

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**Third Session — Eighteenth Legislature**  
**25th Day**

**Friday, March 25, 1977.**

The Assembly met at 10:00 o'clock a.m.

On the Orders of the Day.

**QUESTIONS**

**POTENTIAL DRINKING WATER HAZARD**

**MR. A.N. McMILLAN** (Kindersley): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Premier. I brought up in this Legislature yesterday, the problems raised on a CKCK documentary, dealing with the Buffalo Pound filtration plant and the potential drinking water hazard to the citizens of Moose Jaw and Regina. The Premier indicated, at that time, that he wasn't aware that a problem existed or he alluded to the fact that the problem lay only in my mind. And I'd like to know now if the Premier has had a chance to investigate my question and if he's aware of the problem that was pointed out?

**HON. A.E. BLAKENEY** (Premier): — I'm sorry I have not had a chance to investigate the matter raised by the Hon. Member.

**MR. McMILLAN**: — Supplementary. Is the Premier serious in suggesting this matter was brought to the attention of your Government four years ago?

**MR. ROMANOW**: — Who said?

**MR. McMILLAN**: — The chemist and the manager at the Buffalo Pound filtration plant said that. They feel there is a serious potential for danger to 20 per cent of the population of Saskatchewan. You missed it for four years. I brought the matter up with you yesterday and merely asked ;you to investigate this situation and you come back to the House today and tell me you're not aware of it. Are you or some of your officials prepared sometime today or over the weekend, to investigate with members of the Department of Environment to see if there is any basis to the problems these people have raised?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS**: — Hear, hear:

**MR. BLAKENEY**: — Mr. Speaker, I will look into the matter and satisfy myself. I ask the Hon. Member to put his question on the Order Paper. Then I will know, to what problem four years ago, he is alluding. It is rather clear that it is not possible for people to keep in their minds, questions which were raised four years ago or allegedly raised four years ago. I ask the Hon. Member to put the matter on the Order Paper so that we will know precisely what he's talking about.

**MR. McMILLAN**: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier accept a

**March 25, 1977**

note from myself explaining the situation briefly and giving you the names of the people, the professionals in the field, who seem to feel that there is a serious problem growing? Will he accept that?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — I would like the Hon. Member to put it on the Order Paper. It is, I gather, an important matter in the mind of the Member. It ought not to be something between him and me. I think it deserves the full attention of the House if it is as important as he suggests. I ask him to put it on the Order Paper.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! Order! I'll take the Member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg.

### **MOTOR LICENCE ISSUERS**

**MR. R. E. NELSON** (Assiniboia-Gravelbourg): — Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Minister in charge of motor licence issuers. I was out of the House yesterday morning and I understand there was some question brought up on the licence issuing in Assiniboia. I might say that I was down there trying to look after the problem at the particular time.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear:

**MR. NELSON:** — There have been two licence issuers quit in Assiniboia and I might say I'm very happy with the co-operation I got from the people in the Finance Department. Since yesterday, there have been three licence issuers appointed, one in Assiniboia, one in Wood Mountain and one in Mazenod. Now my question hasn't to do with these particular people, but with the idea ...

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear;

**MR. NELSON:** — . . . that there has been so many vendors quitting. In my particular case I have seven licences. They come due on seven different dates. This is an impossible situation for many farmers. They are trying to get these on one date and the problems that have come up with the licence issuers have been so great that they have been quitting and been pulling out on their people in their community.

But my question is, firstly, how can I get these on one date and secondly, when will the Minister raise the fees for these people so they can be paid properly for the amount of hassle they've had to go through?

**HON. W. E. SMISHEK** (Minister of Finance): — Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member was looking after things in Assiniboia trying to get the licence issuer yesterday, a licence issuer was appointed on Wednesday in Assiniboia. We attended to it much quicker than the Member was able to.

Mr. Speaker, there are from time to time motor licence issuers that do quit. We have close to 500 motor licence issuers and to the best of my knowledge in the last while, about

a half dozen of them did quit but it's nothing unusual, Mr. Speaker. That is normal and routine.

In his particular constituency in Assiniboia, it so happened that a motor licence issuer who was recently appointed quit a few days ago and a new one had to be appointed. Nothing is unusual about that. In case of the particular dates he wants to have his licences issued, I'm wondering whether at the time we asked for the information of when he wants to renew his licences, whether he completed the form. If he hadn't, then a date was assigned to him and maybe this is what created the problem. The Department of Finance had to deal with this problem when we were responsible for the issuing of licences. He indicated that he has received good co-operation from the department and if he gives us the detailed information, he will continue receiving the same kind of good co-operation as he has in the past.

**MR. NELSON:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Firstly, while I was in Assiniboia, his department and the Minister didn't know of the appointment. They also didn't know who or where the issuer would be, they are also . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! Order! What's the supplementary?

**MR. NELSON:** — I'll get to the question. I wonder if the Minister knows that his department was again very co-operative and is having a school in Assiniboia this afternoon for these three people that I arranged for yesterday.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear:

**MR. NELSON:** — It is at 2:00 o'clock by the way. I wonder if the Minister would answer the first supplementary question. When will he give these people a raise so that they can make a decent sum of money on a licence and so that they can give good service?

**MR. SMISHEK:** — Mr. Speaker, for the information of the Hon. Member, since 1971 the per transaction rates were increased from 30 cents to 50 cents in the case of a driver licence and in the case of the vehicle licence, the majority of them were increased to one dollar from 30 cents. Now as things are at the present time, we are reviewing the fees, but this year, since in a large number of cases there will be renewals that will come up twice in one year, this will mean more money for the licence issuers. No new rates will be coming into effects for at least the next five months, but with the new system, rates are being reviewed.

### **INTERPROVINCIAL TASK FORCE ON DRUGS**

**MR. R. H. BAILEY** (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Attorney General. A recent news release out of Ottawa states that the federal Minister of Justice, the Hon. Ron Bassford, has announced an interprovincial task force on the use of drugs across Canada. Has your department been informed of the plans of the federal Minister?

**HON. R. ROMANOW** (Attorney General): — I don't believe that I've received any communication that I can recall, in this regard. I don't want to be uncharitable or unfair to Mr. Bassford in case something like that has come to the department, but I don't have any recollection of that this morning.

**MR. BAILEY:** — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I raised this question in the House several weeks ago. Would the Attorney General, when he has information on the nature of the task force itself, be prepared to provide, in detail to this Assembly, the nature of the task force and Saskatchewan's participation in it?

**MR. ROMANOW:** — Yes, I certainly would be prepared to do so, Mr. Speaker. I would like to remind the Hon. Member that the question of drug laws under our constitution lies exclusively under the jurisdiction of Canada. So much so, that they not only do the investigating, they do the actual prosecuting which is something unusual, whereas an Attorney General does prosecuting in other matters. They do the prosecuting entirely; the prosecution policy. As much as a province or this province is involved in the matter, I will undertake to inform the Member.

### **EXPROPRIATION OF 20,000 ACRES AROUND REGINA**

**MR. W. C. THATCHER** (Thunder Creek): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, some time ago a question was asked to the Minister of Agriculture regarding the government's position on the expropriation of farm land in the Regina area, by the city of Regina, amounting to some 20,000 acres. The Minister of Agriculture answered that his department has no policy on the matter. Some period of time has gone by and your Minister of Agriculture has indicated that he is not prepared to act on this matter. I would, therefore, like to ask the Premier this morning, is the Premier prepared to allow the city of Regina to proceed, to expropriate 20,000 acres of prime farm land, surrounding Regina, much of it the Regina clay land, Regina plains, and forever lose this in agricultural production?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I wasn't aware of any proposal of that nature of the city of Regina to expropriate land. I heard a proposal that a large parcel of land be incorporated into the city, but no suggestion that it be expropriated. There is a very considerable difference between those two propositions, as will readily be seen. The second point is that we have had no proposal from the City of Regina, either to incorporate land into the city or alternatively to expropriate, whatever the proposal is. When we receive a proposal, if it materializes, we would certainly consider it and we would certainly be aware of the fact that there are many undesirable aspects to removing that good farm land from production. That would be a major element in any consideration of any proposal which might in the future be put forward by the City of Regina. I think the Hon. Member will agree that it's not possible to give a definitive answer to a hypothetical proposition that the City of Regina may or may not put forward.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, I would respectfully like to tell the Premier that it is not hypothetical any longer, that the City of Regina is proceeding and whether they are incorporating it or expropriating it doesn't matter. Once they own it, they can do as they like. I would like to again ask the Premier to tell this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan that in view of the fact that it is a myth that Saskatchewan has this blanket, huge blanket area of arable farm land, if the Premier is going to allow cities whether it be Regina, Moose Jaw or Saskatoon, to simply proceed in some unbridled fashion to expropriate the surrounding land and remove it once and for all from agricultural production?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has me at a disadvantage. I don't know that the City of Regina is proceeding to incorporate that land, expropriate it and remove it once and for all from agricultural production. I am left only with what I read in the press. We have received nothing from the city. When we do receive something we will most assuredly deal with it and deal with it giving full consideration to the important point raised by the Hon. Member for Thunder Creek.

**MR. C.P. MacDONALD** (Indian Head-Wolseley): — A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the Premier not admit that this is a continuing problem and that the problem has existed? We only have to look at the expansion and the urban growth in Regina and Saskatoon and Moose Jaw. It's a problem that has been existing not only today, but yesterday, and will continue the next day and the day after as well. Would he not consider it appropriate for his Government to consider a policy on the acquisition of farm land for urban expansion?

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order: — I'll take the Member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

#### **APPOINTMENT OF NICK SHERSTOBITOFF**

**MR. H. W. LANE** (Saskatoon-Sutherland): — Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Labour. Allow me please, to preface the question with my sincere congratulations on the appointment of Nick Sherstobitoff as chairman of the Labour Relations Board. I think that probably if you had any person to choose in Saskatchewan, you couldn't find anyone more exceptional than this man.

Now, my question is, what are you going to do to give him the tools to work with? I'm thinking in terms of the situation that happened at the Star-Phoenix in Saskatoon where 40 out of 56 people asked for desertification and they were turned down. Now what are you, Mr. Minister, going to do in terms of a situation that looks like a slap in the face to democracy and majority rule?

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! I would ask the Member to review the manner in which questions should be put. I think it's quite clear in that outline that the question should be of a non-debatable

nature. I think that the question the Member was putting, in the first instance, was a question that should be followed up in Estimates and not in the Question Period, because he's investigating a part of a department which I think is not of great urgency at this moment. I would say that the Member put the question in a debatable manner and this puts me at the disadvantage that I then have to allow the Minister of Labour equal time.

**MR. LANE:** — Mr. Speaker, perhaps if I could put the question this way. What consideration is being given by the Department of Labour to remedy situations such as this?

**HON. G. T. SNYDER** (Minister of Labour): — I should say first of all, Mr. Speaker, that I do not sit in judgement of decisions that are made by the Labour Relations Board, in the same way as the Hon. Attorney General does not sit in judgement or attempt to reverse decisions that are made by his provincial magistrates. As far as the tools that are being provided, we believe that the Labour Relations Board has functioned well, in light of an increasing workload, that it has had to handle over the last number of years in particular. I agree with you that Mr. Sherstobitoff will make a very able chairman. We believe with the appointment of an executive officer to the board, which took place only a short while ago, that will in effect, streamline and speed up the duties of the board. Apart from that, Mr. Speaker, I think I have no comment to offer, other than to suggest that the terms and conditions of The Trade Union Act are those that the Labour Relations Board is obliged to honour and administer.

**MR. LANE:** — A supplementary. I was not asking the Minister to sit in judgment or in appeal, as it were, on the ruling given by the Labour Relations Board. What I was asking him to do, was to enlighten the House as to what proposed changes there will be to remedy situations such as have happened with the Star-Phoenix.

### SCHOOL GRANTS

**MR. BAILEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. That portion of the Provincial Budget which probably gets the largest piece of the pie is education. The Minister of Finance is no doubt aware that within the next few days, that some hundred school boards across this province must set their budget. One major component is not completed, that is teacher's salaries and so the boards are going to be guessing. I wonder if the Minister of Finance would be prepared to review the amount of money for the Department of Education, should the boards fall short in their guess as to what the largest component of the budget will be?

