

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**Second Session — Nineteenth Legislature**

**May 5, 1980**

**EVENING SESSION**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

The committee reported progress

**MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern):** — Mr. Speaker, we called division on Bill 21 and I didn't hear the Clerk repeat it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — I believe I heard someone calling on division. I'm just not sure where that was, Bill 21?

**MR. KATZMAN:** — It wasn't recorded, I don't think.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Bill 21 on division.

**COMMITTEE OF FINANCE**

**COMMITTEE OF FINANCE — DEPARTMENT OF  
HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION — VOTE 16**

**Item 1**

**HON. E. KRAMER (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** — Mr. Chairman, it's a pleasure for me once again to introduce some faces who need no introduction, and I think, one new one. Tom Gentles, our deputy minister, 33 years with the Department of Highways and Transportation; immediately behind him, the associate deputy minister, Jack Sutherland, with 27 years; Al Schwartz, right behind me is our director of support services division, with 26 years; and for the first time, Paul Fitzel, director of financial services branch, with 16 years; last but certainly not least, Myron Herasymuk, in behind there is our operations engineer and has 20 years with the department. That, Mr. Chairman, adds up to 122 years of service. If you threw mine in probably it would be 150, but the civil servants combine 122 years of experience with the Department of Highways and Transportation. I believe Saskatchewan has reason to be proud of this service, and the longevity maintained by people in this department.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. KRAMER:** — It is not only this top advisory group; last year we recognized 100 people who had 25 years or more of service with the Saskatchewan Department of Highways and Transportation.

We welcome this examination of our estimate. I hope we can proceed in the same tone as we have in other years. Any questions which cannot be readily answered, I hope will instead be given to you in writing later on in order to facilitate things here tonight. Then you would also have record of the answers for your files. I think the Department of Highways and Transportation in Saskatchewan is recognized. I know it is. We hosted the Roads and Transportation Association Canada Conference convention last year for the first time in many years. People from all over Canada were here, and were certainly very pleased to visit. Their ladies were here enjoying some of the best weather

May 5, 1980

September ever had to offer, and that was very good. I think they were pleasantly surprised with what they found in Saskatchewan for pleasure and sightseeing, if we can depend on the frank statements which were made.

If we were to judge the Department of Highways and Transportation's record on the number of people employed and the amount of work done, I think again Saskatchewan has reason to be proud. Since 1972, we have increased our programs. A number of new programs have been introduced, and we have not increased staff in the nine years I've been minister. I think that is not any credit to me; it's a credit to the management and the experienced staff we have here. And at the same time I think I can honestly say the people of Saskatchewan for the most part have received good service on the 13,000 miles of highway we have in Saskatchewan, which is only equalled by the province of Ontario.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to go to item 1.

**MR. G.M. McLEOD (Meadow Lake):** — Mr. Chairman, first of all I would like to welcome the well-experienced staff the minister mentioned who have a number of years of experience. I was thinking at the time he was going to include his own experience in there. He did the addition for me — 150 years of experience. But I think it's generally conceded in the province what the minister has said regarding the staff in the Department of Highways and Transportation; the staff in this province provides a good service.

As we consider these estimates, my basic concern in the whole Department of Highways and Transportation is to do with the financial end of it and that's certainly what we're here to do tonight in the estimates. The concern I have in terms of this 150 years of experience dealing with the Minister of Finance, treasury board and with developing a budget for their department is that they argue the case and say, last year we spent \$162,487,000 or thereabouts. That's including the amount spent in the supplementary estimates. This year we're asking for a lesser amount. In this day and age, and as the years go on, with inflationary dollars it's well recognized by everybody that the cost of construction and building highways is increasing at a great rate. I can't see how it can possibly be justified that the amount of money in the Department of Highways and Transportation can go down.

Now many people will say, well, if you drive in certain areas of the province we have some excellent highways. And sir, I'm the first guy to agree. We have excellent highways in many parts of the province and some of our major arteries are good highways. There are some good programs going on such as the widening of the Yellowhead between Saskatoon and North Battleford.

But as the minister well knows, the area I represent (I think he's been making some comments regarding that) traditionally has been an area where we haven't seen the kind of good highway system some of the other parts of the province enjoy. I'll just stay on the general topics now and I'll get to those specific items in a while.

So, my concern, Mr. Minister would be why your estimates ask for only (I say only but I know it's a large amount of money ) \$156 million, close to \$157 million. But it's less money than you spent last year in the Department of Highways and Transportation.

How can you possibly justify this when one of your recommendations in the annual report was that this year one of your objectives was to improve the secondary highway

system in southern Saskatchewan. I would think this would mean south of the northern administration district line? Could you clarify that? How can you justify a lesser budget in that area? We'll start from there.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I guess it depends on your point of view. We had a budget last year agreed on and passed by this House of \$159.6 million. Last fall the weather was good and we were able to get our work done early. I went to the treasury board the member for Meadow Lake talks about, and I said, look, we can do this work more efficiently by going through the fall and into the winter. If you look at that as I do, that is an advance on this year's budget. As for the budget you are talking about for this year, if we had waited we would have had \$171 million compared to \$159 million last year. The work is done.

I think it is short-sighted, Mr. Chairman, to suggest we shouldn't have don't that last year. It was management that was able to keep the contractors working and keep employment moving in that area. I have always said it is wrong to simply stop because of the budget when the work can be done and you can keep people occupied. So I am looking at this budget, Mr. Chairman, as a \$171 million budget because if we had not persuaded the treasury board to go for this, that is what we would have been spending this year and we probably would have received less for our money.

**MR. McLEOD:** — Mr. Minister, I would ask you then if that is the approach you want to take. In some ways I wouldn't really dispute that because I agree with you that there are many highways in this province which need to be constructed. But the \$5 million which came into supplementary estimates, was it spent on project which were not in last year's project array and on projects which you had no intention of doing at the beginning of last year's season? Or was it just that you had good weather and you were able to complete work which at an earlier stage of the year you thought you may not complete?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Ordinarily (I know the member is new to this critique or being the critic of this department) we have projects which are carried over. The carry-over is always there. We simply do not have as much carry-over. Every year there is carry-over, because sometimes we fall short.

One thing which has angered me in other years is the fact that we have always been very careful not to exceed our budget. Then we run into bad weather late in the fall and we have more carry-over. This year we have a lot less carry-over. There may have been one or two new projects. I haven't identified them but that doesn't really matter, Mr. Chairman. The fact of the matter is the sooner you get a certain job done, the sooner you can move on to a new one.

**MR. McLEOD:** — Once again, I don't disagree with you. Certainly the way things have been going in recent years it costs more money to do them later than it does to do them now. My question then, if that is the case and if that is the way you look at each year's project array, what percentage of each project, when you consider weather and all of the things which you are telling me you take into consideration now, do you usually figure you will have completed by the end of the good season in a normal year?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I don't have the answer, but I am going to give it anyway. I know it is going to be right, Mr. Chairman, because I am going to put it on paper. We have a list. It is history — the carry-over every year.

May 5, 1980

There is anticipated carry-over. For instance, we will be calling some contracts early in the year. We will be calling some contracts, tenders in September and even in October. Obviously, there is not going to be a great deal of work done. Those are certainly planned for carry-over. It depends, and you can look at the date for a tender call, on tender calls which have been out and won now.

For instance, Highway 26 was awarded last week between Edam and Meota. The grading will be finished this year. But the later the tender, the more chance of carry-over. I would be happy to provide, not only to you but the opposition, those which are anticipated carry-over and what have been carry-over in past years.

