

April 20, 1978

EVENING SESSION

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE — HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION - VOTE 16

ITEM 1

MR. D.M. HAM (Swift Current): — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker . . .

HON. E. KRAMER (Minister of Highways): — Mr. Chairman, if I may . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order! I recognize the member for Swift Current, Mr. Minister.

MR. HAM: — Mr. Minister, were you intending to introduce your officials? Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister I indicated to the minister before we sat tonight that I would like to run through, if I have the latitude, the Annual Report following my questions. Under the Planning Division, Mr. Minister, could you indicate at this time any increase in the ownership rate, or are the traffic volumes up? On paragraph 4 regarding field surveys, indicate that on the average, the traffic volumes increased by 4.1 per cent from 1975 to 1976. This is generally consistent with the growth rate recorded the previous years. Could you tell me if the ownership rate of vehicles are up or the traffic volumes are up? Mr. Minister what I was concerned about was under the planning division with regard to field surveys on traffic volumes and vehicle registrations. Could you tell me if in the year 1977 there was an increase in ownership rate and are traffic volumes up?

MR. KRAMER: — Yes, there was. I am sure our staff would have a better . . . I can give you a more accurate answer, but I can give you a generalized answer. First of all, the traffic, the general miles travelled in the province, from one survey I looked at recently, went up from 1972 to 1977 from 4 billion miles to 5 billion. And if you took that over a five year period, I think and I am waiting for a more direct, but . . . it would probably be 2 million miles more travelled. That would be the general increase. And the ownership of vehicles was up pretty tremendously. You have that figure here, I believe.

MR. HAM: — Under the same planning division, Mr. Minister what is the average life of an average paved surface of the Saskatchewan highway? Do you have those figures or some indication of those figures.

MR. KRAMER: — The answer will be what the life expectancy is by the engineering services. Sometimes these roads fool us a bit. A light surface road my last six or seven years more than it was anticipated and in some areas sometimes it goes to pot a little sooner, or potholes. Just a moment. We have about four different stages, about four or actually five, all the way from light oil to first-class paving. Now, No. 1 or some of our major highways, there's a 15 year life expectancy on light oil which is the same kind of surface that's put down on super-grids as well. We might expect at least 5 years to be better depending on the weather circumstances and it would go in between the 5 when you go into an AMOS or B-pavement, we would be looking at 10 to 12 years, possibly 9 to 12 years.

MR. HAM: — This may be part and parcel of the last question I asked. Are the paved surfaces, and I'm speaking on average again, are they receiving the same applications

or thickness as in the past years, or are they receiving more?

MR. KRAMER: — We are staging, quite deliberately, with the increase cost of asphalt — we are doing everything with the base and the foundation of the road that is necessary to take the full scale pavement when necessary. But if we can get by with 2 inches on top of our base, that's the gravel-asphalt base, which we are — for anywhere from 5 to 7 or 8 years and not have to spend all of the extra money, which might mean \$75,000 a mile more, we're doing what is necessary and getting more miles that way with less dollars. In other words, the public is getting the same driving comfort and when the traffic count goes up, or the loads go up — for instance, if suddenly a rail line is abandoned and there's a lot more traffic needed then we can put an extra two inches as we are, in fact now, on certain sections of the Trans-Canada. I think you've travelled over some pretty good examples of where we're putting an extra lift on. Incidentally, that lift is the only area that we get any assistance from the federal government. They go 50-50 on increased thickness in order to accommodate the agreement that was made in Calgary in 1973 called the WEOC (Western Economic Opportunities Conference) Agreement which requested the provinces to increase their load limits across western Canada up to an average equal in each province to 110,000 pounds. Now, in order to accommodate that, the federal government said, we will pay 50-50 for that increased strength. This was called the Highway Strengthening Program. So this is being done. Now, we do a lot of that in our staging. We have not and it's unfortunate, we haven't on any of the paving we've done with the lighter surface on top of the full base, we are rolling along pretty well and saving an awful lot of money and, as I said, getting a lot of extra miles because miles are our problem.

MR. HAM: — Would it be safe to say that you are in some instances or on average, you are decreasing the thickness but you feel that the base is increased adequately to allow the regular pavement to last as long and serve as well? Would that be correct?

MR. KRAMER: — It isn't quite that way. We feel that we can get by for seven years with a lighter surface and then we can add the extra surface at that time, if necessary. We anticipate that seven would be about half the anticipated life of a full scale pavement. I might say to you and the House that full scale pavement which we put down in one of the most recent ones I remember was No. 11, the pavement alone cost \$156,000 a mile, that was a low bid contract. So you have some idea and I'm sure that we do original lift on that for half that.

MR. HAM: — Are you anticipating or is your department doing any studies or planning to cut back on paved highway miles as a result of the reduced speed laws? Is there any need to cut back on highway miles of pavement?

MR. KRAMER: — No, I don't think so. We're not that do need resurfacing and we have a fair backlog of highways that need widening and rebuilding and I see no cutback certainly in the immediately foreseeable future. I believe that we will probably, if we have the capability and the budget we should be continuing to increase our capital budget by similar amounts to what we have done this year.

MR. HAM: — Perhaps we should have added to that question with the reduction of speed laws obviously you wouldn't find it necessary to build the high speed curves. Do you think there would be any saving with respect to a cutback in a survey in the cost of high speed curves?

MR. KRAMER: — Our spiral curves on our new highways are some of the best you will

find anywhere but even though we may be somewhat overbuilding for a 55 - 60 miles an hour speed limit there still will be people who will go 75 and 80 and if they do, they are going to roll an automobile and the accident rate would go up I'm afraid, because we find the curves in our highways have been a definite improvement as far as safety is concerned.

MR. HAM: — Well, obviously, Mr. Chairman, the use of our highways by ambulances and emergency vehicles would require high speed curves in any event. Just one comment with respect to the actual estimates. I noticed under Planning Branch, if I can again ask for this latitude, there is an increase in the estimates for the Planning Branch? Can you explain why please?

MR. CHAIRMAN: — I think that is a subvote.

MR. KRAMER: — If some question is overlooked, Mr. Chairman, I am quite happy to revert back afterwards so you do not have to worry about us and say we are through that. I am here to give as much information as I possibly can.

MR. HAM: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister. Under the Traffic Safety Engineering Branch, I might ask if the accident rate in Saskatchewan is declining, or why is there an increase in expenditures in the Traffic Safety Engineering Department?

MR. KRAMER: — Well the accident rate — we have some very, very hopeful figures here, certainly figures that are pleasing. Certainly we are not going to relinquish any of the momentum or reduce any of the momentum we have tried to establish through Safety '77, but I can report to the House that in the eight month period when Safety '77 was introduced — If you want to — the question is bound to come up and I do not want to suggest that seat belts have been responsible for all of this reduction, but I can simply say in that eight month period — I will go back prior to the 1st of July, in that fiscal year our accident rate and fatalities — the whole bit, had gone up by 22 per cent. We went down after the 1st of July last year by 4.4 in injuries and 12.9 in fatalities. That is with an increase in miles travelled — the total accidents. Now this, I think, is important. The total incidence of accidents increased by 10 per cent but, I will repeat, injuries were down by 4.4 and fatalities were down by 12.9, nearly 13 per cent. Now the first two months of 1978 show a 22 per cent reduction in injuries. Reductions are even more significant because total amount travelled, as I said earlier, in 1977, and that answers your earlier question, increased by 5.2 per cent over 1976. So our miles travelled increased by 5.2 per cent over the previous year. So it is obvious that the incidence or the likelihood of accidents would have to go up because there are more cars on the road and more people on the road — so therefore more exposure. Another interesting little sidelight — a year ago last December we initiated the 'Seat Belts Survivors' Club which provides a safety sticker and a pocket card to people who write in, describes the accident they had with proof of an accident and I have on here 210 members have now written in and have joined the Seat Belts Survivors' Club. That has gone up because I signed No. 214 just yesterday. Now this is no indication really of the number of people who actually were in an accident — these are just the number of people who took the trouble to write in. You have in south of Swift Current I think one of the things that, well, my eyes got a little wet when I got the letter. The House may remember the young woman, and I think she was somewhere in the Simmie area, that hit a school bus. She had a two year old boy and a four year old boy with her, and her children were killed. Well about January I got this letter from this lady, and it must have taken a lot of courage for her to write it, she said, 'I had my seat belt on and my children were in the backseat. It was a Super Cab, and they were both killed. If I had had the foresight to have had them

in a child's seat, they probably would be alive.' I think for that lady it must have been almost heart breaking for her to write that letter, but in any case she did. That is probably the most pathetic letter that I have received from any seat belt survivor.

MR. HAM: — If I might then, Mr. Minister, on that story about that accident, I noted that last week the Moose Jaw branch of the Saskatchewan Motor Club recommended through resolution to the Saskatchewan Motor Club annual meeting that the province should adopt the use of mandatory rear seat belts. I wonder if you could tell us at this time whether you are planning on that move soon?

MR. KRAMER: — No. There are no plans for that at the moment. Frankly, I agree completely that we should be going in that direction, but I think some people would say that we have already gone further than we should and I think, easy does it.

MR. HAM: — I noted under the Traffic Safety Engineering Division, again under Studies, the branch carried out a number of urban traffic accidents showing that 56 per cent of all traffic accidents occurred within the limits of urban areas, greater than 1,000. On that note, I know you and I have had correspondence and discussion in the past. I am wondering if there have been any change in the department's attitude with respect to: (a) Pedestrian overpass in Swift Current over the Trans-Canada Highway, and, (b) Increased lighting on the Trans-Canada Highway specifically at the overpass areas through Swift Current.

MR. KRAMER: — We have under way at the moment — I had the Urban Municipal Association Committee meeting with me yesterday and we informed them that we have initiated a study of the very things that you are mentioning and we are trying to provide as much assistance as we possibly can towards improving traffic safety in urban areas.

We also have a roadway illumination program that we are commencing this year. I do not know whether Swift Current, in this case, will be one of the first places we would look at. There are a number of others that are considered to be worse by my staff. I was just informed, but anything that is possible to do, we are certainly going to do.

As far as overpasses, they are part, as well, of the terms of reference of the study that is going on. I know that you have raised that question and I think I have sent you information about the incidents of accidents. I think they are not really as high as some people think them to be. In fact, they are not as bad as some other places in Saskatchewan but that does not mean — I can give you an example that you possibly go through every week — Ninth Avenue West junction on Trans-Canada No. 1 at Moose Jaw. There is a tremendous lobby there in Moose Jaw continually. I hear quite often from the member for Moose Jaw North (Mr. Skoberg) about the need for another complete overpass in that area; yet even then there have been some sad accidents but it was pretty obvious when the accidents were examined, that very little could have helped those particular people. I do not want to say anymore than that because I invite members to study the history of those accidents and what happened.

You cannot legislate or build roads to prevent those kinds of accidents. I can only tell you that the Swift Current situation certainly is one that should be on a priority list, but is not one of the worst we have in Saskatchewan and, when the study is completed, we will probably know a little more about it.