**MR. SMISHEK:** — Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member is aware in looking at the budget, we have been very fair in the provision of funds for education in the budget. There is an increase of ten per cent in the grants, an additional \$17 million, which is a substantial amount of money. We believe that we are

providing the school boards with the funds that they need to take care of the additional costs in operating our school system, by way of salaries for the school teachers, salaries for other support staff and maintenance and additional costs that the school boards have to face in terms of supply. We believe sufficient funds are provided this year and when the Hon. Member takes a look over the last number of years, this Government has been very fair to the school boards. With the property improvement grant, we are picking up 78 per cent of the cost of our school system.

**MR. BAILEY:** — Supplementary question Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) didn't attempt to answer my question, we heard what he said before. Mr. Minister, perhaps I should rephrase the question. The time limit, when the board must complete the budget, is just in a few days. The largest single component of that budget is an unknown factor. Now should the board submit the budget, falling short as to what that figure will be, what is the Department of Finance prepared to do in the way of redoing the Education Budget? Could the Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) perhaps persuade the Minister of Education (Mr. Tchorzewski), who is not here today, to have an extended deadline upon the time which these budgets must come in?

**MR. SMISHEK:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows collective bargaining is in progress. I would hope that the school board, and the teachers, are going to arrive at a collective bargaining agreement soon. I can not, at this stage, be making promises that additional funds will be provided. There are also limits as to the amount of money we, as a province, can raise. The Hon. Member during the Budget Debate was somewhat critical that we are spending too much money. Now the Conservatives can't have it both ways. On the one hand, they say that we are spending too much money, on the other hand, they argue that not enough money is provided in certain programs, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. W. H. STODALKA** (Maple Creek): — To the Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek). If it can be shown that the school boards in the Province of Saskatchewan are going to have to increase their grants by more than the ten per cent that your department has increased the grants by, will the Minister then, again be prepared to sit down and to look at the share of the Provincial Government's contribution?

**MR. SMISHEK:** — Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Department of Education is always willing to meet with the school boards and the education authorities to discuss budgets as well as the education system.

### POTENTIAL DRINKING WATER HAZARDS

**MR. A.N. McMILLAN** (Kindersley): — Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Premier (Mr. Blakeney) has failed to make himself aware of the situation I have outlined, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Water Supply Board, if he is aware of any problem that has been raised by officials working at the Buffalo Pound filtration plant, regarding the potential dangerous situation of water pollution in the drinking supply for Moose Jaw and Regina?

**MR. H.H.P. BAKER:** — (Regina-Victoria) Mr. Speaker, I would like to stand up on a Point of Privilege, if I may, with regard to the question of the Member for Kindersley (Mr. McMillan) who is trying to condemn the water supply for Regina and Moose Jaw. I could tell him that the quality of the water . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, order, order; I think there are a number of errors creeping I here. The Member for Kindersley (Mr. McMillan) begins his question with a reprimand and that is really not proper. I don't think that the Member for Regina-Victoria (Mr. Baker) has a Point of Privilege. He may be offended by some remark that may have been made with regard to the water system but that is not really a Point of Privilege and I don't think it should be raised at this time. Order, order;

**HON. G.R. BOWERMAN** (Minister for Northern Saskatchewan): — Mr. Speaker, the answer is No.

**MR. MCMILLAN:** — Mr. Speaker, will the Minister responsible for the Water Supply Board undertake to investigate these circumstances that have been raised and can he assure this House that he will be able to give us some answer, preferably on Monday, with regard to the situation?

**MR. BOWERMAN:** — No.

### CATTLE AUCTION MARKETS

**MR. R.A. LARTER** (Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding). I wonder if the Minister of Agriculture is aware of the problems faced by cattle auction markets in Saskatchewan with regard to buyers and the buyers' bonds?

**HON. E.E. KAEDING** (Minister of Agriculture): No, I have no information of a problem there.

**MR. LARTER:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The cattle auction markets, all cattle auction markets in Saskatchewan, are faced with a very serious situation because a buyer from a packing plant, or an individual buyer, can cover one or two or three auction markets in a week and only be covered by possibly \$100,000 worth of cattle. This buyer is only required to have a \$6,000 bond and many losses are taking place because of this including going out of business, as in the case of the Arcola Auction Market. It is back in business now. A buyer is not required to have a bond any higher than \$6,000. Is there any possibility of requiring by law, these buyers to have a larger bond to protect these cattle auction markets?

**MR. KAEDING:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker, my department has that under review at the present time and we are looking into that problem. We are aware of it and we have proposed some changes. We have not moved them forward at this time, but we will be looking at this very shortly.



## DESKS IN THE HOUSE

**MR. W.H. STODALKA** (Maple Creek: — A question to the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Shillington). I wonder if the Minister could assure me that the desks for my Member for Wilkie (Miss Clifford) and myself will be back in position on Monday? We wouldn't want anyone in this Chamber to think there is any sign of movement on either part of ours.

**HON. E.B. SHILLINGTON** (Minister of Government Services): — I am not sure, Mr. Speaker, if that is somebody's idea of the contribution those two Members make or whether there is some reason for repair, but I certainly will look into it and get them back.

## LICENSING OF ILLEGITIMATE FARM MACHINERY DEALERS

**MR. R.A. LARTER:** — (Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister has come up with anything on this business of the licensing of illegitimate farm machinery dealers?

**HON. E.E. KAEDING** (Minister of Agriculture): — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I could inform the Member that I sent him a note about that. There is a problem with relation to some of these dealers bringing in machines from the United States, and the Agriculture Implement Board is now examining how they can license them and get them under the supervisions of the Act.

**MR. LARTER:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Actually, I don't think the dealers are attempting to stop farmers from buying goods across the line at all. I don't think we are trying to discourage agricultural goods going either way. It is a case of getting the "jockies" license and requiring them to qualify in the same way for service and parts dealerships. This is very urgent for the farm machinery dealers. Would you follow this up and see that this does happen?

**HON. E. KRAMER** (Minister of Highways and Transportation): — I would like to inform the Member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) that he should watch his step. That fellow from Speers that he talks about is a good Conservative.

## STATEMENTS

### MOTOR VEHICLE LICENCE

**HON. E.C. WHELAN** (Minister of Consumer Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, since we make announcements to the House rather than the press, it is my intention to bring to this Legislature . . .

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear;

**MR. WHELAN:** — The press has been repeatedly asking me to make statements, and it is my intention to bring to the Legislature some

information that I think is pertinent regarding the motor vehicle license change-over.

Proof of ownership is being asked for. It is a new procedure we are using because of the high number of stolen vehicles that are showing up in the Province of Saskatchewan. But rather than insist on a bill of sale, we have developed another more convenient method to establish proof of ownership when a vehicle is being transferred from one person to another.

Mail-in registration has been discontinued because of the technique used to register the stolen vehicles. But Mr. Speaker, we have worked out a procedure with the auto dealers that will permit registration to suit their needs.

The manual for issuers will be updated to take care of the error in the insurance manual of the handbook. The charges, if any, for renewal of transfers, when they are worked out, will be shown in the manual after it has been amended.

A few issuers have resigned when confronted with the new system. We, meaning the Department of Finance, until April 1, have appointed a replacement as quickly as it was possible to do.

The commissions for issuing registration and motor vehicle licenses have been increased substantially from 1971; from 30 cents per transaction to 50 cents on driver transactions, and to a dollar on most vehicle transactions. With the introduction of staggered renewals, a new cycle of renewals will begin in September. This means more commissions for the issuer with much less effort the next time around. In addition, in an effort to accommodate the public 12 months of the year, we will be examining a number of alternatives.

It is difficult, at this moment, to assess the rates or increase the compensation until we have had a look at the over all operation of the motor vehicle issuers' offices across the province.

Our office had endeavoured to guess the amount of supplies that were needed initially for each issuer. In some cases they have run out but our staff is trying to keep up with this demand, and we think we have now met the requests that have been made by issuers.

Regarding the truck rating system, a questionnaire for trucking firms is being held in abeyance until the license rush is over, although we acknowledge the need for the vital information that was being asked for, if we are going to ascertain the transportation needs of the Province of Saskatchewan.

The staff we have is an experienced staff and the new director has worked for the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office for twenty years or so. We have every confidence that they will perform well and that they will produce the kind of system that we are aiming at and that the province needs.

**MR. C. P. MacDONALD** (Indian Head -Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, just a brief comment from the official Opposition. First of all, I want to tell the Minister that confession is good for the soul, and we do appreciate his

offer of repentance and we do appreciate the rather speedy way in which he has attempted to rectify some of the unfortunate, circumstances that surrounded the issuance of licenses this year. I think one area he should have a good look at is the idea of a recompense for those issuers of licenses. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek), indicated nothing would be done for five or six months. I think you are going to find a rash of resignations, when the fact that the issuers of licenses are over-burdened and over-worked is clear. Anyway I just want to say to the Minister that we appreciate the action of his department and SGIO and we hope that will rectify the situation

**MR. R. H. BAILEY** (Rosetown-Elrose) Mr. Speaker, I should like to briefly comment on the statement made by the Minister. I think his department anticipated that there would be some problems and some confusion in the change-over and your anticipation certainly became a reality.

I think, Mr. Minister, the greatest complaint that his department is facing, as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) mentioned this morning, is that maybe the individual was forgetful or remiss in not filling out the attachment picking out the month. That is neither here nor there at the present time. The major difficulty, Mr. Minister, which has to be corrected, (I assure you that sooner or later, your Department has to correct it), is in connection with the person who has a responsibility for licensing seven or eight or nine vehicles along with three or four drivers' licenses. The registrations are spread over a period of time, sometimes every month of the 12 months. All these people are asking, Mr. Minister, is that all registrations come due at one time. They don't care what month it is so long as it can be transacted in the same month. And if you correct that, Mr. Minister, as I am sure you will, I think you are going to deviate the major concern in rural Saskatchewan. I can tell you that people are pretty hostile.

#### POINT OF ORDER ON THE QUESTION PERIOD

**MR. C. P. MacDONALD** (Indian Head-Wolseley): — On a Point of Order, if I may. Mr. Speaker, I have a habit, I think, of asking questions in a very polite manner. This morning I thought I was very polite about a very, very important matter, the expansion of urban sprawl in Saskatchewan and the imposition of agricultural soil. I asked the Premier (Mr. Blakeney), what I considered to be an important question-if there was a government policy or if anything was being done to protect and to see that this would be looked after in the future. I would like to know why that particular question was out of order.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — I want the Member to know he was the epitome of politeness in asking his question. That wasn't the point by which I didn't allow the Member to proceed. The reason I interrupted the Member was that his question was repetitious of the question immediately proceeding it and was put in a debatable fashion. I think a check of the record will show that.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE – DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS – VOTE 16 (Cont'd)

ITEM 7.

**HON. E. KRAMER** (Minister of Highways): — Mr. Chairman, when we rose last night there was a question about speed limits and I stated at that time that speed limits were regulated under the Authority of The Vehicles Act. We have a copy here. Section 133, item 1, says:

No person shall drive a truck or power unit having a manufacturer's rated capacity in excess of one-half ton or gross weight of 4,000 . . . at a speed greater than 40 miles per hour.

It says 40 here, that is a misprint, it should be 50. The Highways Act . . . this is the change:

No person shall drive any other vehicle at a speed greater than 50 miles an hour.

We have the authority to change that to 80 kilometres. That legislation will be introduced later on. That is our authority to proceed in accordance with agreements that have been made with the Federal Government and as I understand it all provinces. Saskatchewan attended a meeting held at the top level some three or four years ago. The authority for the administration of this Act, as I said last night, does lie within the Highway Traffic Board and is under the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Chairman, is he saying that there is no Act now, that there will be another Act that gives the authority to move it.

**MR. KRAMER:** — We are telling you about the changes that will take place in that Act when the Minister brings them forward.

**MR. G. WIPF:** — One final question on Item seven, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday it was \$262,000 on this that you said was set aside for metric conversion. Is that right?

**MR. KRAMER:** — More than that I believe. In Item seven, yes, that was the amount. Increments in salaries and the amount for metric conversion would make up the difference between \$241,000 and \$502,000.

**MR. WIPF:** — Have you got a breakdown of what part of it was really metric? Could you give me that figure, then we will go on.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Just a moment please. The amount is \$345,000 for the total package.