**MR. McLEOD:** — So then you control this by awarding your tenders at later dates as you look at your budget in the year as it goes on.

**MR. KRAMER:** — That's right.

**MR. McLEOD:** — Now still in dealing with this budget, I am looking at the annual report. While I'm mentioning the annual report I would like to give you a bouquet in terms of the annual report and how its' developed. It's a good annual report and it gives a wealth of information. I would congratulate your people responsible for that. It's a good one.

In that annual report it suggest that one of your recommendations, which I mentioned earlier, was the upgrading of the secondary highway system. That would certainly fall under the heading of rural surface transportation, and I find, by moving down, there is almost a \$7 million decrease in rural surface transportation, in terms of your estimates this year and your estimates last year. I know the supplementary spent more on it. Do you not think, if it's a priority, that rural surface transportation should get priority in the budget?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Mr. Chairman, I don't know where the member's getting this. Rural surface transportation '80-'81 is listed here as an item in vote 17 as \$86,420,000, which is \$169,000 lower than '79-'80. Look at capital expenditures, he says. All right then. There are the special northern jobs that were provided which have to be added to that. That's provided in the heritage fund. It is over in the heritage fund part of the budget at about \$9 million. That's added to it. So you have considerably more in there if you count . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon. Oh, you weren't talking about that. Well, O.K.

**MR. McLEOD:** — No, I said and I may get you to clarify this then, when you talk about the improvement of the secondary highway system in southern Saskatchewan, I take southern Saskatchewan to mean that area of Saskatchewan south of the northern administration district line. Is that right? O.K. So now I'm talking about secondary highways in that area so we won't include the heritage fund money that goes into the northern development roads. O.K.? I'm talking about the capital expenditure and page 61.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I can understand you asking this question. Although we are talking about the heritage fund, there are lots more roads which are part of that in northern Saskatchewan and are not funded by the heritage fund. For instance, the work at Buffalo Narrows and on north is not heritage fund. Other roads in that area are not heritage fund. I don't think the road north of La Ronge is heritage fund. Oh, the one is.

There are a number, and I think we'll work our way through this one but I'd like to satisfy

the member if I could. You have your computer lists on Vote 17. There's a breakdown of subsystems 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. These are all in what you are referring to as the southern system. Now '80-'81 intercity was \$8 million plus last year. That's \$4,610,000 this year. That's on the roads like the one between here and Saskatoon and so on.

In subsystem 2, we have this year \$1,870,000 compared to \$1,459,000 last year, which is a slight increase. It's about half a million increase. On subsystem 3, we have this year \$7,250,000 compared to \$5,366,000 last year. On subsystem 4, called the intra-regional arterials, we have \$23,420,000 compared to \$22,294,000 last year. In subsystem 5 the intra-regional collectors, there is \$32,040,000 this year compared to \$28,068,000 last year, an increase of about \$4 million.

I think if you add those up, you find that in the southern system . . . Well, I'm just glancing at these. I believe there's some \$3 million or \$4 million more. I will give you that sheet. I'll be glad to give you this sheet if you don't have it.

**MR. McLEOD:** — My basis point here, Mr. Minister, is that regardless of how you cut it, I'm sure you were doing the same thing last year when you were doing some development in Highway No. 155 and some of the highways in the North. That's fine. I'm not really going to argue with you about whether it's in your department or whether it's in the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan's department or if it comes from heritage fund or whatever. What I'm saying is if the heritage fund money is designed I won't argue that point with you. That's fine with me. The heritage fund money goes into northern development roads. They're specific roads that you call northern development roads.

But my concern here is, and I'll repeat this, if a priority is for southern secondary roads, and certainly as time goes on (and we both will agree with this coming from a similar area) you can anticipate greater expenditures on highways in the northern areas — with Highway No. 155 and the Buffalo causeway and all of that anticipated greater expenditures there than you would have had in past years. Right? Now, if that's the case and if priority is for secondary roads in southern Saskatchewan, then certainly rural surface transportation, that whole area, if it's going to start including a lot of development roads in the North with the higher cost of construction in that area and so on, should certainly be much higher. Priorities should be shown there in terms of dollars.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Those figures I mentioned on that southern transportation I said would be close to \$4 million. It's actually \$3,605,000 more than last year. I'll agree that's not a tremendously spectacular figure. But when the member says . . . You have made this statement and I can't understand how you continue to make this statement. There's been more money in the last eight or nine years spent in that part of northwestern Saskatchewan than ever in all previous history. I know it was short changed for years. But it hasn't been short-changed for the last eight or nine years, and this year — No. 3 Highway from St. Walburg down to Deer Creek bridge; No. 26 Highway, there are two contracts under way; No 55, out to the Alberta border from Pierceland, there's a contract there. We had an awful job getting the land, but there's a contract there, and so on. right in the town of Meadow Lake, earlier on last winter there was a half a million dollar program just on street improvement. The whole road right up to La Loche, Green Lake — all of that has been rebuilt in the last few years, some of it with federal assistance, because part of it, once you go north of Green Lake, comes under DREE (Department of Regional Economic Expansion) assistance. But that country, if you compared now with 10 years ago, is the difference between night and day. But somehow or other that seems to be forgotten. I can't understand that.

**MR. McLEOD:** — I'll get into the specifics on some of those roads in a while. Certainly I'm not disagreeing with you on some . . . You know, No. 26 and some of the other specific highway project you mentioned. That's fine. Even No. 4, we can now get over without hitting too many potholes. So I'm not disagreeing with some of that. But I certainly would like to take up on one statement. The whole thinking in terms of highways in that area has to be (and you said they were short-changed for a great number of years) . . . Some of those years, when they were short-changed were under your ministry and they were drastically short-changed. There are still areas which are, but I will get into the specifics in awhile.

Now, while we are still talking about northern development you mentioned that highways in the northern area have some federal assistance, and so on. I notice in the annual report some statistics regarding the origin of many of the loads which go into the winter road to Uranium City and Cluff Lake. I probably should have the actual figures here — I could have in a minute — but the point can be made that a great percentage of these roads are originating in Alberta and British Columbia.

I would submit that those loads which come in on those winter roads are coming over Highway No. 55, from the little stretch you mentioned between Pierceland and the Alberta border. Certainly that's fine, and will be built up. The stretch from Pierceland to the junction of Highway No. 26 is not a bad road. But those same heavy loads, if they don't come down Highway No. 55 from Goodsoil through Meadow Lake and then up Green Lake, they're coming across Highway No. 304 from Lloydminster and up through Makwa and so on. I'm sure the minister's aware of the area I'm talking about. Those two roads are carrying those extra loads. Those two highways have had just absolutely — I shouldn't say absolutely — no attention. The people working for the highway department in that area have done the best they can under the circumstances, with the kinds of roads they have and patching and so on. But certainly, those roads are just in awful condition; you'll have to agree with that. We'll get into the specifics of those since you've mentioned it now.

**MR. KRAMER:** — First of all, I'll admit there are lots of roads — there are 6,000 miles of

roads in Saskatchewan which need rebuilding. Certainly Highway No. 304 is one of them. But I'd like to remind the member once again, the average expenditure per rural constituency in Saskatchewan is between \$1.2 million and \$1.3 million. In the Meadow-Lake constituency, it's approaching \$4 million. Now, I don't know what you're complaining about.

