a small business in the constituency for a number of years. And I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming him here today.

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

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly, Alison Gordon who is visiting us from Ontario. Members may recognize Alison's name, with the baseball season just having begun, because she is a former sports reporter for *The Toronto Star*, who was the first woman reporter to cover a major league team, following the Toronto Blue Jays, I believe, for five years.

Out of that experience, Ms. Gordon has authored four mystery novels whose heroine, Kate Henry, happens to be a reporter covering a major league baseball team based in Toronto, Mr. Speaker. Her latest novel is entitled *Striking Out* and has just been published. And by the way, Kate Henry lives in Toronto but is from Saskatchewan.

Of interest to members of this Assembly is the fact that Ms. Gordon's father, John King Gordon, was a diplomat for the United Nations and one of the authors of the *Regina Manifesto*.

She is accompanied today by two famous Saskatchewan authors as well. With her is Governor General Award winner Maggie Siggins, who has done her bit to make this Assembly well-known, and also Gail Bowen, who has in fact killed off a couple of fictitious members of this Assembly. And I'll ask all members to extend their warm welcome to these three Canadian authors that we're very proud to have with us today.

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

**Ms. Lorje:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While we're welcoming these distinguished authors, I think we also should welcome Ted Bowen, Gail Bowen's chauffeur.

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

**Hon. Mr. Rolfes:** — I'm sure this group was wondering if they'd ever be introduced today, but I will do that honour today. I'd like to introduce to the Legislative Assembly a group from John Lake School, which is in my constituency. We have 20 grade 8 students here today, sitting in the Speaker's gallery. They are accompanied by their teachers, Brad Moser, Janice Walker-Szaroz, Dan Kilback; and chaperons, Bonnie Davies, and Aretha Levay.

I will be meeting with them, hopefully, later on to have any questions that you may have, and try and answer them for you. And I've asked my colleague from the neighbouring constituency to accompany me for the question and answer, so he can answer the most difficult questions. I ask all members to please welcome the John Lake School here today.

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

**Hon. Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join you in welcoming the students and the teachers and the drivers here today. Some of you live in my constituency as well, so I will be honoured to join with the Speaker and you after question period. So have a nice day in Regina and a safe trip home.

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

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with you and colleagues in the House in welcoming all of these people from John Lake School. I had a great, great time when I taught in John Lake School. In fact it was many years ago, but I established all the self-contained

learning disability classrooms in the city of Saskatoon, and one of the first, in fact — indeed the first — was at John Lake School. So it's very, very nice to see people here from Saskatoon and in particular John Lake today.

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

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Increase in Gasoline Prices

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'm mad as heck. Today many Regina motorists are also mad as heck, and we're not going to take it any more. Gasoline prices have increased by 3 cents a litre overnight; they're now at sixty-one and a half cents a litre at many Regina gas stations.

We're told the price of gas is going up right across North America, but it's coming at a time when we can least afford it. Farmers are getting ready to put the crop in the ground; they're going to need fuel. The rest of us are busy paying our income taxes these days.

There's been a lot of reasons suggested why the price of gas has been going up — gouging by the energy companies, rising crude oil prices, market forces are to blame, a cash grab by the oil companies is to blame, and the recent federal budget. I'm quick to point out it's been over two years since the provincial gas tax went up one anything.

Mr. Speaker, the search for an answer began some time back when my Member of Parliament, John Solomon, called for a federal inquiry into this mess. Yesterday he again urged the federal government to act on his request immediately. Everyone agrees that an inquiry should be held sooner rather than later, and it seems so strange that prices keep going up five times in the recent eight or nine months.

Mr. Speaker, let's support my member, John Solomon, in his call for a federal price inquiry into the price of gas.

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

### Holocaust Remembrance Day

**Ms. Lorje:** — On a sad note, Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago allied troops began liberating the Nazi death camps. The rest of the world suddenly realized that what it had suspected, but refused to believe, was in fact the truth.

In the 20th century we learned that a civilized people could, as a matter of national policy, dedicate itself to the extermination of another people. Fifty years later, we are still trying to understand how this happened.

Today is Yom ha-Sho'ah, Holocaust Remembrance Day. It is a day set aside for the solemn remembrance of the 6 million Jews who were the victims of the Holocaust. We still cling to the hope, Mr. Speaker, that if we do not forget, we can prevent a

return to this most wicked expression of our often dark century.

For those who argue that we should let the past fade away, that the time has come to forget ancient history, all we need to do is look about us. The daily news reminds us that these evil human impulses are still within us. The evidence is in Rwanda, in Bosnia, in Oklahoma, and maybe even in the land of Anne of Green Gables.

So in remembering the Holocaust, we are engaged in much more than an observance of bad times past. We are reminding ourselves that it is the duty of each nation, each province, each individual, and particularly each legislator, to work against that part of our nature which invites racism, intolerance, and violence. Shalom. Walk in peace. Thank you.

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

### **YWCA's Women of Distinction Awards Dinner**

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night at the Centre of the Arts, the Regina YWCA held its 13th annual Women of Distinction Awards dinner. As the member from Saskatoon River Heights said a few weeks ago, this is one of three such dinners held in the province to pay tribute to women who have made a difference to their community and their province.

The Regina awards dinner was a success in many ways. First it was a triumph of organization. Six hundred guests were fed, entertained, and nominees were fêted, all in the allotted time. I can think of at least one other gender that might have trouble matching that. And because of the organization and the numbers, more than \$40,000 was raised for the Y and its valuable services, including the Isabel Johnson Shelter for battered women.

Finally, 18 remarkable women were nominated and six were given Women of Distinction Awards.

Ninety seconds is not enough time to do more than name them, Mr. Speaker. In the arts and culture category, the award went to Susan Ferley of the Globe Theatre. Gaye Burgess won the business and professional award. Beverley Davison Butt was recognized for community and humanitarian service. Sharon Armstrong, mayor of Wynyard, was recognized for her contribution to rural community. Dr. Joan Baldwin was given the wellness award. And Barb Krause was the young woman of distinction.

I congratulate all nominees, the winners, and the Regina YWCA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Rafferty-Alameda Dams**

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently the member from Indian Head-Wolesey stated that the purpose of the Alameda dam was to, quote, provide water for the Americans when they needed it. *Hansard*, April 4.

In actual fact, Mr. Speaker, I would like to know where the member thought the water was going before the dam was built. And as most water does, 100 per cent of this precious resource used to flow into the United States for free. With the dam, Saskatchewan retains 50 per cent of the resource for our own use. We now have the ability to save water; as well, provide flood protection for Canadians and Americans — the same Americans which the member thought were receiving an unfair share of the water.

Today's headline in the *Star-Phoenix* reads, "Rafferty, Alameda prevent (North Dakota) flood." It goes on, Mr. Speaker, to read:

It may be flooding in east central Saskatchewan, but down in the southeast corner, much of the runoff is being collected behind the Rafferty and Alameda dams.

As the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for this area, I can vouch for the fact that Rafferty-Alameda has prevented flooding at Beaver Park in Oxbow.

Further, Mr. Speaker, the article states that Rafferty is presently 30 per cent full and the reservoir behind the Alameda dam is one-third full as well. In addition, it states that this dam would be holding even more water at the present time if not for the NDP's (New Democratic Party) agreement with the Tetzlaff brothers.

Mr. Dalvin Euteneier of Sask Water comments that Minot, North Dakota would have been flooded this spring if it had not been for the dams. Mr. Speaker, Rafferty-Alameda provides cooling water for the Shand power station, flood protection for both Canadians and Americans, as well as much needed recreational tourism opportunities in the south-east. It's time the members . . .

**The Speaker:** — I'm sorry, but the member's time has elapsed.

### **40th Anniversary of St. Walburg Elks**

**Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, usually when we think of elk we think of animals that roam our parkland in Saskatchewan, but in St. Walburg recently a number of Elks of the human variety were honoured. I am talking about the 40th anniversary of St. Walburg Elks, No. 389, which I had the pleasure of attending on Saturday, April 22.

The St. Walburg Elks have had a huge impact on the community over the last 40 years. They have donated over \$1.2 million to various projects and worthwhile causes over these four decades.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize three individuals who were original members of the St. Walburg's Elks in 1955. They are Paul Novlan, Nick Kujawa, and Cliff Knight. They were presented with beautiful prints at the anniversary banquet for their service in the Elks organization.

The St. Walburg Elks are also doing a wonderful job of

organizing their own financial affairs. At the same function, they held a mortgage-burning ceremony to show that their mortgage has been paid off in full.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the St. Walburg Elks for their contribution to the community of St. Walburg over the past 40 years and offer my best wishes for their future. Thank you very much.

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

### **Flooding in Saltcoats**

**Mr. Knezacek:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to comment on the flood situation as it pertains to the Saltcoats constituency. During the last week constituents of Saltcoats and other eastern Saskatchewan communities have been faced with a serious flood situation — a nightmare for many.

We've had many roads and culverts washed out, highways with water flowing over them, roads opened or cut to allow water to flow in order to minimize the water damage in several communities, and a lot of personal property damage on many farms and within the communities of Langenburg and MacNutt due to the unusual flood situation. The farm communities around Kamsack and along the Assiniboine River basin have been particularly hard hit.

I have personally witnessed the sights I have described to you and have been in contact with the affected municipal reeves, mayors, and councillors, and many residents. All residents and local governments have once again displayed an excellent display of volunteerism and a spirit of cooperation in order to assist in attempting to minimize the effects of the flood on their residents and their properties.

Local residents in Langenburg and Churchbridge took charge of the situation last weekend, many working around the clock, and others were on a call basis night and day. All residents helped where they could, whether it was through filling sandbags, providing lunch, making coffee, monitoring the water level, providing pumping equipment, evacuating residents, or simply helping where needed.

I want to commend all the people who worked together and supported one another in this time of need. Your cooperative spirit in helping one another makes my heart swell with pride. Thank you.

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

**The Speaker:** — Before we proceed to oral questions, I want to remind members, under the third report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly, under Statements by Members, 9.1(4):

Statements are not debatable and are not responded to by any other Member.

I hope members will keep this in mind in the future when they make statements by members.

## **ORAL QUESTIONS**

### **Balanced Budget Legislation**

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions this afternoon are for the Minister of Finance. It appears that everybody has a copy of the government's so-called balanced budget legislation except for this Assembly. And while we eagerly await what will likely be the greatest flop of this session, we have a number of questions for you, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, over the past three and a half years your government unleashed an unprecedented tax attack on Saskatchewan families, such that Saskatchewan people now spend over half of their working year paying taxes and utilities. Over half of the year, Madam Minister.

Can you tell us how your Bill is going to protect the taxpayer from this kind of tax grab, and whether Saskatchewan people will be empowered to have a direct say in any future tax increases?

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for that question. Of course I can't talk about the specifics, but let me talk generally about our approach.

This government brought in the first balanced budget in this province in more than 13 years — the first balanced budget in Canada. Along with that budget we presented our financial plan for the next four years in this province. And what the members will notice, that in that plan there are no tax increases. In fact there are tax cuts beginning, effective July 1 this year. So what they could expect in the next four years is not tax increases, but tax cuts.

But I will say this to the member opposite. Before we decided on balanced budget legislation, we did extensive research into jurisdictions that actually have balanced budget legislation, mostly American states.

And what I'm going to table in the legislature today is a table showing that the jurisdictions that had balanced budget legislation, the states relative to the Canadian provinces, had debts that increased more dramatically than the debts of the Canadian provinces.

And what I'm going to suggest to you is this: why did they have legislation that essentially didn't work? Two reasons. One, loopholes. The other reason was this: they were like the members opposite. We're going to have tough, mean, miserable, balanced budget legislation. The government can't do this and the government can't do that. And all of a sudden they realize that the government can't continue to operate schools beyond

April because they've run out of money.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Next question.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, you speak of loopholes. And we'll certainly be watching your legislation to see what kind of loopholes it has in it. You've confirmed in the newspaper that it's going to contain some things that no other jurisdiction has. How very true. Your Bill likely will contain absolutely no protection against the heavy hand of government soaking every last penny out of the hard-earned wages of the people of Saskatchewan.

And the Saskatchewan taxpayers' association said in a news release yesterday, and I quote:

"A balanced budget law without the proper use of accounting, without (the) proper protection from tax hikes, without penalties for politicians who break the law and without a debt-elimination plan (is worth little more than) the paper it's written on."

Given your statements, Madam Minister, in the media, I fear and the taxpayers of Saskatchewan fear that this legislation will be useless. Can you give your pledge that this legislation will be little more than a cruel joke on the people of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, I must admit, to have the Tory Party talking to this government about balanced budget legislation is like the disease prescribing the cure. But he also mentions the Association of Saskatchewan Taxpayers — and normally I wouldn't get into speaking about groups in this legislature — they mention it.

Where was the Association of Saskatchewan Taxpayers in the 1980s when over a billion dollars a year was being racked up in this province's debt? I can tell you, the leader of that group was working for that party. She was part of the group that added about a billion dollars a year to the debt of this province.

What I can assure the members opposite is this. We balanced the books of the province, and we did it the Saskatchewan way. We've begun to pay down the debt and give tax relief to families, and we did it the Saskatchewan way. We will bring in balanced budget legislation, and we will do it the Saskatchewan way.

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

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, you balanced the budget the NDP way, by taxing more and more and more on the people of this province. That's how you accomplished it, Madam Minister, and that's what the people of Saskatchewan are saying to you all across this province today.

Madam Minister, I have a copy of An Act respecting the Protection of Saskatchewan Taxpayers that we introduced earlier in this session. It contains all of the elements of balanced budget legislation, with teeth, Madam Minister, taxpayers' teeth. It's designed to protect people from government, instead of protecting . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I will ask members to please quit shouting across the floor. The member has a right to ask his question without too much interruption by other members. Would the member please put his question.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our legislation is designed to protect people from the government, instead of protecting government from the people. It's time to start restraining government, Madam Minister, instead of the taxpayers.

Compared to your legislation, which is little more than a popgun, this is a howitzer, Madam Minister, and it's what your own polling is telling the government on that side of the House. Madam Minister, if you are so confident in your government's ability to manage and balance budgets, why not implement this piece of legislation and throw yours where it belongs — in the garbage can, Madam Minister.

You shouldn't fear the taxpayers . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I think the member has gone on quite a length of time. He has to ask a question. Would the member please put his question. Order. Would the member please ask his question.

**Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, you shouldn't fear the taxpayers. Will you do what you should do in the legislature this afternoon — introduce a real piece of balanced budget legislation, like The Protection of Saskatchewan Taxpayers Act.