MR. HAM: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. No doubt, potential accidents and potential deaths are a concern and I have written you about that, however my major concern, at

this point, (obviously that would be one) is with respect to the newest development of the city on the north side of the highway trail subdivision. The children from that area have to travel across the highway is they choose to short-cut or they could have, until the fence went up across the freeway or down the freeway. That's my concern for the over-pass. These children can save themselves several blocks walking on the over-pass and secondly, the tourists and visitors have just one heck of a time finding their way off the over-passes and into the city onto the service roads and I congratulate your department. I know there was a cost-sharing situation struck between the city and your department with respect to lighting on Highway No. 4 and on the No. 1 and No. 4 over-passes . . . a big improvement.

This may not be a question for your department, but I'm wondering if you might comment, if you can. Is there any liaison between yourself, your department officials and the Attorney General's Department with respect to prosecuting non seat belt wearers, or those people not wearing seat belts? Are the police given a free hand, so to speak with respect to prosecuting? Are they encouraged to prosecute? Is there any particular encouragement given from either department, are you aware of it?

MR. KRAMER: — It is the law in Saskatchewan and certainly I don't think it should be necessary for the Attorney General to talk to the various chiefs of police and tell them, now look, you should be enforcing this law, any more than helmets that have to be worn by motor cyclists or a number of other laws. We have a lot of trouble with trying to enforce all the liquor laws. I am sure that for the most part the RCMP traffic officers and the city policemen are doing their job. I believe there will be some policemen, because of their own possibly personal bent will be more assiduous than others. I don't think it would do any harm for the Attorney General to take a look at the statistics of incidence of fines in the various areas and see what the record is, if enough time has gone by to see whether there have been more or less per capita in some areas.

I have an exact answer, that I said I would give you, on vehicle registrations. In 1976, the estimate was 600,000 vehicles in Saskatchewan; in 1977, 620,000 vehicles. The travel in 1976 estimate was 4.8 billion vehicle miles. In 1977, it was estimated at 5 billion vehicle miles, which resulted in the 5.2 increase. We have on the seat belt matter, I had this on the sheet, but I didn't want to dwell on the seat belts too long. The use of seat belts has increased according to the statistics we have from 30 to 75 per cent. The use on provincial highways is as high as 90 per cent. Unfortunately, the tendency is not to buckle up in the city . . . going short distances. And that's where it shows 56 per cent of the accidents occur in the urban areas. I don't want to talk about Safety '77 as if that was the only thing that happened. We've done a number of things and I think most of you know there are speakers in schools and various places lecturing on traffic safety. The classified driver licence system was implemented. This caused some problems because of the computerization. The assistance to community groups for traffic safety projects — there's cash assistance through the SGIO for different projects that they undertake. Alcohol education, DWI courses are now available throughout the entire province; that is drinking while intoxicated or people who have drinking problems. Apprehension — now the Attorney General, as you know, has instituted a road-side breath testing which is also prevalent across Canada. The twenty-four hour suspension if you are found with .06, that's with the alert machine which can identify .06 or over and will identify red after they get well over the .08 or .09. The forgiveness is reasonably good on the highway but if anybody was to argue, I would not advise them to argue on an amber light because they still might, if they went to a more scientific machine they might find they were over .08.

The rehabilitation, there's a treatment alternative now being explored. We've had the reduction of speed limits, financial assistance to urban municipalities and there you go back to your question again. Because three-quarters of all accidents occur in these jurisdictions, urban and then in the rural municipalities. You know it is rather interesting to note that only 25 per cent of the accidents occur on our provincial highway system, that's what we are discussing tonight and over 50 per cent of the traffic is on those roads. So I think it's certainly a point that's worth remembering, maybe worth talking about a bit.

MR. HAM: — I may be a little ahead of myself here, I meant to ask you previously on that discussion we had about the overpass, the pedestrian overpass and the lights, I wonder if I might be able to not pinpoint a specific time but an approximate time that your department officials could indicate when we can anticipate either/or - increased lighting or an overpass? With respect to the pedestrian overpass over No. 1 highway through Swift Current and lighting, if you could indicate some approximate time - two years, five years?

MR. KRAMER: — It's in the terms of reference as I said of our study. I would like to see overpasses built, assist the cities with them, as soon as possible. I can tell you this, if you had a highway right through the middle of your city as I have with kids crossing back and forth, No. 4 runs right through my city, and I have been sweating over that for some time. I believe, unfortunately, there are some areas where overpasses have been built and the kids still run across the highway. So you are not going to cure it all with overpasses but at least society can't be blamed if we have the overpass and the children refuse to use them. We should be moving in that direction; I hope we can. My deputy here informs me - did you say the traffic budget is up or down - you made an observation on the budget, the traffic safety engineering budget?

MR. HAM: — I think I asked why there was an increase in expenditures.

MR. KRAMER: — I took it that you said it was up and unfortunately and I am not happy about this but I think there is a reason for it, it is actually the safety engineering budget which covers many things is down. The reason it is down fortunately is because they have been shifted into another area working on the traffic accident data system and into the transportation branch. So what does not appear here will probably have showed up in transportation or management services. So I'm glad you asked that question because it was something - I knew it had happened but it went out of my head.

MR. HAM: — Maybe I can wind up the discussion on the pedestrian overpass in Swift Current with the comment, maybe once North Battleford has their overpass Swift Current can get theirs. Is that fair to say?

MR. KRAMER: — I didn't indicate that.

MR. HAM: — I wasn't suggesting you were.

MR. KRAMER: — No, but I would say, frankly, if I was not the member and you were not the member for Swift Current I think if we looked at the thing judiciously there wouldn't be much doubt where the overpass should go when you have that incidence of traffic.

MR. HAM: — If I might, Mr. Chairman, now move on to public communications, that division, if you might have some indication of the cost of printing pamphlets for the seat belt program, (a), (b) maps, provincial highway maps and (c) the annual report?

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order, please, if I just might have your attention. I know I have mentioned it before and I just want to remind you that I know there is an item 7 on public communications. This is in general on item 1, I realize this, but I would just like to remind you that there is an item specifically for this later on and it would expedite things any why ..

MR. KRAMER: — Mr. Chairman, I think it's a point and I didn't want to raise it again but I think it would be easier and I don't think it matters to the member for Swift Current. The highway map. But this is only one, we will get the rest of them. I think maybe you had better ask under the item of communications, please. All right? The highway map incidentally, that is the first figure I got — it was \$99,000 and there are one-half million.

MR. HAM: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, those are excellent maps I might tell you, but I have difficulty explaining to people where to get them. Are there specific locations, other than government offices, where you can locate these maps?

MR. KRAMER: — We keep the Chambers of Commerce supplied with them. We certainly have supplies at our Department of Highways stations and we are going to try to get a number of them into the service stations along the heavier travelled highways. As far as I am concerned, you will notice that the highway maps are not as available as they used to be at service stations —and if they are, you pay for them — and if you get them and pay for them they are not worth damn — pardon me, Mr. Chairman. I believe, I would like to suggest to the House and I would like to have comments from the other side. A good many maps are used and used very carefully and the rest are just used and tossed in to the garbage, almost. I wondered if anyone would really mind if \$1 impost should be put on those maps — because they cost a lot of money.

MR. G.H. PENNER (Saskatoon Eastview): — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just three areas that I would like to ask the minister some questions about. And the first has to do with the sort of the State of the Union if you like, insofar as the 42nd Street bridge in Saskatoon is concerned. The matter has been before the city and before the department for a number of years, and as I recall last year when the Highway Estimates were before the House, the minister was indicating at that time that there were some studies that were ongoing, which were sort of prerequisites if you like, before any further steps could be taken along the line of finally getting to the point where that very much needed river crossing in Saskatoon is put into place. I wonder if the minister would care to comment with regard to where the situation is between the city and the department now.

MR. KRAMER: — Well, I think what I ought to do because this has been a vexing question and depending on who is telling the story and asking the questions over the years, there has been ..

MR. MacDONALD: — You're the one.

MR. KRAMER: — Well, I am telling you and I have a documented summary here, which I will Table. (Inaudible interjection). That's it. I can go back through this summary, it is just

April 20, 1978

a little more than three pages — going back to August 1972, and maybe for the benefit of the House and the press, especially the Saskatoon press, I ought to read at least some of it. (Inaudible interjection). August 1972 I wrote to the city of Saskatoon and strongly recommended that an up-to-date overall transportation study be carried out to assist with the orderly development of transportation facilities in the city. I stated in part, at that time, that my department would be prepared to contribute significantly to such a study under our Urban Assistance policy. That was in August of 1972 — remember that date. Now, in 1973, on March 20, and I think that is about eight months later, Mayor Sears indicated the willingness of the city of Saskatoon to co-operate with the province of Saskatchewan to undertake a transportation study. Two weeks later I wrote back to the mayor, indicating the department's willingness to co-operate with the study and that the department and the city agree to establish a steering committee at that time. July 24, and here again, all of April, all of May, all of June and nearly all of July went by and we heard nothing from the city of Saskatoon. Mr. Couturier, our planning engineer, wrote to Mr. Beverige, expressing concern about the delay in proceeding with the transportation study. I am sorry, I was a little too generous with that time. That was one year and four months later. One year and four months later and this will be tabled and copies can be made of it. October 16, 1974, a meeting was called with the city Department of Highways staff to discuss the details of the transportation study and the possibility of a start in the near future on the 42nd Street bridge. The department emphasized the need for the transportation study as a first step in the process. And on November 22, 1974, the city of Saskatoon formally requested concurrence from the department to obtain proposals from consultants for the transportation study. On December 3, 1974, and that again is within two weeks. I replied in answer to the request stating we had asked our planning engineer to make arrangements to contact city staff in order that a consensus may be obtained on the goals, objectives and terms of reference of the study. The transportation study was commenced in 1975 and completed in July, 1977 by DeLeuw, Cather and Company of Canada and Underwood, McClellan and Associates Limited. The Department of Highways' share was \$247,500. That was 75 per cent, the city paying the other 25 per cent.

Then on December 17, 1974, I answered another letter, number 29 letter from Mayor Sears. Mr. Sears' request was that the department undertake the design of the proposed 42nd Street bridge, the design. I indicated that the department would consider an application for the design of the bridge under the urban assistance policy but the department staff was not available to undertake the design at that time until 1976, that would be the following year. The key point is that the final design could not start before final decision was made concerning the bridge location which was part of the transportation study for which the city of Saskatoon and ourselves spent over \$300,000.

On April 2, 1975 I answered another letter from Mayor Sears regarding the location and technical feasibility of the 42nd Street bridge. I said at that time negotiations can proceed but the department's position is that the construction of the bridge would be contingent upon the findings of the Saskatoon city transportation study. I also indicated this was mutually agreed to, mutually agreed to, at a meeting with Saskatoon officials on October 16, 1974.

On May 24, 1977, that is getting a little more up to date, a letter to Mayor Wright approved the city of Saskatoon's application for cost sharing the functional design for the 42nd Street bridge and the function design study of Circle Drive, for College Drive and Warman Road. On June 6, 1977 things were moving along a bit brisker at that time. City council received this information at its regular meeting and it was on

August 10 following that, from June to August 10, city engineer Carol requested written expressions of interest to approximately eight consulting firms for the functional planning and design of the proposed Circle Drive arterial roadway.