**MR. McLEOD:** — Well, I'll tell you what I'm complaining about. If you take the average over many years, they have been so bloody far behind for a long time that it would hardly have mattered. Certainly, I'm not disagreeing. I'm happy you're finally spending \$4 million. O.K. that's fine. I don't disagree with that. The people there will be happy about it. The people there will be extremely happy about it. But what I'm saying to you is that I must continue to remind you that's the case. You mention 6,000 miles of highway in this province need rebuilding. There are constituencies, and if you want to divide them by constituencies, that is fine. I was surprised at that. Oh, yes, you said rural constituencies, so much an average by constituency and so on. I don't see why you don't divide it by the highway districts in place and I am sure you do that.

I heard you mention that the Meadow Lake constituency leads all rural constituencies in the amount of money spent. I heard you say to the member for Rosetown-Elrose, his riding is the only one that comes close. It is second.

I would be interested in, if you have those figures, then, who is first and second and let's have who is third and who is fourth and down the line. Let's have the rural constituencies, the amount of money spent in each constituency in the province for this coming year.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Well, I have the averages, but I can give you the figures. They will vary from year to year. That \$4 million is just one drop in the bucket. We are talking about Meadow Lake and this is what you have been complaining about. There have been years that it has been up as high as \$10 million and that was before 1975. That was the entire program, including a nearly \$3 million airport, which was a part of it. There is another \$3 million which opened and completed a bridge up at Buffalo Narrows which, while it is not in your constituency, is still northwestern Saskatchewan. I believe you haven't been short-changed, that's all.

**MR. R.L. ANDREW (Kindersley):** — Mr. Minister I am interested in your little green paper here with regard to the paving program on Highway No. 44, Plato to Snipe Lake — 7.21 kilometres. Is that the basis of your program on that highway for this year?

**MR. KRAMER:** — If that is what the project states. I guess that is it. Any construction programs we have budgeted for are in that program.

**MR. ANDREW:** — All right. I take it this is a continuation of this Plato to Snipe Lake area which is a distance of perhaps 25 miles, whatever that is in kilometres. The road you built so far is just about one of the worst roads I have ever seen in my life. It looks like it is built out of logs with some pavement over top; it is the roughest road I have ever seen. Is it your intention to resurface the road from Plato through to Eston, or is that a finished product now?

**MR. KRAMER:** — That is a stage construction and another two inches of hot mix is supposed to go onto that road this year.

May 5, 1980

**MR. ANDREW:** — Over the total area of perhaps 20 to 25 miles? O.K., so the thing in here showing 7.21 kilometres isn't quite correct? There is more than that; it is the total program. That is all I want to know.

**MR. KRAMER:** — People tell me — I can't have every road in this province in my mind — that is the area which requires completion and extra surfacing. I don't know whether that's it. Does that answer your question?

**MR. ANDREW:** — What you are telling me then is the entire road will be resurfaced with a two-inch layer and that's being done. I was just confused by the fact there are 7.21 kilometres here so it's more than that. Thank you.

**MR. McLEOD:** — Let's get back very briefly, Mr. Minister, to what we were talking about earlier. I won't belabor this point too long. You mentioned the amount of money spent and you talked about the area. I'll go back into the particular area I represent.

You said at one stage it had been short-changed over a good number of years. And it's not just by the Department of Highways in this province regardless of which government is in power. It has been short-changed (I mention it here in the House since I have been here before) by railway companies and by federal governments in terms of transportation. That's true.

What I am asking you, as the Minister of Highways and Transportation in this province, is to recognize it. I think you do recognize that it has been short-changed, you stated it here. There is a special situation here with no railways into the Goodsoil, Pierceland, Loon Lake, Makwa area.

Over the years they haven't had roads on which they could haul their farm products; they have by necessity had a long haul. In this day and age, they are farming bigger farms and they are hauling with bigger trucks. By necessity bigger trucks need more than winding roads, like Highway No. 304 for example.

I would ask you to recognize that rather than come and tell about the dollars and cents picture. That sounds very good in this House with other rural members on both sides saying they are getting \$4 million in my constituency — a constituency which has been developed for many years in this province, and was a well-developed rural area of Saskatchewan when the first pioneers were just moving into the area up there.

These rural members, because you are giving dollars and cents figures, saying \$4 million there and only whatever the average is in some other rural area in southern Saskatchewan . . . It sounds like quite a comparison, you hear the oohs and ahs. But you know the case, you know the situation needs special recognition and \$4 million isn't . . .

I'm not arguing about it. I'm glad it's there. I'm certainly glad it's there. But it isn't the big figure you made it sound like for that particular area in northwestern Saskatchewan. I guess you have a couple of comments now.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Mr. Chairman, the \$4 million is only one small fraction of the money spent. I can certainly give the member the amount of money spent since 1972. I want to assure him it has been a tremendous amount of money compared to anything ever done before. You can only do so much each year. The point I am making is that northwestern Saskatchewan is doing just fine as far as the total budget is concerned.



And there haven't been many thank you's.

**MR. McLEOD:** — You had one here tonight. I would ask you to continue the commitment because you and I both know what's needed in that area.

Mr. Minister, I am sure you were expecting this. I would like to find out from you just what has been done in terms of rerouting Highway No. 43 in the area between Pambrun and the junction of No. 19 Highway. What plans have you at this stage in terms of the rerouting or proposed rerouting?

**MR. KRAMER:** — None so far.

**MR. McLEOD:** — You say none so far. Are you anticipating making some plans to reroute the highway?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I don't think there are any of the older highways that won't eventually be planned for. We are taking a look at the entire system; we are talking about the secondary road system and rural transportation all over. Certainly that's one of the roads being upgraded and looked at.

I think everybody knows there is a controversy. I have had petitions from both sides wanting a reroute, and they are about equal. Letters come pouring in from both sides of the question, both about equal. In the final analysis, there'll have to be a study done based on some economics, engineering, distance travelled and so on, before we arrive at a decision. I am saying there are no plans at this time to do anything except look the situation over and come to a decision when we decide to build that section of the route.

**MR. McLEOD:** — So you are really saying there that the petitions you're receiving from that area are coming from local residents who travel that highway frequently. You say they are about equal for rerouting on the proposed route south and for maintaining the old route? About equal?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Yes.

**MR. McLEOD:** — That's an interesting comment. I certainly have a large number of signatures here and I know they are the same ones you have. I have received a great number of petitions from people in the Vanguard-Pambrun area and so on that are really opposed to this. They make some suggestions about political considerations and all that. I won't . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I could get into that a little bit and we may. Well, we could; I'm not worried about the wisdom of getting into it. I would ask and urge you to be sure when you are planning these things to use the vast experience of your staff that you mention here tonight. Use economics, mileage travelled and all of those things you mentioned in determining where those roads go, and the situation in terms of acquisition of land and all of those other things. Don't allow political consideration to enter into it.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm glad he said that because one of the petitions I have, and it probably has the most names on it of any, was taken up by a very prominent Conservative down in that area . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, there are a few of them down there. I will let him know we are not supposed to give any political consideration to this and I am sure we won't. I think that day in Saskatchewan is long gone, and I'm not going to go into that either. But if you want a long story about political twists and turns going back as far as 1932 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yeah, and

May 5, 1980

Anderson . . . When I first came down . . . I think I will. I think I will.