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, I would say to the member opposite, if what they proposed has teeth, it's because it's going to bite the taxpayers and the people of this province.

The members opposite have to have some consistency and have to at least strive at some credibility. They have said in their legislation they're going to reduce the debt, eliminate the debt in 25 years — \$500 million a year in new cuts to do that.

They've also said they're going to reduce the sales tax. They're going to reduce the income tax — \$180 million new cuts required — \$680 million. They've also said they're going to cut government spending by 5 per cent, which will get them about \$250 million. They're \$400 million short. The Tory Party still can't add.

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

### Gasoline Price Increases

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, gasoline prices have now jumped to 60 cents a litre across Saskatchewan. And while people like John Solomon are quick to attack the oil companies, governments share at least as much responsibility for the high price of gasoline in Saskatchewan.

Nearly half the price of gas is federal and provincial taxation. In fact if the oil companies were giving gas away for free, we would still be paying 28.7 cents a litre or nearly \$1.30 a gallon in taxes. Saskatchewan drivers pay 15 cents a litre in provincial taxes alone, the highest in Western Canada.

My question is to the Minister of Finance. Do you agree that the government should shoulder much of the blame for the high price of gas and what plans do you have to lower the gas tax in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Anguish:** — I thank the hon. member for his question. The hon. member should know full well that the price of gas is market driven, and I don't think you should be blaming John Solomon, who's done a very good job in terms of calling on the federal government to look into the issue of gasoline prices.

And I point out to you also that the member who made a statement earlier today . . . is that the Saskatchewan tax on gasoline has not been increased in excess of two years. We'll remember the days when, as an election promise, some of those members opposite sat in a government that removed the gasoline tax completely. It won them votes in one election, but it drove Saskatchewan \$15 billion into debt.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member keeps forgetting that a good portion of that debt, over \$5 billion, was in place in 1982 when the NDP were defeated.

Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about market driven. Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan it's tax driven. Let's have a made-in-Saskatchewan solution for the gasoline tax. I understand the Minister of Justice can't do that with guns, but let's do it with gasoline here. Lower the taxes here, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, if you don't plan on lowering the gas tax, would you at least like to legislate a guarantee that you don't plan on raising it any more in the future. You said that you haven't raised it in two years, but you announced it two years ago and it took place this year.

You could have given that guarantee in your balanced budget legislation by making it illegal to raise taxes, but you haven't done that because you want to leave the door open for future increases.

Mr. Minister, why don't you have a legislated tax freeze in this legislature to protect consumers from future tax increases to gas tax and other provincial taxes?

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

**Hon. Mr. Anguish:** — I don't think the member is thinking very rapidly on his feet, Mr. Speaker. If you'll recall back, it's that group of people over there who caused negative things to happen with Saskatchewan's economy and the Saskatchewan budget.

If you'd follow what's happened over the last years in this legislature, since this administration came into office, we've finally come to a point that we have a balanced budget in Saskatchewan and we've started . . . it's not much, but we started to reduce the tax load on the citizens of the province of Saskatchewan.

That's a projection that we plan on continuing. It's a commitment by this government and the Minister of Finance, it's been laid out in the financial plans of the province, and I think you should do a little homework and come up with some questions that would be of greater concern. At least show some logic on your part; your questions defy logic to the people of the province.

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

### Balanced Budget Legislation

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has made its own bed when it comes to keeping promises and honouring contracts, and the balanced budget legislation has not even been introduced and already people are expressing cynicism about how this government can be trusted to honour any contract or commitment.

This government has a track record of tearing up contracts with business people, with farmers, and is very well-known for its retroactive changes to legislation. The actions of the government speak far, far louder than their words or their words on paper.

My question is directed to the Minister of Finance: Madam Minister, people don't trust anything that is legislated by your government because they're not quite sure that it'll come to fruition because you change laws to suit your political purposes. What guarantee will people have that you're going to abide by the legislation that you bring forward today?

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — I thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, this government promised to balance the books of the province. This government delivered on that promise. This government promised to begin to reduce taxes once we balanced the books of the province. We've delivered on that promise. This government has promised to reduce the

debt of the province. We put forward a plan to do that, and we've begun to reduce the debt of this province.

I'm astonished to hear the member opposite say the electorate does not trust this government. We have a record. We have plans that we have put in place and we have delivered on them.

What I say to the member opposite is, when has she ever put before the people of this province a plan to solve any problem, never mind the major financial problems that this province has faced.

We have balanced the books of this province. We will bring in legislation that will be effective, and we will ask the people of the province who they trust to manage their finances.

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

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed interesting to note that these are the people whose leader ended up saying, at midnight tonight the PST (provincial sales tax) will be gone. The same man in fact who as leader of the opposition said, under no circumstances if he were premier of the province . . . there would never be any casino in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that this government has relied on unsustainable windfalls and high taxes to balance their budget. And today they're going to introduce a law which will supposedly keep the books balanced. Now nobody can legislate good luck, Mr. Speaker, but the NDP sure knows how to legislate high taxes.

My question to the Finance minister: will you indeed — which you did not answer earlier — give a commitment that your legislation will offer protection to the taxpayers against your government's tax and spend policies; a commitment, Madam Minister, to actually reduce the costs of government in order to hold the line on taxes?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite makes statements which are not accurate about what our Premier said and did. But she has opened herself up to an examination of her own record. How can a leader that stood in this legislature in the last session and added \$300 million to the deficit, talk about balancing the books? How can a leader that has promised already four tax cuts without telling the people where the money's coming from, stand in this legislature and talk about balancing the books?

We have balanced the books of this province. We have laid before the people our plan for their future. It includes tax cuts.

But I'll say to the member opposite, we are not going to Americanize politics in Saskatchewan. We are not going to have budgets by referendum in which you ask narrow questions and you play games, as they are in Quebec, to fiddle the results. We are going to balance the books of this province, and introduce legislation, and do it the Saskatchewan way.

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

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the people of this province know exactly what this government has done to their lives. They know exactly how much disposable income they have left in their pockets, and it's not much. Saskatchewan, as a province, is seen as out of step with the direction being taken by other places.

And while other provinces are setting goals of smaller government, and they are not relying on windfall resource revenues to balance the books, Saskatchewan has no sustainable — with emphasis on the sustainable, Mr. Speaker — plan to pay off the debt.

My question to the Finance minister: Madam Minister, can you and will you, give your assurance to Saskatchewan people that there will be a schedule of debt reduction legislated into the Bill that you introduce? And if targets are not met, what indeed will be the repercussions?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm astonished to listen to what the member opposite seems to believe are facts. We didn't cut spending in this government? Since 1991, we have cut spending by over \$275 million. Where has she been?

We have balanced the books of this province, and we've laid before the people a new plan for their future. We reduced the debt of this province \$500 million in one year alone. That's equivalent to the Government of Canada reducing its debt by \$16 billion, and we've laid out a schedule for further debt reduction.

I will tell the member opposite, there will be very serious penalties involved for people in this province who do not manage the finances of the province properly. The electorate will fire them, as they fired the members opposite in 1991. And, Madam Member, they will scrutinize what you say about the finances of this province and see if you really have a plan. And they will deal you the result that you deserve.

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

### **Sale of Bronson Forest**

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Environment minister. Mr. Minister, yesterday, or last evening, I had the privilege of attending a meeting of about 200 people concerned about the sale of huge portions of the Bronson forest, including recreational areas, to the Thunderchild Indian Band. And, Mr. Speaker, the people at that meeting had several questions they wanted to ask the Environment minister. They even made sure that they had it noted on the agenda, an agenda I'm sure the minister received. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, the Environment minister didn't show up. Neither did the NDP MLAs in the area — the members for Lloydminster and Meadow Lake. And no offence, was it because they had to attend the last supper? I'm not sure.



This is typical of the kind of treatment these people have received from this government. Mr. Minister, why didn't you attend yesterday's meeting? Why are you refusing to meet with the Bronson Ministikwan Concerned Citizens Group?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. I can assure the members opposite that I have had many discussions and met on several occasions with representatives of this group.

I want to say that the issue that has been raised is an issue of long-standing discussion. It's been going on for 18 months now and our officials have been assigned and special facilitators have been assigned to carry out this discussion. That discussion has actually been quite a sound discussion and very informative to the various parties, has been going on, and we continue to . . . we intend to continue to provide an opportunity for discussing the issues around the Bronson forest treaty land entitlement.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Minister, the people that attended that meeting would like to know which meeting you've attended in the past.

Mr. Minister, people have been asking for a meeting. They've been asking to meet with you and you simply refuse. In fact they had a number of questions they wanted to raise with you, and I brought one. First and foremost, the people at the meeting passed a resolution opposing any sale of the Bronson forest, including the recreational areas within the forest.

Mr. Minister, will you act on this resolution?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to report that I met with the one representative of that body as recently — if the member opposite wants to stop talking and listen for a minute — as recently as two weeks ago. I want to say that we met as a caucus committee with a larger representative group of that organization only several months earlier than that.

I want to say that, as I said earlier, we have provided opportunity for discussing this issue. The member opposite may not understand the history of treaty land entitlements in Saskatchewan, although I would want to give credit to the former government for something because they did move some of that discussion some distance ahead.

Those treaty land entitlement discussions were finalized in . . . after we were elected, and I think it is a significant achievement that that occurred.

Under that treaty land entitlement, first nations have an opportunity to ask for land to be transferred to them in respect

of obligations from the past under the agreement.

The band requested the area that's under discussion. And as a result of the special circumstance, this land had previously been committed to the federal government for the formation of a reserve for this band. It was considered appropriate that this land again be made available for these discussions. And the discussions that have continued since that time have been fruitful for all of those who have a cooperative interest in seeing to it that our obligations are met.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Speaker, and to the minister. Mr. Minister, I can certainly indicate we have had some interesting discussions regarding treaty land entitlement, and I thank the Minister of Justice for those discussions.

However, Mr. Minister, the World Wildlife Fund, what kind of a recommendation did they give regarding Saskatchewan and its endangered species — a D rating. And what the people are suggesting up in that area . . . there are areas of the province and Crown land that we can certainly make available under the treaty land entitlements. There are areas that maybe we should look seriously at preserving.

They had a number of other questions. What is the price tag on the land? What will happen to lease agreements? Will other Saskatchewan people besides aboriginal people be given the opportunity to purchase Crown forest land?

Mr. Minister, these questions were asked last night. Will you be prepared to meet with these individuals and answer their questions directly and will you do that before the next general election? Or are you going to do like Mr. Bowerman did before the 1982 election: make a promise, so-called promise, prior to the election that he could run away from afterwards. Is that what your intention is?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't know how much time you want me to take to answer this question, but the contentions of the member opposite are offensive to say the least about good process.

The promise was made to the federal government and I have before me . . . and if the Leader of the Opposition would quiet himself for a minute, he might learn something.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I think the members asked a question. They should give the minister an opportunity to answer the question.

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Thank you. I want to respond first before I answer the question to a very inaccurate contention made by the member opposite. When the federal government of the day was attempting to resolve some of the issues that have not yet been resolved, Saskatchewan was asked by the Thunderchild Band

whether this land might be transferred. Saskatchewan made a commitment to the federal government to transfer that land at that time. The federal government responded.

If the member has not yet received a copy of this, we can make it available to him. He ought to have done his research. By saying they thank Saskatchewan for that commitment, the federal government did not carry that process forward. There was no lack of commitment by Saskatchewan to that commitment that was made at that time.

I want to say to the member opposite that with respect to the discussion that's gone on, not only have we as a department and as myself and as our caucus committee made ourselves available for these discussions, but so also has the Thunderchild Band. The Thunderchild Band is not obligated under the treaty land entitlement to discuss these issues with people who are not third-party interest.

The Thunderchild Band has especially gone out of its way to have discussions with the community because they believe in sound community cooperation. And in a press release issued last year, if the member opposite and those who spoke to him to say that this did not occur want to contend that they do not know the answer to the question the member asks, i.e., what will happen to this stuff in the future, they should read from the press release that that band . . .

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

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### **Bill No. 62 — An Act to Maintain Financial Stability and Integrity in the Administration of the Finances of the Province of Saskatchewan**

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to Maintain Financial Stability and Integrity in the Administration of the Finances of the Province of Saskatchewan be now introduced and read the first time.

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

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

#### Motions for Interim Supply

**The Chair:** — Before we proceed to the resolution I would ask the minister to introduce again the officials who have joined us here this afternoon.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my

left I have Bill Jones, the deputy minister of Finance; behind Bill I have Larry Spannier, the executive director, the Treasury Board branch; behind me I have Craig Dotson, the associate deputy minister of budget analysis division.

Seated at the back I have Kirk McGregor, executive director, taxation and intergovernmental policy; Jim Marshall, executive director, economic and fiscal policy.

(1430)

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, and welcome once again to your officials. Yesterday in our discussions there were a number of issues that came up and were talked about. And one that you said that you couldn't talk about in the Assembly was the one that the Premier was making in Kamsack at 5 o'clock yesterday. And of course the media today is full of that announcement, but very few details.

And as you can appreciate, at least from the comments in the media, a lot of the people that were there for the announcement, reeves and councillors and town administrators and others, they're happy to see the province giving money. But they make the comment about how this money is going to come out of existing departmental funds, some of which we identified yesterday, some of which you did not identify. And we're talking I guess here about \$6 million.

You said that if this budget isn't passed before the Premier calls an election, that this will be the money that carries us through until a new government is formed, and I would presume perhaps a new budget brought down and all that.

So in light of the fact that the supply Bill you bring before the Assembly today in fact is a very important one, because this may be the financing of the province until after a new government is elected, would you mind giving us a few more details, now that the Premier has made the announcement about the \$6 million — which departments are going to have to give that up and how that is going to affect the structure of those departments as we go through this period.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, thank you for the question. What I will say is the only thing that I can add today that I wasn't able to add yesterday is the dollar amount. What we're talking about here is \$6 million, up to \$6 million. That is, the associate deputy minister tells me, about one-sixth of one per cent of the budget of the province of Saskatchewan.

What we have said is that when you're dealing with one-sixth of one per cent, an infinitesimal amount of the whole, total budget of the province of Saskatchewan, is that we will be expecting these two departments, plus the government generally, to be ensuring that in areas where they've managed the finances of the province in such a way that money that they had anticipated requiring in fact is not required, will be redirected to this particular priority. And that is a prudent way to manage the finances of the province. And beyond that, I have nothing more

to say.

The only thing I can add, as I say, is the number and the small percentage it is of the total budget.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Well, Madam Minister, you can't lead us off on that tangent. You clearly yesterday in questioning said that departments like Agriculture and others weren't going to be tapped; GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) funds, for instance, which are still outstanding would not be tapped.