**MR. WIPF:** — Is that all the way through for every department in the highways?

**MR. KRAMER:** — That is only for this Item.

**MR. R. BAILEY** (Rosetown-Elrose): — An interesting observation. I was wondering, although it doesn't directly fall under your department, when the change comes in the speed limits from the miles per hour to the metric, which is not that much difference in change, if the inquisitive motorists would know if the radar detection units are also going to be changed to metric at the same time.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I think that is an interesting question. I presume that they will have modified equipment that will take care of the speeds prescribed on the roads at that particular time when enforcing the law.

Item 7 agreed.

## ITEM 8

**MR. KRAMER:** — Mr. Chairman, I should like to table a letter from the City of Prince Albert, to the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, further to the discussion. I will read it before I table it if I may, Mr. Chairman. It was concerning a question raised earlier.

This is to advise that the city council has approved your request to have the Department of Highways and Government Services carry out preliminary surveying, pre-engineering work this fall, on the air tanker base as proposed by the Ministry of Transportation. As discussed, the city of Prince Albert has not yet approved the MOT location for this base and we wish to advise you at this time that all work being carried out is carried out at your own risk and that you agree that you will not hold the city liable for any costs incurred, should the ultimate location be different than that being proposed by the Ministry. I would ask that before you enter the site that arrangements be made with the airport manager, and all activity on the airport field itself have his prior approval. Signed, J. A. Swystun, City Engineer, Prince Albert. Dated September 22, 1976.

**MR. W. C. THATCHER:** — I should like to welcome the Minister to the House today. I can tell by the expression on his face that he is thrilled to be here. I would like to tell him that the Opposition is thrilled to have him. I sincerely hope, this morning, that the Minister brushed his teeth, had some Scope and washed his mouth out with soap for all the terrible things that were coming out of his mouth...

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order! I don't think that it requires any preliminary remarks from any Member of the House, in regard to these things, in order to operate the business efficiently. This applies to all sides, I am not stressing any individual side. I am interested in expediting your business, our business, in a manner in which I think it can be handled honourably and that is the way we would like to do it. I ask Members to try and adhere to it.

**MR. C.P. MacDONALD** (Indian Head-Wolseley): — Mr. Chairman, might I ask what was the purpose of those comments? The Member was just setting up and made a very interesting comment before he started in response, to what I understand, were some rather unpleasant remarks of last evening.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order! I think those remarks were dealt with last evening. I should like to see us get started on a good tone and where the decorum of the house is certainly held to an acceptable level for all Members. I will certainly endeavour to keep it that way.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Well if the Chairman happens to be through with this item of great importance, may I proceed. I notice last year that the Minister budgeted the sum of \$34.5 million in terms of maintenance. Could the Minister tell me, on item eight, what was the actual figure that was spent? I realize the fiscal year is not completely finished, but I am sure your departmental people have a reasonably accurate estimate of how that amount was spent.

**MR. KRAMER:** — We have the book item that indicates what was spent. If you go to the supplementaries you will also find that there is a supplementary amount, maintenance of public highways and bridges is \$1,803,120. The \$1,400,000 is to provide legal authority; I say legal authority for our accounts payable. The Finance Act requires that we be authorized the full amount of what we actually spend plus accounts payable at the end of the year. The \$1,400,000 is not spent; it is simply a legal bookkeeping entry to stay within terms, the legal terms of The Finance Act. Of the remaining \$430,000, because the weather has continued to be good to now, we will not be needing that amount either. We're about \$100,000 over in some small items, but this will be balanced by similar under expenditures in capital. We will net, within our total of last year's allocation of \$129,700,000.

**MR. THATCHER:** — I am not completely clear what you mean by 'legal authority'. I think you said, \$1,400,000 for legal authority from the Department of Finance. Could you explain that in a little more detail?

**MR. KRAMER:** — The legal authority to spend money, in any department, is granted under The Finance Act. No department can spend more than the legal amount, the stipulated amount that is permitted in this House during these Estimates, in any one year without coming to the House with Supplementary Estimates. That is a procedure that is time honoured and has been in effect as long as I have been around. That is where the legal implication comes in. You may want to take a look at The Finance Act or ask the question during financial Estimates or ask for a technical, legal explanation from someone that is probably better informed than I am. I believe that is the best you can do.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Is the Minister saying he

got a special warrant for \$1,400,000? Is that what the Minister is trying to tell us?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Yes, I suppose you would call that a special warrant.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — So what you are saying to us, Mr. Minister, if I understand, you got a special warrant for \$1.4 million, so you are \$1.4 million over your appropriated budget in the last fiscal year.

**MR. KRAMER:** — No, I am not saying that. I am saying that we have to follow this procedure in order to provide, in a legal sense, for money that may be spent. I am saying we will not spend it but we have to have the money in place in advance, just in case we do.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — One more question which will clarify this. You got a special warrant for \$1.4 million but you are not sure whether you are going to spend \$1.2 million or \$1.4 million. Is that correct?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I am saying that we are not going to spend any of it. But I am saying that The Finance Act states, that we have to take this procedure in order to stay within the letter of the Act.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Mr. Minister, I know what The Finance Act says, and you know it and so do most Members of the House. When you require money for a government department over and above the appropriation that is granted in the Legislature in the Estimates, you have to get a special warrant and a supplementary Estimate. You got it for \$1.4 million and now you tell us you are not going to spend it. We will determine that next year, not at this time.

The second thing, you also indicated, is that you borrowed from capital into operating, is that correct?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I am saying that we may for the amount of \$100,000.

**MR. BAILEY:** — Mr. Minister, when you go into for example, some new construction or new gravelling, tenders are let and you know approximately what the costs of that extension or the upgrading of that particular piece of road are going to be. I want to ask a question. When you undertake a project and all the work is being done by your own highway crew, obviously your department places an estimate as to the cost of what that particular project will be. Am I correct in assuming that?

**MR. KRAMER:** — You are.

**MR. BAILEY:** — Mr. Minister, I realize that you have been in the Province of Saskatchewan longer than I have, one of the favourite topics is weather, drought and crop conditions and so on.

Looking at the Public Accounts and Estimates and your costs of various projects in Saskatchewan, you have listed the cost of placing the railings on the south side of the Saskatchewan Landing bridge along with some other mileage of highway. One of the topics of conversation, I can assure the Minister, and it branches over into the Morse constituency, was the length of time that it took the highway crews to put the new railings on the south side of the Saskatchewan Landing bridge. Do you have the cost of that, isolated from the cost of that along with the road? I would like to know the cost of placing those up.

**MR. KRAMER:** — If you want that exact amount, put a question on the Order Paper asking what the cost was of that particular project. In fact I will discuss the wording with you. We will put it back through the department as a House question and we will get the information to you.

**MR. BAILEY:** — All right, Mr. Chairman. Let me ask the Minister another question in relation to this. Was the estimated cost for this project the actual cost or did it exceed your expectations?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I won't know until we investigate it. The Member for Indian Head-Wolseley said, "Why is that necessary?", It is not necessary but it is certainly far more legitimate and useful to have that answer given on paper through the House, than it is by word of mouth, from me to him, because it has to be factual when it is put on the order, and it has to be checked by my staff. I am quite happy to give you the answer in a note. I am simply saying that your guarantee of its authenticity is greater with any department, if it is put on the Order Paper and recorded in the House. It can be referred to 10 years from now.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Mr. Chairman, I think the Minister is asking us to establish a very dangerous precedent in Estimates. I certainly understand that there is a possibility that you won't have all the details of all the specific information that any Member on this side of the House might ask. But to suggest he has to put it on a written question is ridiculous. You might be completely out of this House and the Estimates might be all through, and there may be something quite wrong with it. If you want to say that the information isn't here but you will try and provide it as quickly as you can, then you have one of your people go out and phone and get it back, or whatever. We are not suggesting that you have to have every detailed answer for any question that the Members may ask. But don't suggest that we have to put something on the Order Paper. It is your responsibility in Estimates to provide it for us, in the quickest way you can, and if the Member agrees it is fine.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I agree with the Member. I am saying that we would get the figures in a hurried fashion from the Swift Current district and there could be, because it is hurried and over the phone, a margin of error. You can have them both, the research to answer the question and the quick one. But I would want to put that bit of a Caveat on it, that it is a quick answer rather than a researched answer. I would rather think they



would both be the same, but I simply want to give the Member that guarantee.

**MR. BAILEY:** — Mr. Chairman, I just want an answer. I don't care if it is within the week. Can I have an answer within the week, Mr. Minister?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Certainly.

**MR. WIPF:** — I want to thank the Minister for tabling a letter this morning. However, as I read it it still doesn't answer the question that I asked last night. I suppose you could dig through your files and bring out many, many letters that you have. The letter does say, as I said yesterday, that you have permission from the city to do engineering work, preliminary survey work and all that. You also stated that the city has specifically approved the location of the air base but you tabled a letter this morning in contradiction to that statement. The letter that I am asking for, as I asked yesterday and I thought I would get it today, is the letter that specifically approves the location base of the air tanker station in Prince Albert. I feel that I have been misled by this document that you tabled the other day. Could I have that letter or does it exist?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Now, I just happen to have the statement that was made in the House and I will read the statement. I have told the Member that I thought he had misunderstood what I had said.

Now what I said and I quote:

The location of the base is strictly in accordance with the Ministry of Transport's master plan for the city of Prince Albert. We have a copy of the letter from the city which gives council approval (that's Prince Albert city council approval) to do the engineering work and the city has now specifically approved the location of the air tanker base and access road.

I submit, the blueprint that I consider to be authority from the duly appointed and paid representative, of the city of Prince Albert, Mr. Swystun. It is approved, signed there in the proper section. I presume that the city of Prince Albert has authorized this gentleman to say 'this is what we approve' and he has put his name on it. If he has put his name to it without permission of the city council, then that is a problem for the city council.

**MR. WIPF:** — It was the same engineer that signed the letter and signed that blueprint then?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Yes, right.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Chairman, the Minister has indicated under this item that there is an over expenditure on Item 8 and that there is an under expenditure on capital expenditures which we will deal with a little later.

Can we conclude from this that you, in fact stole dollars from what was going to be capital expenditures in new construction in this province and that you took money from that and placed it elsewhere in your department, possibly into maintenance? Would the Minister comment on this?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Yes, I will comment on it. I said before that we have to remain strictly within the letter of the law and to come within a few hundred thousand dollars. We are continually monitoring construction work in six districts, very carefully, during the year to make sure that we don't over expend progress payments that are being made continually to contractors. Work is proceeding and that has to be paid whether it is in ordinary or capital. Our accountants have to maintain a strict surveillance of the spending. It would take a Solomon or some other very wise person to come out at the end of the year, in six districts with all the complications of each particular district, and thousands of projects, to stay within the dollar amounts right on the nose. At the end of any year, in any department that is handling that amount of work, there is going to be some over or under expenditure. Now we can go over the Budget with special warrants, but we have to go before the Treasury Board with special warrants and at the end of the year. In order to stay strictly within the letter of the law, we must make this formal application to the Treasury Board in order to stay within the rules.

I am saying that it is a formality, that we know now that the money will not be spent. I assure the House, again, that that \$129 million that was allocated to us last year will not be overspent when all the bills are those that are coming in March, certainly cannot be paid until April. It is that way every year and I think that you will find that this is true in similar departments anywhere you go. I repeat, I am assuring the House that when the bills are all in we will not be spending more than the total gross amount that was allocated to the department last year.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Would the Minister tell the House what amount was taken from capital expenditures and placed into general expenditures?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Well, I mentioned the \$100,000 out of the total amount that is in the supplementaries. There is maintenance of public highways and bridges \$108 million; Highway Engineering Branch \$50,500; Yorkton district \$23,500; North Battleford district \$32,970. Now if all of those are checked out, they fall into place. On the maintenance side there will be \$100,000 shortfall. There will be a surplus, my people tell me, that we can take from capital in order to keep the books balanced and that is within the legitimate operation of the department.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Could the Minister tell us what he vired from last year's appropriation, approved in the House, from capital to operating? You have just given us the Supplementary Estimates. We are not interested only in the Supplementary Estimates, we want to know what you vired from one item to another item, or what you vired from capital into maintenance or ordinary expenditures.