When I was first elected in 1952, No. 5 Highway headed off south and east of North Battleford to Saskatoon. It went down to Denholm and wandered down to Fielding, then it hit off across to find a good Liberal about three miles south. At that time he was the leading Liberal in that part of the country. Then it went over to Maymont, but that part of the road, No. 5, was built during the Anderson regime, so they built the Miller turn, Ches Miller, a very good prominent Tory, still lives in the old farm home . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yeah, sure, fine fellow, a good friend of mine. But it went over to what was known as the Miller turn. Then the government changed, and it crossed the railroad tracks and went south of Fielding and went to the Nutting turn. It was known as the Nutting turn. Then it wandered back into Radisson, and went off into the woods looking for another prominent Liberal over toward Borden. It used to take me, with a new Pontiac car in 1952, 7.5 hours to get to Regina when we were driving down. Fortunately, Mr. Chairman, that day is long gone.

**MR. McLEOD:** — Boy, you know I've been a student of history of my time. I think maybe that was one of my concerns — the longevity of the minister's service here. He may have learned his politics from those kinds of actions. Certainly in those days they moved, as the minister says, from one Liberal to the other Liberal's place . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll leave the portion of it out. Perhaps the only change from 1952 until now, and that was what I was alluding to at one time before, the move from one NDP riding to the next NDP member, to the next and so on — it's on a grander scale but it's still maybe . . . Maybe you learned your politics well in those days, Anyway, I believe my colleague there, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, wants to get in on that.

**MR. E.A. BERNTSON (Leader of the Opposition):** — Well, thank you. Mr. Chairman, the minister responsible for highways indicated earlier today that the average, I think, on a constituency basis was \$1.3 million. Was that your number?

**MR. KRAMER:** — \$1.2 million — \$1.3 million. I said rural system.

**MR. BERNTSON:** — Thank you. I represent a rural constituency called Souris Cannington; that's why I keep coming back and keep taking deposits. No. 9 Highway south to 18 was built by the Thatcher regime, a fine highway it is. I don't know if they were turfed out of power or ran out of money when they got to 18, but there hasn't been five cents spent on it since, except to patch a few holes, bury a couple of culverts that were washed out in floods — that kind of thing. Well, it's a goat trail, it's just the damndest thing you've ever seen. This is the highway that has all of the heavy potash traffic on it. It's one of the main trade routes between Canada and the United States and it is a goat trail. The bridge across the Souris River — two of those trucks can't pass on it; it's just a terrible thing. You've spent nothing on it, so your average may be \$1.3 million but I would suggest your priorities are lacking considerably.

The other highway in Souris-Cannington is an excellent highway. No. 18. That was built in the late '50s and early '60s after we had almost paved it with bodies during the oil boom down there on a dust road; you couldn't believe the traffic on that old gravel highway. Finally, after lots and lots of pressure from the local people and the oil companies, etc, which were the cause of the boom, we had No. 18 Highway built but that was in the late '50s — early '60s. It's an excellent highway, and the highway crews are keeping it in excellent shape. Then we go to No. 13 which some years ago this government decided to improve and they did a good job between Redvers and some place beyond Carlyle. But there are 12 miles east of Redvers — between Redvers and

the Manitoba border — that are worse than No. 9 south. If No. 9 south is a goat trail this one is a chicken trail. 'm telling you it makes no sense at all to me. To putt he beautiful king's highway in there and then have both ends of it going to nowhere is ludicrous . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, it's going to Redvers. Going to nowhere, it stops at Redvers. You'd think Redvers was the end of the world but it's not; it's a very fine community . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

You're right. Now we'll get to another one that goes to Sherwood, U.S.A. — from Sherwood N.C. all the way to Pelly, Saskatchewan. It's the biggest, poorest excuse for a highway that one man ever told another about. Oh, there are a few little pieces in between that are good, but from Fairlight, Moosomin, on south to the border you spent a lot of money patching it up. Just last year you had tons of crews down there scraping up the shoulders and patching it some more, and levelling off the ditches where cars had rolled in and smashed up the ditches. You spent a lot of money on No. 8 Highway, but you still have a goat trail because the thing was never ever build with a proper base and the only way to correct it is to start from scratch and build a highway instead of trying to patch it up. I would venture to say that No. 8 Highway over the last 15 years there has been enough spent on maintenance to have replaced it with a good highway. No. 9 south — that's from No. 18 to Northgate. O.K.? I know you are going to tell me you've spent a lot of money on it, but it's still a goat trail. You've done nothing with it except patch holes and pull up shoulders.

Then we get to No. 318 which is a short highway and I think you might even call it a secondary highway. It goes from Carnduff to Alida but has a very significant traffic count. It's in the heart of the oil patch of the Southeast; well, it's a disgrace. I was encouraged the other day, through, because Carnduff has submitted a change in their — they're developing some property north of town and they sent their plan to community planning but the Department of Highways didn't approve it because they wanted an extra 25 feet in case some day they might wan to improve the highway. No, I don't know if that will be in my lifetime, or yours, but at least they are thinking forward. The average may be \$1.3 million but one of the highest traffic areas in Saskatchewan has been getting very little of it.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I wouldn't want to say that the Leader of the Opposition was exaggerating a bit. I don't know about those goats which he's talking about down there. He was also talking about all the votes he got down there and I don't know to whom he is referring, or whether Manitoba people should be happy about saying when you go that way you go nowhere. I might be inclined to agree with that, Mr. Chairman. Having said that, yes, the road is not one which we are tremendously proud of but it isn't really as bad as you say it is either. It's one of the roads which certainly is a candidate for rebuilding. I can show you a few, pretty darn close to a lot of main centres in Saskatchewan. Having said that, yes, it's one — we spent \$300,000 on that road incidentally, in 1978-79.

The vehicle count on that road is not tremendously high. Maybe there's a good reason for that. It's only 275 a day which is not one of the lowest in Saskatchewan but a good deal of it is the heavy trucks. I can assure the member we're concerned about that road. Whether it's rebuilt or maintained . . . I have to admit I wasn't on that particular stretch of road but the year before last there were lots of complaints about the one east of Redvers to Manitoba. In fact I came from Manitoba in that way and I travelled a number of miles down to Boissevain and a number of the places and it wasn't a road I was tremendously proud of, but it wasn't all that bad, maybe it was one of the good periods. That was two years ago. I have had people tell me, yes, it's rough and I'll agree. I'm not defending the quality of that road, but at the same time, if you're going to start on a route — No. 35 is a north-south artery, and No. 9 — more emphasis in the last 10 years has been put on north-south arteries than east-west, because there had been unfortunately, a tendency to improve for traffic going through rather than for people who wanted to stay in Saskatchewan and go north and south.

North-south highways on the whole have been prioritized on traffic count. But in the North, we have spent a lot of money — on north-south arteries — and we've very little left on No. 35 north and south as far as you want to go. These are highly travelled roads. No. 2 — it's not a political priority. It's simply a case of taking those roads that are carrying the highest traffic count . . .

**MR. BERNTSON:** — No. 8 — what's your data on No. 8 traffic count, etc.?

**MR. KRAMER:** — It's 90 at the border. I thought everybody had been sent one of these. If you don't have one, I'll see that you get one. It's important that you do have it.

**MR. R.A. LARTER (Estevan):** — Mr. Minister you said you don't get any praise on your highways. I think I have praised the Department of Highways both in the media and in this legislature on what it has done with the highway system.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — He has highways to brag about.

**MR. LARTER:** — I do. I have highways to brag about down there. What is going to happen to the 5.5 or 6 miles of highway on Highway No. 47 from Lampman corner to Benson? That is a very dangerous section — it's the only piece which hasn't been rebuilt

on that road.