You said the place that you were going to get the money from was primarily Highways and Municipal Government. And then you alluded to maybe other agencies. Now I asked you about the funds that the minister failed to bring forward by March 31; you said definitely not, definitely not.

So, Madam Minister, what percentage, what percentage of the departments of Highways and Municipal Government does this \$6 million make? Because you pretty well ruled out the rest of government. You pretty well ruled out the rest of government contributing to these funds.

A lot of the existing monies in those two departments are already part of cost-sharing agreements. In other words, the local municipality, the local town, has to put up so much money in order to access so much money. Same goes with Highways. What percentage of the departments are we talking about here, Madam Minister?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, it's 2 per cent and 4 per cent. What I said to the member opposite yesterday is these two departments will be asked initially to manage this within their departments. If not, we will manage it across government. And what I can add today is it's \$6 million, so it's the kind of sums that are obviously manageable.

I want to alert the member opposite to an issue that I will continue to raise with every round of questioning here. What we're talking about now is interim supply — money that is required by agencies in this province in order for them to continue carrying on their businesses.

I want to inform the member that if in fact interim supply is not passed today, the following agencies will not have enough money to carry on their operations beginning next week: transition homes for abused women, group homes for children and youth, group homes for mentally handicapped adults, sexual assault centres, as well as many other agencies.

What we will be telling these agencies is that we unfortunately cannot provide them with the money they require to continue their operations because the opposition will not pass interim supply, even though we've told the opposition that they have estimates as well as interim supply and we would be prepared to deal with any of these questions that they're raising in estimates. So I must alert the member opposite of the action that we're going to be forced to take here.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, yesterday and the day before in this House, both you and the members of the opposition have talked about all sorts of topics. I mean when it suits your purpose, you'll branch off and go wherever you feel like and I don't hear you asking Mr. Chairman then to shut you up.

So, Madam Minister, this is potentially the funds that will take the province of Saskatchewan . . . I mean your Premier can walk in here at any time and he can say: Mr. Speaker, I've been over to see the Lieutenant Governor and I've asked that they prorogue this legislature — plain and simple — no budget. No budget passed, Madam Minister. It's just hanging there, just hanging there, okay. And then all of the things you just mentioned will still have to keep going and you know how you'll do it. You'll do it by special warrants, okay.

This supply Bill probably will pass. I'm not sure yet, but it probably will pass. This potentially could be the funding that we will see take us through the next two months, if there's an election call.

Now I'd say it's fairly important that we discuss this because we may never get to your estimates. We may never get to the Premier's estimates. He may not want to face the heat in the House; he may call an election instead. That's his prerogative; he can do that. Therefore, this is it and there's lots of topics that we have to talk about.

I just took a quick road trip through your spending announcements since January 1. And I'll give you an idea of where you've been going: wellness grants, over 60,000; Grandmother's Bay road, Highways, 770,000; sponsorship of business expo, 5,000; Canadian government's on-line projects, 200,000; Saskatchewan Cancer Foundation, 700,000; Crown Life, 150 million; Future Skills, Education, \$10 million; training at Hitachi, 262,000; Scotty the Dinosaur movie, 1.1 million; strengthening community health services, 20.3 million; ag-food innovation fund, 27 million; SaskFILM (Saskatchewan Film and Video Development Corporation) funding, 4 million; gambling addiction, \$1 million; northern development fund, 2.6 million; health centre capital projects, 10 million bucks; biofermentation, 6 million bucks; more wellness grants, \$60,000. And that's not even half of it.

I mean, Madam Minister, you've been doing a lot of spending since January 1 to date, and there's a lot more than that. Now what we have before us here is your two-month look at the window, and we may have an election in between. So it's very, very reasonable for us to ask you all sorts of questions about the funding and what you're going to do.

Now you're telling me, 2 to 4 per cent of the Highways and Community Services budget are perhaps going to be reapportioned here. The question that is being asked by the people out there is, is this going to be a hundred per cent grant, or is this contingent upon them coming forward with other funding? And if that is the case, then it will impact on other funding which they already get under various cost-sharing

formulas. Now can you answer the question today? Is this 100 per cent grant money, or is this contingent upon those communities, RMs (rural municipality), whatever, out there, coming up with a cost-sharing formula to present to you?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — What we've provided for is we've allowed municipalities to redirect their capital grants through the revenue-sharing program towards maintenance and repair activities. And municipalities can also access an additional 2 million in revenue-sharing grants for their road projects in '95-96. There will also be another \$4 million in assistance on a cost-shared basis with municipalities for roads. So that's the specific answer.

On the more general question, I want to remind the member opposite, we have said, if he wants to ask these questions, that we'll proceed immediately to estimates, and he can ask exactly the same questions because what he's holding up here is not the government. What he is holding up, if this does not pass today, is we will be telling these agencies, sorry, next week we will not be able to process your money because the opposition will not let interim supply go. Even though we have said to them, we're prepared to address exactly these same questions in estimates. So I want to be absolutely honest and upfront with the member and not find him dealing with a situation that he's not aware of.

We will be telling these groups at the end of today that, sorry, you will not be getting money next week even though you need it to run your operations, because the opposition will not allow us to pass interim supply. We will be explaining to them our offer that the minute you pass interim supply, we'll go into estimates and address exactly the same question in estimates.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Highways tried the same thing; tried the same tactics as what you're now doing when those two pieces of legislation which hinged upon you moving money from last year into this year were before this Assembly.

You know what? I'd go back to my office day after day as the Agriculture critic, and I'd have to field calls because the minister was busy phoning around the province getting people to phone me up and threaten me with dire consequences if we didn't pass his legislation.

Well, Madam Minister, his legislation went through but it wasn't because of the phone calls, I can assure you. And the Minister of Highways' Bill didn't go through at all. And all of the calling around and all of the malarkey didn't do a bit of good, because unfortunately when you try that sort of thing, you have exactly the opposite reaction.

I understand about the groups out there. And they all have deadlines. We all have deadlines. The simple fact is we've asked you a lot of questions in here and you simply don't want to give answers. You come before the Assembly with this amount of money, with an election looming, perhaps no budget

passed, and say that you don't have the right to be here asking those questions.

I asked you a lot of questions about gambling and the casino and the funding of it, and whether it had been to Treasury Board and what Treasury Board had agreed to. Did I get any answers? No, none whatsoever.

Today we're asking you questions pertaining to a major announcement the Premier made yesterday with \$6 million and how it's going to work, and it's as if it was nothing.

There's going to be a huge impact on how all of those organizations out there access money. And a lot of that will be tied up in the very money that you come before the Assembly for. Has to be; there's no other way around it. They're spending money as we speak.

Madam Minister, will the cost sharing that you've identified in this announcement be new, or is it the existing cost-sharing agreement that they have?

(1445)

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — I say to the member opposite, this is a new program which is similar in design to the provincial assistance disaster relief program. And I would say to the member opposite that it's not . . . we're not talking about tactics here that we're using with the opposition.

We're just saying that we're going to have to tell the people of the province what the law allows us to do. The law simply does not allow us to spend money to give to those groups that need their money next week, those groups that are relying on that money, unless this Bill passes because — as I say and I'll say it again — we have made the commitment to answer your questions to the best of our ability. You may not like the answers, but we are providing the answers. And we've also said that if you will move to estimates, you can get the answers through that process.

For example in this case, what I have to do here is go back and try to find out from people fully cognizant of Municipal Government, what the detailed answer is to your question. Get the Municipal Government administration here, and they can give you even better, more detailed answers in a shorter period of time.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Well, Madam Minister, that I suppose will occur down the road. But my understanding of the way you run government — and you were very specific about how you manage the pennies — that you and you alone and your officials were in charge of everything. And when this item came before cabinet the other day, that it would be the Department of Finance that would be the lead agency in finding where the cash is going to come from and that you'd be asking the various departments to give up money in order to meet the needs of an emergency.

Now, Madam Minister, you've indicated that you're going to find some of it immediately, and then you're going to find some of it down the road. In the media reports, the Premier . . . and I'll quote from the article, Mr. Chairman, if that's all right.

This is from the *Leader-Post* — Thursday, April 27, 1995 — article by Kevin O'Connor. The member from Riversdale, and I won't use his name:

. . . agreed the amount being set aside likely won't be enough to repair all the damage caused by the rain and flooding, but could "kickstart" more flood relief.

In other words, that this 6 million is only the beginning of the process, that there's more coming.

Now I go back to my original premiss, Madam Minister. If the budget isn't passed, if an election is called before the House rises, this is what we're dealing with. And after that you're on special warrants. So if this is only the kick-start and there's more coming — and I suspect more would probably be during an election campaign — could you please identify for us what more might be and where out of here that more is going to come from?

And it is quite realistic that that more might have to come out of here, so could you tell us what the Premier meant by kick-starting more assistance for what's going on out there?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, everyone in this government manages the pennies very carefully. The Minister of Finance cannot do that in and of him or herself. So everyone is committed to ensuring that their department is run as effectively as possible.

What I will say about what the Premier said is he said something very reasonable. He said listen, we've looked at the problem; it looks like it's a problem of this sort of magnitude, and it looks like this is a reasonable way to deal with it. But we'll have to assess it and see whether or not there's things here that we're not aware of.

And if you would read on in some of what he said, what he said is we will be directing our next avenue to the federal government and saying to the federal government, we have a very major situation here and we expect you to make some contribution. So it's completely premature to talk about (a) us putting in more money, whether it will or will not occur; and (b) where it would come from.

Because what he said was just a very reasonable statement — this looks like a reasonable thing to be doing right now. And I notice on the radio this morning many of the municipal leaders were saying it looks reasonable. Then he said (b) we're going next to the federal government for money.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Madam Minister, can you give me an example of where the federal government has paid in money in a situation like this in the province of Saskatchewan in recent

history?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — In 1984 there was flooding — the provincial disaster relief assistance program was partially cost-shared by the federal government. So there certainly are precedents for the federal government to be involved in this sort of thing.

**Mr. Swenson:** — In 1984, was that . . . I don't remember that as being a flood year, but that was to do with what area of the province, and can you tell me what amount?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, I'd say this. This is the problem: this is interim supply. The Municipal Government department I'm sure would have all of those details for you and would love to provide them for you. But in order to do that, we've got to go on to estimates.

You're asking very detailed questions for a number of departments across government, and we simply don't have that sort of information available here. But there is another forum which we would welcome you to move to, which is estimates, in which we would love to give you exactly that information and be sure that the Department of Municipal Government had it here for you.

**Mr. Swenson:** — I appreciate that, Madam Minister. Mr. Chairman, I won't ask any more questions about recent floods in Saskatchewan history. I think what Madam Minister meant was 1974, which you and I remember very well, when Moose Jaw got clobbered and a lot of the South was flooded. One of the reasons we had to build the Rafferty-Alameda complex, to keep a lot of communities from being flooded. But I'll restrict my comments, Mr. Chairman, to the issue at hand.

Madam Minister, let's go back to 1995, April 27, which is really what I'm concerned about because you've come before the Assembly with spending estimates for the next two months. And those spending estimates may have to cover off a lot of things for your government, depending on what happens. I mean if Madam Minister wishes to stand up and clarify the fact that we're not going to have an election writ any time in the next two months, then I might be prepared to restrict my comments in some areas to estimates. If I can have that assurance, I'll be glad to restrict my comments.

But so far nobody's told me that that won't occur. And it's reasonable for me, as the Finance critic, to ask you questions about things that will occur perhaps during an election campaign, is it not? I mean we're then into a whole different ball game. I can't ask those questions any more. I'm done. I'm no longer an MLA — gone. You're still the Minister of Finance; you can spend money — and you will spend money. We know that you've planned to spend money during an election campaign. Therefore we have to ask you questions with what we have at hand, and that is your spending estimates before the House.

I go back to the premiss that the Premier has said that this is a

kick-start for more flood relief. If, Madam Minister, the federal government, who are very strapped for cash these days, say it is your problem, there is no more money, where in this interim supply Bill, where in government, would you come up with the funds to go beyond what the Premier announced yesterday? And usually when you use the phrase kick-start, you're talking about a small amount of something bigger to come. In other words, this is just the beginning of the money that he's going to promise for this situation.

The federal government says no, not at all, there's no money. Then where are you going for the money that you'll need in order to fund his further program?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, again, just to clarify the situation with respect to interim supply and estimates. What we're saying is that there is another forum in which exactly these questions can be asked, and can be asked more effectively because you can actually have the department here with all of the details that you require. And if you use that forum, you don't have to inconvenience the people of Saskatchewan who are depending on getting their money to run their agencies next week.

So we are certainly prepared to answer those questions. There is a forum in which they can be asked, and we will answer them.

Going back to what the Premier said, all I can say to the member opposite is what I said to him before: what the Premier obviously meant — and I don't want to interpret his words — but to me, what kick-start was referring to is that they are now going to go to the federal government and make a case to the federal government and say, we have a very serious situation in this province and we will expect some assistance from you. And I'm sure that that is what the kick-start is.

But it is much, much too early in the situation to be talking about what comes next, beyond the fact that we're heading to the federal government and saying that they have a role to play here as well.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Well two points, Madam Minister. You told me — I didn't tell you; you told me — that there was going to be Highways, Municipal Government, and other agencies. Now to drag all of those people in here at once isn't allowed. We'd have to go through it one by one by one. That might take quite some time. Obviously if we have all of these other players involved in this, that means that someone is giving them direction. Okay? And that's usually the Finance minister.

And the other point is, I wish it were so easy. I saw the Premier recently trundle off to Ottawa when Ralph Goodale axed the Crow, and you know what? He didn't come back with one red cent. I mean he went charging off with the flags waving and the horns blaring — I'm going to Ottawa and I'm going to change this around. And what did he come back with? Not a whole lot, Madam Minister — not one thin dime.

So I wouldn't keep my hopes up too much for the Premier to go

off and ask for some flood relief. You're the one that said there were going to be a lot of players in the action here. But there isn't one of those agencies could come in here and tell me what the other guy was doing. And you know it.

There's only one place that comes from and that's the Department of Finance because you're in charge of the extra funds. Now I asked you yesterday if those extra funds might include the money that the Minister of Highways was trying to bring into the legislature as of March 31.

He said he had 20 million bucks for infrastructure, and if we would simply allow him to do it, then there was going to be all sorts of money for road infrastructure. He mentioned about the member from Maple Creek bringing in his highway petitions — there'd be money for that; there'd be money for this; and money over here.

Madam Minister, is the Minister of Highways going to move the \$20 million from last year's budget, because your budget number has changed. You had a surplus of 177 million? 178 million? . . . whatever it was. That figure I presume now will be higher by \$20 million. The budget surplus for '94-95 will now be higher by 20 million bucks and the one this year will be lower by 20 million bucks.