**MR. KRAMER:** — You are using the term 'viring' and maybe I did, but my Director of Support Services says we cannot vire, we have to go for special warrant and then the Treasury, of course, handles it.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — In other words, Mr. Minister, what you are saying is that all the money appropriated for last year's Estimates, whatever it was, so many millions, was used for capital and that was appropriated and used for maintenance and there was no transfer from one item to the other.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Except for the \$100,000.

Item 8 agreed to.

## ITEM 9

**MR. H. W. LANE** (Saskatoon-Sutherland): — I have a question to ask the Minister regarding a topic that was raised about a week ago in the House, namely, the 42nd Street bridge in Saskatoon, or the North Saskatoon bridge crossing. It was raised again by my colleague from Eastview yesterday.

When it first came up, the Premier gave the assurance that, in terms of cost-sharing between the Provincial Government and the city of Saskatoon, there would be suitable arrangements made by the Government and that the city of Saskatoon could be assured that some of the cost would be picked up by the provincial coffers.

Yesterday, shortly before the supper recess, I believe I heard the Minister say that the only commitment that had been made at this time, with respect to cost-sharing, was a sharing of costs leading up to studies regarding traffic flow and so on. Then after the supper recess I heard words to the effect of the usual basis being used which is 50-50, at least the implication was left with the House that there would be a 50-50 cost-sharing basis.

Now my first question is, is that to be taken by the city of Saskatoon as a firm commitment that there will be a 50-50 cost-sharing basis from the province?

**MR. KRAMER:** — When the bridge is proceeded with, after all of the design studies and other preliminaries have been taken care of, the province is committed to spend at least 50 per cent, probably a bit more.

**MR. LANE:** — I think that is a first. Now we have a commitment that there will be 50 per cent and perhaps more. That is on the record now.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I beg your pardon, but that is knowledge that the city of Saskatoon has had for the past three or four years.

**MR. LANE:** — Mr. Chairman, when the

Minister speaks about traffic surveys and so on, the mayor of Saskatoon seems to indicate that all necessary traffic surveys have been done, or at least he has that impression, rightly or wrongly, and that now he is not getting the proper go ahead from the Government. Now, the Minister indicated yesterday that he wanted some request from the mayor of Saskatoon at this point in time. Perhaps if you could tell us exactly, Mr. Minister, what request it is that you are waiting for? My colleague and myself could get on the phone to the mayor of Saskatoon and confirm that the bridge could be proceeded with, because nothing seems to be happening; we don't get deadline dates; the traffic is bottlenecked in that area and the situation is getting worse and worse.

Now what exactly is it that you wish to know from the city of Saskatoon?

**MR. KRAMER:** — We need nothing more at this point from the city of Saskatoon. I did not say that we needed anything from the city of Saskatoon. I am saying that a number of people in political life, including city politicians, have not deemed it necessary to rush the request for the design for the functional study which they had the opportunity to do, according to the letter I tabled in the House since 1974. They never replied, never made the request until last fall before our budgetary process was completed.

We need nothing more from them at this time, but I take a dim view and I am not pointing my finger at any one in particular and certainly not Mayor Wright, if he has misunderstood some things/he probably has not searched all of the records of them coming along, after being tardy, waiting for two years to make the application for the design study. They know when our budgetary process takes place; and that it is futile to come and ask at the end of the budget year, before our budgets are in place, to ask us to assist with the study at that time when they had had our offer three years before; to complain that we are not moving fast enough, I think is unfair.

**MR. LANE:** — I understand, Mr. Chairman, that there are studies going on presently about design and so on and that makes good sense. Could the Minister tell me if the exact cost-figure and the cost-sharing agreement are being worked out side by side with the progress in terms of the design and so on. Are both things proceeding at the same time? Have negotiations been opened in terms of nailing down the exact cost-sharing basis of the Provincial Government?

**MR. KRAMER:** — The functional study will be shared as the transportation study is shared, again 75/25, with the province sharing the 75 and the city is aware of that. I should like to inform the House, again, that even now the city has not asked for a share of the bridge construction although at this time we have nothing on paper to indicate that. I don't think it is necessary for them to do that, but there seems to be a fair bit of innuendo suggesting that we are dragging our feet. I suggest to the House and to the Members for Saskatoon, that we are not, dragging our feet. The opportunity has been open to the city since 1974, it was open to apply and request us to share the design study, 75 per cent of it; they didn't make their request

until last fall. I said at the SUMA meeting in Saskatoon that the ball was in their court, I repeat it, that is where it was. We are proceeding as quickly as city requests come in. One city request is in. We will be proceeding with the functional study, when and if they ask for a structure, if the design study indicates that the structure is feasible in that location, that the soil conditions are right, etc., then we will proceed with that. But the city is the initiator and that should be remembered.

**MR. LANE:** — Mr. Chairman, I didn't mean to suggest any impropriety on the part of the Minister. What I was implying was that the way in which budgets operate and the way in which the inflation factor takes its toll, that if this thing is dragged on and decision is left for some period of time, that there might be at that point in time when costs have, perhaps, tripled or quadrupled with respect to the cost of the bridge, some reluctance on part of the Government at that time. How does the city get a firm commitment now of you saying, that you will give this much money in terms of funding that bridge. Is it just a matter of them requesting exactly how much, requesting you to put a figure on it?

**MR. KRAMER:** — The fact is the city has known for years what the sharing formula for construction is, it is 50/50, there is no commitment needed from us. Here is a copy of the Urban Assistance Policy, that every city councillor ought to know, if he is doing his homework, the information is available to him. If aldermen or Members of the Legislature fail to inform themselves and choose instead to play politics and attempt to get headlines as the great defender of the rights of Saskatoon or whatever, then that is their problem. I am simply saying that it's the city's responsibility and it is not going to be allowed, as far as I am concerned, to pass the buck to the Provincial Government. They knew very well what the situation was for years. It is written in black and white.

I don't know what the Members are going to gain by questioning me when they ought to be at city council questioning them.

**MR. ROMANOW:** — Mr. Chairman, I am sorry to delay my colleague's Estimates. This is not the best tactic I suppose as a government but I, too, am a Member from Saskatoon and I heard at some considerable length, last night, questions relating to this 42nd Street bridge by the Liberal Member and now this morning we hear it again by the Conservative Member.

There are two points that I want to make. First of all, I am distressed at what I believe to be the continual attempts by the Liberal and Conservative Members of Saskatoon to continually politicize this question of the 42nd Street bridge.

I think the worst example of it, I must say, came when the rookie Member for Saskatoon Sutherland (Mr. H. W. Lane) in his very first question in the Saskatchewan Legislature, was asked by the press outside how things were going. His response was that things were going pretty well, but he had to ask two Ministers for some kind of answer on the 42nd Street bridge, but neither one of them could give him an answer. He said that

finally he had to go to the Premier in order to get an answer but the Premier waffled on the question of the commitment. Those are pretty close to the exact words of the Member for Saskatoon Sutherland that he gave to the television cameras at that time. The simple fact of the matter is that anybody, who was in the Legislature at that time, knows that the question was asked specifically of the Premier and the Premier gave the commitment that he did the day of funding, as the Minister of Highways had repeatedly done this morning and last night. I am disturbed by that kind of irresponsibility on the part of the Opposition Members in the Legislature, because that is simply not what transpired.

The second point that I want to make is that I think the city of Saskatoon has handled this thing well. I think they are a competent civic government, they have a competent civic administration. I believe that the Department of Highways has done a good job on this thing. Everybody comes on the television cameras in Saskatoon and they say to build the 42nd Street bridge, everybody, meaning the Opposition MLAs. I know that we have fallen in that same trap on this side of the House. I want to tell you that I have received many communications from people, who are not confirmed in their minds that 42nd Street, as an example, is where this bridge should be located.

There are many people who say it should be on 51st Street and some who say it should be even further down the line. Now what are we to do as a government? Are we to respect the wishes of the citizens of the city of Saskatoon and area, or are we to arbitrarily as a Department of Highways, say it shall be here at 42nd or it shall be there at 51st or whatever location?

I think the Minister of Highways is taking the correct and responsible point of view when he says that we want the local government to be heard in this situation. We want them to decide where the location should be. I think the same thing can be said with respect to the functional design study. This is a totally responsible thing and you have to know what kind of bridge, what kind of earth, what kind of costs, what kind of materials, before you know what the dollar cost is going to be and whether it is going to meet the operation. That again is local responsibility.

I only want to intervene to say, Mr. Speaker, that I was born and raised in Saskatoon. I am very sensitive to this question of the need to improve traffic patterns. I believe that we need a bridge in the 42nd Street area, wherever it is ultimately decided. I have confidence in Mayor Wright and the city council, very much so. I think that negotiations will be tough. There will be periods of frustration, that is inevitable. The Government is committed to do what it can to assist and I think the Department of Highways, the Minister and the deputy and his officials have done all that they can to make sure that this project is being moved ahead. I want to commend the Minister of Highways for doing a good job and urge the Members of this House to get on with the business of making sure this project is achieved working through the civic government and not in the political forums here.

**MR. PENNER:** — I wonder if I may comment, after the lecture delivered by the Attorney General. I think that if he checks the record

he will find that the questions, which I asked of the Minister last night and of the department, were questions about planning and the future. I have never had any intention of attempting to politicize the matter. The matter was one that I raised a year ago to find out what the department had in mind. I am not attempting to lay fault anywhere. The fact is that there are many, many people in the city of Saskatoon who are frustrated every day because they can't cross the river. I am simply, in the questions that I directed yesterday, attempting to find out what kind of time line the department has for the future, what kind of target date do they see as a possibility. The matter of the funding, as the Minister says, has been written down for a long while. Anybody who cares to read knows it is 50/50 funding at least and it might be more. I agree with you that Mayor Wright and the council of the city of Saskatoon are extremely competent, as competent or maybe a little more so, than any other municipal council in the province. It may very well be that they will get better than a 50-50 split, if they do, hallelujah;

I think the Attorney General ought to understand what my particular purpose was in the questions that I asked last night, if he didn't understand them.

**MR. H. LANE** (Saskatoon-Sutherland): — Mr. Chairman, in brief response to the comments of the Attorney General. He refers to the fact, or at least he leaves the implication with the House, that somehow I used the press to mislead what had transpired in the House. He, of course, refers to the fact that I am a rookie MLA. I certainly make no pretensions about the fact that I have only been here a very short time and I am trying to learn. Of course I am watching the example from the other side of the House to see what I should not do. Now he says that the question was directed to the Premier. I wasn't sure how to nail it down at that time, and I asked either the Minister of Highways or the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Of course one of them was not here, and I didn't recognize the fact at that time. The other one sort of shrugged, didn't know what to do with it, then finally the Premier answered the question. That was the way it came up in the House.

In terms of irresponsibility, I would ask the Attorney General whether it was irresponsible then to raise the question the other day about Place Riel? Only a few short years ago there was a commitment for 50 per cent funding of that particular project. Now delay after delay has taken place, and after costs have risen from somewhere in the order of \$4 million to \$10.8 million, the Government's commitment has now come to only 33.3 per cent . . .

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order . . . I think that we are not on the subject of highways at present. If we could revert back to the bridge.

**MR. LANE:** — In terms of the 42nd Street bridge, I have specifically referred in my question to the House to the 42nd Street bridge crossing or the north Saskatoon crossing. I haven't tried to nail it down. I have said that there is a problem in that area and the people in Saskatoon recognize that there is a problem. We have simply been indicating that something has to be done and perhaps there should be some input from this Government.

Now when he refers to it, he says that we are politicking. I refute that statement. I take exception to the statement that we, in some way, by bringing this 42nd Street bridge or north Saskatoon bridge crossing up for debate, do not have confidence in Mayor Cliff Wright. That's utter nonsense. I simply asked questions to peg down what would be the Government's contribution, or would it be another Place Kiel case, where the contribution once the cost had risen would flip to a lower percentage?

**MR. ROMANOW:** — Mr. Chairman, I want to pursue this because I think this is an example of my point. The Hon. Member says that something has to be done. He wants to know what can be done. I am asking the Hon. Member, what more can the Minister of Highways have said or have done, as far as the Government of Saskatchewan is concerned? What more? That was available to you yesterday and last night. Transportation study, we're funding it, we are waiting for it; functional study, no request from the city of Regina, we are waiting for it; location, no location from the city of Saskatoon, we're waiting for it; commitment to funding, 50/50. Mr. Chairman, it was 50/50 two years ago, it is 50/50 today, it will be 50/50 two years from now and maybe more. What more can be done?