On October 27, 1977 the city of Saskatoon in a letter to the department's district engineer, Harold Bird, Saskatoon recommended that DeLeuw, Cather of Canada Limited be commissioned to carry out this work. This recommendation was approved by written confirmation from the district engineer, H. Bird, on November 9, 1977. Mr. Bird also noted that the terms of reference were to be prepared. Terms of reference for the functional design study have been approved by the city of Saskatoon and the Department of Highways and Transportation. The terms of reference have been submitted to DeLeuw, Cather of Canada Limited. Work has started on the functional design study. It is anticipated the functional design study will be complete later this year in December.

Following approval of this study by the city and the department, it will be the city of Saskatoon's responsibility to then formally apply for cost sharing for the construction of the project. When such approval has been received, the city will then be in a position to formally commission detailed designs of the roadway and bridge. This design could be completed by late 1979 at which time tenders could be called. That is the resume on historical data of the discussions over the years on this bridge. I think that I should repeat once more that the initiation, it is the city of Saskatoon's bridge. Let us not forget that. We have co-operated in every way possible. I do not think that there are any delays that we can be blamed for if there were any delays. I am not being critical of the city of Saskatoon, I'm simply giving the facts. I'd like to table this document for all interested members.

MR. PENNER: — I appreciate the defence that the minister has attempted to mount with regard to the delay in the construction of the 42nd Street bridge. He mentioned the transportation study and I'm sure that most people in Saskatoon who have followed it with any interest will be aware of the fact that the Department of Highways in fact, in '72 and '73 insisted that before anything further was going to be done with regard to the bridge, the transportation study had to be done. You can tell that the minister didn't live in Saskatoon. Anybody who lived in Saskatoon realized that the bridge was a requirement, that it maybe wasn't a requirement immediately but when looked at all with any kind of realism both within the city and traffic patterns within the city, that it was a requirement. The minister is trying to kid us if he thinks that there was ever any doubt about the location. The location with regard to that bridge was set from the time that the Richmond-Heights, River-Heights development in Saskatoon was planned and the parcel of land was there. And there may have been some odd little question that maybe it ought to have been at 51st Street or whatever. But anybody who looked seriously at it, Mr. Chairman, knew full well that the location was set, that you could have all the experts in the world run around anywhere they lived; they were going to decide that the bridge was going to be at 42nd Street; that it was going to hook up at Circle Drive and College Drive. There may have been some technicality about which way the road curved through the area that was owned at one time by the University of Saskatchewan. It is true that there were negotiations that had to take place with regard to the city of Saskatoon getting the road right of way.

There were some technical questions about the intersection at Preston and where the road was going to cross the railroad tracks. None of which took a number of so-called 'experts', three or four years to determine. And I say to the minister that while the transportation study may have had some long term usefulness to the city of Saskatoon,

there was absolutely no need in the world to tie the 42nd Street bridge in terms of its location into that study.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the minister to consider where the city of Saskatoon would have been had they waited from some kind of technical expertise, some kind of actual present demand, before they built the University bridge. It was because the people of Saskatoon, in their wisdom, had a bit of foresight and built the bridge far before there was ever any demand for it and it has served an extremely useful function. And I say to the minister that any attempt to say that the delay was because the transportation study hadn't been done, is simply a matter of trying to whitewash the entire situation. And the people of Saskatoon know full well, whether they are there as residents or members of the business community, that that bridge was required, they knew where it was going to be, it was never any secret. The planning was done in that regard.

I want to ask the minister if he would maybe move away from the 'water under the bridge' so to speak, because that is in fact, water under the bridge. And there's nothing we can do to recover it, despite the fact that the bridge isn't there yet. In terms of the function design which is expected to be completed this fall, whether it's September or December or whatever, we don't know for sure, but sometime this fall, we're going to then be in the position as you indicated of looking at cost sharing. I'm wondering if the minister would agree with me that the present system of cost sharing which is roughly 50-50, I think it actually may work out, because there's a little more cost sharing on the part over the waterway than there may be in other areas, it may work out to about 52-48 but I think basically 50-50. The minister wouldn't agree that that's basically an antiquated system. I wonder if the minister would care to comment with regard to the kind of cost sharing that the city might anticipate when they get into that particular stage?

MR. KRAMER: — First of all, I'm going to get into your question. I have to comment on your statement which is a reflection, I think on two things. The member for Saskatoon-Eastview talks about defence. Well, if there's anyone who ought to be on the defensive it's the member over there. He was on city council there during that time and responsible for some of the delay and the foot dragging . . . yes, him right over there. Certainly one of the supposedly . . . really an alderman in that city . . . and they waited and waited when they knew these particular things. The member stands in this House, Mr. Chairman, and says we should just go ahead and build a bridge, no studies, nothing to do with the future of traffic movements in Saskatoon. I want to point out to him, if that was a waste of time and a waste of money, why did the city of Saskatoon, I think he was a member of council at that time, agree to spend up to \$340,000 of public money in the design study, the transportation study. After dragging their feet they finally said — I do not know why they did; the money was there. Our assistance was there. It could have been on its way two years ago. The bridge could have been under construction right now if they had moved, because the history is there. You cannot change it. It was nothing but a shilly-shallying delay on the part of the city council and that member over there was part of that council. Do not come along here and tell me where we were dragging our feet.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the records show not only that. On April 2, 1975, certain little things happened and it is on record — mutual agreement by the people at that time. Anybody who comes along and says we should spend billions of dollars on a modern-day structure that is going to be there for another hundred years and not do any studies to see whether it is in the right place at that particular time — he says anybody knows. Well, obviously they did not know because they finally, after they got back from their

fishing trips and one thing or another, decided that year, well maybe a couple of years later we ought to get busy and ask the department to help us with the study. So, do not come along crying to me. Hindsight is always 20-20 and the member for Saskatoon-Eastview is a real example of 20-20 hindsight.

MR. PENNER: — Well, Mr. Chairman, you know that particular response makes an answer. The minister stands and says that I am being defensive. I do not think that I am being defensive at all. What I am trying to do is establish a particular point of view, and that is that there was one reason why the city of Saskatoon eventually agreed to that transportation study vis-a-vis the bridge and that was because the city of Saskatoon knew darn well the Department of Highways would not have approved it without it. The city of Saskatoon knew darn well that that bridge was a requirement and if that was the kind of game that the city of Saskatoon had to play to get it, we finally agreed we were going to do it.

Now what did the study show? The study showed that the location of the bridge, as the city of Saskatoon had indicated, was exactly right. In so far as the study was concerned and the bridge and its development were concerned, there was really no need for it at all.

Now, I want to go back, Mr. Speaker, and ask the question that I asked before I took my seat the last time and that is, where does the department stand or does it have a position at this stage with regard to the question of cost sharing, recognizing that the old sort of 50-50 formula is rather antiquated?

MR. KRAMER: — I did not answer that. When the things that are necessary are done, the various designs and so on and when the request comes from the city (because it is the city's bridge, not ours), it will be given, I am sure, the most generous consideration possible. I just want to point out once more, in case there is any doubt in anybody's mind but the guilty party across the way, I want to just read one more paragraph from the study I tabled.

Mr. Kramer, (in a letter to Mayor) approved the city of Saskatoon's application for cost sharing of the functional design for the 42nd Street Bridge and the functional design study for Circle Drive and for College Drive, Warman Road.

That transportation study was not just for the bridge. It was for the total perimeter of Saskatoon, for \$247,000 of Saskatchewan's money and 25 per cent to match of Saskatoon's. I hope you will use it. But the functional design study is required prior to the detailed design of the bridge and associated roadway. The functional design will identify such items as right of way requirements, bridge length, width, roadway configurations, etc. you know, if you are naive enough to think that you just simply, like the beavers, throw a bridge up overnight, and you are going to spend millions of dollars and do like some of those Liberal governments in eastern Canada, Quebec and what not — you build a bridge today and the next day it falls in the river — I do not think we want to operate that way.

When the city of Saskatoon gets around to making its requests, even though they are two years late, we will co-operate with them. The costs have gone up since that time too. Do not forget that. If they had been brisk and on their toes we probably could have saved two years inflation.

MR. PENNER: — Mr. Chairman, you know the minister has a weak enough argument as it is without attempting to weaken it further by suggesting that I, in any way, indicated that a functional design is not required. Any fool knows that you are going to have to have a functional design before you can start. My argument had to do with the transportation study itself as a prerequisite for the location of the bridge.

Now the minister, Mr. Chairman, indicated that the bridge was the city's bridge. You know it is kind of interesting. On the one hand he stands up and says that you cannot have the bridge unless you comply with our regulations to have this transportation study thing that we want and then, on the other hand, he says that aw, but it is the city's bridge. The city had already determined where the right of way was going to go. The city had already determined where the bridge costing was going to be. Now it is the city's bridge. Is the minister indicating that only city people are going to use the bridge?

MR. KRAMER: — No, I am not indicating that at all. I am simply indicating that we have an overall responsibility for the safety and certainly we have always recognized the fact that bridges are necessary. But what the member is really telling this House is that the aldermen, the city of Saskatoon, for a paltry \$61,000 when we are talking about a \$6 million, or a \$7 million or possibly \$10 million bridge structure, now would drag their feet for two years because they did not want to spend \$61,000 on a transportation study, not only for the bridge, but for the total perimeters of Saskatoon. And I say any member that would try to tell grown up people that kind of a story had better have his head read. And they tell me he is a school teacher, \$61,000 that they drag their feet on for two years when we were paying the bulk of it, three quarters, saying, oh, well, we don't really need to spend that because we don't really need . . . everybody knows where the bridge is going to be, when the total study was going to be done. It could have been done much sooner if it had not have been for that ridiculous foot dragging. And that is my point, \$61,000, not even a fraction of one per cent of the total cost.

MR. PENNER: — Mr. Chairman, the minister still does not understand the position of city council at the time that that decision was made. City council was not quarrelling with the concept of the transportation study. What city council quarrelled with and they were absolutely dead right, and the study has proven it, that there was no need to tie the location of the bridge into the transportation study. And that is what that particular situation was all about. I am wondering if the minister, and it gets back to the funding question, and I can understand and I can appreciate that the minister may not be able to stand up and say O.K., it is going to be a 75-25 on the funding, or it is going to be 65-35 on the funding. Would the minister agree that the old formula is antiquated to the point where it cannot apply in this particular situation?

MR. KRAMER: — Antiquated is one way of describing it. It has been around for a while. Probably not as long as the member for Saskatoon-Eastview. I want to say this that I can tell you definitely it will be somewhere between 50 and 100 per cent.

MR. PENNER: — I appreciate that and I urge the minister to consider it to be as close to the 100 per cent as he can possibly get it. I want to go to an area, Mr. Chairman, that relates to Preston Avenue. Well, it really relates to the freeway on the southern outskirts of the city. In my mind, a roadway that was built with the idea that there was a need to move traffic fairly rapidly into the downtown area of the city and I have to say that I frankly agree with the concept. The citizens of Saskatchewan spent a tremendous amount of money to build a four lane highway, that is a reasonably high speed highway, that allows people from the south and the eastern part of the city, many of them in my

constituency, to be able to get downtown in a hurry. The city has a position with regard to the intersection at Preston and the freeway insofar as traffic lights are concerned. A position, by the way, that has been developed since I left that council. I want the minister to know that. I wonder what the department's point of view would be with regard to that?