There is no way for that minister to move that money now? Is that . . . we are led to understand that that's simply gone and that's gone into the surplus and it stays there and there will be no attempt to do anything with road infrastructure in this province with the money that previously would have been allocated.

(1500)

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, and to the member opposite. First of all, with respect to what is the lead agency. The Department of Finance is not the lead agency on this issue. The way the government works is, on any one issue in which there are two or three departments involved, there is a lead agency, which is the one that collects the information, makes the proposals and carries the day.

And I'll assist the member opposite to know which department he will want to ask these questions of. It's the Department of Highways that is the lead agency on this particular issue. So they're the ones that are going to be able to do the best job of giving you all the detail that you're asking for here.

Now he's asked another question about the transportation partnership. And as was stated in the House at the time, the opposition had a choice there. They could have passed the legislation by March 31, or the legislation died on the order paper.

And so the legislation has died on the order paper. And as we said at that time, there's no way to transfer funds from one year to the other. So there's no capacity to do that and it will not be done.

**Mr. Swenson:** — As I look at the Highways and Transportation numbers here that you've brought forward on your Bill, we're talking about 20 . . . a tad over 28 million. Is that the number as I read it?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Yes, the member is correct.

**Mr. Swenson:** — So 2.8 million and that . . . so if we took even 10 per cent of that, we'd only be looking at \$280,000. You told me previously that we were looking at 2 to 4 per cent of the department; 4 per cent of that is about \$140,000 that the minister would have available, under at least this appropriation, to move into a \$6 million-plus program. That obviously would mean nothing.

So that means that the minister would have to move his entire budget on a fast-forward back to present in order to come up with anything significant at all for people to operate under. Six million dollars according to your schedule, Madam Minister, is the next three appropriations inclusive of the Department of Highways if you went two-twelfths each time. That takes us June, July, August, September, October, just to meet . . . if you kept on the same schedule.

Can you tell me what the Minister of Highways has in mind with the money that's been appropriated to him already, especially given the fact that you may be into an election campaign? Would the Minister of Highways then have to go on special warrants in order to meet the requirements of the program the Premier announced?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Let me clarify some of the numbers here. The budget for the Department of Highways is about 168 million, so two-twelfths is about 28 million. Only 4 million of that 6 is coming out of Highways, and it may very well not come out for several months. Because, I mean, what we've been told, I gather — and this is why you need the Department of Highways here to get all your details that you're asking — but I gather we've been told it's too wet to start doing anything right now. So this . . . you may very well find that not a cent of this 28 will go into that because it will be more than two months before the key part of the work can even commence.

But again I come back to my major point. These are very good and interesting questions, and they're worth asking. But you should be asking them of the people who can give you the best and most detailed answers, and that's the Department of Highways. So I would suggest that that's the best place to get these detailed answers.

**Mr. Swenson:** — My colleague raises a good point. How would you ever ask a guy a question that's never in the House? Well I guess, Madam Minister, I go back to the question. If you can guarantee me absolutely that all these people are going to be available and we're not going to get the pin pulled on us here for a June election, then I'd be more than willing.

But you understand the predicament I'm in. I'm the Finance critic. You come forward asking for fairly large sums of money.

I have no guarantee at all that I'm going to get the opportunity to ask those people. Plain and simple. This House could sit here for weeks yet, absolutely weeks yet, before we got all of the questions and the answers. And that's quite reasonable.

Madam Minister, if the . . . And I go back to the other question I asked you — and this is one that you would directly have to deal with — the demand for extra funds. And I am concerned about that, because that demand may come on — say — six weeks from now, eight weeks from now, when we are in the middle of an election campaign.

And I'm wondering what the response would be for a demand for significant amounts of money. And obviously the federal government isn't probably going to give you any money during the middle of an election campaign. At least I wouldn't expect the Liberals to give you a bunch of money in the middle of an election campaign. And the Premier is going to want to give out some more money.

Can you give us some indication of where in government you might be able to come up with more money if the Premier decided to announce something in the near future that would help this flood-stricken area of the province?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite. What I'm trying to say to the member opposite is that this isn't about my problem, your problem, this side of the House's problem, that side of the House's problem. What this is about . . . it's about the fact that today is the last day in which we can pass interim supply and still guarantee that the groups that I talked about — transition homes for abused women, group homes for children and youth, group homes for mentally handicapped adults, and sexual assault centres — will have the money they require in order to continue their operations.

And so what I said, if the member opposite passes interim supply, we can go on to estimates. We can answer exactly these questions. In fact if he allows the departments that he most wants to ask questions of in here, he can do a better job because they'll have more detail.

Now with respect to your specific question, we're talking about a pretty extended time frame here. And again I'm reluctant to get into this because it's Highways that should be talking about the details.

But essentially it looks something like this. It will probably be into the summer before things have actually dried out, people have actually been able to get onto the roads, and figure out the extent of the damage. So I'm not sure why the member would see a reason for the government today to be sitting here and planning — we're going to give extra money; where is it coming from? — because what we have said is two things. We're going to the federal government, and we're going to wait until we can reasonably see what the damage is. And if you want a rough estimate when that might be, probably sometime in the summer.

**Mr. Swenson:** — So, Mr. Chairman, did I hear Madam Minister say that there wasn't going to be an election in June and that we would have the appropriate time to review this stuff and that because the demands weren't coming till summer that there was no need to worry about whether we appropriate the government money or not? Is that what I heard her say?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — The member opposite knows that I said nothing about an election, and I'm not the person who decides when an election is.

What I said to the member opposite is, that with respect to the roads that you're worried about in the flooded part of the province, you should be asking the Department of Highways for the details. But if you want me to give you a rough guess as to when we're going to know whether or not further assistance is required, a rough guess is probably something like the summer. But as I say, you need to ask the Department of Highways.

What I've said to the member opposite is that we shouldn't be playing silly politics with this supply Bill because the many agencies, especially the smaller ones that run on shoestring budgets, require their money in order to be able to continue their operations.

And I think it's incumbent upon all of us to set aside our differences, especially when I've offered you another forum in which we can go through this process, and ensure that these people get their money when they need it.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of points, Madam Minister. My experience from being in government is that when these things happen, most often people say, why does the government manage its affairs so sloppily? I never did once see them point the finger at anyone else.

And the other point is — and you know that full well — the other point is I didn't see the Minister of Highways yesterday making the announcement. She and the Minister of Agriculture conveniently were off in a plane some place flying around looking at the flooding.

The individual yesterday who seemed to be doing all the talking and doing all the promising and laying out the skimpy details was the Premier. It wasn't the member from Melfort there front and centre with the pope, and I kind of would have thought maybe the person that should know would be the one. But it wasn't; it's the Premier that staged this event, made the promises, and talked about the kick-start.

Now maybe the proper thing to do would be to drag him back in here and we'd plunk him down in his chair with his political officials that he has around him all the time, and get into what he said, and what he promised, and what he might promise in the future. Because as I read the media, there is an explicit promise here from the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan that there is more to come, folks. I'm on your side; I'm here in Kamsack today; I got my rubber boots on. I've been out; I've

had a look at all the damage. And I can assure you that I'm on your side and if you just stay with me, I'll promise you some more.

Now that's the way I read the reports, Madam Minister. I wasn't there, but it does say that the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Community Services were up in the plane flying around somewhere. Okay? Premier. Premier made the promise. And I would suggest to you that he wouldn't be the first Premier that in the middle of an election campaign made a promise.

That means that there's more money coming. We're in interim supply. Where is the money coming from is my question, Madam Minister. Where are you going to come up with the Premier's promise: and there's more to come? So far you tell me Highways and Community Services are coming up with some of it, and they'll compress their budgets as need be. Where, Madam Minister, are you going to come up with the rest of it from?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, I say to the member opposite, I'm actually doodling circles on my paper here because we're going in circles here. He asks me a question, I give him the answer. He says I won't answer the question because he doesn't like the answer I give him. The problem is it's the only answer I've got because it happens to be the truth.

What the Premier said was, he said look, we're going to assess the situation. If he said anything about money — I know what he said — he said he's going to approach the federal government about money.

And all I can say is what I've said to you again and again. We will assess the situation. It will take several months. We will approach the federal government. And so we simply can't sit here as a government and make plans about, well now what will we do if this should happen. You wait till something happens, you assess it, and then you determine what you're going to do. But the Premier made one commitment about money, and that was the commitment to put in the dollars that he announced and to approach Ottawa for further funds.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Well one final question then, Madam Minister, on this topic. And then we'll take your advice — providing you answer it properly — and move on to another area of our discussion. Are you prepared to categorically say that there will not be expenditures made by the Premier in the month of June pertaining to this program?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — What I can say to the member opposite is that this interim supply Bill will be what the government is allowing other agencies or itself to spend in the months of May and June.

I can't commit on behalf of the Premier. I have no reason to believe that he has any intentions to do any spending at all. That is my understanding. But I can't commit. I don't know what is going to occur in this province in the next six to eight weeks. It's impossible.



And this becomes a little frustrating with groups that always are talking about, well let's tie the hands of the government so the government can't do that. Let's tie the hands of the government so the government can't do that.

Two months ago we didn't know there was going to be a flood. Couldn't make a commitment that we're never going to spend any money to deal with that situation. What if there's an earthquake? Are we supposed to say, oh no, I'm sorry, I promised the member from Thunder Creek that I wouldn't allow the Premier, and the Premier said he would never spend any money no matter what happened?

You simply can't make those sorts of commitments. What I can commit to you is that the money that will be spent in the next two months is the money that you would be passing if you passed this interim supply.

(1515)

**Mr. Swenson:** — Madam Minister, unfortunately that's kind of what I expected. In other words, we got down to a bunch of weasel words about what the Premier might and might not do, and you don't have any control over that, and he might spend the money. And that's the problem with that Bill you brought into the House today, is that there are no controls.

You know there are lots of jurisdictions in North America that have very stringent budget controls and budget legislation and they have disasters all the time. And they get around them, because they're quite prepared to lay out to the people, because of that balanced budget legislation, exactly where they're going. And they are quite prepared to go back to the people with various mechanisms and not have this fudgey, four-year, sort of political document that you brought in. And they have disasters all the time.

Madam Minister, you could have very stringent legislation and still deal with things like this flooding, but the government would have to be very open in how it came back and solicited the funds. You couldn't have the situation which you just weaselled on me where we could have the Premier running around rural Saskatchewan in a month's time in the middle of an election campaign, saying, I'm going to give you some more to fix your roads.

See, you'd make a big political promise out of it rather than having some legislation that controlled that. He couldn't do that under our legislation. He couldn't. But he can do it under what you've proposed.

Okay, Madam Minister, I believe that you should be able to say to this Assembly that there will not be a political promise tied to the disaster that people are going through in eastern Saskatchewan right now — flooding — having their homes flooded, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** — Order, order. I'm having difficulty hearing the member from Thunder Creek put his question. He's not sitting

all that far from me.

**An Hon. Member:** — He wasn't saying anything.

**The Chair:** — Order. Order. And I will ask for the cooperation of members of the committee to allow the member from Thunder Creek to continue with his questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the enthusiasm of all those members, some of whom have seats over on the east side of the province. And I'm sure that they are wondering, as we are, about what exactly the Premier meant yesterday about the money he's expending on behalf of the taxpayers for their area of the province. And I assume that they're also wondering what the Premier meant when he said it was simply a kick-start of more to come. And I'm sure people in their constituencies will be asking them about the time schedule of the kick-start and the more funds to come, and how this Assembly is going to deal with it. And I suppose that's why they are so loud because of the anticipation they feel about more money coming into their area.

What we're trying to define in the Assembly today, Mr. Chairman, in the interim supply and the money that the minister is asking for today to get us through to the end of June, is how much of this money is going to end up in the Premier's program. How much of this money may potentially end up in the Premier's announcement? And if it isn't this money, which would have to be the money that would carry this province through to the end of June, where will the money come from if it isn't this here?

And the Finance minister said what she would guarantee is that there would be no more, and it's not this money — no more. But she will not categorically say that the Premier won't be making more announcements potentially in the middle of an election campaign all up and down the east side of this province.

So if he's going to make that promise, I would like to know, Mr. Chairman, where the money is coming from. And that's a very simple question. It's something I think every taxpayer would understand. If this is all there is, there isn't any more, okay; and if the election is called, this is it — there is no more. And yet another announcement is made. All I'm asking is where is it coming from? Now if there's no announcements coming, then I'm satisfied. That's fine.

There won't be any need for any more because the minister said these departments are simply going to fast forward their money up and they'll be ready to look after the needs of the announcement, and they can handle it within their existing budgets; those budgets will not grow. That's fine.

But I haven't heard the minister say that there will be no more announcements before this funding expires in the case that the legislature prorogues and that there isn't access to any more money anywhere else. And I haven't heard her say that yet, Mr.

Chairman, and it's a simple question. And it's something I think people in the province, on the east side, anywhere that you're a taxpayer, would clearly want to understand.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm drawing my circles again because we're going in circles. To me I've given a clear answer to the member opposite, and the only possible answer to the member opposite. What I have said . . . and I'm very nervous when the member opposite says the minister has made commitments, because it didn't sound like any commitments that came out of my mouth.

What I said was this. I said the Premier made an announcement yesterday that there would be up to \$6 million available because the assessment that we have right now suggests that that is what will be required to deal with the problem. He made no reference to the fact that more is on the way. What he made reference to was . . . he talked about money, approaching the federal government. But it's impossible for me to stand here and tell you what's going to happen in the next six weeks.

I mean would you like me to stand here . . . and I'm always worried what he does with *Hansard*, so don't take this sentence without the preface: would you like me to stand here and say, I commit that not a penny more will go into the north-east, no matter how much snow falls and no matter how much rain comes in the next six weeks, that's it. That would be unrealistic and unfair to those people.

And that's a problem I have with some of these attempts to hamstring government; no matter what, we're not going to do this. So I have no other answer for the member, except to say this is what is committed now and reassessment will occur. If there is a likely time frame, my guess is the summer. But if you want a specific answer, ask Highways.

I think we're going in circles; there is no other answer to be given, because neither you nor I can predict what's going to happen in the next six or eight weeks. Do you know if it's going to continue to rain or snow? I don't.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Mr. Chairman, the minister is absolutely right; none of us can predict those things. But what we can predict, and what we should think about in here, is that if more money is going to be spent, then it is logical that that spending would come here, okay. That's logical. I've heard the Finance minister make that argument. I've been chairman of Public Accounts; I've sat on Public Accounts. I've had the auditor comment on it many times, about that type of spending, that this would be the place to do it.