I know what you are going to do, judging by the track record. You will go back in front of the television cameras, and say that oh, we couldn't get the determination of the Government, they were uncertain about this, he said maybe 50/50, maybe 40/60. That's the way it is going to be operating. The press will dutifully report that, without any kind of catching of it. All the people in Sutherland will say, how great this new MLA is fighting for this 42nd Street bridge or somewhere out there. I am saying that is pure political phoniness. Every Member has the right to ask every question that he wants to ask about the bridge or anything else, but please do it with some degree of political integrity.

My purpose in rising today, and I repeat again, is that this has not been the case as far as the bridge is concerned. I think on the television show that I refer to specifically, while it may have happened that way in the House as you report it now, that's not what you said on television. You took an entirely different interpretation. You purposely tried to communicate to the citizens of Saskatoon that the Ministers were either unwilling or unable to answer the question and that the Premier refused to give you a commitment of funding and that is a pure basic untruth. You know it. I am saying that when it comes to the questions that are here, please just say that I'm for the Saskatoon bridge. The Member for Buena Vista (Mr. Rolfes) and all these Members that are here are for the operation. When you ask us what can be done about it, don't ask us to move in and bully the city of Saskatoon. Don't ask us to get in there and run roughshod over them. You are suggesting that we should be moving in and imposing our stand on the city of Saskatoon and I oppose that. I am not referring to the Liberals, they didn't say that. The Member for Sutherland has suggested that. Don't ask us to bully the city of Saskatoon or to override them or to push our Government views on them, because that is just not the way that we work. We simply want to hear from them as to location and as to these specific issues and to move on to the bridge in that regard.



I think, Mr. Chairman, that the Hon. Member will certainly appreciate that. I hope he keeps those comments in mind when he next comes before the television cameras about the 42nd Street bridge.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear;

**MR. LANE:** — This wasn't a political issue as long as we were asking the Minister of Highways questions about how the bridge would proceed. Now it has become a political issue, now he is saying we are bullying the city of Saskatoon. What we are in fact trying to do is get some information for the city of Saskatoon, some commitment. If you say, Mr. Attorney General that I am fighting for the citizens of Saskatoon you are quite right. I intend to continue to do that because nobody over there seems to be doing it.

In response to the question about what more could the Minister be asked to do, he could be asked to continue answering questions so that we can nail down exactly what is going to happen and get some firm commitment so that the 42nd Street bridge or the north Saskatoon crossing doesn't turn into another Place Riel. After the inflationary index has taken its toll and the costs have gone up, then the Government decides at this time they don't have quite enough money in the coffers, because they have been shooting the wad in potash mines. That's all we want to know, and it won't be political as long as you allow us to ask the Minister questions about the procedure and how this thing is going to proceed in the future on the 42nd Street bridge.

**MR. ROMANOW:** — Mr. Chairman, I want to again say that that is an example of an out and out falsehood, falsehood about money, falsehood by the Member for Saskatoon Sutherland, falsehood by the Conservative Party about the business of shooting the money on potash. That is an out and out blatant political misrepresentation. If I was less than parliamentary I would call it something more substantial than that..

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order, order please!

I have been looking into two crystal balls here, which you people have been referring to in the past and I fail to see where the debate is building on tearing down this bridge you are referring to. I think that it is very important that we adhere to the item at hand and I think all parties have had a chance to express their views. I have been fairly lenient, but I do ask you to get on with the business of the day. I would ask you to consider Item 9.

**MR. ROMANOW:** — Before we agree to Item 9, I want to complete my remarks, and I will keep your observations in mind, in so doing.

I want to say, Mr. Chairman, with respect to .this particular Item 9, as it relates to the 42nd Street bridge, that the kinds of statements that we have received, are the kinds of statements which have destroyed the credibility of the Conservative Opposition. The Members laugh because they win two by-elections in 1977. I tell you, you may as well enjoy it, because you will have about two and a half years or three and a half years in which to enjoy the success that you have.

The Member talked about the 42nd Street bridge and he said he wanted to make sure the costs on the 42nd Street bridge didn't escalate because of costs of inflation and that somehow the Government is going to try and duck out. Mr. Chairman, if the costs of the 42nd Street bridge escalate, they will escalate partly, if not mainly, due to the fact that the Government of Saskatchewan is awaiting specific recommendations from the city of Saskatoon on these points. If the costs on Place Riel escalate, it is because the Government is waiting for specific recommendations from the University of Saskatoon and the University's Commission on Place Riel. If the costs escalate as they do, all governments will have to make the decision that is relevant at that particular time. That has nothing to do with the questions with respect to the 42nd Street bridge. I submit to you, Mr. Chairman, and I submit to the Members of this House, and I submit to any impartial and fair-minded person who has been listening to this debate, last night and today, that every relevant question respecting funding, studies, transportation, location and the go-ahead, have been answered by the Minister. And the bottom line on that is that there has been no delay and no foot-tracking from the Department of Highways.

The question of money for potash is a total misrepresentation and a red herring which shouldn't be brought into this question whatsoever. Mr. Chairman, I repeat again, the Member for Saskatoon Sutherland is falling into the negative steps of his leader and the Conservative Party in drawing these falsehoods through the political arena.

**MR. LANE:** — On the question of destroyed credibility, I would submit to the Attorney General that credibility is not destroyed by asking questions, it is destroyed when governments make commitments which later on they do not keep, or when they fight an election with no mention of potash mines, and just months after the election is over, when they have had no mandate, spend in excess, or make commitments of millions of dollars, that's what you were saying in the House the other day. Now certainly that is going to be a relevant question in the mind;; of the electorate.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is only fair, since he brought up the question of Place Riel again, that I should have an opportunity to respond.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order, please. I think we have to draw a line here somewhere. I ask the Members to adhere to the subject and this is the bridge, Item 9. I am not going to, as long as I am in the Chair, allow anything further to be discussed at this time.

**MR. LANE:** — Mr. Chairman, I will respect your ruling on that particular issue. I would like to raise one more comment and that is, when the Attorney General referred to my comments, he left the implication with the House that in some way I was urging the Government to bully the people of Saskatoon when he talked about the 42nd Street bridge. I would like to set the record straight at this time and say that I have indicated time after time, that it is not the 42nd Street bridge, that's one reference, but the other reference is the north Saskatoon bridge crossing.

I realize it is not in this Member's Riversdale area, therefore, it is not as great a concern to him and his constituents whether or not the traffic is bottlenecked in the Saskatoon Sutherland constituency. Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, we can get back to the Minister of Highways and continue asking questions about the 42nd Street bridge, without interference from the Attorney General.

**MR. ROMANOW:** — I want to tell the Hon. Member for Saskatoon Sutherland . . .

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** — Order I'll acknowledge the Member for Saskatoon Eastview.

**MR. G. H. PENNER** (Saskatoon Eastview): — Mr. Chairman, the Attorney General doth protest too much I am afraid. And the Member for Saskatoon Sutherland doth know too little to talk very intelligently about the issue. That became pretty evident during the last by-election campaign, the kinds of things that the Progressive Conservatives were saying about the 42nd Street bridge or the North Saskatchewan River crossing indicated that they hadn't bothered to research it and that's par for the course for the PCs, they don't research very much of anything.

I would like to suggest to the Attorney General, and I should like to suggest to the Member for Saskatoon Sutherland (Mr. Lane) that they both keep their hands off that darn 42nd Street bridge, leave it to the Minister and me and we will get the thing up, in co-operation with the city of Saskatoon.

**MR. LANE:** — I just want to make one comment, and that is: — if in fact we did as well with no research as we did in the last by-election, just think of how we will be able to clobber the dickens out of them when we know something.

Items 9 and 10 agreed to.

#### ITEM 11

**MR. G. H. PENNER** (Saskatoon Eastview): — Mr. Chairman, may I suggest that we take all the numbers through to 20 as read and approved?

**THE CHAIRMAN:** — It has been suggested that all numbers be taken through to No. 20 as read and approved. Is this agreed?

Items 11, 12, 13 agreed to.

#### ITEM 14

**MR. W. C. THATCHER** (Thunder Creek): — Mr. Chairman, if I could ask the Minister . . . that's a fair hike. You are going up roughly \$400,000 in the Regina district. Could the Minister just very briefly explain the reason for this?

**MR. KRAMER:** — The main increases there are the usual wage increments for those periods that I mentioned earlier. That's \$160,000. Metric conversion is \$47,000. That's an item that was not there last year, also day labor wages, there is a \$31,000 item there.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Last item, could you repeat that again?

**MR. KRAMER:** — \$31,000 for day labor.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Minister, I don't think those numbers came to quite the increase there. You will note that your number of employees that you are budgeting for has gone from 48 to 47, yet you are budgeting for an increase in salary of \$160,000 with one employee out. And the numbers that you have just put out, I don't think add up to the total increase.

**MR. KRAMER:** — With approximately \$250,000 in total, the increments are \$160,000, the metric conversion and items that accompany it are about \$50,000, and the day labor is \$31,000, so that's \$241,000. There are some miscellaneous items, office equipment and service contract — \$3,200, miscellaneous adjustments of \$4,700, etc.

**MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern):** — Just one question to save me from doing it in 16. Are you telling me that there are metric conversions in every one of these estimates?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Those are signs for the various (six) districts, and are signs that will be put up in October (all speed limit signs) throughout the entire province by the various districts.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Minister, it appears that the amount that you are allocating for salary increments, with one less employee, if my very quick calculations are correct, is almost a 24 per cent increment. Could you explain that?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Our estimate is 26.4 per cent, you are a little low. Prior to the AIB (Anti Inflation Board) it was 16 per cent. That was before the Thanksgiving deal. The allowance for the unsettled agreement is the balance.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Well, Mr. Minister, you take the figures. Last year you budgeted \$681,000, this year you are budgeting \$854,000. Now I may have punched the wrong button here, but my calculator says that is a 24 per cent increase calculated for . . .

**MR. KRAMER:** — Our gross is 26.4 per cent, I think that is correct, I have the accountant here behind me.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Minister, never mind the two percentage points, or whatever it may be. That's a pretty hefty increase isn't it — 24 per cent?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Well, it's normal. That's about what the increases are right across the board. The Yorkton district is 27.7 per cent and it is 25.3 per cent in the Saskatoon district. This will depend on the size of salaries because it is a percentage of the salaries. There is a greater increase in the lower paid people in order to compensate them for the increases in the cost of living, but the large increase took place during that high inflation period, prior to the federal AIB being introduced.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Minister, actually the figure is much higher than that because there is one less employee. Now are you telling us that the wage settlements, that you are projecting for this year with your employees, are going to be somewhere in the 24 to 27 or 28 per cent bracket?

**MR. KRAMER:** — No, I am not. I am saying that these embrace two years. The year we know about was in the vicinity of approximately 16 per cent. We are providing a figure that will take care of increases. We are not going to make commitments because we are not going to end-run the negotiators. The figures between 6 and 10 per cent are the only figures I can give to the House at this moment without showing our hole cards.

**MR. THATCHER:** — I'm not trying to hold things up, but I want to get this perfectly clear. What you are saying then, is that you are incorporating increases that were negotiated last year and what you are projecting are settlements that will be for the 1977 year. Is this correct?

**MR. KRAMER:** — This amount, the 16 per cent, was for the 1975-76 agreement. The amount that is still being negotiated, belatedly, is the 1976-77 and that's the one that I am saying is not the one we can put a firm figure on for reasons that are obvious.

Items 14, 15 and 16 agreed to.

#### ITEM 17

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Chairman, I notice the North Battleford district has an over expenditure here of \$33,000. I also note that the increase in salaries that are being suggested here, I'll grant you there is an increase of one employee, but it comes out to 34 per cent. That's getting pretty high, Mr. Minister. Would you explain where the over expenditure in North Battleford came from, and also why there is such a huge increase in salaries for that particular district? Does North Battleford have some sort of a favoured position within your department?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I would like you to identify the \$33,000 over expenditure. Where do you get that figure?

**MR. THATCHER:** — I get that from your Supplementary Estimates and it is account No. 16, and the amount is \$32,970.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Fine. First of all this district was just formed

last year. The budget that was made up in early 19/76-77 has an item there of \$407,320. That was the early 1975 wage rates. There was a staff change of three. I'm sorry, plus one, at \$17,350 and that would bring it to the new total, plus \$12,360.