**MR. KRAMER:** — It's not on this year's program, Mr. Chairman, but judging by what we have done in the past I think it's pretty close to the top of the list. It is a north-south artery and certainly needs rebuilding; it carries a fair bit of traffic. I hope (the Leader of the Opposition is looking) I'm right when I say this — that one carries a fair bit of traffic.

**MR. LARTER:** — Mr. Minister, you used fly ash base instead of clay base on the road to the Lampman corner and just about one-half mile beyond that. I believe this fly ash is standing up very well, according to the people I talked to down there, and also the first two mile stretch you tried out to the Boundary Dam road. You mentioned there was a limit on how far you could haul this fly ash, even though you're getting it free. Is it your intention to finish this stretch into Benson with a fly ash base? And how about the 11 miles into Lampman? Are you going to rebuild it with that?

**MR. KRAMER:** — It's not only hauling the fly ash, my staff tells me, but also the availability of gravel. These two factors combined determine whether or not we can use the fly ash effectively. But the ash alone apparently cannot be hauled a great distance without becoming uneconomical. If we found gravel close by, and this is what we're looking for now, we would use that instead of the fly ash. But if the gravel haul is further away, then the fly ash becomes more economical. That's simple.

**MR. LARTER:** — Mr. Minister, the further north you go, the closer you're getting to the gravel again. You're moving away from it from Estevan, but when you get up toward Kisbey you're getting a little closer to the gravel. Maybe it's not the type but I wonder if you aren't getting closer to that gravel. That was a piece of information I wanted to know.

There's another thing we are concerned with in the Estevan area. You probably have heard about Mr. Pepin's announcement the other day that there's going to be no more federal assistance at the present time for municipal airports across Canada.

Estevan was right in the middle of some political promises during the elections. We have a 2,600 foot runway and it's a very, very short one. Just about all of the large oil companies, mining companies, and I think possibly eve SPC for the future, require a longer runway at that airport. We have many executive jets that will be coming in there sometimes twice a week. The city has convinced some of these companies to give some assistance. Panteluk Construction has agreed to offer some assistance in extending the runway to 4,400 feet.

We find there is a real urgency in this situation. The planes are getting faster and would use it more frequently if we had this extended runway. We have the property. We have the old air force base runway and it's not a bad base to build a runway on. The old runway has stood up pretty well. I think with federal and provincial assistance they have upgraded this runway periodically.

When I heard the figure of \$3 million mentioned for the Meadow Lake airport I thought, by golly we only need \$200,000 or \$300,000 to extend this runway to 400,000 feet. I wonder if you can tell me what assistance there is for a city like Estevan. To tell you what the urgency is, just about all the officials, who come in from some of the oil companies and the coal companies, fly into Regina, rent a car and have to drive to Estevan. One of the tragic cases that happened a while ago was that of the three Gulf Oil people killed at Macoun. These were people who would ordinarily fly in, but because our runway is too

May 5, 1980

short they couldn't. I wonder what there is as a program that can help a municipal airport extend that runway?

**MR. KRAMER:** — It wasn't just cut off recently, that federal assistance on runways. They used to pay 50 per cent on those and we put up the other 50 per cent. Actually, the policy was that we put up 65 per cent of the balance with the remainder coming from the municipality of the people there. Now we're still, of course, prepared to put up the 65 per cent.

I talked to Mr. Pepin 10 days ago and put some of these propositions to him. I also want to say that I talked about that plan, which was washed out during Trudeau's former austerity program, to Mr. Mazankowski. I didn't get much of a yes there on re-instituting the policy either. I don't know what kind of a promise you had during that period of time for Estevan.

However, I think what the member for Estevan is saying is that there is a problem there. You need improvements to the airport. Our people are prepared to talk about it. I don't know how much financing we can do or if you can get some local assistance. Why don't we have our official go down there, talk about it and see if we can't work something out. I will agree a place like Estevan needs a better airport than they have.

**MR. LARTER:** — I appreciate that very much, Mr. Minister. I would like very much to set up a meeting with the Mayor of the city of Estevan and the councillors. I appreciate your offer. We will do that as soon as possible.

**MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern):** — Mr. Minister, I guess I'm one of those who has some pretty good highways in his constituency, for some strange reason. But, I do have two or three . . .

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — It's on the way to Eiling's place.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Well, it was a combination of both things there. Mr. Minister, Highway 11 the turnoff to Hague and Rosthern are leaving some bodies behind after some major accidents. My concern is, would it be feasible for your department to do something at those two corners? One suggestion is similar to what they did near the Martensville turnoff where they widened the highway one extra lane for about 100 yards to make turning left and right safer. There was a straight-through lane as well. It caused less accidents. You did it last year under the maintenance budget at Martensville. I wonder if it would be feasible to do something at Rosthern and the Hague turnoffs on High No. 11, under the maintenance budget, to improve that dangerous situation?

**MR. KRAMER:** — The member is right. That has been a troublesome area. I don't know if he is aware in 1972 we installed overhead flashing lights; then we gave it what is called a type A intersection treatment — advisory, speed and crossroad ahead signs were put up in 1978; then we reduced the speed limit to 50 miles per hour or 80 km in 1980. In 1979, there were nine accidents, two single-vehicle, seven two-vehicle accidents; that's too many but there are some areas where the rate is higher. One accident resulted in six personal injuries and one fatality — just one last year. That is a lot better than it has been in the past, so there has been some improvement. In 1978 there were 12 injuries in seven accidents; one was fatal. Back to 1977, it was not as bad a year. They go up and down according to when two fools meet. That is unfortunate but that does happen.

We will take a look at that because our safety people are constantly looking. Dr. Bergen at the university is going to be look at this one very shortly . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon? The Hague one, yes. He is going to be studying it and we will see if we can't come up . . . That study is already under way. At least it has already been contracted for.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, just one comment to you. Your flashing light is part of the problem at that corner because the post you put it on blinds the view of the far corner. If you are coming out of the town of Hague, you have either the stop sign or the post that holds that flashing yellow light blinding the bad curve coming from the south. I would suggest while he is looking at it, that maybe the recommendation to move that post about 10 feet further toward town, in other words, widen the stretch about 10 feet and improve it. I spent about four hours there one day trying to see where all the blind spots were and why the accidents were happening. There are certain obstructions. I refer to the telephone post which is a bad one. Coming out of the café, a little more height on the grid where you approach would help as well. Now that there are more businesses on the other side of the road, I am afraid it may get worse.

The Rosthern corner is starting to cause problems, Mr. Minister, and hopefully we can have a good look at that before too much time. Because of the new approach there, a problem will develop. At Waldheim where Highway No. 312 and Highway No. 12 join is a dead end of Highway No. 312. I am informed by the people who live right near the corner that at least once a month, quite often more, they have to pull people out of the ditch because they don't see the highway stop in time and there is no road on the other side. They end up going straight through into the ditch. The request is for a flashing yellow light or something to warn the people that there is something strange going to happen there, or to have it lit as is the Kenaston corner when you come to crossing highways. I don't know if there is any consideration of something at that corner. I know there is construction there right now. Has the minister any comment?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Well, these points are constantly being examined by our traffic safety branch. We will take a look at those. I am sure our people have made notes of them. But I don't think anyone should wait. I never speak anywhere on safety when I don't say to people look I never travel down any highway anywhere (whether it is this province or anywhere else) where I don't see hazardous places. Immediately the thing to do is to get off the route, call collect, tell Mr. Popoff there is a spot there which ought to be looked at. I called about three in the city that I ran across (right in the city here but not ours).