That may not be the case, Mr. Chairman. We're getting three and a half years into a term, anything's possible. There's been a lot of speculation about a June election.

If that's the case — and I appreciate the minister's probably drawing circles again — but the simple fact is, Mr. Chairman, if the Premier . . . and he's already done it once, okay. It was six yesterday. If the Premier decides to go out and spend some

more, there may not be an opportunity for this Assembly to scrutinize any of that, okay. That will have to come from somewhere.

And this Finance minister says there is a bottom line and it will not move. She manages her pennies, even though she goes out and hires people like my friend Rod Laporte, for \$44,000 in the dying day of a term, but she manages her pennies. And we're really concerned that if announcements pertaining to expenditures are going to be made, that they should not be made in the middle of an election campaign, Mr. Chairman; that they should be made while this House is in session and we should scrutinize how this expenditure affects the monies that the minister asks for. Okay?

And I may not get the opportunity to have an entire budget presented. That's not unreasonable. It's happened in this House many times. We simply prorogue, there's an election called — boom! No budget passed. If that be the case, then we have to work with the cards that we're dealt. The cards that we're dealt is this interim supply motion.

If Madam Minister would simply say, well, I guess we'd use special warrants and we'd go get the money, or something to that effect. I mean I'm sure she must . . . she's got her officials here; she must have all sorts of answers of how it would be handled and where the money would come from.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, I really . . . I don't know what to say except, as I say, you're right; I'm drawing the circles again.

Governments simply don't run on that basis. That is, we don't sit here and say, well now what would we do if it keeps raining for six weeks? Where would we find the money to do that? Because we could sit here and say . . . because there's no evidence, we don't have any evidence it's going to continue to rain for six weeks; nobody knows. It would be the same as sitting here, well what do we do if interest rates went up 5 per cent? What would we do if the price of wheat dropped 10 per cent?

We only start looking at what our options are when we know that something is going to happen. We do not know that the problem is worse than what we've estimated right now, and we will not sit here and try and figure out what we would do if it were worse until we have some evidence.

So as I say, you're asking me questions; I'm giving you the same answer because it is the only answer. We simply do not have in place contingencies for things that might happen. Because if we ever did that, the government would be totally bogged down in looking at a hypothetical, which is what it is. Neither you nor I know if it's going to continue to rain.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well because Madam Minister will not -- will not relieve the anxiety that taxpayers will feel about the Premier running off and making election promises in the middle of someone else's disaster . . .

and that's what it is. There's people out there, they don't want to be flooded, they don't want to not sow a crop this year, they do not want to sandbag their homes, but they are forced to do it. And I think it is really inappropriate that you wouldn't categorically say that their misery is not going to be part of some election promise of your government and your Premier four, six weeks down the road.

I don't know why you'd want to be in that position, but you don't seem to want to deny it to this Assembly and the taxpayers of this province. So I guess we'll have to leave it and you can handle it at some later date. And I guess if you think that that's appropriate, that's fine and dandy.

Yesterday before the Assembly rose I was asking you some questions about Treasury Board process and the expenditures of money, dealing with the downtown casino. And you brought up the name of a Candace Fox who did a study for the casino corporation. And I asked you if that was the basis of the report to Treasury Board, and you categorically said no. And at that point, the Associate Minister of Finance rose and asked that the committee shut down.

I'm wondering if you could tell me what was the basis of the report that went to Treasury Board — who prepared it and what the basis of that analytical work was to give the member from Elphinstone, your campaign manager, the authority to go and contract the building of the casino.

(1530)

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite. The process that was followed was a standard process. A request comes from the Gaming Corporation; it's analysed by the people at the Department of Finance and any other departments if they happen to have an interest in the topic, and then a decision is made.

But what I want to emphasize here is that we're on interim supply. There is simply no money in this budget going to the Gaming Corporation. So people do not have to be concerned about passing interim supply and doing anything with respect to the Gaming Corporation because this interim supply Bill has nothing to do with passing any money to the Gaming Corporation.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Well, on the third day, Madam Minister, that's a rather weak defence. We've talked about the Gaming Corporation in this committee, Mr. Chairman, for extended periods of time. We've gone through a lot of questions. We're actually starting to get somewhere on the questioning and I don't know why the minister would want to stop now.

I mean I finally have got it down to the fact that this thing did go through Treasury Board with some type of analysis by her officials that allowed the member to go off and start contracting and spending money. And we know that we're right down to the fixtures of the place and what it's going to look like and everything else.

And it's important because the revenue stream, Mr. Chairman, impacts on the budget and the money that flows back into the Consolidated Fund from the Liquor and Gaming Commission. Government's projected income from the Liquor and Gaming Commission, okay, back to the Consolidated Fund. Not the casino; they have projected nothing on the casino for four years, which is an interesting little exercise in itself.

But the fact is that this project downtown is totally being financed out of cash flow of the Liquor and Gaming Commission, okay, because there is no casino right now. So you've got no revenue coming from . . . you've got no revenue at all coming from the casino itself. You're in the construction phase and the contractor is paying for the building, and he's going to put the building up, and he's going to turn the keys over.

But there still won't be any revenue. And it probably will take months and months before that revenue stream ever gets anywhere near being able to support the lease arrangement. So it's important that we know that Treasury Board was involved in this, that it went through the Treasury Board ministers, and they gave the okay for this self-financing arrangement which most Crown corporations don't have.

Now what I would like from you, Madam Minister, you mention this individual, this Candace Fox who gave an assessment of when profitability would start to occur and when the revenue streams would begin to support the casino so that you wouldn't be robbing from the rest of the operation and therefore potentially robbing from your dividend back to the taxpayer.

Do your Treasury Board analysis . . . was it similar to the one done by Candace Fox? You say you didn't use her. Did your numbers correspond with what she projected as far as revenue stream and then what that revenue stream would be on a monthly basis? Did your Treasury Board analysis correspond with hers?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, again I'm so leery when the member interprets what I said because I didn't say that at all about the Candace Fox report. The report was done for the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority to assess the market potential; is there a market in this province for a casino? So the question has no relevance because that wasn't the purpose of her study initially.

I will bring the member back to the main issue though at hand, and that issue is this, that today we need to pass interim supply. Otherwise we're going to have to inform groups like the following: transition homes for abused women, group homes for children and youth, group homes for mentally handicapped adults, sexual assault centres. And we will add to the list as the day or evening or early morning wears on. We will have to tell them that we cannot provide them with the money that they are requiring because the opposition will not pass interim supply. And in fact they're talking about the Gaming Corporation which doesn't even have any money involved in interim supply.

So I would urge the members to think carefully about what we're saying here.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, the minister simply can't get away with that. She told me yesterday just before we closed down. She said the projections were for 10-million-plus of revenue — it's in *Hansard* — and that there is a capacity in the province to manage casinos and look at the profitability of casinos. There is a capacity for one significant, profitable casino. I mean you were talking about the revenue streams yesterday, Madam Minister, being 10-million-plus.

I asked you a minute ago about the analysis that you took forward to Treasury Board about the monthly revenue streams that support the leases on the building, and you tell me that no such thing was discussed yesterday. I don't know why you would want to do that. I mean all that does is make us suspicious about what you're up to.

If you have done the analytical work — and you've said that it went to Treasury Board, and you've analysed the stream of revenue — all I'm asking you is what it is. We know the capital cost of the project. We know what kind of a lease arrangement will probably have to be in place to sustain it. Why don't you just tell us what your revenue stream that you have projected from your Treasury Board analysis is, and we can get on with it. You've already told me that Candace Fox said it's 10-million-plus. All I said, did your stuff correspond with it?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — All I can say to the member opposite is obviously there would be no reason for any estimates in revenue to be inconsistent with that report done. What the report did . . . and it was talked about at the time. This is not a secret report. It was done by the Liquor and Gaming Authority.

And the issue that was asked was exactly what I said in my response yesterday. Is there a capacity here to generate revenue from a casino and what is the capacity? And she made some assessments. And if you get the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority here, I'm sure you can get the exact report, and they can give you all the information that you require.

But, again, there's no money in this interim supply going to the Gaming Corporation.

**Mr. Swenson:** — I don't know why you don't want to answer the question. I was asking you about Treasury Board analysis. I said, did you agree with Ms. Fox. You said that she had nothing to do with it. She didn't talk about numbers. *Hansard* proves that she did talk about numbers.

Now you're saying I've got to go back to the liquor and gaming commission, that there is no Treasury Board analysis and revenue stream. That's all I asked. That's three times.

You say you brought it to Treasury Board, that you followed the practice all the way through, that the analysis was done separate from Candace Fox, that you didn't necessarily use her

as your analytical work.

I just asked you what the revenue projections were, the monthly projections that you used for Treasury Board — nothing difficult — because then we can ascertain whether you can sustain the monthly lease fees or whatever, the expenditures. It's a simple process, Madam Minister. That's all we're asking about, nothing more, nothing more. You can end this particular line of questioning very easily.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, what I've said to the member opposite is I'm sure when the Department of Finance officials did their analysis, they consulted all kinds of documents including — I'm sure — the Fox report. I don't know what use they made. They would have consulted it.

I said to you, again, we don't have estimates of the revenue stream because there's no revenue in this budget with respect to the Gaming Corporation. And I've said that. I'm drawing circles again because we keep going around this circle.

You say well you won't give us the answer. I say well here is the answer, and that's all the information we have. And the question comes back, and we have the same answer. So what concerns me is that there's a very serious issue at stake, which is the capacity of these agencies — which I have listed and will continue to list — to function, and we're talking about something that isn't even included in this interim supply Bill.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, let's be fair here. I don't set the agenda of the House; that's her colleague — the very same minister we're discussing, the guy that's got control of the operation downtown, the guy that's able to cash flow from inside like nobody else in Crown land that I know of. The minister says it's been to Treasury Board. She won't give us any answers. I have a sneaking suspicion, Mr. Chairman. If it got anything more than a cursory look, that was it — okay? And we're off, launched.

Madam Minister, I didn't determine that your interim supply Bill didn't come forward until just the other day. Your House Leader did that. If you were so concerned about all of the third-party agencies you just described who may suffer, then talk to your House Leader. I simply get up and ask the questions when I get the opportunity. I'd have gladly done this last week. I'd have done it last week so that there weren't women out there who are being abused and battered who are worrying about their next meal or if the lights are going to go out or if they're going to have a bed to sleep in.

I'd have gladly done it last week. But the member from Elphinstone didn't want it brought to the House, so what am I supposed to do? You know. Don't chastise me. You sit at the cabinet table with him. If you've got a problem with the way he runs the House, please bring it up. I would have loved to have had a week and a half, at least, so that's a moot point, Madam Minister. It's got nothing to do with the opposition and the timing of all the poor unfortunate people out there that you're not going to be able to pay because you didn't bring your

interim supply Bill before the House.

So don't even bother raising that point again. It's absolutely moot, absolutely moot . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . please do, please send the letters out. I'd love to talk to each and every one of them and explain to them why their particular funding didn't come before the House sooner. I'd love to do that.

Now, Madam Minister, why don't you simply answer the question. You have determined that this Crown is different, that it's off on its own, it's doing things differently. All I want to know is what did Treasury Board come up with as a reasonable return for that casino operation on a monthly basis from the time it opens, which we are told is Grey Cup — okay? — until the end of the fiscal year. Let's narrow it down. Let's narrow it down, from the time the casino opens until the end of the current fiscal year. You must have that kind of information.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Well as I would say to the member opposite again, we're going in circles. There's no revenue stream in this budget for the Gaming Corporation for the casinos. And as soon as we know what that revenue stream is, we will inform the members opposite in the legislature.

I would say this about interim supply, if the member . . . and I appreciate the fact that perhaps he wanted to deal with this last week. That certainly wasn't communicated to me . . . would have been quite pleased to deal with it had you communicated that. This is the third time that we've been here.

But I certainly will make the member opposite two offers because, as I say, when we start telling people the money isn't coming, we want to be clear that we did everything we could to get it to them. And so what we will do is one of two things. We will, if you want to pass interim supply, we could immediately go to estimates and deal with these questions. Or we're prepared by mutual consent to sit here as long as we require — 2, 3 in the morning, 6 in the morning — so that you can ask as many questions as you want.

But I'll tell you, when we tell people that their money isn't coming, we're going to show them that we have done everything possible to ensure that their money is in their hands.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Now, Mr. Chairman, it goes back to where we got yesterday, and Madam Minister started to lecture us in how we should handle our affairs and how this House should be run and why it's all right for New Democrats to ask questions on the interim supply for days on end and weeks on end, but it isn't for Tories.

You know, it just boggles your imagination that that attitude is exhibited after four years by a member of this Assembly. And there's a lot of long-standing members of this Assembly sitting in here who know full well that interim supply, interim supply can be debated for great lengths of time and has been debated for great lengths of time. And you know what, Mr. Chairman? At the end of the day, the province carried on. It didn't matter which party was in power and who was asking the questions,

but you know what? The province carried on.

(1545)

You know, I've never seen the lights go out, Mr. Chairman, because interim supply was being debated in the House. Never seen the lights go out. I've never seen anything come to a grinding halt. I've never seen anybody starve to death. I've never seen anybody thrown out in the cold because . . . but you know, Madam Minister says, look it, you either do it on my time frame, on my agenda, or I'm going to punish you. I'm going to make you sit here all night, or I'm going to punish you in some way.

Now the government controls the agenda here — not the opposition — the government. They bring forward Bills whenever they see fit. And I can't believe that at this stage of the game we're going to get a lecture from the Minister of Finance, a first-time member of this House, about how we should conduct our affairs. Just like that. Don't ask me any questions because it isn't in my interest to answer them. And if you don't do like I say, I'll get somebody to bring in a rule change, and we'll make you sit here till midnight to get done what I want to do.

You know that is really something else, Mr. Chairman. I've never seen that kind of an attitude exhibited before by a Finance minister. And I'm really wondering why members of the House then, we even bother coming here. I mean what's the point? We might as well have shut it down three months ago and said, let the Minister of Finance and her little kingdom run the province of Saskatchewan.

Well it doesn't work that way. It never has. It never will. So, Madam Minister, the questions aren't difficult. They're something you deal with. You deal with your officials. I asked you a question about what you've decided in Treasury Board vis-a-vis, something that's under construction right now. Every person in this city drives by it daily, sees it and wonders.

It isn't financed like other Crown corporations. It will not be talked about in Crown Corporations for a year and a half. By then it will either be a roaring success or a dog.