**MR. THATCHER:** — What is the \$12,360 for Mr. Minister?

**MR. KRAMER:** — The 1975 settlement was 18.3 per cent in that area. We have a round figure for the others. The estimated settlement this year, plus that amount, brings our estimate up to 28.3 per cent — that's a possible, not a definite figure, but we have to budget in that manner in order to take care of any eventuality when the agreements are finalized.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Would the Minister not agree that he's probably, in contrast to last year, allowing lots of dollars in for potential settlements? But if you were a negotiator for the SGEA (Saskatchewan Government Employees Association) and you saw these kinds of dollars being budgeted for, wouldn't you be giving an open invitation for tremendous demands on the part of the people that you must negotiate with, for a settlement? Now last year we had the reverse argument. We stood here and said that you were not budgeting enough. And now we can't use that argument because you are certainly putting the dollars out. Why this change in philosophy? Are you not just inviting the negotiators for the SGEA, and rightly so in the interests of their membership, to simply make very, very strong demands on this treasury?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I think that is a point that could be raised, but my advisors doubt if the SGEA is going to base any of its arguments on the basis of a 1975 settlement, which is the major portion of the amounts we are discussing here. The same yardstick is used in the wages and salaries in all of the districts. They vary because it is a percentage of different sized salaries, so the percentages do come out somewhat differently. In this case, they came out a little higher and the low of 24 per cent, the estimated wage increases, are not clearly identified and we don't intend to identify them. I think this is about the best you can do to fully inform the House as to what the anticipated spending may be after those rather, I think, tardy settlements, regardless of whether it is the union or our Government negotiators who are to blame. We are behind with the final settlement.

Item 17 agreed to.

### ITEM 18

**MR. G. N. WIPF** (Prince Albert-Duck Lake): — On this Item 18, under what area does the obtaining of gravel come? You are stockpiling gravel, your buying of the gravel — what area do these come under?

**MR. KRAMER:** — That purchase is done under Item 8. That is included in the \$43,233,700 on page 53, Item 8.

**MR. WIPF:** — Okay, I didn't realize that at the time. Can I get the names of the holders, or where you get the names of the people that own the pits, as to where you get the gravel from?

How much gravel is the Department of Highways taking off Crown land at this time from the pits?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I will get all that information, the location, the ownership of the pits and I will have our staff tabulate it and send it over to you. We could list any specific pits you are interested in, or do you want us to identify all the sources of gravel that are used in the Prince Albert district? That is a big chunk of north eastern Saskatchewan; it is more than one-sixth of the province. If you want those close to Prince Albert, the latter will require less research than if you want them all. But you can have whatever you want.

**MR. WIPF:** — I would like those within a 30 mile radius of Prince Albert. Is the Department of Highways, at the present time, taking gravel from Crown land, from the reserve out there and using it?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I think we probably are. If there is Crown land around, it would probably be the most inexpensive area from which to get the gravel. As I say, I'll give you those answers and we'll identify them, whether they are Crown or privately owned and who the owner is.

**MR. WIPF:** — Okay, that's good. The reason I'm asking is that I understand that there is one pit up there, just about finished now, from which you have been taking gravel, but the gravel is coming off the Crown land beside it, although you are buying it through the holder of the pit.

**MR. KRAMER:** — If you have a specific case, we would certainly be interested in it. If, in fact, we are buying Crown property from some individual, I certainly want to know about it immediately.

**MR. WIPF:** — I can't supply you with that today, but I want to supply you with that on Monday. Also when these pits are dug out, finished, is there a policy of the Highways to restore these pits, fill them in, instead of having the big holes? Whose job is it to do that, is it the owner of the pit or is it the Department of Highways?

**MR. KRAMER:** — If it is our pit, if it is a Crown owned pit, it is landscaped for grass and restored to reasonable environmental standards. We do not have any control over privately owned pits. I think it is a question that could possibly be raised by the Department of the Environment, if it is an eyesore, visible from the road. But that would be an intrusion on someone's private land and I think there would probably be some hesitancy to order people to do something on their own property.

**MR. WIPF:** — Mr. Chairman if I had a lease on Crown land from which I was selling you gravel, (I see your deputy over there shake his head, no) when the gravel has run out on that lease, do you not have any authority to instruct me to get that levelled off and reseeded?

**MR. KRAMER:** — The extent of ownership, of course, is somewhat less when it is a Crown lease but the owner of the Crown lease, or the lessee, is still in a position to have a say what happens on that lease while he owns it or is a resident on it. There are literally millions of acres in Saskatchewan in the southwest, of leased land which ranchers have been on for three generations. They treat that land as if it was theirs and behave as if it was theirs. To give you an example, they even post it, even though it is Crown land, during the hunting season and forbid people to enter onto it to hunt the Queen's deer. So a lessee has a fair bit of authority. It would have to be looked at, if it was a public nuisance. I think there are some regulations that some department has in order to get him to clean it up.

**MR. WIPF:** — Then it is possible for an individual to lease Crown land from you with a gravel pit on it and then sell you the gravel off that lease?

**MR. KRAMER:** — There may be circumstances where a mineral lease, sometime in the past, has been given to him. A lessee has rights only to the surface for grazing or farming, but I would assume that if the department came in and took gravel from that land, the only compensation that would be due that lessee would be the disturbing of those acres that were used. But as far as the purchase of the gravel is concerned I would doubt very much, unless he had some lease that had been entered into which might be an exception back some years ago.

I would want the specific location and the name, we would be glad to research it and give you the answer. But I can't answer now as this is hypothetical. Please give me the details.

### WELCOME TO STUDENTS

**MR. A. THIBAUT** (Kinistino): — Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to introduce a fine group of Grade Eight students from Aberdeen. They are here this morning with their teachers, Mr. Nick Peters and Mr. Ted Thacker and their bus driver Art Cavill. They are visiting the Legislative Building and later on this afternoon the RCMP Museum and so on. I am sure you will join with me in wishing them a very educational trip here this afternoon and being a safety man, I want to wish them a very safe journey home.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. G. H. PENNER** (Saskatoon Eastview): — I wonder if I may join the Member in welcoming a very fine looking group of Grade Eight students who are sitting in the gallery. They come, I am sure most Members will be aware, from an extremely fine school unit, an exceptionally fine school. They have two fine teachers with them . . .



**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Good . . .

**MR. PENNER:** — Well, I wouldn't want to go quite that far, but anyway we would like to welcome you people to the House today. We hope you find the time that you are here to be worthwhile. Like the Member for Kinistino, I want to wish you a safe journey home. Please take back my regards to your fellow students and other members of the staff.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. R. KATZMAN** (Rosthern): — Mr. Chairman, I would like to also welcome some of them as they are from my constituency, just over the highway. I hope they have a good time here and have a good, safe trip home.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. H. W. LANE** (Saskatoon-Sutherland): — Mr. Chairman, I would also like to add my best wishes to the group. As you may or may not know, the town of Aberdeen is my home town. The reason they are such a fine looking group, of course, is because the nature of the community has nothing to do with the educational supervision they are receiving from the top. I appreciate that Mr. Thacker is with the group. He was a principal of mine in some years gone by and has been with the school for a long time. I just want to send a hearty round of welcome to these people.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

#### **Committee of Finance — Highways & Transportation cont'd.**

Item 18 agreed.

#### **ITEM 19**

**MR. W. C. THATCHER** (Thunder Creek): — Mr. Chairman, would the Minister tell me the role of this Management Services Branch within the Department of Highways? What do they do, what is their function?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Mr. Chairman, funds in this Item cover the cost of personnel and other services, materials and equipment essential to general operations branch development and administration. This includes salaries for branch management, salaries for vacation and other paid time where the employee is not available for work, employee training to better perform in this area of responsibility, salaries and expenses for maintaining liaison with other development agencies and organizations. It covers system development. Funds in this Item cover the cost of personnel and other services, material and equipment essential for the development of systems. Funds in this Item as well cover the cost of personnel and other services, materials and equipment essential for the updating and maintenance of various operations. This includes general maintenance of existing computer programs where errors are detected, modification to existing computer programs to make them continue to fulfill the user's requirements, modification to existing computer

programs to have them continue to operate effectively when modifications are made to SaskComp, that is Saskatchewan Computer Corporation, further modification required to the work flow of systems when either volume and/or changes in purpose makes these originally designed systems decrease in effectiveness.

Some of the major systems requiring continued updating are: — (1) Administrative accounting, this includes modification required for the general employment payroll, department owned equipment and administrative accounting systems; (2) Material testing analysis; (3) Earthward system. This system requires modification for changes in standards and education and training of users; (4) General maintenance and updating of existing systems.

That should cover it. There are a few more items here but that is roughly the information, I hope that is the information the Member for Thunder Creek desires.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Minister, I think maybe what you have gone through in the last minute or so confirms the growing suspicion that many people have and that is the tremendous growth in the size of Government. Now you have listed a long, impressive-sounding list of duties for this department. The fact is that of these duties 60 per cent of your expenditure in this department goes strictly for salaries for 22 individuals. Much of it is financial services for the Department of Highways, and I think last night we conclusively demonstrated that your financial services branch is a needless duplication of another existing government department. There were 31 employees involved there, we see 22 employees involved here and that is a grand total of about 53 people that I think are highly questionable, that are really necessary in the Department of Highways.

I think as one goes down the list of your estimates and you total up exactly who is who in your department and who is doing what, you find out that you have expenditures listed here for 460 people. Of those 460 people, 262 of them are administrative people, 57 per cent of your people are in administration. Where are the people who are supposedly out maintaining our highway system, where are the people who are building our roads and please don't tell me they are private contractors because we just don't seem to have too many of them left any more? But, Mr. Minister you have obviously got a department here, management services, but what you have listed I fail to see why we need this department when we have an executive administration, you have a financial services branch which we don't need, half a million dollars there could be tossed right off the top, \$572,000. There is over a million dollars that could be chopped right off your budget in terms of people. You've got a personnel branch, some of the duties which you listed for these management services, if they don't come under personnel I don't know what they would come under. Why do you need a personnel branch when you have people doing this? You've got a planning branch, why doesn't the planning branch do it? Then it goes on and on into a surveys branch, a work branch, public communications. Mr. Minister, you just listed a group of needless duplications. What are all these administrators doing here? Of your 460 people listed 262 are strictly administrators, where are the people who are maintaining our

highways, who on earth is making the system go?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I want to go through this once again. Our total budget is \$143 million. We are talking about the administrative management and accounting capability to handle that total budget. The Member for Thunder Creek ignores the challenge I offered him last night to submit the management of the Department of Highways to the scrutiny of an independent body so we could have an in-depth study done. I won't even ask him to share the cost of it but I am prepared to do that. I don't know whether he sets himself up as an expert in accounting. I have to rely on the advice of the people who have been in this department. I think, including the number of support people sitting here, that represents 100 years of service to the Saskatchewan Government. These are some of the chiefs in the various branches whom we depend on, whom the Saskatchewan taxpayers depend on. The total administration costs, I mentioned before, are 8 per cent of the budget. The Member asks where are the people that do the maintaining? There are 1,500 of them scattered through towns and villages all over Saskatchewan, the most decentralized department that we have anywhere in this province. Those people are out in the country in all the various sub districts that we have just examined and for whom we have given account of our spending money, for Swift Current, North Battleford, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Yorkton and the Regina district. Each one of these has a management capability to control the funds and authority to spend the money, also to direct the maintenance for this far-flung department. Now the Member for Thunder Creek may have some good ideas. We are prepared to submit them to the scrutiny of qualified people outside this department; if that is what he wishes in order that we end this argument back and forth. I say this is the best answer that we can come up with. I say that the management of the Saskatchewan Department of Highways and Transportation budget is better than most and can't be equalled in any department anywhere across western Canada. I haven't had the chance to examine the ones in eastern Canada. We get work done for the Saskatchewan people, more work, more miles for less dollars, and I suggest to you that an 8 per cent administration cost is a good one. I see a former Minister of Highways, I would like to welcome the Hon. Gordon Grant to the House.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. KRAMER:** — And I would like to say to the young Member for Thunder Creek that t-the Hon. Gordon Grant had all the same staff in his department at that time. This man is a business man, and I am certain that the Hon. Mr. Grant, would have seen through this alleged nonsensical arrangement while he was Minister. He would have done away with the systems that the young Member for Thunder Creek suggests are now wrong, after being time-tried and efficiency proven. So, Mr. Chairman, once again I have done the best I can. I say I am prepared to submit the management of this department to outside scrutiny and have it exposed to expert questioning and analysis, which I doubt that we can get from either me, as the Minister, or the Member for Thunder Creek.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Chairman, I agree with the Minister completely, in

fact I would like to go a step further. I would like to suggest that we let Gordon Grant go and sit over there and maybe he would know something about the department and would get on with it, because the Minister seems either unable, incapable or unwilling to answer questions. Now he just told me he has 1,500 employees spread around Saskatchewan. I would like to ask you, why don't they appear in the budget? You have got the numbers here, you list them out 13, 31, 17, etc., add them up for yourself. Very quickly I added them up to 460. You say you have got 1,500 employees looking after our roads, building our roads, why don't they appear in this budget? You can talk around things as long as you want but answers like yours are why school children, who are up in the galleries, get such a nebulous impression about the nonsense that goes on in this Legislature.