These things sneak up on you. There is a mailbox, for instance, sitting on the corner of 23rd and (doggone it, the one that goes up to the shopping centre) . . . Anyway, right at the intersection. I was stopped. I was taking my daughter to school. I went to pull out and right from behind the mailbox, would you believe, came an automobile. I didn't get hit but I could have been. Those are the things I'm saying all of us have to keep our eyes open. We are prepared to check into anything.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Minister, there's one more very dangerous intersection which has been brought to the attention of your department, I believe twice in fact. I believe your highway crews have been out surveying. I don't know what they are up to, and then seem to stop. On Highway 5 going east of Saskatoon on a very major hill, there have been four or five almost bad accidents when vehicles . . . It is a big feedlot. It is Mr. Sommerfield's location if you want to mark it down to your staff. Something has to be done there because it is on the crest of a hill. Just as they get to the crest, they have to

May 5, 1980

turn left or turn left onto the highway coming out of private property.

There is many, many a time that I have watched squealing brakes and people just barely missing them. I think we have a bad problem there. Once again, this is a spot where all I think they can do is widen it 12 feet for maybe 20 or 30 feet so that they can get off the road or get by so people aren't piling up behind them and trying to get past them. I wish you would take a look at that.

One other comment, Mr. Minister, while I am on my feet. You and the member from the side have a continual argument about load limits and so forth. Has your department done any looking into the feasibility of increasing the load limits by using balloon-tires on the front of vehicles? The big tires which you see on cement trucks in the front allow them more weight for better distribution. Would you be willing to or has your department done any work in considering allowing that for the gravel trucks, for example, which haul through my constituency into Saskatoon? It makes the weight distribution better with these big balloon tires but, of course, it's more costly and they'd like to haul a few more pounds.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Our people are constantly looking for better weight distribution, better ways of hauling on roads which are in danger of being ruined by overloads. Your observations will be noted. I can't tell you right now because all our people are not here. I'll check into it to see if they have; I'm sure your observations will be noted.

**MR. J.W.A. GARNER (Wilkie):** — Mr. Minister, this is going back a little, regarding spending \$1.2 million per rural constituency. I brought it your attention last year and I'd like to bring it to your attention again this year, that is Highway No. 21 in the Wilkie constituency. You had given some statistics here earlier. I would like to know how many accidents there were in the last five years on that stretch of road and how many deaths have occurred on that road?

**MR. KRAMER:** — We'll get that. We have now, and it's going into the second year; a computerized accident data record. Simply by checking an area, we can tell you exactly how many accidents occurred anywhere in Saskatchewan and compare them to last year because we've gone into the first three months of the second year. It's working out very well, we'll get the information. I'll be quite happy to get it over to you as soon as I can.

**MR. GARNER:** — O.K. Mr. Minister, on Highway No. 21 the main area I am concerned about is from Kerrobert to the town of Unity. I think you know the area I'm talking about. I think you've been to many auction sales out there yourself, being a qualified auctioneer . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I know. I think he's a little better than you are too, to be truthful.

Mr. Minister, the STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) bus travels this road every day. This isn't my description of the road. I have my own description, but we're getting along well here tonight so I don't think I'll throw it out. The people are calling it Kramer's cow path. Now, I mean that's not my thought of it, that's their thought of it. We have a road there that's too narrow. It's oiled. I'll agree it's dust free but really it's only fit, as my colleague from down south said, for goat traffic because it isn't wide enough. Mr. Minister, I'm very concerned.

It's hilly country and it's too narrow. A lot of semitrailers use that road. It's the main link connecting south traffic to the north for tourists, for people down south going to the



Meadow Lake Provincial Park, etc. The road is in terrible shape. There are no if's, and's or but's about it. It's a dangerous road. Now that's why I wanted the figures on this road as to how many people had been killed and how many accidents we've had on it.

Last year I think you gave me the costs. I would like the costs you put into it this past year for repair. I know you can spend a lot of money on repair but I think we're getting to the stage on that road, Mr. Minister, where we're starting to throw good money after bad. It has to be done.

Has your department looked at building? I mean, it can't be repaired any more. I think it's beyond repair; it's too narrow and the shoulders are breaking away. I'm concerned when we have this STC bus travelling one way and these semitrailers going the other way — the shoulder is soft, a lot of people are going to be hurt or killed. I'm very concerned. Is your department looking into rebuilding Highway No. 21 between Kerrobert and the town of Unity?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I said earlier, Mr. Chairman, there are certainly at least 3,000 miles similar in quality . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I said six, but he's right. It's not as good as the one you're complaining about. It's not a detriment. I travel the road a fair bit, and I don't see how they could call it Kramer's cow path. You don't have a cow down in that country of any kind. They are all back at the ranch, and I can prove it — I hurt my hand on Sunday. Working on Sunday is the only way you can get by in this world.

But anyway, I will not argue about the quality of the road. It is part of the hundreds of miles which need upgrading. I think the member knows No. 21 Highway was designed as a north-south highway in 1972 and various sections have been upgraded. Unfortunately, when you look at these — I just checked — there are 130 vehicles a day on that particular stretch of road . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right. And you take twice as many on yours, so if I have to judge on the basis of the traffic count . . . They're not a joking matter. ?certainly there are many road which need work, but they're not all in one constituency. There has been east-west traffic on No. 14, down through Landis, and that is carrying the bulk of the traffic. There's a lot of pressure from Brock north. They want a new highway through there. The municipalities want another north-south highway coming up from the Eston-Elrose country. But we have 13,000 miles, and that's a lot of miles for a province with a million taxpayers.

**MR. GARNER:** — Well, Mr. Minister first of all Highway No. 14 does carry a lot of traffic, I agree, and it's finally been completed. It took a long time. It was surveyed many times. If you had given the survey crew a shovel and a wheelbarrow, they could have finished it ten years earlier. I'm not trying to be vindictive about this, Mr. Minister. No, I'm really not, but my concern, Mr. Minister, is that Highway No. 21 — the traffic count (I think was from '78) is increasing every year because the heavy oil is affecting the Wilkie constituency. I think you're well aware of that. There are many new wells going in there. The traffic is increasing and the STC bus, which we're very happy to have, is travelling on that road. If it were a few holes I wouldn't complain, but the road is just too narrow. We've had quite a number of people killed on that road, and sooner or later we're going to have a real bad one. I know there aren't enough dollars to go around, but you stated earlier \$1.2 million for rural constituencies and I think it's about time we put some of that \$1.2 million into that road. That road in my constituency is one of the priorities you should look at for next year. I would really appreciate it, and I know the people would really appreciate it.

**MR. D.M. HAM (Swift Current):** — Mr. Chairman, a few question for the minister. Sorry, Mr. Minister, to hear about your hand. Did you say you were working with bull or working with a cow when that was hurt? Just a few comments and some questions. We've heard recently on the news that the population of Saskatchewan is showing a significant increase, which I'm pleased to see. It may soon reach the point it was back in the 1920s or 1930s. Can you indicate whether your department has contingency plans, or what measures you have taken to accommodate the increased traffic which your government predicts is going to be coming to this province over a continuing period of months or years?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I don't think we're going to have such a rush that it requires contingency plans, Mr. Chairman. This morning we were planting some trees at the Western Development Museum and I was looking through the guest list signed by people coming in from various places. There are a number of pages from last year. I spent half an hour looking through them. There's one thing that sand out in the remarks. The roads are great. I would like the member for Swift Current to repeat the question. Where do you expect this pressure to occur? I know what the member for Wilkie has just said. It's going to be true if a major oil patch develops there as it is true in the Cut Knife-Lloydminster area around Lashburn, Maidstone, through there. The road facilities there, mainly municipal and highway, will simply not carry the traffic on the basis of the kind of projections we had seven or eight years ago. We have to go for a deeper structure, a stronger structure of highway to carry the kinds of loads that are anticipated. Those are not contingency plans; those are simply plans that will be forced on us almost by the growth in those communities. But I have a notion I haven't answered your question.