MR. KRAMER: — First of all, and you are not the only one that has these requests. I believe that all of the members from Saskatoon and area have indicated concern about the Preston Avenue. Now let me for just a moment take a look at the situation in Saskatoon. First of all, a freeway was built to take people into the downtown area. That is right, what the member says. Not only that. But take people through the city of Saskatoon, those that did not want to, now I can't imagine anyone not wanting to stop in Saskatoon, but some people just have bad taste, in fact, thousands of them. Going on through we got a half a freeway through Saskatoon and then some politicians back some 10, 12 years or so ago, they decided that they were not going to have a freeway, that they were going to go up through that Avenue A area, at a tremendous cost to all the public of Saskatchewan to accommodate a few people and I think somehow or other to accommodate the town of Langham, when already there was a design to swing that freeway up around the outside and those routes, already widened on 22nd Street West, could have gone out there and swung straight up out of there and you would of had a freeway. You didn't, no but having gone that far, a freeway is designed to move traffic through. Now, again we find the local politicians in the city of Saskatoon, for whatever reason, ignoring their City planning branch. Some of the local politicians decide that they are going to move a congregation, a total congregation, on the south side of that freeway — with the Alliance Church — and expose them to the hazards of crossing that freeway. That is a city decision. And I say, if the city wants to make that decision they ought to possibly consider an overpass, because lights will do no good whatever. Lights will do no real good whatever and I would like to give you a little history — and I will table this, too. Traffic studies again. Let's take a look at what happened at Preston Avenue and Circle Drive, Saskatoon. 1975 - five accidents, 1976, 11 accidents, 1977 (strangely enough with traffic going up) 7 accidents. Now, in the total picture right from your city of Saskatoon and as you know, our Traffic Safety Engineer, Al Popoff, used to be your engineer and a very, very fine chap — and I am relying on his advice . . .

MR. PENNER: — Good man.

MR. KRAMER: — A good man, right. Accident rates are not considered alarming (these accident rates) or high. A review of 12 similar intersections in Saskatoon indicates that this is one of the lower accident rates. (Inaudible interjection) Well there seem to be a lot of brave ones going down whenever I'm driving. Anyway, signalized intersections often have higher accident history than unsignaled ones — strange but true. Between 20 and 30 accidents a year is not uncommon at some of those signalized intersections. Signalization is not warranted for the following reasons at this time: One, recognized national guidelines and technical warrants are not met; two, total vehicle delays would increase; three, traffic noise will increase. Heavy vehicles on the highway Circle Drive would be required to come to a full stop in not one, but two places, because if you put one at Preston you've got to have one at Clarence. The freeway facility would be downgraded and all that money that the people of Saskatchewan put in for that freeway would be down the drain, and all you have would be another city street. Now, I think what the city of Saskatoon is going to have to take a look at if they insist that they want to develop south of there, I think the city of Saskatoon had better come down and have a chat with us about the cost of building some fly-overs, because we just cannot have, on

Sunday, all the fine people from over there crossing that busy road. If that is what the city of Saskatoon decides to do, against the advice of their Planning branch, then they had better accept some of the responsibility at least. I am prepared to listen, but as far as signalization is concerned, I have told my colleagues on this side of the House — they have been after me for two years as you have — but

MR. PENNER: — You ought to.

MR. KRAMER: — All right. I think there has to be a different approach. First of all I think there has got to be (until we find that different approach) I think there has got to be a better place to have a congregation. Right on the weekend and all the traffic is there, to have a congregation crossing that highway, I think that just doesn't make sense — especially flying in the face of the community planners, the engineers and the people who are advising them on this — but the politicians in the city of Saskatoon have decided otherwise.

MR. PENNER: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could just comment briefly. I have had to say I am rather encouraged about the minister feeling that sometime of grade separation is preferable. It is my understanding that that portion of the freeway is presently the responsibility of the Department of Highways, and I want to invite the minister to contemplate the fact that probably the quietest time for the use of that freeway is Sunday morning — in terms of highway traffic — and I want him also to consider the tremendous implication that growth south of Saskatoon and the acreages you know, just immediately south of the freeway has had on people crossing at Preston and at Clarence. I think that, you know the implications behind the decision to locate the church there is something that I am not fully aware of, that I do not fully appreciate. I have enough confidence in the city of Saskatoon City Council that if they have made that decision, there is a good deal of wisdom in it. But I want the minister and his department to consider the implication of the growth that has taken place south of the city as a factor that is quite a part and probably more significant than the church would be insofar as traffic attempting to come across that intersection on a north-south plain. When one looks at the sight lines, particularly when approaching the intersection at Preston and the freeway from the south and driving north, the sight lines are not good and as I say in many respects, people who are using it, unless they are making the turn to go downtown, will do everything they can to stay away from it because of the hazard of trying to cross four lanes of quickly moving traffic. That's right. And so I say to the minister that I respect the position of the department with regard to a fly over or some kind of grade separation and would encourage the minister and his officials to do whatever they can to speed that up.

MR. KRAMER: — There is a fair bit that does not meet the eye in this whole situation. I would like a few people to ask a few questions as to .. it's fine. I sure would not want to stand in the way of the church people having their meeting place but community planning means something to me. And even today I believe that the application, if it has been in, it has only been in recently, after they have decided in council without advice from their planning branch; they have not even applied to community planning. Now if we are going to have orderly development of urban centres, I do not think they should ignore ordinary rules of community planning which is going to, in the final analysis, result in some very unsafe areas around that city. Here we are trying our best to bring down the incidence of accidents and a few developers are doing their very best to upset that just so they can get their development plans on the road. If development is needed, let those developers then put up a few bucks to create the safety devices that are needed to move traffic across the top of that road.

MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern): — The member for Eastview has opened up a topic that I would like to continue on for two points that were made. You referred to the transportation study that was done in Saskatoon. Could you tell me why and what changed your mind that the original summation to the city of Saskatoon suggested that the north Saskatoon bridge, as it was called then, may not be at 42nd Street and may have been at 51st?

MR. KRAMER: — I never changed my mind and I do not know of any engineering studies that suggested the bridge would be elsewhere. There may have been some discussion about the possibility, but there was never any engineering advice on that.

MR. KATZMAN: — Did the transportation study come up with any recommendations re the next proposed bridge in Saskatoon, which is supposed to be on the south end of the city of Saskatoon coming across approximately where the Saskatoon city golf course is now?

MR. KRAMER: — My people say they are not aware of any suggestions, unless there was possibly some additional information or suggestions by the engineering firm that was engaged by the city. We will, however, check the study and I might say, for any member that might wish it, we should have copies available. The city should have copies available of that study and I think they would be very useful to the members.

MR. KATZMAN: — Well, the reference I am going back to is that when the exhibition built their new race track it was announced that the reason of the location and everything would be that the new bridge, a suggested bridge, was coming across the golf course and that was the reason that the golf course was changing its location and so forth. Now, when did your study, you are saying that that was not considered at all?

MR. KRAMER: — I am not saying it was not considered. My staff are telling me that they are not aware of a suggestion of that kind but they are prepared to check and see if there was a suggestion.

MR. KATZMAN: — On the same study, was there any recommendations re the problems that have developed in the city of Saskatoon from 20th Street to 33rd Street, and is there any sharing of financing to widen that area?

MR. KRAMER: — We share that 50-50.

MR. KATZMAN: — Does that include the taking over of any properties and so forth, that have to be?

MR. KRAMER: — That includes everything concerning the new structure.

MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose): — I just have a few questions I want to ask the minister. First of all, I hope he can help me correct this rumour which I heard, Mr. Minister, because when I was home on the weekend, I heard a rumour that (I hope it's right) you had changed your mind about that stretch of highway that I've been referring to. That you are in fact, going to rebuild No. 15 from south of Rosetown through to Mildred. I thought perhaps, that you should correct me if I've heard that rumour incorrectly. Mr. Minister, I do have a question.

Sometime ago, probably three years ago, on a number of occasions I made reference to the fact that to my knowledge Saskatchewan was the only province — the only place I had been in North America, I should say — where they didn't at regular intervals on the highway, have posted the school bus signs, that it is illegal to pass. You know the signs I mean. At that particular time the only signs that existed in Saskatchewan were on dangerous hills where a bus crossing would take place. I am very pleased now to see the odd sign cropping up on the highway which does just exactly what we do in the rest of North America and I congratulate the Department of Highways for that. I think it has a psychological effect and I think it is good.

My question is this, is it your intention now to take a look at the overall pattern in Saskatchewan and go into the erection of (I suppose it would be several thousand) signs at regular intervals. I see a few on the highways; I congratulate you. We are now in with the rest of North America on this and I would like your comments on that, Mr. Minister.

MR. KRAMER: — We are going to continue to erect signs wherever they are necessary. These signs have become fairly expensive; we have to budget for them. I don't know. . . I did price them; I am almost afraid to ask what the average cost of a . . . It would average out small and large, certainly at better than \$100 each.

MR. BAILEY: — I can appreciate that. That is quite a cost, Mr. Minister, and I can appreciate the . . .

MR. KRAMER: — (inaudible)

MR. BAILEY: — No. What was the department's reasoning (and I'm not being sardonic about this, Mr. Minister) for not having these signs on the highways previous to now? I checked it out and as far as I know we were the only ones in North America who did not have these signs posted at regular intervals. I think it is three years ago that I questioned. We now see the signs. Have you had a change in policy? Why did you hold back — was it just cost factor?

MR. KRAMER: — Well, I'm informed by my staff that we have always had them where there were problems of sight, distance and so on and we are simply extending the policy to as many spots as possible because even on the level, some people don't seem to be able to spot the buses at time. It is one of those things that we can't be too careful about.

I believe that we will be moving with more signs as soon as we can and we will be going on a priority basis wherever there seems to be the greatest need.

MR. BAILEY: — Thank you, Mr. Minister.

I will allow you time. (I'm not going to ask you any further questions because some of these people have more questions than I have) but I would hope that before you are through highway estimates I will be able to reach a decision with you on No. 15 Highway, and give you and your advisor's an opportunity to change your minds between now and when we get through the estimates.

MR. KRAMER: — I did tell the member that I went down No. 15 last summer — down across the ferry and through there and those constituents of his were passing me at 75

and 80 miles an hour on that road and I don't know what they would do if they widened that road to a modern standard. I don't know in the interests of safety whether we can actually really entertain, I think there has to be a bit of safety education done before we give them a freeway through there that will allow them to travel at those speeds safely.

MR. WIPF: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I believe to hear you say that the member for Rosetown-Elrose's constituents are so happy that they are just about flying and, as he said that he will await your answer before the end of the estimates, I do hope you don't take five, six days or two weeks because it would be a long estimate here.