Now once again I will ask you. Where are your 1,500 plus employees? Why haven't they been budgeted for? And as far as this proposal of submitting it to an outside body to examine the Department of Highways, if your answer is indicative of what is going on in the department, and I really don't think it is, because I happen to share the very high regard that you hold for the people who are in this House with you today. But the answer that you have given me, as far as management services as it pertains to the other department that you have, is perhaps a little strange. Now would you tell me where these 1,500 employees are?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Since the province was formed, the regular civil service personnel, day labor personnel, have never been listed. They weren't listed in 1950, in 1960, they are not being listed in 1970. This is the budget procedure, and I submit that if it is wrong then possibly a request ought to be made for an overhaul. It has never been any different. It has been an accepted procedure and if I am as short on capability as the Member for Thunder Creek suggests, far be it from me to change it now.

**MR. THATCHER:** — I find this very interesting, Mr. Minister, because, in the Budget Address the Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) bragged about how this Government has kept control on the size of the civil service and nobody believes his figures. He doesn't even believe them himself. We, in Opposition, have always tried to find out just exactly how many civil servants we have in Saskatchewan. You have just told us there are 1,100. You have 460 listed, but you say you have 1,500, so I will give you the benefit of the doubt and say 1,100. There are 1,100 who are not in these items, which I am sure the Minister of Finance has not included in his items. And you have just admitted that the Government is hiding and disguising this terrible growth of the civil service. You have done an abominable job in explaining the function of this management service, which based on your explanation today, is a needless, useless duplication. The financial services branch could also be eliminated immediately and consolidated as have most other Government departments. That could save the taxpayers the expense of 53 civil servants and save us well over one million dollars. If the other departments in the Government that we are going to go through have examples like yours. God help the taxpayer.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Hear, hear! God help the taxpayer if you had to make decisions. All I can say after that tirade, is you are dead wrong, nothing is changed, it is the same as it has always been. I will correct that figure. The regular summer and winter complement of the people who are in the day labor area is 1,500. They go up to as high as 2,500 during the summer months, construction months. That will be a little more information for you.

**MR. A. THIBAUT** (Kinistino): — Mr. Chairman, since the students in the galleries were referred to, I want to compliment the Minister of Highways for the continuation of Highway No. 41 from Aberdeen to Alvena. I know it is very well appreciated. I also want to say a word of welcome to the former Minister of Highways (Mr. Grant) who is sitting behind the rail today. My feeling is that the Department of Highways, whether under the Liberal Government or this Government, has been a very well managed department.

**MR. C. P. MacDONALD** (Indian Head-Wolseley): — Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a comment on the day labor services. There is no question about it, day labor services have been in the Government for many, many years. But there was a basic difference from 1964 — 1971. Everyone in Canada knew that the Government did more to hold down the growth of bureaucracy than any government on the North American continent, including freezes year after year after year. Nobody questioned the growth of the civil service. But today the growth of the bureaucracy and Government expenses are becoming a major issue in the inflation and tax rates, the rise of taxes in the province, and the cutback of services. All of a sudden we have the Minister telling us we have got 2,500 additional civil servants in the Department of Highways, one department, in the height of the summer construction period, and 1,500 the rest of the year. And how many times have we had to press the Government side, trying to determine the total extent of the civil servants and the bureaucracy in this province without any success? All I am suggesting, Mr. Minister, is that that is an interesting disclosure. I think we should sit down and do a tabulation in this department and in every department that we come to in the Estimates. Does the Minister have any additional people in the Department of Highways who are paid by the Department of Highways, other than the 460 here, other than the 1,500 under the day labor services, and the 2,500 in the height of the construction period? Do you have any other contract? Do you have any other individuals paid by the Department of Highways in any way, shape or form, by contract or by anything else in this appropriation for this fiscal year?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I am not surprised when the Member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher) raises inane questions, but I am surprised when the Member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. MacDonald) does. He was a Minister and ought to know what was going on in the Department of Highways and in other departments during those seven years he was in Cabinet. I suggest to you that the same complement of people, both winter and summer, were in the Department of Highways during those seven years and that has not changed. I can provide you with the total temporary

employment figures. I will tell you something else. A great many of those people who were on so-called temporary service, worked as long as 42 years until three or four years ago. Nameless, faceless, as far as the Government of that day was concerned. Forty-two years service, then retiring with no pension. One of them, a 44 year man retired with \$11,000 of which he had contributed half over his period of years in the Government. Not funded, no pension, for him and countless others. This has been changed. These people are now in the service as they should have been a long while ago. That was changed about three to four years ago. But the Member very well knows that he is headline hunting, talking and asking about a disclosure, a disclosure of information that he was well aware of. Certainly every Minister and every Member in the House who has been in the Cabinet knows that day labor service has not been itemized and listed in Estimates since 1905. No change.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask the Minister to please answer my question. I am not debating whether day labor services have been in the Government. Of course they have. What I am asking you for is an accurate evaluation of the growth of bureaucracy in Saskatchewan in the last five years. And figure after figure has been thrown out by the Public Service Commission with no accuracy. The press has searched for it, everybody has searched for it. All of a sudden we have been told there are 2,500 day labor people in one Government department. Not that there weren't just as many perhaps in 1971 or 1968, I am merely asking him what additional people other than day labor service and those listed in the Estimate book are paid by the Department of Highways? Those under contract, or any other way, any other temporary employment those are not included in permanent positions?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Well, once again the Member for Indian Head-Wolseley, (Mr. MacDonald) talks about the 2,500 people. I said that was the employment during summer months when we are trying to get construction work done. At the same time that people are complaining of work not being done fast enough, others are saying we have too many people working. Temporary staff goes up to as high as 2,500 in the summer, but the main complement, truck drivers, maintenance and asphalt crews, clerks, etc., in the various districts, are not listed in the Estimates. Regular civil servants are there, they have always been there. There may be, from time to time, contractual services. I will list those; I can't give you that off the top of my head. I will give you a total list. It is no secret, anybody can get it, a list of those people who are temporary. There is no change. I want to say you are wrong as well when you talk of this growth of bureaucracy. This department has done a lot more work in the last five years. We only increased because of five new programs, traffic safety division, a thousand miles more highway to take care of in the management area, urban assistance plan, which is spending a great deal of money, and has to be supervised. All of those, and others. The urban transit assistance needs supervision. We have only employed 18 more people in the regular service since I have been the Minister, since 1972. The others remain very close to the same numbers, in the maintenance and day labor area.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Mr. Chairman, I understand from the Minister he has given me an undertaking to provide a complete up-to-date list. I will ask him for that as of July 30, 1976. So that will be the height of the construction period, and that will be an accurate interpretation of all people paid by the Department of Highways in any way, shape or form, whether it be day labor, any kind of temporary employment, under contract, whatever it may be as long as they are paid from the appropriation of the Department of Highways. I will look forward to that. I can appreciate that that may take a short period of time/ for his officials may take a day or two a week, and I will appreciate receiving that as soon as possible.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I just want to know, are you including those working for contractors?

**MR. MacDONALD:** — I am not talking about a contract that has been let. I am talking about individuals whose services are under contract to the Department of Highways.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I will do a little more than that. I will get them for some years back as well.

**MR. R. A. LARTER (Estevan):** — Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Highways brought up the point that there are many faithful employees of the past on low pensions, and I agree completely. But some of these gentlemen who were pensioned off with low pensions, during their working period, were promised by your Government, and I believe by the past Liberal Government, that at the time of retirement they could have this money out in cash. Their understanding was that they could have their money out in a lump sum, with interest. Now we have people retired from the Department of Highways who want to do a little something, for example, they want to get into a store and under the rules that are now in place, which they were not told about, and they insist they were not told about, they can't get this money out even without interest. All they want is their money back.

**MR. KRAMER:** — When the Public Service Commission comes up, would you ask at that time?

### WELCOME TO STUDENTS

**MR. A. THIBAUT (Kinistino):** — Mr. Chairman, may I have leave of the House once more to introduce a group of students.

I should like to introduce a fine group of 45 Grade Eight students from Cudworth School. They are here today with their teacher, Shelley Thomas.

You know that coming from Cudworth is a long drive. I am sure that their trip here this afternoon will be a very educational one. If they haven't had dinner, we will have dinner a little later on. I am sure that you will all join with me to wish them a very educational stay here. Being traffic

safety year, I want to wish them a very safe journey home.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**Committee of Finance (cont'd) — Highways & Transportation**

**MR. G. N. WIPF** (Prince Albert-Duck Lake): — What was the last answer that you gave?

**MR. KRAMER:** — The last answer that I gave was in answer to the question of Mr. Larter's which should be asked when the Public Service Commission estimates are under consideration. I said there were people retiring/when I became the Minister, who had worked on so-called temporary service for as long as 44 years and they are not on a pension today.

Item 19 agreed to.

**ITEM 20**

**MR. LARTER:** — Mr. Chairman, just one thing I should like to mention on this survey and I believe this is where it would come under.

The Member for Weyburn (Mr. Pepper) is not here. I believe the Member for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson) mentioned the other day that we call this section, at the junction of Highway No. 13 and 39, through Weyburn, the million dollar mile. It took so long to complete and the design on that corner was one of the most fantastic designs I have ever seen in my life. It had Highway No. 13 coming in on a curve and I believe there has been at lease one fatality on that road already. The road was just resurveyed and redesigned and it is still a dog's breakfast going into that corner. I am just afraid that unless there is a new approach into Weyburn, on that intersection, a stranger coming along that road can get himself into a terrible amount of trouble. And even though it has been redesigned, and you have spent thousands of dollars again, it is still a very, very bad intersection. I just want to bring this to the Department of Highway's attention. I believe that all the people travelling that road, as often as we do, will tell you exactly the same thing.

**MR. KRAMER:** — We will agree with that, it is probably not the best. It is not the worst either. We have more accidents on other intersections. It is under constant surveillance and our people did the best they could with the situation that exists there. We have discussed the problem with the city of Weyburn. I can only report that there is ongoing surveillance on that road. If we can find better answers we will be building whatever safety measures we can into that intersection.

I mentioned the Traffic Safety Division that we have in our department, the first one in Canada. We set it up three years ago and it is totally dedicated to checking out areas which are accident prone and trying to find solutions. Some of the solutions are very expensive, a three million dollar interchange might do the job. But short of that we might not be able to come up with any answers.



There will be another \$11,000, my deputy informs me, spent there on signs again this year. We are doing the best that we can.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Minister, at this point, since we seem to be on that subject, I shall perform a task for the Member for Moose Jaw North (Mr. Skoberg), which is becoming rather common for me to look after his constituency business, because of my proximity. I should like to comment on the junction to No. 1 Highway, which comes in on 9th Avenue North in Moose Jaw. I am sure the Minister, and I do not intend to make this a political thing, I am sure the Department of Highways is aware over the past ten years of the number of fatalities that have occurred at that intersection. I appreciate the problems of the Department of Highways to correct that intersection. It is a terribly costly thing and we are probably talking in terms of three or four million dollars. But I ask the Minister and his department to please look at that intersection. It is just something terrible. I am very familiar with it as I drive it a couple of times a day and you almost take your life in your hands when you are either crossing that highway or coming in on No. 1. I would ask the department to take a look at that and while I realize that a three million dollar horseshoe is out of the question, there must be something that we can do to improve the safety factor there.