**MR. HAM:** — Well, my concern is that it's your government that continually tells us that the population is increasing in the province. I think if the minister has ever had the opportunity, as many have on long weekends, to witness the cars that move into Saskatchewan from Alberta or leave after the long weekend, combining that with the fact as I say, your government continually says the province will be growing, the population will increase, surely we have to seriously consider the future design of our roads based on that. And I am surprised that we don't have far more accidents on the long weekends than we have had in the past, especially on the two main highways coming in from Alberta, the one to Saskatoon and the Trans-Canada Highway. On that note, perhaps you can indicate if it hasn't been asked earlier, what plan you have now to four-lane the highway from Alberta to Manitoba — that is, complete both ends.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I'll tell you, Mr. Chairman, one reason we don't have too many accidents when they're coming in from Alberta, is once they've negotiated that road from Calgary to the border, they can drive anywhere. I think that is generally agreed. That's right. The four-laning of Trans-Canada Highway: I've said it and I've been in the press with it. I was down to Ottawa talking to the new Minister of Transport just 10 days ago. I was down last fall talking to the former minister, Mr. Mazankowski. I have to admit that both of those gentlemen are a lot more pleasant to talk to than the great stone face that occupied that office prior to May 22 last year, who simply knew one word and that was no.

The fact of the matter is that if we're going to move Canadians back and forth across Canada there has to be a national policy to share on this Trans-Canada Highway and do that necessary four-laning. The necessity for four-laning becomes more evident when we have reached 4,000 or more vehicles per day. We haven't done that either west of Swift Current or east of Qu'Appelle yet. It's coming. Neither has this occurred on the

Yellowhead. We have spent a lot of money widening the Yellowhead as someone noted earlier between Saskatoon and North Battleford and on to Lloydminster. That will be 20 feet wider and will accommodate the vehicle counts that we're enjoying today, but it isn't going to be too long before we're going to have to have both those trans-Canada highways four-laned. Certainly we must move forward into a four-lane, but when more than half that traffic is trans-Canadian in nature every minister in Canada at the convention last fall agreed unanimously (Mr. Mazankowski was there and sat at the meeting) that we must have a trans-Canada policy to do those things that were originally done when we first built the Trans-Canada Highway No. 1. Certainly, if we are going to talk about Canadian unity we ought to be able, as Canadians, to enjoy safe movement back and forth across this country. Certainly, it is not only the duty of the federal government, it is our right to ask that they share at least 50-50.

Now, in the Maritimes the Maritimers say, we're already getting 65 or 70 on the Trans-Canada Highway and the highways in those provinces. Maybe they need it. But certainly we need that policy because at \$300,000 per mile on just one lane, start to figure that out. You get two miles of four-lane for \$1 million today, and you're lucky to get it. I'm saying that there has to be a new policy which is going to take care of the Yellowhead, and take care of the No. 1, to move Canadians back and forth not only in Saskatchewan but in Alberta.

On that road between here and Alberta, I don't want to pan our neighbours, but I see no improvement over the years on the four-laning of that one. I have a list of it somewhere if someone wants to question it.

The four-laning in Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan is roughly equal, within a hundred kilometres each way. Alberta's four laning — a great deal of it is paid for by the facts because the roads through the national parks are entirely federal. So, Alberta actually has less four-lane than we have in Saskatchewan.

**MR. HAM:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I have to totally agree with you that the federal government has responsibility with respect to national transportation. I agree, they should accept the responsibility to four-lane the highway, at least contribute to the four-laning of the highway.

Perhaps the minister might comment on my next question. I'll ask two now. Would you be more willing to consider or commit your department to four-laning all of the section we're referring to on the Trans-Canada, or a portion of it, if the Alberta government completes their section, from Calgary to Medicine Hat or the Saskatchewan border? As I understand from news reports I've heard, there is serious consideration being given in Alberta on four-laning that highway now.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Mr. Chairman, I certainly could not make that kind of a commitment without having gone to the treasury board and discussed it with my colleagues. I think it's been said earlier that I have to make the choice on four-laning, where you have one good lane to travel on, and improving the No. 8s and No. 9s and the No. 21s. I'm saying that's going to be my choice first — if our budgets will not allow us to four-lane the Trans-Canada and the Yellowheads.

**MR. HAM:** — I think, Mr. Minister, even though the federal government does pay for paving or at least for construction in national parks, the Alberta budget has been three times that of Saskatchewan for a number of years now.

May 5, 1980

I would like to, within the Chamber, thank you and your department for finally (if I can use the word, finally) considering to agree to install lighting along the Trans-Canada freeway through Swift Current. I thought it was kind of neat (if I can use that word) the way you arranged to have the city of Swift Current pay for half of them by installing them on the service road rather than on the highway. Even so, we're getting them, and I thank you for that.

I ask you now if you would consider seriously the same sort of lighting, costly as it is, but based on your concern about the safety or not only drivers but pedestrians to other centres in Saskatchewan which are badly in need of this kind of lighting. I know the Regina freeway is one area that has some lights, in the section around the hospital. On the Saskatoon highway where it meets up with 8th, there is no light in that area.

One further question, aside from the lighting — it's to do with lighting but only traffic lighting now. Was it a decision by your department or the city of Saskatoon, or a combined decision to install the traffic lights on that intersection of the freeway that leads to the new church on the south side of the freeway and south of Saskatoon?

**MR. KRAMER:** — There were two questions there as I gather. That is, the general lighting — we're continually trying to upgrade and improve the lighting.

In answer to the last question, it certainly was not with our approval that the city went ahead and put stop lights on a freeway the Government of Saskatchewan paid very dearly for, and it was against our advice. In fact there are letters on file which we have indicating that it would be more dangerous to put the stop lights in than it would be to leave the situation the way it was. It has proved that way. So they went against our advice.

They also went against our advice when they located that church on the south side of the freeway when there was ample room on the north side somewhere. They could have found somewhere to build a church instead of exposing their citizens to that kind of danger.

The good fortune we have had since those lights were installed is that there haven't been three or four people killed. I know one person, in fact he's our safety director, who was nearly wiped out by a major transport that came through the red light (because people are creatures of habit). All of a sudden that red light is there and he is probably oblivious to it and went right through it. Mr. Shields had to take off into the ditch. He started to make his approach and he swung off and just missed by a hair's breadth. And I know of two others. One trucker went off the road to avoid (because he was going too fast) hitting a Volkswagen and smashed the ruddy lights. They were out for 48 hours. And the poor devil was charged. As far as I am concerned I think he should have appealed that because he took evasive action at his expense, saved a life and was fined for it.

**MR. HAM:** — I presume by that answer that the Government of Saskatchewan has no control over the installation. In other words, it stays?