Mr. Minister, I am wondering about the highway bridge over the South Saskatchewan River between Prince Albert and Birch Hills. In Safety '77 last year we talked about a lot of safety programs and I have talked to many of the people in the Muskoday area, there is quite a concern there because the band is building a band hall on the south side of the river. The biggest part of the population live on the south side of the river and to go across that river there is just a traffic break, there is no pedestrian walkway, there is nothing marked for them. They tell me that they have written you and made many presentations to the Department of Highways to try and get a walkway put in there or something. There have been presentations apparently, they have talked to the RCMP and the RCMP have backed them and am just wondering, Mr. Minister, if you can bring us up-to-date on what is happening in there. I know the hon. member for the other side of the river who is very interested in safety will be pushing for the same thing. What has the Department of Highways done so far in order to get a crosswalk of some kind, there any plans to get a pedestrian crosswalk on that bridge? The tourist season is coming on and now there is going to be more traffic as I say because of the band hall on the other side of the river. It is going to be very unsafe and we are probably looking to many accidents. I have come down that highway many times at night myself and if people are walking on that bridge it is just about impossible to see them until you are just about on top of them. I would just like to know what your department has done, what it is going to do and what are your long-range plans or immediate plans for this?

MR. KRAMER: — I don't know, the question I think was what are we going to do about an accident prone situation and there was a suggestion that there had been a number of letters from the Indian band. I want to tell the member that there have been no letters, no letters, not from you and the only approach that has been made to me has been as you say from the member for Kinistino, who has asked us to look into this. We have looked into it, I did check. Now let's take a look at the history thus far. There have been no accidents - there have been a number of accidents, rather, but there have been no fatalities - no, I don't want any either, that's right. On or near the bridge there have been 13 injuries but there has been no pedestrian hit, not one. Six of these accidents occurred at night. Most of the accidents occurred in the winter and this was because of loss of control and they hit the side of the bridge. Maybe those folks have been lucky until now but there has been absolutely no fatalities and all the people that have been injured have been inside of automobiles. I wish I could say that of all bridges in Saskatchewan. I would be pleased to have a letter from the authorities there. If there is a hall that is going to create a great deal more foot traffic, I'm sure our people would be pleased to look at the possibility of trying to take some counter measures, whatever they may be. But I have to say that if there were letters sent, my staff is not aware of them. I do not recall getting any communications from the Muskoday people.

MR. WIPF: — I don't have a copy of any of the correspondence. I was told this as late as two weeks ago by band councillors that the Department of Highways had received letters backed by apparently recommendations from the RCMP. I just pass on to you

what I have received and I am glad that the member opposite brought this to your attention. I brought it to his attention. But, as you say, let's not wait for accidents to happen, let's not wait for some fatalities to happen on that bridge or in that immediate area before we do anything. One of the reasons, I suppose is the people on the north side of that river live in one of the most safety conscious constituencies in the province of Saskatchewan. They are very conscious of the problem that they have over that bridge. You've said, I believe, that if you get a presentation from them to have something done in that area, you'll consider it and probably be doing it. I realize the expense, the cost of putting a walkway on this side of that bridge. It is a terrible expense.

The other area I was wondering about, Mr. Minister is, there is a new bridge going up in, I believe, the Gronlid area. I do not know if there is that much foot traffic there — I doubt it. I think it is sitting where there is not a town close to it, but if this could be considered, in case it is close to an area there.

The other area that I want to bring to you, Mr. Minister is this. I have had some complaints and I have been asked to ask you about Highway 55. On Highway 55 we have our truckers hauling pulp, we have truckers hauling chips. They have got two different sets of load limits. The chip truck's load, I believe, is 74,000 pounds. The logger is allowed up to 110,000 pounds and I am wondering, Mr. Minister, why the difference in the chip and the pulp haul? There is a vast difference in the weight limit there and they are hauling the same type of wood product to probably the same place. Has your department made any recommendations or is your department prepared to let the people who are hauling the chips raise their limit up to the same limit that the pulp limit is? In the wintertime the pulp trucks can get up to, I believe, 120 or 130,000 pounds. They can get a permit to travel once the frost in the ground but the chip truck has to stay around the 74,000 pounds as I understand it.

MR. KRAMER: — First of all, I think I am going to have to give a little more history. The reason for that special privilege for the pulp trucks, the logging trucks, was an agreement made in 1966 by the Thatcher government, which gave a special privilege to the pulp hauling trucks in order I suppose, to subsidize the operation and make it more financially viable. That agreement is one that has been made by the government. So far we have not abrogated it, but we are not happy with it.

Now the question you raise is whether or not we should compound — and I do not want to add to the problem by adding more weight to roads that were never designed to stand that particular type of load. Now we did accommodate all truckers this winter with an increase in weight during those months that the frost was on, on an experimental basis. I believe we are going to be able to institute that extra loading earlier next year, probably mid-December, in fact, by bringing in legislation which is going to actually legalize what we did this winter. That is the little amendment that I was at because there was some question as to whether or not we could legally do what we did, but, anyway we got away with it. If I can get the co-operation of this House, the amendment I will bring in will allow us, in our department, to issue those permits and try to accommodate those roads. It was not a great deal but it certainly would allow an extra 60 bushels on the average truck, which is not bad. It was taken advantage of considerably. I think there were more than 1,000 permits issued in Saskatchewan during that short period of time. I cannot hold out too much hope to increase those ready loads up to 110 and 125,000. I think we are bound by the agreement. I know it is annoying. It annoyed me when I was a farmer, and I have hauled stock over some of those roads and had the big logging truck go by me with twice the weight when I was going along with half a payload; but that is the situation and I cannot do much about it unless we decide we are

either going to abrogate agreements or spend an awful lot more money on some of those roads.

MR. WIPF: — Mr. Minister, you say that you are going to increase the weight load on all trucks here. You are telling me then, that you are going to increase the weight load of the people hauling chips up to what the people hauling logs is? What are you talking about when you say all trucks? Will the log trucks be permitted the 90,000 or whatever it is that they are permitted to haul. The trucks hauling chips, will they be permitted to haul up to that level also? Will they be rated up there. You said all trucks — you mean the chip haulers too?

MR. KRAMER: — I am talking about all trucks that are in the up to 74,000. Now we have the parameters of the permit that the terms of reference refer. During our special weight limit the one that would normally carry an allowable weight of 28,000 was raised to 30,000, an increase of 2,000; 42,000 went up to 45,000, increase of 3,000 pounds; 60,000 pound truck went up to 65,000; and the 74,000 limit went up to 80,000, which was an increase of 6,000 pounds or 3 tons payload. That would include chip trucks and everything else, but that does not put them up into the category of the poles and the logging trucks. Hopefully this next year (and I think our records show) that there wasn't real appreciable damage on those roads that have bridges that will carry those kinds of loads. We will be starting in December and going through until March. We will be in sort of an honor deal — if the weather is warmer than 6 below we are just asking people to use their heads and stay off them.

MR. WIPF: — Mr. Minister, we will look forward to that. That's an additional 6,000 pounds as you say. It is just too bad that the chip truck couldn't get up there. There are not as many chip trucks on the road as there are pole trucks and it's a little discrimination there for the same guy who owns the two trucks, one is hauling poles (logs) and one is hauling chips.

MR. KRAMER: — I didn't make the agreement.

MR. WIPF: — I realize that, but you have broken other agreements that were made by the Liberal government and by your previous governments. I could see that you could maybe do it for the chipper or the chip truck.

Mr. Minister, going to another area, in your department only building the highways up as far as the northern administration district line? Is that right? Or do you work into the DNS area, the northern administration district area?

MR. KRAMER: — We have the main trunk highways. We are responsible for No. 2 and No. 102 as far north as it goes. We are responsible for No. 155 and on up to as far as it goes, also for No. 4 and 104. Those are the main highways of the highway system, and of course No. 102 going to Flin Flon, even though it goes into the northern administration area. The Department of Northern Saskatchewan performs the function that is ordinarily performed by the municipalities. This is sort of their market road, grid road, community access road. Those are the responsibilities of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, the trunk highways that are marked and numbered by highways are ours.

MR. WIPF: — Mr. Minister, you talk about this road going up to Creighton. What percentage or what amount of money has the Department of Highways in their budget for this new bus experiment that they are running between Prince Albert and Creighton,

this brucks bus. Has the Department of Highways got any money in that experiment?

MR. KRAMER: — That's the Saskatchewan Transportation Company. I have no knowledge of that.

MR. WIPF: — Mr. Minister, can you tell me at this time what was the complete cost of the water bomber sites in the different areas that you were responsible for? You were building them last year at Budget time so could you give us a breakdown of the cost in the areas there.

MR. KRAMER: — I'll get that. I think I will take another question and come back to that one, Mr. Chairman.

MR. WIPF: — O.K. Mr. Minister, over the last . . . I'm looking in your book .. maintenance . . . in 1975-76 we had 12,915 miles of road (it says in your book here), the maintenance on it approximately \$29 million, or \$2,230 per mile for maintenance. In 1976-77 we had 12,972 miles for \$34.5 million roughly or \$2,700 a mile. That's an increase of 57 more miles in the two years at an increase in cost of \$5 million overall. Can you explain that and what is the reason for this rise in costs of about \$500 a mile in maintenance costs over the one year?

MR. KRAMER: — I think once again the member is getting into an area — first of all, the figure he has given me are not correct.

AN HON. MEMBER: — They are from . . .

MR. KRAMER: — They certainly are not interpreted properly because that is not the cost.

I think members would be — we're prepared to stay and answer. I have been a member here for a number of years. I have sat over there. These kinds of questions if you took the time — Mr. Chairman, I'm not begging the question at all — I'm saying that the chances of getting accurate written researched answers are so much better if you take the time and put these on the blues as questions. We could have started way back last fall, those all could have been compiled and further questions built on that. I am saying that not in a critical way but I am trying to suggest to you, if go you back through the records, I think the member for Morse (Mr. Wiebe) has had questions on the order paper and he's got the answers. Those answers are accurate, not taken kind of quickly. We'll give you approximations in some of these. What page were you . . .

MR. WIPF: — On page 34, Mr. Minister, under maintenance. I guess to break the question and make it a little simpler, there is an extra 57 miles that you maintained in the year 1976-77 and it cost \$5 million more than it did a year ago to maintain the highways. I was just asking what was the big breakdown and why the big reason on that?

MR. KRAMER: — I thought you were asking a question on how much per mile. What you are asking a question on is the total maintenance budget. The numbers of miles have not increased that much and that is true. Let us remember that for instance a great deal of this is asphalt costs and maintenance. The price of asphalt has more than quadrupled in that period of time. The cost of wages in that period of time, if you look at those three graphs those three bottom graphs, there is simply a tremendous increase in wages, the cost of equipment. We have a tremendous amount of equipment

replacement repairs. Anybody that is in business or farming knows that the cost of repairs has doubled. All of these reflect in the total cost of maintenance and that I think is the answer to the increase, even though the mileage is not increased a great deal. It is pretty obvious that this has been the pressure of inflation. Asphalt is one of the main ones, machinery equipment and wages.

MR. WIPF: — Mr. Minister, when I did quote you the cost per miles, as I said, it's just about \$500 per running mile in 1976-77 over the maintenance costs of 1975-76, which I thought was a little high, \$500 a mile. You do explain some of the reasons for it.

There is another question, Mr. Minister. I believe you are going to give me a breakdown after on the costs of the water bomber sites and the work that was done at the airports. You can table that for me?