And, Madam Chairman . . . Mr. Chairman, Madam Minister, I think it's just reasonable, when you bring in spending to this Assembly based on revenue projections as outlined in your budget, that we would want to ask questions about how you're going to meet that revenue projection with your spending. And part and parcel of that revenue projection is gambling. Gambling is big business in this province, tens of millions of dollars.

Now I'm asking you about a very small part of that projection and the impact that it has on government spending. And I don't know why all I get in response is lectures and threats from the Minister of Finance. I mean, this could be dealt with so easily that it's unbelievable. And I don't understand why you don't want to answer the questions. It is under construction, Madam

Minister, and you are sinking a lot of taxpayers' money into the fulfilment of that construction — a lot of taxpayers' money. Why in the world you would not want to . . . because I mean if you weren't making those lease payments, the money would flow through, you know?

We talked about that yesterday. Somebody else could have built the casino in its entirety, and you could have simply taxed it, okay? But you want to be part and parcel of owning the building, so why don't you want to answer the questions about what analysis you've come up with Treasury Board to support that thing downtown? I don't understand why that is so difficult.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, first of all I want to clarify. What I was saying to the member was not a threat. It was an offer. You have said you want to ask many more questions before you pass interim supply. You want to ask many more questions before you pass the budget. Fair enough.

So I was saying, well there's two ways of doing this. We can pass interim supply and go on to estimates, and you can ask questions for as long as you want. Then the people of Saskatchewan get the money they require to continue their affairs.

If for some reason it seems to you that it has to be interim supply, for whatever reason, that these questions can be asked — even though this is not the best place; I can't give you as much information as some other departments could that are responsible for these areas — prepared to, by mutual agreement of the House, to sit here as long as is required in order to ensure that you feel you've had every opportunity to ask every question that you want.

Because what I'm saying is that our obligation is to try to ensure that whatever happens in this House and whatever is going on in here does not adversely affect the people of the province and that people who require money don't become the sacrificial victims of whatever this particular issue is about in the House.

And again, as I say, I'm drawing circles because we're going around in circles. What I have said is that the casino is being built, developed by a private developer. The province will then pay a lease payment to that developer. There are no revenue projections in this budget for the casino, for reasons I explained to him yesterday. The casino agreement wasn't in place when this budget was put in place.

As soon as we are in a position to say that there are revenues coming in and expenses going out, I can assure the member opposite that they will be informed as quickly as possible about that. And I can't . . . there is no other answer available. I do not have any other information to give him about this, so we just keep going. As I say, the problem with what he's saying is I have given him as much information as I am able to give him.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Let's keep it real simple then. Are you saying then that the analysis done by Treasury Board on this operation

did not make any projections on financial viability of the casino? Is that what you're saying?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, no, I'm not saying that.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Okay, then that's out of the road. Treasury Board did make projections on the financial viability of the casino based on certain things. Okay. All I'm asking you is to give me the financial viability. I mean I'm just asking questions here on behalf of taxpayers who are wondering about how the thing is going to unfold. You won't budget anything. Okay. The member from Churchill Downs says it's four years down the road; you say, well maybe not. So all I'm asking you is, what is that financial viability look like. It's not difficult, Madam Minister.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, what I say to the member opposite — and you would know this because you've been in government — every piece of government analysis, especially when it affects a commercial venture and private sector partners, is out there in the market-place. It's not an issue within the Department of Finance.

You cannot release all of this sort of information; it's simply not possible. But what I've made the commitment is when money is coming into the government, expenditures are going out, you will have that information released, so then you can scrutinize what is occurring. Beyond that, I'm sorry; I have nothing else to offer except what I've told you in the past.

**Mr. Swenson:** — I wish — thank you, Mr. Chairman — Madam Minister, you hadn't tried hiding behind that commercial . . . I mean this is the only one, Madam Minister, and the government owns it. It's not like somebody in the private sector is running the operation. It's your buddy over here from Elphinstone that's the major-domo here — okay?

And your partners in the endeavour are possibly going to build some more casinos on reserves, but you're it. I mean, there's nobody else you're competing with here. The machines are yours; you own them. The whole shebang is yours, so don't try and give me this commercial business because you've got a Crown here with a monopoly — okay? So give me a better excuse than that to hide behind why you don't want to give me those numbers.

That one won't fly any further than the drop from my desk down to that floor. So you want to try again, that's fine. If you just simply don't want to answer, that it isn't in your political best interests, then I guess maybe that's where you better go.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, as I say, I don't want to keep going in a circle, and I'm always very reluctant to use a hypothetical because then all of a sudden the member comes back and says — aha! — so you've got a commitment here.

But what I'm talking about is these sorts of considerations. If in fact you're building a building for me, and I'm going to lease it

from you, the amount of the lease payment that you might expect might vary according to whether I said I plan to make a billion dollars on that or I plan to make \$100,000 on that. So there are many . . . and as I say, I want to clarify again; I'm talking totally hypothetically here. But this is what I'm talking about in terms of this being a different sort of transaction than a transaction within the Department of Finance or a particular department.

What I have said to the member opposite, when there is a revenue flow and there are expenses coming under that revenue flow, you will have all of the details laid before you.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Madam Minister, we're not building 7-Elevens on corners here. We're building the only casino in the province of Saskatchewan. And if you're telling me that you've got an open-ended lease with your contractor that says I'm going to get . . . depending on what the revenue stream is, I'm going to make my lease payments higher, boy, we really are in the glue then. Are you telling me that? That that's part of the deal? That as the revenue in the casino goes up, the revenue on the lease goes up? If it is, I want to get in the leasing business with you people. Is that what you're trying to tell me today?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, this proves my point. I said I am so reluctant to ever use a hypothetical with the member opposite because he comes back and he says, oh well, you've just said this.

No, I did not know that what you asked me there is not true. So if you want a straight answer — no.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then, Madam Minister, just give me the straight answer. It's easy. It's not going to infringe on anybody else's commercial viability; it's the only casino in the province. We're not talking apartment buildings. We're not talking grocery stores. We're not talking gas stations. We're not talking government buildings. This is it, the only one.

Now because it's the only one, you have a unique arrangement for it. You are into this arrangement, I suspect, because you think you're going to make money, and it's based on revenue projections that are going to meet the lease payments and pump money and sunshine into the liquor and gaming corporation.

Why in the world you would not want to tell us about the good news, I don't know. I mean taxpayers need to know about a major investment in gambling in the province of Saskatchewan, downtown Regina, a building, the one and only. You say it has nothing to do with the lease arrangement; I accept your word.

Tell us what, Madam Minister, the analyses show, and then the taxpayers of this province will be satisfied and relieved.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, I really have nothing to add beyond what I've said before to the member opposite to that question.

**Mr. Swenson:** — Well as the rules of the place are, Mr. Chairman, I can't make the member answer the question. But obviously she's come down to the point where she says it is not in my political best interest or the government's political best interest to give the member from Thunder Creek information of why the government is spending . . . well the building is costing 20 million-plus, so the lease has to cover off the 20 million plus the operating. And it's not in the taxpayers' best interest to understand why that money is being spent or how it's being spent, or what the projections are.

And it's sad, Mr. Chairman, but that's where we are. She says, I will not talk about it any more because it's not in my political best interest or the political best interests of the New Democratic Party going into an election campaign to talk about those issues.

(1600)

It's sad, Madam Minister, it really is. I would have thought you'd want to trumpet those numbers from the highest heights because it's such a wonderful investment for us to be part of. And instead, you want to hide behind, I will not answer any more questions to that member on that issue — it's sad, Madam Minister — and then ask us to turn around, simply get out of your road and let you pass your interim supply Bill with millions of dollars involved. And we're supposed to trust you just like that when you won't answer simple questions around small amounts in the bigger scheme of things.

Madam Minister, I raised the whole list of expenditures of the government earlier on in the questions, many of which impact on the monies that you are bringing forward. And there are all sorts of them that obviously will come out of funds that you're seeking from this Assembly.

Can you tell us if the spending schedule of the government is on track two months after your budget? Because we don't have many opportunities to track that, vis-a-vis all of these expenditures and where they fit into a normal 12-month rotation of expenditures within government.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — What I would say to the member opposite, Mr. Chairman, is that we're less than one month into this budget and certainly we have nothing to change in terms of the spending estimates.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, when you're asking for the two-twelfths of the year's budget, I'm wondering, because we have just recently heard about the union-preference tendering policy, and a lot of folks may not have been prepared for that, I'm wondering how many contracts would you estimate would fall into that area that would be affected by that policy? And how will that affect the total government expenditure under the request today for two-twelfths of the budget?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, I don't have that information here. As the member

opposite would know, that this is Crown Investments Corporation that has all of that detail. They can tell you in spades with many, many details as to how many agencies will be affected. And what I suggest is that you ask them that when they're here in estimates.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well, Madam Minister, I didn't see anybody from CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) in here asking for two-twelfths of the budget to be approved without the scrutiny of the people and the people's representatives; I see you here. And so I think that it's your job and your responsibility to answer the question and to find out the information and to deliver it.

That's why you have your officials with you, to help you to answer tough questions; otherwise why would we bother paying them wages to bring them along. And if they can't do their job maybe you better get some more and invite them to join in to this little exercise and start delivering some answers to the people of Saskatchewan about where you're spending two-twelfths of the total tax budget of this coming year.

I don't think it's fair for you to dodge the question that way, so I'm going to repeat the question. Madam Minister, how will the union tendering policy that has just been brought into effect by your government over the past couple of months affect the total bill of the two-twelfths requirement of the budget that you're asking for?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, okay, I think I understand what he's saying here then. None of the Crown corporations that would be affected by the union tendering policies have any monies involved in the two-twelfths. So this interim supply that we're talking about has nothing to do with any of the agencies that would be affected by the tendering policy you're talking about.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well, Madam Minister, I guess that is something we're just going to have to work on for a couple of minutes because that sounds like a highly irregular possibility. The budget for the year that you are asking the people of Saskatchewan to accept, I thought covered all government expenditures, 5.1 or \$2 billion, whatever the total amount is, covers every department in government, I thought. I didn't think that there were any exemptions.

And certainly it would seem to me that much of the work and the tendering done in affiliated government areas would be affected by this policy. For example, we see SGI contracts now that have had the union tendering policy applied to them, and of course, that is not a regular Crown corporation type of contract, as I understood it.

And so it would seem that that policy has been applied through more than just the Crown sector. And as a result, there must be some costs to taxpayers associated with that policy. And I'm wondering where that is budgeted for and how much you've estimated that will cost in this two-twelfths now allocation?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Again, I would say to the member opposite is there's nothing in here with respect to SGI, and as I mentioned in response to your colleague from Thunder Creek, that we have no changes to make in the estimates. Our budget is as presented.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you. Mr. Chairman, under the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, my understanding is that Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation does renovations to certain kinds of homes that are in their jurisdiction so that they can be leased out to people, basically on welfare, the underprivileged, and people on fixed incomes and that there's a formula for that.

Those renovations would, of course, be contracted to contractors to do on a basis of need, I'm told. And does the union-preference tendering policy then not affect those contracts? And if so, how would that be built into an estimate of costs for the two-twelfths that you're asking for?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, what I would say to the member opposite is SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) has come forward with no changes in their budget, so there's no change from what we presented here.

But again, this is the sort of detailed question which is much better asked of these departments or agencies when they come here in estimates.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I didn't have a chance to listen to all of the questions earlier, but I will point out to the minister that I did hear the member from Thunder Creek express concern that if an election were called before the budget were passed, that we would never have an opportunity on behalf of the taxpayers to ask any detailed questions of anyone. So the only opportunity that we may have to find out a few things about where the taxpayers' monies are going to be spent in the next several weeks, and maybe even months, would be this opportunity here and now.

We are told that under the Saskatchewan Water Corporation there are four more pipelines that are being contemplated to be contracted out in the near future. These would be somewhat similar to the pipeline that was done at Melfort. So perhaps you could give me some idea as to whether these are . . . these contracts for these four new projects have been built into this budget and how they reflect in the two-twelfths of allocation that you're asking for at this time.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, I will give the member the same answer. There's been no change to the budget; nothing has been brought forward. And that's a very good question to be asking these agencies when they appear in estimates.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well I see we're going to get the classical run-around here, aren't we? And I guess, well, if you've got the whole day to waste of the



taxpayers' money, I suppose I'm getting paid by the day; I can afford to stay here too.

Madam Minister, it seems to me that if you're asking the people of this province to trust you with two-twelfths of the budget without any questions or any debate, then those of us on this side would not be doing our jobs. And I hardly think that the people who have put us here would be very happy if we didn't at least try to get you to answer some of the questions that should be answered before you're allowed to spend two-twelfths of the total budget of this province without any accountability whatsoever.

It appears, by your answers, where you basically are not answering any of the questions all afternoon. So how would you justify asking the people for two-twelfths of the budget if you're not prepared to answer questions on where the money is going to go?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, what I would say to the member opposite is this. What we have here is the Department of Finance. We simply do not have with us the kinds of detailed information that the member opposite is requesting. But as I said to his colleague from Thunder Creek, the departments that have this information are ready, willing, and waiting outside to come in and do estimates so that they can get into these detailed issues and we can provide them with those sorts of answers, and that we can do this before the budget is passed.

And what I would say to the member opposite as well, we introduced the budget on February 16 — the earliest budget in Canada — to ensure that they had ample opportunity through the normal process to ask these sorts of questions. What's at stake here is something quite different. Who is going to suffer if interim supply doesn't pass aren't the members here — not you, not us. It's going to be people out there in this province who provide services like transition homes for abused women who are not going to have the money to run their budgets.

So what we have said to you and your colleague is, we are prepared to move to estimates so you can ask all these detailed questions, get your answers, or we're prepared to have the hours of the legislature extended well into the morning so that you can ask every possible question you want and pass interim supply.

But when we inform the people tomorrow that their money will not be coming, we will be showing that this side of the House made every reasonable effort possible and was willing to do everything to compromise to ensure that they got their money.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Madam Minister, you can tell the people anything you like, because you're a politician and they'll take it for what it's worth. And I don't particularly care what you tell them. Because the truth of the matter is that until you answer some questions about where you're going to be spending a couple of billion dollars and how you're planning on using that money, we have no intentions of

letting you get off with simply giving us lectures about how we're asking the wrong questions or detailed questions or anything else. I've got my flat shoes on, and if you want to stay here until 4 o'clock in the morning, that's fine and dandy with me.

Under Municipal Government, I see that you have the estimates of one hundred and ninety-eight point zero zero three eight. I don't know if those are points or if they're commas. But that is under your estimates.

Now it says here that you're asking for a two-twelfths proportion, which . . . I think maybe I'll just let you explain that for yourself.