This is on behalf of Moose Jaw North, Mr. Minister.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I am sure that the Hon. Member for Moose Jaw North would thank you for performing that task. Yes, it is another one of the troublesome areas. I can remember one accident there where a group of young people drove out there at an estimated 70 miles per hour. There is no way that you can prevent those kinds of accidents. I don't know what they would have done had there been an overpass there. They would have probably gone over. Those are the unavoidable, unfortunate accidents that seem to occur once in a while.

Since we have slowed down the traffic, however, with the flashing lights, the incidence of accidents in the last two years is nil. I don't know of any. But I agree with the Member that it is a hazard. If there is anything more that we can do, if anyone has any suggestions for improvements, we would be pleased to listen to them.

The interchange, as I mentioned to the Member for Estevan, would cost three to four million dollars and is probably the only guaranteed solution.

**MR. J. L. SKOBERG** (Moose Jaw North): — Mr. Chairman, just on that point, the Minister is probably well aware that there has been a considerable amount of correspondence drawn from the administration in Moose Jaw and from myself in regard to that intersection and some other areas in that particular area of Moose Jaw.

I wonder if the Minister could give some assurance at this time that there will be an ongoing study made of that intersection in co-operation with the administration in Moose Jaw in

order to alleviate the very serious problem that is definitely evident at that point?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Yes, we are prepared to co-operate with the elected officials of the city of Moose Jaw any way we possibly can in order to save lives, especially during Safety '77.

Item 20 agreed to.

### **CAPITAL EXPENDITURES — VOTE 17**

Items 1, 2 and 3 agreed to.

### **TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE**

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Chairman, at this point I should like to point out to the Minister that these capital expenditures for this year are showing a mere one per cent increase over last year. I think we brought down a Budget which has vastly increased percentage-wise in Government expenditures over last year.

I should like to ask the Minister that in view of the fact that our highway system is probably the most important thing to rural Saskatchewan because of the vast distances of this province, does the Minister think that he has been fair to people who don't live in a concentrated urban area like Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, etc., do you really think that you are being fair to the people that live out in rural Saskatchewan, with a paltry increase in capital expenditures of one per cent?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Well, that is again, a matter of conjecture on the part of the Member. The dollars, I agree, are not a large increase, but I will give him the assurance the great bulk of this money is going to be spent on the three, four and five series of highways in this province. The emphasis on super highways is going to be far less than it used to be. We will be building more miles of road into the areas that he mentioned with this money. I will also assure the House that this year with a drop in the inflation rate, construction economy and efficiencies, I guarantee that we will build more miles of road and pave more miles of road than we did last year.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Minister, you have mentioned a drop in the four-lane highways. I don't know where you have been building these highways, these four-lane highways. I don't know how you could drop it much further than what you have during your tenure as Minister of Highways. You completed a little stretch I believe between Valjean and Secretan. The four-laning of that highway to Saskatoon, probably as heavily travelled a route as we have in this province, has been proceeding at a ridiculously low rate and I see nothing wrong with four-laning the main arterial route in this province. It makes common sense from a safety point of view as well as a means of expediting transportation through a very vast and large province.

Mr. Minister, again I contend to you that the overall gross Budget of this province has continued to go up and up and up and we are now spending up to \$1.5 billion. If you can only get us a one per cent increase in capital expenditures out of a \$1.5 billion Budget, you are getting clobbered when you go into those tough Budget negotiating sessions with your fellow Ministers.

Mr. Minister, you have to get on the step because rural Saskatchewan is getting the shaft, because of your incompetence in these negotiating sessions.

Would the Minister tell us, of his capital expenditures of last year of \$83,765,000, how much of that figure was actually spent and on what date was your last contract let?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I can't accurately answer that question either on the last Budget or on the total amounts of money. As I mentioned earlier, these final bills come in at the end of the fiscal year, also there is a carry over and this will have to be calculated. We assume, as I said, that we are within our budget and we have kept the programs in reasonable shape. The Member can criticize the progress, but I should like to read into the records the number of four lanes that have been built since 1961-62. In 1961-62 there were 37.67 miles; 1962 — 1.25 miles; 1963-64 — nil; 1964-65 — nil; 1965-66 — 2.61 miles; 1966-67 — 27.83 miles; 1967-68 — 30.40 miles; 1968-69 — 46.43 miles; 1969-70 — 18.18 miles; 1970-71 — 14.87 miles; 1971-72 — 30.89 miles; 1972-73 — 47.06 miles; 1973-74 — 22.50 miles; 1974-75 — nil; 1975-76 — 49.63 miles.

Now if you average the miles added over those years and if you take from 1964-65 on to 1971, the Member's assumption that more miles of four-laning was done in that time, is just not correct. Even with that paltry amount he mentioned on Highway No. 1, there were more miles built per year than there were in the previous three or four years, as the Member for Morse found out when he got into a debate over that.

I am not suggesting that we are moving fast enough I am suggesting that the No. 11 requires a great deal of attention. I would suggest to the Member for Thunder Creek that even though it was necessary to four-lane between Swift Current and Moose Jaw, it was more necessary east of Regina. The choice was wrong because the traffic count was far higher, and still is in the Indian Head area. I am sorry your seatmate is not with you. I am saying the choice was not based on traffic count west of Moose Jaw when it was initiated, and was wrong at that time. There is certainly a real need for extension to the east of us. There is a need for further construction between here and Saskatoon; there is need for construction of that kind of highway in other parts of Saskatchewan as well. I think we are doing pretty well.

You like to refer to the Province of Alberta. Your colleague from Shaunavon (Mr. Anderson) raised that question and granted that the road, even the two lanes between Swift Current and the Alberta border, are in far better shape than they are when you drive from there to Calgary into the land of the

blue-eyed Arabs, I say we take no backseat on the Trans-Canada. We have 50 per cent of Trans-Canada four-laned. Your suggestion is wrong, that we are not doing well, that we are not getting our share of the Budget. I think we are providing a service to Saskatchewan in highways, second to none when you consider the miles of roads that we have to provide. The complaints that are coming in (and you get complaints a lot oftener than you get compliments) nobody runs after a bus once they are on it – I suggest that the complaints are far less than they were three or four years ago, the written, spoken and telephoned complaints, as near as we can record them.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Mr. Minister, you still haven't answered the question on how much of your capital expenditures last year were actually spent. You have a goodly number of people with you this morning, and I am sure that they can provide that figure. I doubt that very much road building is going on at this point in time. I think you can come up with that figure. But as far as your job and as far as the Department of Highways is concerned, frankly the job that it is doing stinks, because there is no reason that this Trans-Canada shouldn't be four-laned from one end of this province to the other. It should be done as quickly as possible. There is no reason why this road from Regina to Saskatoon shouldn't be four-laned as quickly as possible, and there is no reason why that road which goes from Saskatoon through to the Alberta border into Lloydminster shouldn't be four-laned. Certainly you can't do it tomorrow and nobody suggests that you should, but you should be down there and you should be working on them, because four-lane highways on your main arterial roads are, with the kind of vehicles that we've got, and the necessary mass transit that we have to have, necessary as a safety factor. Time is becoming more and more important in a person's life. What sort of dollar value do you place on your time? A four-lane highway expedites that. Time is becoming important, not only to farmers, but to everybody who is on an hourly rate. The four-laning of the highways is not a luxury, it is becoming a necessity. Again, I will ask the Minister, how much of your budget for capital expenditures did you spend last year? I can't believe that you cannot come up with a figure right now. I suggest you come up with it. The figure you are proposing this year, again proves that you have lost out badly in the battle for the dollars in the overall global budget for this province for the coming year.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I have tried to answer the question as best I can. I listed; we have completed miles and miles and miles of roads . . .

**MR. THATCHER:** — I mean dollars, never mind roads.

**MR. KRAMER:** — . . . The dollars, I have told you, that until the final year-end accounting is done that I cannot answer that accurately and I do not propose to make a guess. You will be able to get that information in the following year, but I cannot now. I will be glad to give them to you at the end, but I cannot give you an accurate answer now. There is no accounting procedure that is going to provide them. If you want to pursue it further – I

don't know what else I can tell you.

**MR. THATCHER:** — That is unadulterated nonsense. You have got the gall to walk into this House with your estimates and you can't even tell us what you spent for capital expenditures last year. Who are you trying to kid? Now you can fiddle around with telling us how many miles have been built from 1971 through 1975 and yet you can't tell us how much of last year's budget was spent. How much road building have you been doing this winter? Not very much, if any whatsoever. Now I can't believe that you cannot send some official from your department out of here and have an answer in five or ten minutes, and until you do, we are simply not going on. You are just refusing to provide us with that information.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I am refusing to provide an answer that is impossible to give. The accounting procedures will simply not allow me to come up with an accurate answer and I am not going to provide an inaccurate answer to this House.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Well now, isn't that strange! He can give an accurate answer on what he has to spend up in North Battleford; he's got some things down here on the Supplementary Estimates; he seems to be able to provide accurate answers there. He seemed to be able to provide what he considered accurate answers on everything else which has come up, but then we get to the capital expenditures and all of a sudden, we are drawing a blank. Now come on, who are you trying to kid? Send somebody out and get that answer right now or else get out of that chair.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** — Subvote 17 — agreed?

**MR. THATCHER:** — All right, we can do it this way if you want. Would the Minister care to break down that \$74,712? What are you spending it for? We have a lot of these coming up.

**MR. KRAMER:** — It's in front of you, I've tabled it in the House.

**MR. THATCHER:** — How did you arrive at this figure?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Through the Estimates.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Of the Urban Surface Transportation, how did your department decide which town is getting it, and which one wasn't getting it? Give us a little further explanation as to why you chose town A over town B, etc., other than the fact of what political party may be representing that particular area. If I may point out, in Thunder Creek, which is certainly not an NDP stronghold, and highly unlikely ever to become one, that last year we got exactly nothing. Oh, we got a little finished on our four-lane highway, other than that we didn't get one nickel spent in terms of capital expenditures in the

Thunder Creek constituency and you can go on and on and on.

Now you note that if you break some of this down, many of the areas that are represented by NDP MLAs seem to do reasonably well, so would the Minister tell us how do you justify your choice of A over B?

**MR. KRAMER:** — When we get requests within the policy we process them and they are estimated, the programs are delivered accordingly, according to our Urban Transportation Policy, and certainly abided by.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Is this the last vote? Well there are a couple of questions which have not been answered.

Would the Minister tell me what it costs for grading, or how many miles were graded this year — in the past construction year — how many miles were paved, what was the cost to move a yard of dirt this year as compared to the year previous?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I answered that question last night, but I shall repeat. Grading, we completed 299 miles, paving — 390, oil treatments — 243 miles. Average cost per yard — earth work, 61 cents per yard.

**MR. THATCHER:** — Would the Minister care to tell the House of the figure last year, \$83,765,000, would you care to tell us exactly how much you stole out of that capital fund to put into general expenditures, maintenance and items that were not obviously a capital expenditure, because very obviously the Minister can provide that figure, his people can provide it. The Minister is afraid to provide it.

**MR. COWLEY:** — If the Member for Thunder Creek knew anything about the financial arrangements of the province, you would know that you can't vire money from capital into ordinary operating.

**MR. KRAMER:** — The question is again hardly worth/of an answer. I object, Mr. Chairman, to the Member suggesting that money was stolen and I demand that he withdraw that now.

**MR. THATCHER:** — I shall rephrase the question. Shall we say "removed" then?

Mr. Chairman, I might add, until the Minister provides that figure we are going to be on Highway's Estimates for quite some time. I suggest to this House that for some strange reason the Minister is afraid to provide that figure. He knows full well that he can acquire that figure very, very quickly if he wants to. He obviously does not. I challenge him to provide it. He can do it, everybody else seems to be able to do it, but somehow on this particular item they just don't seem to be able to come

up with it. However, I think we can give him the weekend. Perhaps it's a good idea. He and his people have the rest the afternoon to go and dig that figure out, which will take them about a couple of minutes, and, therefore, I would call it 1:00 o'clock.

Progress was reported and Committee given leave to sit again.

The Assembly adjourned at 1:02 o'clock p.m.