MR. KRAMER: — Yes, I've got that. The costs for the Meadow Lake air base, and that's a commercial air base as well as a water bomber base, the total all in costs, that would be the land and everything to begin with, \$2,418,830. Hudson Bay, \$2,215,020. La Ronge, of course, was built, the main structure was built by the federal government totally as a commercial airport and our inputs into that were the clearing, and the roadway which we still have to build, and so on. All of the costs on that one are not yet in. Prince Albert's water bomber base site is \$485,850 — nearly a half million, and we have an estimate for Buffalo Narrows of \$1,000,004, if you are interested.

MR. WIPF: — Mr. Minister, we were talking about the metric conversion and I see in your book you have trained 100 people on metric conversion, in your department. What has it cost the Department of Highways so far for the metric conversion and when are you going to complete putting up the metric signs and taking down the old mile signs? What has it cost up to now? Mr. Minister, while you are figuring that out, just of interest to myself, can you tell me also the cost of replacing a 4 X 4 post with a stop sign on it in the Prince Albert District? Can you tell what it costs the Department of Highways to replace that? The reason I am asking this is because there were some people working on the highways and they knocked down a couple. The cost that the Department of Highways had quoted, I thought, was unreasonably high. I was just wondering if you had the average cost.

MR. KRAMER: — I can get the average cost of our signs. I will be quite happy to provide it for you but I cannot give you that right now.

MR. E. ANDERSON (Shaunavon): — While our No. 1 Highway in the province is one of the finest sections in western Canada and, as you well know, once we get to Swift Current, it is no longer double lane, so we run into a problem of traffic congestion. There is no point, as you know, double-laning it much to the border because of the fact that the province of Alberta, in spite of its riches and oil, have allowed their section No. 1 between the Calgary and Saskatchewan border to deteriorate. I do not think they have touched it since they built it. What we are faced with, as the traffic comes through in the tourist season, there is a very heavy overload from Swift Current west. You also know that we have, in the south, a highway that runs from Brandon (No. 2) to the border and turns into 13 and crosses the southern part of the province through some very scenic areas such as the parks and the Moose Mountain past the Big Muddies right on through. At this point with your program on the highway system, this road will be oiled completely across the province except for 12 miles from Govenlock to the Alberta border. Alberta is in the process of closing up the 40 or 50 mile gap they have, of

unoiled road, coming in to meet it, which will give us one of the shortest, most scenic routes, for a second Trans-Canada route.

In the year of 1952, I think the year which the member was elected, that portion of highway of which I am speaking was then part of the highway system of the province.

I am asking the minister if he is considering requesting and finishing the oiling of this 12-mile stretch missing in the No. 13 Highway, which would make the second Trans-Canada route across the province the shortest and most scenic.

MR. KRAMER: — That section, as the member points out, is now in the municipal road system and he is right. It had roadway signs on it. I understand that the old timers who live down there say that it wandered around and you had to stop the old Ford and kick the cows off the road when you were using that highway because it was just one jump from the back pasture, but you are right. It did have highway signs and it was marked in the highway system at one time. I do not really know. I am glad you raised that because I was rather wondering who had decided — I imagine it was by some deal with the municipality. There is a need and there will be some development, I believe, when the federal people decide what they are going to do about their total road development and their road agreements in the Grasslands Park, that this will be a natural extension. I certainly am interested in seeing that road developed. I am getting a little feedback from people in places like Maple Creek that they are not anxious to see it developed for reasons that are obvious. But there is no doubt that it is feasible for No. 13. There is a fair bit of work to be done on No. 13 and I think the Grasslands development will be a factor, certainly an important factor. A study as you know is being undertaken by Parks Canada of what they will do on roads. Originally, when I was Minister of Natural Resources, there was an offer of 200 miles of good highway through that whole country. I am not sure where it is at now but I can only tell the member certainly it is in the ball park for development, and I am sure there will be something come out of it, especially when those studies are completed.

I am a little bit worried about something that is north of there and some of the same people we were talking to were interested in that too, and that is the Fort Walsh road. We thought we had an agreement with the federal people that they were going to develop that road and take the burden off the municipality of Maple Creek, but there seems to be a slow down. I hope it is going to be cleared up soon.

MR. J. WIEBE (Morse): — Mr. Chairman, it seems that a lot of members tonight are discussing certain highways which are located within their constituencies. I noticed even some of the city members are bringing up particular problems and not to disappoint the minister I would like to join with my colleagues as well and discuss some of the highways located in my constituency. I think though, before I go into that, I think the Morse constituency is extremely fortunate in that, as a whole because we do have two major highways going through it, the No. 1 and the No. 4, we probably can claim a superior highway system which is located in the Morse constituency. Part of that is a result, I believe, because approximately 80 miles of No. 1 Highway four-laning runs through the Morse constituency which is probably the largest chunk of four-laning of any constituency in the province of Saskatchewan. I don't know whether you can say the good highways in the Morse constituency are the result of an energetic, eager MLA (Laughter) or whether they are the result of an excellent staff located in the Swift Current district. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Merv. Clark and his staff in Swift Current and also Ernfold for the excellent job which they are doing. Not always do they agree with all the requests which I make but, on the whole, I feel they are

doing an excellent job and would just like to offer congratulations to them.

I am talking, Mr. Minister, in regard to a highway which we have discussed in Estimates in previous years, and which I have written the minister about in previous years, and this is No. 19 Highway from Hodgeville to the No. 1 Highway. I got rather excited last summer I must say in that when I did have an occasion to use that particular stretch of highway I noticed a fair amount of survey and activity on that particular route and thought, we are finally going to get some work done on No. 19. Basically, the highway system as I said earlier, in Morse is good. There are two problem areas; one is No. 43 and one is No. 19. No. 43 is not that bad; No. 19 I think that 21 mile stretch from Hodgeville to the No. 1 Highway is getting to the point where it is becoming quite a cost in terms of maintenance and I believe that the traffic count and the need is there for consideration to be given to No. 19 Highway. As a result of that survey activity which did take place last summer, I am just wondering when that particular stretch of highway will be slated for reconstruction. I noticed it was not in this year's program. I am hoping that it might be in next year's program. I am just wondering if the minister could shed any light on that particular stretch of highway.

MR. KRAMER: — I have said and I see the member for Morse does not see there is about 5,000 miles at least of that kind of highway that certainly needs widening and upgrading in the province. All I can tell the member at this time is first of all, we are doing our best to keep first class maintenance on it. I think he has indicated that our staff is doing a real good job and I think they are. I think we can be very proud of our maintenance staff in spite of some criticism from some quarters, that I may refer to later in the Estimates, which are completely unfounded. But that road you refer to is certainly in that total of 5,000 pretty high on the priority list. I don't know whether your people are travelling as fast as the people in Rosetown-Elrose. Do you think it is safe to build them a good road, Jack?

MR. WIEBE: — Mr. Chairman, when it comes to the driving habits of the constituents of Morse, they are very conservative and that is as far as they go in their conservatism.

I am sure that in regard to those 5,000 miles the department does have sort of a grading system in terms of priority, in terms of which particular highways need to be done first, second and so on, which is quite understandable. The ones that need the attention the most should, of course, receive that attention. It is my feeling that No. 19 has now reached that stage. I would be very pleased to talk to the minister about it after estimates, if he wishes and I would like to be able to put as much pressure as I possibly could on him to consider that particular stretch.

MR. PENNER: — Just one further question that I want to direct to the minister on another topic.

I have had occasion, in the last few weeks, to drive No. 2 from Findlater up towards Watrous. I wonder if the minister has given any thought and whether he has had any discussion with the Minister of Municipal Affairs with regard to upgrading that piece of highway at least to super-grid status?

MR. KRAMER: — I think the member knows No. 1 is being widened and upgraded and there has been a fair bit of work done on that in the past and the work program will continue. We can't do it all in one year. As we complete certain sections of road it provides us with an opportunity to move on others. I think that is what is happening. We will have completed by next year, for instance, one of the worst areas, and fairly heavily

travelled - No. 4 north into the Meadow Lake area. That road has had a tremendous amount and it will be completed, totally completed next year. That will be No. 4 to Meadow Lake and that will be done. We can move then further west and probably we are already starting on No. 26.

Likewise, we completed in the last three years, 70 miles on No. 35. That is going up north of the valley through to the north country there. That will be completed. No. 2 to La Ronge has been completed and that again is a job done and we can move to other areas. So there is a lot of daylight showing in places.

I see the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake (Mr. Wipf) is back. He was asking about metric signing and the very various costs concerning it. The gross costs that we have developed here have been about \$849,050. That is everything; that is the total area of metric signing. I want to say to the House that I want to register, again, my disappointment — I think we have all the material, there is still some — my disappointment in the establishment of metric in Canada. It may be a surprise and I think it is a surprise to a number of people and to some of the people in this House that this act that brought metrication to Canada was passed in Ottawa in 1971. In case anybody wants to make some political capital of that, they better think twice because it passed the House unanimously that Canada would go metric.

The pressures, surprisingly enough, I report to the House came actually from big industry in the United States. That is where it really originated. Let us not argue the pros and cons of it. We are into it; we were into it with the unanimous consent of the House of Common in Ottawa and that is the direction that we are going. I have to say this - anybody knows that it is easier to figure by 10s than all those awkward measurements that we were raised with and another generation will appreciate it, we won't. We won't and I don't. I can say that honestly and frankly. I don't but another generation will. We were less than 10 per cent of the world that was using that old Imperial system - one yard, the distance from King Henry's nose to this thumb, you know, those kind of cute little measurements that developed over the years, which are ridiculous. The United States, incidentally while dragging its feet, on a government basis, is being pushed by those same industries. It would surprise this House to note that 16 States in the union now have metric signing on their highways. I was surprised and I get a little annoyed when people try to make political capital of this. You go to Alberta, go to Ontario, go to British Columbia (not to Manitoba) they are not on yet, but Canada has moved in that direction. We're in this, we might as well (as someone said) relax and enjoy it and do the best we can.

MR. WIPF: — A supplementary on that, Mr. Minister, just a brief one. In this metric conversion is there any relief coming from the federal coffers at all to help us do this conversion? Maybe one of the reasons in the States that they are putting up metric signs is that there are so many Canadians taking holidays down there from Saskatchewan at this time, you know with the gas prices and that, they are getting prepared for us.

MR. KRAMER: — There is one thing about it. That's why I was disappointed. We were accommodating federal law. We got no assistance whatever from the federal government in this, and I think that when those people that are down there, we know a number of them are down there on holidays, they are quite happy to go down there enjoying whatever is to be enjoyed down there, but they certainly take out extra medicare insurance before they go and a number of other things they take, they are damned good and sure they take before they go and let's just not start into that one. I am

not envying the people across the border, to the South or to the West. As a Saskatchewan citizen I'm \$400 ahead with my medicare and my insurance. That buys 40,000 miles of free driving and I say that people of Saskatchewan have got to go to beat heck to drive that 40,000 miles. So let's not quip about that. We are better off. The people of Saskatchewan are proud to pay their own way and they are not freeloaders.