Of the Municipal Government budget, what percentage are you asking for now? Is it the full two-twelfths? Or are there any additions to the two-twelfths or is it a simple two-twelfths? Or have you allowed for some of the emergency funds for the flooding to municipalities in that area?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — We are requesting a straight two-twelfths across the board for all departments.

(1615)

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Madam Minister, the other day the Minister of Municipal Government announced in the papers — we have copies here — that in fact she was going to be providing help for rural municipalities who were blasted with unusual weather conditions. The Premier is even talking about an emergency fund requirement from the federal government. Now how could she make that kind of an announcement without some contingency plan to pay off the extra monies that she obviously has to be promising?

When this budget was drawn up, it had to have been done during December or January or February — in that period of time. You brought the budget in pretty well before any snow melted whatsoever. The heaviest snows we've had have been towards the end of March, and into April we've had snow and rain. There was no anticipation of extreme flooding, and nobody told us anything about any guesstimations that there was going to be anything like the kind of problems we had. So I saw nothing built into the budget as a contingency plan for any flooding any place in the province or any kind of damage to crop lands that might not be seeded. And all those kinds of contingency things never were considered in the budget, that I could see.

So if they were never considered in the budget at that time, then now how do you propose to pay the bills for those things that you're promising? You've got a Minister of Municipal Government saying to the municipalities, we're going to help you, and we're going to give you money. So where is that money going to come from?

It can't be coming out of the budget because you didn't budget for it. You didn't have any contingency plans for any kinds of

bad weather or floods. A little while ago I heard you say you never make those kind of plans. You never worry about the future in terms of disasters. You only cope with them as they happen. And if they happen, then you have a plan — not quite the way most people live their lives in our world, fortunately.

But that's your plan, and that's your position, and you're welcome to it. I hope we don't have to live that way for ever. But the reality is now that you've got these promises made. So if you're not asking for more than two-twelfths, how are you going to pay for the commitment that this minister has to those people out in rural Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, it looks like the members opposite really are not interested in passing interim supply, so perhaps it's time for a little bit of straight talk in this legislature.

What I would like the people of Saskatchewan to ask the member opposite is what is going on on that side of the House? Was he really, when his colleague was up here asking exactly those questions and getting answers for about half an hour — maybe an hour — on exactly that point, was he really off somewhere not listening to this? Was he daydreaming, not listening? Or do they not have any other questions to ask, so they just keep recycling the questions?

But I will say to the member opposite, I went through this for at least a half an hour with your colleagues. If in fact you're going to be in this legislature, trying to delay the passage of money for groups out there, please at least try to come up with different questions. Please don't share questions.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Minister. Well as a matter of fact, I heard your answers to some extent earlier, as you alluded, and you want to talk straight talk. I never heard a straight answer. As a matter of fact, I haven't heard a straight answer yet today. All I've heard is you beating around the bush and playing politics with a very important segment of the taxpayers' dollar, which is the cost of running this Assembly.

Now we're spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep this place operating and you haven't given anybody one straight answer about anything. You just got up and said that, well you asked the same question. Well we didn't get the answer the first time, we didn't get it the second time; we rephrased the question to allow you to have time to think it over. And because we thought that maybe you'd need a little more time to think your way through it to come up with the answer because you didn't seem to have the right officials here, we thought maybe if we talked about something else for awhile, you might have time to send somebody out to the back door and invite another official in that could come up with the right answers. So we asked some other questions for awhile.

Now we've hoped that you'd come up with the right officials that have the answers and we asked the question again so that you'd have an opportunity to tell the people of Saskatchewan where you're spending their money and how in fact you're

going to deliver the services that your ministers are all promising, when in fact you haven't budgeted for it.

And you're saying in this list here that you're asking for a straight two-twelfths but you don't have any allocation for the funds extra that you're promising. I also heard you dodge the question on how the \$6 million is going to be paid to the Highways.

Incidentally, Minister, I just had occasion, while you were busy not answering any questions today, to look at some pictures that were taken of the flood area, and they're very interesting. You should take a look at them yourself. They happen to have been taken by one of your members so it should be easy for you to access.

Fact of the matter is, Minister, that while the Premier needed to promise people some money in order to comfort them while they're in the middle of a flood, from the pictures I've seen today, \$6 million quite frankly is never going to do the job. It's going to take quite a lot more money than that to fix up the highways and the roads that are being destroyed in this province at this very moment, and have been destroyed over the past three weeks.

But you've only made a commitment of 6 million in that initial forecast, but you haven't told us where you're going to get that money from. I never heard any straight answers about how you're going to budget for that money; who's going to pay for it.

Now you're going to try and tell us that people are going to go out there and start working in two or three weeks now, building these roads, and wait for two or three months to be paid? Give me break. People don't work that way in society any more. They've got 30-day deadlines just like everybody else has.

And if you're going to ask road crews to go to work, start rebuilding highways, and you're going to have people out running graders, maintaining roads and things like that and extra projects of putting in broken bridges and that kind of stuff, don't tell me that you're not going to be able . . . or have to pay them for two or three months down the road into summertime sometime. That's just not the way it works. You're either going to pay them in 30 days or they're going to walk off the job and leave the province.

That's as simple as that, because they can't get any more than 30-day credit buying their fuel and hiring their men and women and the people that they employ and all of the things that go into the process of running road equipment and building crews and all that kind of stuff.

So you have to come up with some answers on where the money's going to come from. And you know very well that you have to provide that money. And you haven't done that because you just thought that you were going to throw this document together in about a half an hour, whip it out on a printing machine and throw it around the legislature; we'd all come in

here and say, grand job you did there, let's all pass this thing and let the minister carry on, and be like the used car salesman, and trust her to do everything right.

Well, Minister, you've asked for too much. You've already gone through this process once this year. You've had interim supply on one occasion already. Now you're asking for it again and you're asking for it in double the amounts, and you're not allowing for any contingency plans for the promises that your own ministers are out in the country making — contingency plans of extra expenditures that have to be paid for.

If you follow through with the projects that you say you're going to follow through with, there's absolutely no question in my mind but that you're going to have to start to pay people. And if you don't start to pay the people, they're not going to work for you. And you know that, so you have to budget for it.

So what are you going to do? Are you going to start picking one pocket to put it into the other pocket? Are you going to download this onto the municipalities and force them to pay the contractors? Are you going to force the Department of Highways to start borrowing money and run a deficit on the interim and pay interest? What would be the plan to pay off these people that you're promising that you're going to give all this work to, to fix up all these projects?

I don't think, Minister, that simply saying that you're not going to do it until later, or that you're just going to talk about it in some other process of the government, is fair. I just don't think that's fair to the taxpayers. I don't think it's fair to the people that you're talking about employing.

How would you suggest that we would convince anybody to come up to the North with a bunch of graders and a bunch of U-Hauls or Terexes and big heavy earth-moving equipment? How would you expect to attract them to come up there and do the work or to take a contract from you to fix those things?

How would you hire a bridge crew if they were to read the *Hansard* today and find out that there's no contingency plan to pay them? That there is no money available because you haven't included it in your estimates for the two-twelfths, plus what you will need to pay them. If you haven't provided some mechanism for them to get paid, why would they trust you? Why would they come and work for you? Those are all the questions that you have to answer for us if you're not willing to answer for us where the money is and how you're going to pay for it.

If you're not willing to tell us how you're going to pay for it, then at least tell us how you're going to convince people to work for you without any money available. How are you going to attract folks to bid on contracts when they think they might never get paid?

Or is this sort of another one of them deals like Melfort where you had pipeline and it sprinkles water all over, and people in the community all get hung out to dry, trying to collect the bills

from the things that are charged up at their different businesses and nobody ever pays them.

Is that the kind of a government you're going to run throughout the entire province where you have contractors that have to have equipment and materials, and when they go to buy them they're never paid, so in turn their suppliers never get paid? How are you going to attract those kind of people to come in and do the jobs if there is no money?

If I were to read *Hansard* today, there's no way, as a businessman, that I would ever take on a contract with this government to go into that flood area because you've made no allocation to pay them. And if you don't have any allocation to pay them, then I don't think they're going to want to work. I wouldn't. Why would you? I can't see this.

So, Minister, where in the world is the comfort zone for these folks that you're planning on taking into that area? Is there any place in this document at all that gives anybody any kind of comfort or assurance that you're going to pay them when they come in to do these projects?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, as I said to his colleague, we will manage within the existing budget.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Well thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Madam Minister, I don't believe you, quite frankly. I see Madam Minister has turned the matter over to her colleague, so the new minister of Finance, maybe we'll get somewhere now.

And how are you going to manage the affairs of providing money so that people can be comforted to know that they can get paid to do the work in the flood zone that the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs has promised in the past couple of weeks?

There's no funding available in this document that I have received here, interim supply. All it is is the two-twelfths allocation that has been asked for to run the ordinary budgeted-for projects of the province.

So, Mr. Minister, where is there some indication that people that are hired to clean up the mess of the floods will in fact be able to be paid?

**Hon. Mr. Shillington:** — I have a certain sense of *déjà vu*. When I was here Wednesday dealing with these issues, these same questions seemed to arise. And you got the answers then and I can only repeat the answers.

In any budget there is some items which you will overexpend and some items which you will underexpend. You try to avoid that but that is not always possible. What one must do is to manage within the total envelope. And so we may be overexpending in the area of Highways in this problem. Some time later on we'll have a bit of luck, we'll make up for it.

We have, over the last four years, done an admirable job; so say the professional bankers and so on. We've done an admirable job of managing. I'm certain these very competent officials in the Department of Finance will be able to manage within the total budget.

You ask us specifically where it is going to come from; where will the underexpenditures be? We of course don't know that. We do know from experience they do arise, and that sums of money of this nature are manageable.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I've been listening with some interest and I got the feeling that Madam Minister was finding it, if you will, a little annoying to have to sit and try to answer questions on her interim supply. And the part that amazes me . . . and of course the present associate minister, who is now taking the chair and is attempting to answer the questions, I know is quite well aware of interim supply and the debate that can take place. And certainly the deputy minister has been involved in the past as well, and as in an office when it comes to this type of debate and the questions that arise.

And many times, and I can remember even when the present minister sat on this side of the House and the types of questions and the information that the then opposition member, now the associate minister, would arise and endeavour or felt that was important that questions that were raised of matters of importance such as . . . There's no doubt in my mind that the flood in north-eastern or eastern Saskatchewan right now would not be uppermost in the member's mind if he was here asking the questions and how that project would be financed. And so it's interesting to know how sometimes the tables change, and when you're trying to determine where the allocation of funding is going.

(1630)

Now the Premier announced the other day that there will be \$6 million, or at least he's made a promise of \$6 million. And I'm not exactly sure how that . . . we've been trying to determine how that is actually allocated. The minister keeps telling us, well that's not really in this portion of interim supply, or there's no real allocation of the 6 million. It's just part of the overall budget that eventually, once roads are refurbished or reconstruction of roads or reconstruction of some of the damage takes place and the costs associated with are tabulated, that that funding will be placed forward and . . . or the requests will come for funding.

And I guess the question I would have, and I think my colleagues have had all along, is, as a Finance minister and as your department looks at this when the Premier goes out and makes an announcement, or if it were you, Madam Minister, you must have some idea prior to making an announcement where you're going to find these funds. And I think the minister or the Premier indicated that he was also hopeful that the federal government would come across with some funds.

Now whether it's directly coming out of this interim supply or this request for funding is irrelevant, I think part of that portion is or may come out of this to this two months supply that you've asked for. You've called for two months and I'm not sure if it's part of what that will be — if that's Municipal Government that directs that issue or if part of it's Highways because of the Highways estimate. But at the end of the day, Madam Minister, where do you find the funds?

In determining the \$6 million, is that something that you're going to find extra funds out of the blue, or are you going to reallocate funding to other departments to pick up this promise of \$6 million?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the member opposite a question. If I give this answer to yet the third member of the Tory caucus, would he promise to tell the rest? Or do I have to go through each one of you so that I actually have to go through this 10 different times?

I'll try it once again and, as I say, I'll try it on the condition that the member opposite will explain it to the other seven so that we don't spend all of the time in the legislature with the same answer 10 different times. My fear is after the next election we won't have to worry about that.

What I said to your colleague from Thunder Creek was this. When we do our budgeting, we say look, here's the amount of money that we're going to spend this year, and here's some of the estimates that we have about costs. In a budget of \$4 billion there are certain things that . . . costs that you expected to be there that aren't there.

It's like I say, it's like a household. You set aside a certain amount of money for car repairs; your car doesn't break down — oh, that's great. And if you manage your finances well, you take the money for the car repairs that you didn't need and you apply it to something that happened that you didn't expect to happen, that you do need money.

So what we've said to the municipalities out there is yes, this is a situation wasn't anticipated; do you have a problem? You do need our help; we're willing to give you this help. And we've said that the departments within the government will find this money by redirecting savings in other areas.

And I'll try that this one time and hope that this satisfies your complaints; otherwise I'm going to get it xeroxed and sent across so that you can hand it around to each of the members, because I'm sure this must be at least the 10th time that I've gone through that particular explanation.

**Mr. Toth:** — Well I thank you, Madam Minister, for having offered that explanation and I think it basically relates to the question I asked about the fact, at the end of the day, where do you intend to find emergency funds such as the promise that was just made, and the fact that . . .

Like I guess the concern we have, the concern I have, is what

contingency plans are in place when you address funding? Now you've said yes, you estimate what you may expend through the next year, and you estimate what will be spent by a department. But as we've already seen, we're facing a situation in north-eastern Saskatchewan where there will be substantial dollars in reconstruction of road and road surfaces. And certainly a portion of the funding that will be needed to compensate people for loss will come through insurance, which will have no bearing on our discussion here today. And that will take place.

But as well, Madam Minister, there's another problem looming and I'm not sure if any of my colleagues have raised it, and that problem is the fact that there may be many people across this province . . . I shouldn't say across the province, but in the eastern part of the province, are going to find themselves in a position where the availability . . . or land available for crop production is going to be greatly diminished. And you may find that there's a farming community out there that is certainly going to need some help or some assistance or some assurances that as a government . . . whether they're the farm community, whether they're the small businesses in the communities of Langenburg or MacNutt or the Canoras of this world, that they will be looking to you.

And certainly we can look back over what's taken place over the last few years, areas where your government has decided that it was more important to change the rules versus honouring contracts. And one has to wonder what kind of a commitment there will be to try and offset some of the losses that will be incurred by many people, due to the excessive water and the flooding that has taken place and is continuing to take place.

And unfortunately, I understand by the news that there is a weather advisory up in that Yorkton-Quill Lakes area again today, with the possibility of . . . I shouldn't say possibility, I guess they are actually getting more snow on the way, which just adds to the problems they face.