MR. PENNER: — I wonder if I could get back to the question I asked a minute ago. Some of the people will want to use some of that so-called free driving they are going to get by living here on that Highway 2 that I asked you about. You answered about almost every other highway in the province and I'm really not surprised because you have to be embarrassed about Highway 2; you've got to be embarrassed about the so-called work that has been done on it. I wonder if you could give us some indication of how long it is going to be before that highway and the poor people who have to drive on it.. I only have to drive on it three or four times a year .. thank fortune. There are some people who have to drive on it every day. How much longer are they going to have to wait before they can get that upgraded at least to super grid status and hopefully into some kind of highway status?

MR. KRAMER: — Well the member is being humorous or attempting to be. The program this year says we are going to pave from Holdfast to Liberty. We will be grading from Liberty to Imperial, which, as a share of the total highway program in Saskatchewan I think is very good. The road will be improved; it will be totally improved once it is finished.

MR. A. THIBAUT (Kinistino): — Mr. Chairman, first of all I want.. it is very indicative by the number of people in the opposition in the House tonight that the Minister of Highways has a pretty good program.

I also want to thank the Minister of Highways for continuing No. 41 from Aberdeen to Wakaw. This certainly is going to help the city of Saskatoon that needs a lot of help. I also want to compliment the Department of Highways in the sincere effort they made in traffic safety. I think that anybody now that wants to make any political hay out of seat belts must look quite foolish. The results are very good. I know in 1974 we had killed 318 people and now in 1977 we killed only 274. I'm looking forward to 1978 with still greater reductions.

I also want to say that Carl Shields, the Director of Safety '77 did a marvellous job. I attended some of the meetings throughout the province, some on my own, some with the director and I must say that any place that we went people were really interested in the safety effort.

I also received the Traffic Safety Report from Ontario, 1977, which was a very similar job to that we did in our traffic safety effort in Saskatchewan and you would have thought that they copied our report, but I see by the number of papers they went through they never looked at the Saskatchewan report. But they came up with the same recommendations.

I want to say that from my constituency I received only one letter against seat belts and I tell you I was really proud of my group. In other communities where they were uneasy, where we held meetings, the remarks we would get there was, why can't we get meetings of that kind all over the province? Well, I want to say that any member of this Legislature who wants a safety meeting in their community should get in touch with Carl Shields. If they are scared of getting in touch with him, they can get in touch with

me or the minister and we'll arrange a meeting down there.

I think that the attitude on roads this year has greatly improved. I think the few accidents that we have on our highways is a credit to the Department of Highways for the design and good roads. I am still looking forward to improving this attitude in our roads. I think it is not only our job on the government side but also the job of every member of this Legislature not to try to snip at the safety programs but join right in and put that sticker, 'Seat Belts Work,' on your bumper and get out there. You can't make another inch of politics out of it because the more you work against the safety program now the sillier you look. That's about all I have to say. I want to maintain that the Department of Highways is doing a wonderful job on one of the biggest highway systems in western Canada. It's a good system. I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HAM: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, if we may get back to where we left off before we were interrupted. You asked if we could comment on the charge for a map. My first reaction has to be under present economic conditions and I refer now to the gas prices in the province without pretending to sound political or critical about the gas prices. The fact that we are in a tourist deficit at the moment, I rather doubt that by charging for maps at this juncture, at this time that we would be creating too much good will in the province. I would say presently that we should probably give the maps out gratis but perhaps a year or two or three down the road when conditions are different that it may be a worthwhile recovery by charging for the maps.

If I may ask a question under public communications. Do you have plans or do you have intentions to combine your highway winter road reports with MOT (Ministry of Transport) or are you working with MOT at this time? Or will you be?

MR. KRAMER: — Mr. Chairman, could we get agreement on item 1 and take that under its heading?

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Mr. Minister, it's very difficult to hear you.

MR. KRAMER: — I was wondering, that is under communication, on item 7. Could we get agreement on number 1 then move forward on these questions in an orderly manner?

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Well, I am prepared to proceed that way but there was kind of the agreement at the start that you would go the other way.

MR. HAM: — Yes, Mr. Minister, I was hoping that if I had the latitude I could finish up on item 1 and won't bother you later on anything else.

MR. KRAMER: — Well, I think it's a bit easier on my staff to get the answers if we went through the items one by one and get to your questions . . .

MR. HAM: — I'll mark these and get back to them after.

MR. KRAMER: — Let's try that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HAM: — O.K. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, you may be aware, in fact you may be one of the citizens that now use this system of driving, and when I use that term I mean a system whereby during the daylight driving hours you use your headlights. There are a

number of citizens in the province, those who are generally concerned about driving safety and so on that are promoting the use of headlights during daylight driving. I am wondering if your department has considered a program of encouraging the use of lights during daylight driving and whether or not you have considered making overtures to the automotive industry to make a mandatory system whereby you start the car with the lights on kind of thing?

MR. KRAMER: — The transportation ministers of Canada have put that forward at a national level. It certainly has a great deal of merit. The problem that is raised by safety people is that when you have a large number of cars with their lights on, especially as it starts to become dusk, there's one character saving his battery, as he thinks, sitting in the middle of those then pulls out, it's a little difficult to see him. I believe that if we are going to move in this direction, we're going to have to ask for special switches to put in cars that automatically turns the lights on and off and that would make eminent sense. It is the government of Canada which established the safety standard that said that everybody has to pay \$200 extra for a car because it's the law to have seat belts. We pay that, that's \$22 million in Saskatchewan every year alone on new cars. That's a lot of money . It would be much cheaper to have a switch on all the new cars at least that would automatically turn the lights on and off. Because most people don't want to put their lights on because they forget them in the daytime. Then they wind up with dead batteries and they say they are not going to do this. The answer is, Yes, it's desirable but there are some things raised on a national level that indicate that it isn't all beer and skittles.

MR. ANDERSON: — Just one question to the minister. I have been asked — As I drive down on No. 1 highway, I find quite a few of the turn-offs have had for about 10 years a temporary approach sign. You've got me stumped. Why a temporary approach when it has been there for 10 years?

MR. KRAMER: — A temporary approach was something that has been put there — I may need a little coaching from my staff — been put there a number of years ago. I don't know when it all started — back in the 60s, about 66 — we started this when any road that may require later on a limited access, access every two miles. Those farmers have already been notified and that's why the temporary access sign was put up so that when a service road was put in they will know that they will no longer have legal access directly on the highway. That's what the temporary access sign is all about. It makes some people pretty angry.

MR. L.W. BIRKBECK (Moosomin): — Just one more question, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, what responsibility does your department have with regard to the displays, if you like, on our border crossings, on our two major crossings, the Yellowhead route and the Trans Canada, with reference to advertising the province - here we are, we're coming into Saskatchewan? Very simply the question is, what responsibilities do you have in that regard, in your department?

MR. KRAMER: — This is Tourism and Renewable Resources but I can give you a quick answer. As most people notice, there is a new universal logo being used on all letterheads and everything else so that all documents - it's a cost saving thing - all departments will use this. We need a new sign to be upgraded which will probably carry the new Saskatchewan logo with some other advertising which will update our prairie to pine signs which were very nice in their time but the Department of Tourism is working on that and certainly will be moving on it very quickly.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, you would agree that it would have to be Department of Highways crews that would have to do the installation if there were any new developments to be taking place? If you had to move something to that site, who is going to do it. Does the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources have vehicles, transportation vehicles and that type of thing to do that type of work and employees to construct those projects?

MR. KRAMER: — They may ask us for some assistance but they will initiate the work. We will do it for them actually on a custom basis if they can't do the work themselves. If they need some of our equipment they will simply pay back into our advance account for the amount of time we spent on it. They will initiate the work.

Item 1 agreed.

Items 2 and 3 agreed.

Item 4

MR. ANDERSON: — I wonder, while you have a beautiful voice, if we couldn't read the items by numbers, not aloud. Rather than go through you reading all the numbers just say, item 5, is there any question, otherwise pass to — maybe that's not allowed.

MR. HAM: — Mr. Chairman, may I comment on that. I have some difficulty going clause by clause now so I would prefer that you carry on the way you are.

MR. KRAMER: — It seems to be going that way and I have told the member if there is something he wants, if he wants a reversion, if he missed something but I am not pressing it either way. I would be quite happy to go either way.

MR. KATZMAN: — In the Planning Branch do you do any of the work that may have something to do with the causeway idea that has been brought up two or three times by some of the towns downstream from Saskatoon?

MR. KRAMER: — I don't know what you are talking about. A causeway, is that across the river? Are you talking about a causeway for a river crossing?

MR. KATZMAN: — Yes.

MR. KRAMER: — There are no plans at this time for any of that type of crossing. There is a study being undertaken by the Saskatchewan Research Centre at the university and that is as far as it has gone. But as far as any planning or location there are none at this time.

MR. KATZMAN: — Well, there was some looking at this by the city of Saskatoon for the decision that a bridge would be better and there was some looking at it further downstream to replace some of the ferry crossings. The reason, I understand, that Saskatoon thought it wouldn't work was the up and down of the high grades and the destruction of the river bank. Yet it may work because of all the problems with the ferries downstream now.

MR. KRAMER: — I have no knowledge. I know there are studies going on at the university and that is all. As far as any planning in our department, there is none. If the city of Saskatoon has any, we have not been made aware of it.

MR. KATZMAN: — Well, I have a copy of a study done by DNS. Do you not have one? There is supposedly a causeway being considered up in the North by DNS. You have no record of that either?

MR. KRAMER: — This is not DNS. It could be interpreted, a bridge study at Buffalo Narrows could be interpreted as a causeway because the approaches are going to be fairly lengthy, but it is still a bridge. Yes, you go across a long shallow narrow and that would be a causeway, but the current is far too strong and there still has to be the bridge clearance in the centre, so it is a bridge. Unless there is some other spot for DNS. This is our study and not DNS.

MR. KATZMAN: — Well, O.K. I think we are now talking on the same wave length. The concern was with that type of concept in some other areas where the experiments have been to build the stones out so that there is a narrower centre because it is deeper. Now the suggestion is to move that step to just one section of arched area for the ice and so forth, because of that problem, and the swiftness. Are you considering any of these in any locations to replace ferries because of all the problems of the ferry closures, downstream from Saskatoon, from the Diefenbaker Dam?

MR. KRAMER: — No, not at this time, but if studies show that these are feasible, we probably may entertain it later, but I have to say, not at this time.

MR. KATZMAN: — Then, the second part of the question. Where would you handle ferries? Is this the right vote

MR. KRAMER: — Municipal Affairs.

MR. KATZMAN: — They have nothing to do with Highways?

MR. KRAMER: — Not at all.

Item 4 agreed.

ITEM 5

MR. HAM: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I noted that you indicate you have staffing problems in the Planned Registration and Property Management Branch. Have these been solved?

MR. KRAMER: — I didn't hear the question.

MR. HAM: — I say you note that you have indicated, under surveys, that you have staffing problems in the Planned Registration and Property Management Branch. Have these staffing problems been solved?

MR. KRAMER: — There is a shortage of some of these people in the wage market, but we have it under control. We are adequately staffed at this time in spite of the fact that this kind of people are difficult to get in Canada at the moment.

Item 5 agreed.

Item 6 agreed.

ITEM 7

MR. HAM: — Mr. Minister, if I could repeat that question that I asked earlier, whether or not your department, together with the Ministry of Transport, is considering combined weather forecasting or working in conjunction with each other for more accurate weather forecasting with respect to your hotline and so on?

MR. KRAMER: — Well, we use all of the information. The Ministry of Transport makes all of their weather information available to us and has done ever since their weather stations were established in Saskatchewan. They also assist us with the major airports with signalling and that type of thing. There has been complete co-operation from MOT in that area.

Item 7 agreed.

ITEM 8

MR. HAM: — Mr. Minister, this may not be the time and place to ask this question. You can answer it, if you choose. Can you indicate approximately how many metric signs were replaced as a result of mistakes — signs that were printed improperly or there was wrong information on them?

MR. KRAMER: — There was nothing significant. The Signal Industries in Regina do all of this work and if there were any defects they would simply be sent back and corrected at their expense.

Item 8 agreed.

ITEM 9

MR. HAM: — Mr. Minister, I noted that in your report, under the operations division that there was a decrease in grading in the year 1976-77. Could you indicate why?

MR. KRAMER: — I will answer that. It is not under these estimates but I can answer that. The reason for the drop in rating last year was simply an unfortunate one of bad weather conditions in the areas that the contractor was in so that they had to be followed up and finished this year. That was the reason for the reduction and there is very little we can do about it — weather conditions just won't co-operate.

Item 9 agreed.

ITEM 10

MR. WIPF: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, can you tell me how many part-time employees there are in this engineering branch. In summer, how many do you employ?

MR. KRAMER: — Well, this wouldn't satisfy me but they are talking in terms of 23 man months. Does that help you?

MR. WIPF: — That is all right. Thank you.

Item 10 agreed.

Item 11 agreed.

ITEM 12

MR. HAM: — Mr. Minister, I am curious. Do you have evidence that government outfits can construct bridges for less than private contractors?

MR. KRAMER: — Well we have and have had, I guess since the inception of highways, a bridge engineering and construction branch. I think that the House and the members will know as well, that we do a considerable amount of work for municipalities. The question the member asks, can we perform that service for less money. My staff advised me that the type of work we do which is mostly in the area of smaller projects, yes. In fact, the city of Regina engaged our department to do the overpass because they were not satisfied at the price they were going to get from a contracting department.

MR. HAM: — Do you have any studies, Mr. Minister, which determine to what extent studded tires damage road surfaces, and any plans to abolish the use of tire studs?

MR. KRAMER: — No. We have relied on studies done in Ontario and various other places but our department is not really too concerned with the damage done by studded tires. Some city jurisdictions are a little more concerned because of the pressure of traffic in some areas.

MR. HAM: — Mr. Minister, you say you are relying on studies from Ontario. I understand studs are illegal in Ontario. I am wondering how you could determine whether they are damaging or not if they are not using them in Ontario.

MR. KRAMER: — The matter is, whatever information we have is we're relying . . . Obviously the studies in Ontario were not sufficient to convince us to ban studded tires in Saskatchewan. We have not done so and we have no intention of doing so.

MISS L.B. CLIFFORD (Wilkie): — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I know you have heard about the problem in my area, numerous times as have numerous governments, about the causeway in the Tramping Lake. I do not want to go over all the details but I would like to ask you a couple of questions.

First of all, would your department take a serious look at the problem of Tramping Lake area. It is one of the longest lakes, I am sure, in Saskatchewan and possibly in western Canada because you have to go at least 70 miles around it to get to a place on the opposite shore and the lake is only two and a half miles wide or so. I would like to know if you could take a serious look at it. Would you and your department be willing to come and talk with the people of that area about their problem and, before that, would you be willing to discuss, with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, possibly an alternative to the road system around there, to put it as one of the priorities for the grid system? So that if this cannot be solved by putting a causeway or a bridge across it, would you discuss seriously, with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, some alternative to the road system around the area.

MR. KRAMER: — In this case, and more so than three or four years back but responsibility for this kind of, as you indicated that Municipal Affairs is the department that should be doing something, if it is decided that this work is necessary. I agree, (interjection) don't, that's a long way from Tramping Lake. Anyway, the causeway, I'll tell

you one thing, the causeway will accommodate a hell of a lot more traffic than the primrose path ever will and I agree with the member for Wilkie that there is a real need in those communities. I tried my best to initiate some activity there about five years ago and there were a number of people that were interested and then there were a number of people who as usual dragged their feet and they were on the east side. The municipality on the east side was something less than interested. But, yes, I'll talk about it but I would like you to raise it with Municipal Affairs as well because the transportation area, that is rural transportation is in Mr. MacMurchy's department. I would, well now the Minister, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I'm behind the times, the Department of Rural Affairs, let's call it what it is and if there is anything that we can do, if they arrive at some logical solution to this problem, I'd be very happy to see something done and I certainly have always been anxious to see this happen and I still am.

MISS CLIFFORD: — One final question, how about, I realize the problems, I discussed it with many people between municipalities and funding and what you have often in the past but there are times, however, when a government department must be a leader and possibly I think this is one of the times when some real initiative and leadership between the two departments could really help this area and solve the problem that has been there for numerous years under both governments. I think it is time for leadership and some kind of incentive from your department and the Municipal Affairs Department.

MR. KRAMER: — I'll take a look at it again and see if I can build a fire.

MR. BIRKBECK: — I did want to ask a question under this subvote and I'm quite frankly glad I let the member for Wilkie go before me because her question is of much more value and importance than the one I have to ask, but it is a question I do want to ask and that is with regard to the research that you are doing. Sorry, Mr. Minister, if you are having difficulty understanding, I will turn up the volume a little.

You are doing some research in a number of areas. The member for Swift Current has asked if you have done any studies with regard to studs and tires and possibly doing away with studded tires. You replied that you would be depending on the research from Ontario. In other matters we see that we are depending on research from the United States. I suppose what I am trying to say is that I am somewhat concerned, are we, or do you feel as the Minister of the Department, that we are doing ample research to make the necessary changes that we have to make as we progress. Do you feel we have enough going into research in your department?

MR. KRAMER: — I certainly do. In fact I think we are not depending on — I suppose I could have answered that question on studded tires, simply by saying, we are not concerned. The information we have on any studies has come from Ontario and it hasn't impressed us. That is simply because we are not interested.

Now as far as our research division in Highways, I invite people to visit that department and take a look at the work that is being done there in asphalt, soil studies and so on, that has been going on over the years.

This fall we established the first of its kind in the world - our highway test track, which is unique in the fact that it is a circular track, built and designed entirely in Saskatchewan between the Department of Highway staff and the Saskatchewan Research Council.

I have a roadbuilders' magazine for all of western Canada and there is an article in there

of two full pages and pictures indicating the interest that is shown in this test track, which is designed to test all types of road, heavy pavement to lighter pavement, under certain weights and certain temperatures. I invite members, again, to go down to Park Street, where it is all enclosed in an igloo-type building there. It is a unique thing and it is a tremendous credit to Saskatchewan Research Council and our Department of Highways, at a total cost of only \$375,000. That is something that I don't want to elaborate too much on. I have a pamphlet on it. I think it would save a lot of talking. You can pass it around. We have other pamphlets if anyone wishes them.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, I would just like to thank the minister for the reply. I appreciate it. Thank you.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Chairman, if I may have permission, I have one question on item 8, as I wasn't in, if the minister would allow me. I believe that is right, otherwise I have to ask in every vote going down from 13 to 20.

On the maintenance of highway, I assume that is where the \$45 million is where you charge flagmen and these type of people. Am I correct? On highways, like when you are working on a highway, is this the estimate to talk about them?

MR. KRAMER: — Yes.

MR. KATZMAN: — O.K. I have a concern and I think the Minister of Labour will have the same concern of the people who are on Workers' Compensation, who are partially injured workers could, in my opinion and in the opinion of some of the Workers' Compensation people, make excellent flagmen in these kind of jobs. Now, is there any consideration within your department to work with Workers' Compensation with the partially disabled in one form or another but who are still capable of handling this job. Are you doing any work together to try to employ these people in these areas?

MR. KRAMER: — We have a tremendously good record in re-employment of people who are injured or trying to provide work for people who have handicaps. We have some people who are being picked up every day by the handicapped bus in Regina, Saskatoon; incidentally funded 75 per cent by this department by capital funding as well as a maintenance grant. I would want to be very careful in the area of flag persons. There are some awful, awful careless people on the highways and we have lost flag persons with two good feet under them because they haven't been quick enough to get out of the way. We have, and it's unbelievable but it's true. They have been seriously hurt and they have been killed and I believe that if it was a case of driving one of the trucks, we quite often use lead trucks; if they were able to drive, we could use them there and so on. But, in busy traffic I would want a young person that was alert and had two sound feet under him.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, you've brought something out that I've never heard before. How many flag people with the department in Saskatchewan have been killed being flag men?

MR. KRAMER: — I can get you the historic figures, but we have had incidents.

MR. KATZMAN: — It is a rare, rare, rare, thing I would assume.

MR. KRAMER: — We had one, not one of the recent ones, on a marking machine moving down the highway, out here at Moose Jaw. One young man killed and one badly injured

April 20, 1978

and that is only about three or four years ago and there have been some incidents since. There is one gentleman in North Battleford, an elderly gentleman, that was crushed in between two, driven up right against the truck, and he has been on compensation for years because of the sheer carelessness and impatience of people going through.

MR. KATZMAN: — So you are saying when there is a construction crew going, people aren't considerate enough and because of that you are taking a risk on any of these types of people if you were to hire them as flagman and, therefore, for their safety you are saying, we have to back away?

MR. KRAMER: — We can employ them. I would say if there are incapacitated people there are places where the traffic is not high, it is not dangerous, there are places that we can. But on a busy highway, the last thing I would want would be an older person that couldn't move, or a young person that might have a handicap.

MR. KATZMAN: — Is there any specific area, for an example, people sit on a van and do a lot of counting of vehicles going by, for certain rates and destinations and things, are you using them for that area, where they are protected?

MR. KRAMER: — We use them wherever we can and the only thing, if you know of handicapped people that are looking for work, tell them to apply to the Prince Albert office, get their name in, or whatever area they are in and they will not only receive consideration but they will be given priorities if they are handicapped.

MR. WIPF: — What you are suggesting is that Workers' Compensation people who will then be able to work on some of the lighter type jobs (as I call them), seasonal in most cases, if they get their name in now to your department you will give them a consideration wherever possible?

MR. KRAMER: — I'm saying that's our policy, yes.

Item 12 agreed.

ITEM 13

MR. HAM: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, could you or your officials tell me whether or not there are any plans to construct, or are you considering building a four-lane highway south of Swift Current to the Neidpath junction? There have been a number of accidents over the last several years and there have been pressure groups in to see me. Whether or not you have received correspondence or not I don't know, but I know there are a lot of concerned citizens live in that direction.

MR. KRAMER: — Mr. Chairman, may I answer that last question? There has been no correspondence as such that we are aware of and my people say that it is not considered to be of high priority at the moment.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:03 o'clock p.m.