And so while we sit here in the Legislative Assembly and we may complain about the fact that the sun isn't shining, it would be nice to see some warm weather, there's people in north-eastern Saskatchewan at this present time fighting to save property. But not only that, wondering where they will be this fall in trying to pay their bills because of the lack of opportunity even to possibly put that crop in the ground.

And what that's going to do is not only place individuals looking to government for some help or some means of helping them through the next winter but, Madam Minister, it also affects your budget in the fact that there will be a number of acres that will not have a crop this year, a number of acres that will not produce, another number of acres that will not generate revenue. And what contingency plans have your government or department put into place to address circumstances such as what we were seeing and what may arise due to the flooding situation in north-eastern Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — I didn't quite understand the gist of

what he was saying. Would he mind repeating that question?

**Mr. Toth:** — I guess, Madam Minister, if you pay attention and listen, you might understand. What I was basically asking, Madam Minister — and I think we've asked this before; we're still waiting for a direct answer — is what contingency plans does the government, working with the department officials, have in place to address emergency circumstances?

You stood up in the Chamber this afternoon and bragged about balancing the books and balancing your budget, but at the end of the day, even when I listened to your presentation of the balanced budget that you presented back in, I believe it was around the end of February, there wasn't anything in your budget address to indicate that there was some contingency plans in place to address any emergency circumstances that may arise that may affect the bottom line of your budget.

And that's the question I'm asking, Madam Minister. If there are any contingency plans, what your plans are, how do you plan to address it. And in the overall scheme of things, versus the two-twelfths you're calling for today through this interim supply, how you address the emergencies that arise.

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, the answer is the same as I gave to his colleague and his other colleague, and maybe another colleague. And that is that we will manage this within the confines of the budget and that when another situation arises that isn't anticipated, we will develop appropriate funds.

**Mr. Toth:** — I guess that's the concern we have, Madam Minister, is when you talk about we'll manage, you haven't really . . . the interesting thing, and I'm coming back to some of the discussion we've had even in Crown Corporations and just recently with the Provincial Auditor's office.

And the Provincial Auditor has indicated that you lay out some guidelines, some plans, as to where you hope to be 12 months down the road, as your budget is presented today and where it is. And if there are some little kinks that may arise or some little areas, emergency situations that come up on the chart and your Richter scale it jumps, how do you address it? Do you have any plans in place that would address emergency situations such as we see in the Langenburg area, or emergency situations that may arise because of the flooding up in that north-east sector that may arise? They may not be there today, but will be there two or three months down the road.

And while I guess you're hoping and trusting that people will have faith in you and believe that you can manage it, it seems to me the auditor has indicated that it certainly is good to have a management plan out in front so that we can, as an opposition, and the people of this province can, at the end of day look back and say, well, here the government did have a plan in place. Yes, the government presented a budget to the province and to the people of Saskatchewan as to what they were going to expend.

The budget indicated what they anticipated to receive . . . in receiving as far as revenues so that they would be able to meet their budget commitments, and this is how they were going to do it. And do you really have a plan in place, or is it just a matter of managing on a daily basis as emergencies arise?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Yes. Yes, we do have a plan in place.

**Mr. Toth:** — Yes, we're just managing by the seat of our pants. Is that what it was, Madam Minister?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — We do have a plan in place and the member opposite knows that.

**Mr. Toth:** — Madam Minister, you're calling for, I believe, in this interim supply Bill some \$260 million in the area of Health. And as I view that . . . and a number of concerns . . . and we raised a couple concerns just this past, the past two days, with regards to individuals and some of the problems that they've faced in the area of Health.

When you call for an expenditure of two-twelfths, in view of the fact that we have, I believe it's 23 district health boards, is there an allotment that . . . of this 260 million, what amount would be allocated directly to district health boards? Do you have any of that information available?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, again this is the kind of question that . . . we don't have this sort of detail here because what you're asking us is all of the departments of government. You're asking us for detailed information about all of them. And if we had the information here, this whole room would be full of boxes.

So what we're saying is that when the Department of Health is here, they can certainly tell you what percentage of that money is going to the district boards. You could also look in the budget and find out what percentage of the spending in the Department of Health goes to the district boards and it'll be two-twelfths of that particular amount.

But the point I keep trying to make again and again with the members opposite — what we're talking about here is interim supply, which is just the money required for those agencies out there so they can continue their operations.

We do not have the capacity to give you detailed answers here. There's another process which you can activate in two seconds, if you want, which is you bring the departments in and they have all the details and they would be more than pleased to answer all of these questions.

**Mr. Toth:** — Well, thank you, Madam Minister. And we look forward to ongoing debate in this Assembly as we sit down with the different departments and hopefully work together with the minister or the member or the House Leader as to when the departments will come forward.

**An Hon. Member:** — Well then why don't you get on with it, for God's sakes?

**Mr. Toth:** — But it's interesting, the member from Lloydminster says, why don't we get on it. Well we've been talking to the House Leader, we've been asking for certain departments to come forward. And yet when we ask for them we're told one day that this certain department will come forward. By the time we come to the House the next day and we're ready for the debate on that department, then all of a sudden we find we've got another department in front of us or we've got a Bill in front of us.

And obviously the member from Lloydminster really doesn't know how this House operates. She certainly has a lot to offer from her seat but she didn't have the time to go and talk to her own constituents about a concern that they have on their minds at this present time. And maybe it would be appropriate if the minister took that time to address those concerns.

But that has nothing to do with interim supply. So we'll get back to interim supply . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Don't you ever question my ability to represent my constituency. You keep your own nose clean.

**Mr. Toth:** — The interesting part, Mr. Chairman, there's enough people in that Lloydminster riding who would question the member's ability to represent her constituency.

But getting back to the debate here, when you're allocating your funding and calling for your interim supply and asking for two months' interim supply, basically then am I understanding . . . or what you're saying, Madam Minister, as a department or as a Finance department, basically what you're doing is just coming to the Legislative Assembly without really taking the time to seek information from the different departments as to the allocation that is needed. Or do you just automatically assume that one-twelfth is all they will use? To me, like, if you were to look at the Department of Highways, they wouldn't necessarily need a large allocation come November, December, January, February; their allocation would be heavier during the summer months.

And so do you just take the time to just address one-twelfth without reviewing what the departments need in general? And maybe there is an expense that is incurring, say, through the months of May and June, especially in highway construction, that would be more appropriate; where you would indeed allocate a little more of the Highways' funding right now versus just the two-twelfths?

(1645)

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite, this is standard practice in government. This has occurred ever since when you were in power, when we were in power before, when the Liberals were in power.

What you do is you say each and every department gets one-twelfth, or if it's two months, two-twelfths of their budget, to allow them to continue to operate until the budget is passed. It's an interim measure.

You know the member opposite really shouldn't get into the level of preparation. We've been standing here for hour after hour. We've been talking about one of the most important budgets in Saskatchewan's history — a balanced budget that has tax cuts involved, that has major expenditures in Health — and what we dealt with are about two or three topics.

And the members are sharing questions; that is, they're coming in and they're asking the questions that the previous members asked.

So what we are prepared to do is to discuss the budget in overarching way. If they want to get into details, they know very well there's another process which they can activate right away which is the estimates, and they can then get the proper people in here to answer their detailed questions.

**Mr. Toth:** — Madam Minister, whether they're detailed or not, there are certainly questions that are out there and that individuals have, as well as ourselves in opposition.

One would have to ask at the present time, Madam Minister, while you're allocating funds and allocating expenditures, what do you have right now to show where does this revenue come from and the allocation of the funds? Does your revenue come on a one-twelfth basis to the department so that you can allocate these funds, or how do you arrive at the . . . where do you get the revenue or find the revenue right now to meet that two-twelfths commitment? How are you finding that revenue?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, I'll certainly do my best to get back to some of the basics here to answer that question. Money keeps coming in to the government even though the budget hasn't been passed. That is, taxes are still collected in the province, and sales tax and income tax money just keeps coming in. So certainly the money is available.

And so what we do is . . . because the budget isn't passed, the year end has occurred, March 31. We're into the new budget year. We need to be able to give money to these groups, so they can continue their operations. And what has been standard practice in the past is you just automatically give them one-twelfth or two-twelfths. And as I say, it's been standard. It doesn't mean they're forced to spend one-twelfth or two-twelfths. If they don't need that money they won't spend it obviously.

But I'm going to get back to my main point. I have just been informed by the Department of Finance that there will be agencies that will not get money before Wednesday, and they will require that money before that date. So I will say to the members opposite, if they are not going to pass this legislation today, what we will be telling these agencies is the money is not forthcoming because the opposition will not pass interim

supply. This means money going to transition homes for abused women, group homes for children and youth, group homes for mentally handicapped adults, sexual assault centres.

And we will tell them as well that we made every effort. That is, we've said if they have questions, we're willing to move into estimates, allow them to ask their questions there. We're willing to extend the hours of the House if that's what they'd like. But we made every effort on our part to ensure that this money would get to them as soon as possible. Unfortunately, depending on what happens in the next ten minutes, we will have to say that their money simply won't be there on time and that they need to address that with you.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The comments from the minister become stranger and weirder because I thought we were supposed to work tomorrow too.

And I thought that the last time that you came to this Assembly asking for money without any explanations towards the end of March, you said, we'll need interim supply for the month of April, and we're just going to have to pay all these folks. So we won't have our budget passed. So you guys be good now and don't ask too many questions, and let us pay the folks and pass this. And we did that. We were very cooperative with you. You were only here a matter of a few minutes, and we said okay, go ahead, carry on the first month, and we'll ask you these important questions next month.

But of course, you just are making us look foolish because what you're saying is that now I'm not going to answer any questions. I didn't have to answer any last time, so I'm not going to answer any this time either. They'll get tired after awhile and go home and let me away with whatever I want to do.

Well, Madam Minister, that's not the way it works in this Assembly. We gave you a break last time in good faith, and now we expect you in good faith to answer some questions.

So my question is very simply this. We gave you a one-twelfth proportion of the budget last month. We passed that; we gave it to you. Is that money all spent up, every thin dime, as of the end of this month? Is every dime gone?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Chairman, to the member opposite. First of all, I want to clarify what was said last time. What we have said consistently is there is a process in the parliamentary system whereby detailed questions can be asked and answered, and that's the estimates. And last time we said that, and we're saying the same this time.

It would be absolutely impossible to determine whether or not all the money was spent because, first of all, we haven't reached the end of the month, and this will vary from department to department.

The members opposite may not realize a piece of information that my department has just provided me. We require four days in order to process the funds that are going out. So I mean you

are really putting yourselves in the position where groups are not going to have the money they require in order to continue their operations. And I hope that you have for them a very good explanation because what I will be saying to them, as I said to the opposition . . .

Two things — we're prepared to move on to estimates immediately so that these same questions can be asked in that format, exactly the same questions. Or we're prepared to extend hours and to sit here as long as you would like to sit here tonight so that you could ask as many questions as possible. And we're prepared to do that because we're not prepared to allow the innocent groups out there to become pawns in whatever this particular game happens to be. So it's really up to you to decide what your answer is, but I can tell you that that is what we will be saying to these different agencies.

And you have to understand — we have forewarned you — it takes four days to go through the different processes that have to go through to get this money from this legislature through the processes out to those people.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Madam Minister, I asked you a very simple and, I think, fair question. I asked you, did you spend the one-twelfth of the money that we gave you the last time you came to this Assembly and asked for interim supply for one month? We gave it to you without any commotion whatsoever, on good faith that we would let you do it so that you could run the affairs of the government.

And then we said we will next time get into more detail and hold you accountable because that's fair ball; that gives you enough time in the new budgetary process. You've had that time. Now you're trying to take advantage of us, and you're trying to take advantage of the taxpayers. You're trying to take advantage of our good nature because of course you're going to try to tell people that some folks might not be able to get paid.

Well we know that that is just purely nonsense. It's not going to happen that way. You know that as well as I do. Anybody that needs help is going to get it. Nobody's going to be short-changed. There won't be any people left starving to death on the streets as a result of our having an opportunity to have grievance before supply — an ancient tradition, a parliamentary process that you and your government seems to have forgotten about. You seem to have forgotten that there are ancient traditions that go with the democratic process and that we, as an official opposition, have a responsibility to hold you accountable, and accountable means that we have grievance before supply.

That's the old adage that is written in every history book that you will ever read when you look for definitions and explanations of how the democratic process should work and how the people's money should be accounted for and spent. There's no exception to that tradition, except in dictatorships and those kinds of administrations.

In democratic government and in democratic process, grievance

before supply is always an honoured tradition, and ministers have never been let away with saying people are going to starve to death on the streets if you don't give us the money by passing interim supply by a certain such a date and hour, especially after we've let you away with one month's supply already without any questions whatsoever; just on good faith, we trusted you as the minister. And trust can only go so far, Madam Minister. And we let you know that fairly and squarely when we let you off last time.

Now today, we spent all this time trying to find out simple little questions like, did you spend all the money that we gave you last month? And you don't know. Obviously you don't know if you spent one-twelfth of your money. You know, if I had a child who was on an allowance and they couldn't even tell me if they spent all their allowance from last month or not, there's no way I'd give them another allowance because you surely can look in your pocket to see if it's empty or not. I mean, how hard is it to tell that the money is gone or not gone. This can't be a really difficult problem.

Madam Minister, what are you trying to cover up here? What is going on with this government? What kind of tricks are you trying to pull on the taxpayers of this province? This doesn't look fair, and it doesn't look to me like you're trying to be fair with the people of Saskatchewan.

You've run us around all afternoon, wasted our time. We've asked you simple, honest questions like, did you spend the one-twelfth of your money. And you won't even answer that simple question. Now how tragic a minister can you be, not even to answer a simple, honest little question like, did you spend the money from last month? You don't know if you spent it or not; I think that's the problem. You are incompetent and don't know what you're doing. You haven't told the people of this province one thing today that matters in the scheme of things, except to throw out idle threats about how you're going to destroy the reputation of the opposition because they stood around and asked questions.

Well let me tell you, this happens to be our job, and at least we know enough to do it. And we've asked you several times to be honest with the people of this province, and you neglect your duty, and you neglect your responsibility, and we are going to hold you accountable going into this election for not telling the taxpayers where you spend their money or how you plan to spend it. But don't try to get away with saying that you can spend just an ordinary one-twelfth each month because that's not the way it works. We know very well that in the Department of Highways, construction work comes in the . . . and the minister . . .

**The Chair:** — Order. It now being near the hour of 5 o'clock the Committee of Finance will now rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:59 p.m.