**MR. KRAMER:** — It stays as long as they leave it there.

**MR. HAM:** — A question I have asked you once or twice in the past during estimates — I am not sure whether there is any change — we fortunately didn't have too many bad

storms this winter and I didn't have the opportunity (I hate to use the word opportunity) to travel in storms and witness any of your highway snow-removal vehicles and the like to see whether or not you have replaced or in any way modified or installed addition lighting. I am talking about the warning lights. I think there is the little blue light now. You may recall last year I asked you to seriously consider putting on additional and brighter lights. Have you investigated or installed any different lighting?

**MR. KRAMER:** — We have made some modifications. It's not easy with the swirling snow and everything else, continually looking for better way. What we have been asking is a baffle similar to that on the back of a station wagon to try to deflect the ice that forms on these lights and keep them clear. Other than that I don't think we have been able to make much progress in order to do something effective, better than what we are doing now.

**MR. HAM:** — Just one final question, Mr. Minister. I have had members of car clubs contact me in the past, and you may be aware that some years ago when Taylor was the minister of highways (no relation I don't think to the Taylor from Indian Head-Wolseley) in Alberta, he allowed organized drag racing to take place on a section of the four-lane highway between Calgary and Edmonton. I am wondering if the minister has given serious consideration, not so much to blocking off a section of their freeway but to co-operating with some of these organized car clubs (provided they are well organized and of course under the guidance of the police or whomever), to allow these young people to take their frustrations out on a side road that is paved or maybe even a piece of highway that is not being utilized much any longer or at all? I think the minister is well aware that if we get some of these heavy feet off the highway and onto an organized, drag strip then maybe they won't be quite so heavy during the week (if they are allowed to do it on the weekends).

**MR. KRAMER:** — WE do have some areas abandoned highways. I know for awhile the old airport north of North Battleford was used and we are tying an d our people are looking at ways and means of finding place for the young people who are going through that particular phase where they have just got to burn off some excess energy, It's a pity they wouldn't run rather than drive. But, yes, our department is looking at ways and means of co-operating. I think more of this is being done by cities and city councils. Just we are prepared to work with any of those groups at any time if we can be of any help.

**MR. R.H. PICKERING (Bengough-Milestone):** — Mr. Minister I think you will agree that Highway No. 6 south is our main artery into the capital city of our province. It would seem that just past the overpass, south of the city to the correction line 14 miles south, that No. 6 Highway is in very poor condition.

I have nothing in the project array regarding this highway for the second year since I have been a member and I wonder if you have anything in your immediate planning to upgrade this highway or make it a four-lane as far as the junction of No. 39?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Well, the road has some rough spots in it, but my staff feels there is nothing in the next year or two that can't be handled with probably some increased maintenance. Four-lane is certainly not warranted at the expense which is required to build another lane. You are talking, especially in that gumbo, of more than \$300,000 a mile for another lane. I wouldn't put that on my priority list. I think we want to improve the top; it has a good wide top. I think we can live with it if we keep the top in good shape.

May 5, 1980

**MR. PICKERING:** — Mr. Minister, it is obvious you haven't been down No. 6 Highway south. I travel it probably 200 or 300 times a year and I am aware of the condition the highway is in.

The shoulders between the overpass and the junction 14 miles south aren't fit to turn off on the side to change a tire. As a matter of fact you have to realize there are many pieces of machinery being moved by farmers after purchasing the machinery in Regina, and there is no place to move them off the road. I think you should go out to take a serious look at it. The shoulders from the junction south are fine, but not from the overpass for the first 14 miles. Do you have any immediate plans on widening these, say even this fall?

**MR. KRAMER:** — My people say they agree they are especially bad this spring so they will be taken care of as soon as the crews can get at them. Certainly for the next two or three years at least it is not on the priority list for four lanes as you are suggesting. I think we can improve the shoulders; our people agree. I haven't been on it since last fall, but it was in pretty good shape then. It is spring work. The big trucks are going in and when they pull over on the side they really rip it up.

**MR. PICKERING:** — Mr. Minister, I have received numerous complaints about the turn off immediately south of the overpass. For a couple of miles there is no passing lane so when the drive-in is about to start there are traffic line-ups up to a couple of miles at times. I have been in them myself. Are there any immediate plans of putting at least a passing lane there so that people can go by as through traffic?

**MR. KRAMER:** — We will check that one out. I think if there are long queues of people and impatient kids around we should be taking a look at it.

**MR. PICKERING:** — I certainly hope you do. Going into secondary highways. I understand that Highway 334 from Corinne to Avonlea has been brought up in the Assembly forever and ever and ever. I presume there won't be anything done. I see there'll be nothing done with it during the coming year. I would hope you consider this as it is the main artery going to the Avonlea country, the only one they have. I think it needs to be upgraded. I had numerous complaints about an anhydrous ammonia fertilizing company at Milestone having trouble getting permits to cross this highway because it was in such bad condition this spring. So I hope you would have a look at this.

I'd like to bring to your attention secondary Highway No. 377 from Ceylon to Radville. I think you had a letter from Mr. Remie DeRoose regarding this turnoff into his yard on the incline of a hill. When coming from the east he has to make a turn. He hit a school bus. I don't know exactly when. I talked to him the other day. He explained to me that approximately six miles from Highway No. 6 south on Highway No. 377 going east. It's very hilly which I'm familiar with. There are numerous turnoffs into farmyards and whatever that are bad spots — hazardous spots — and he would suggest that the Department of Highways take a close look at this whole six miles. I will commend you — Mr. DeRoose did say there was a surveyor and an engineer out there I think today looking his situation over. But he would certainly like you to go out and look the whole situation over.

The reason I tell you this, Mr. Minister, is because Highway No. 13 is under construction. There is more traffic going straight down Highway No. 6 and using Highway No. 377 during the construction of Highway No. 13 from Trossachs over to

the junction of Highway No. 6. Would you consider sending somebody out there and having a good close look at this within the next few days because it is very dangerous?

**MR. KRAMER:** — We'll have a look at it. Our people have made a note of it and will have a look at it. Also you're right. It is not a road we're tremendously enthused about.

**MR. PICKERING:** — Mr. Minister, Highway No. 39 goes through Yellow Grass straight through the town. Are there any immediate plans for by-passing Yellow Grass in the very near future?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Not to my knowledge, no.

**MR. PICKERING:** — Mr. Minister, regarding elevator closures at Colgate and Goodwater, I notified your department that they were concerned because they were going to have to haul their grain to Tribune farther south. They were concerned about the condition of the road.

I think if you have a map there you will see it is a short distance. You replied to me when I asked if you wouldn't do something to upgrade it. You said certainly. Support for federal financial assistance with respect to this continuing concern of rail line abandonment and the subsequent burden placed on our farmers as well as our provincial highways system would be appreciated. I would like to ask the minister who is responsible for the Department of Highways. I have never heard of a minister of Highways in Ottawa. Is the provincial government or the federal government responsible for this highway?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I believe, Mr. Chairman, that Justice Hall pointed out if there were going to be rail line abandonment, millions of dollars would have to be put in place by the federal government to remove the very burden the member is discussing from the backs of the provincial taxpayers. And as late again as 10 days ago when I had the meeting with Mr. Pepin we discussed it. I can't make any predictions, but certainly I can say that he understood what I was saying and said at that time that he agreed this was a responsibility of the federal government. If they were going to go along with the abandonment forcing more and more heavy loads onto the provincial highway system, it was unfair to put this burden on the taxpayer.

I can't predict but possibly the Minister of Agriculture, who has been talking on another front on this through the transportation agency arguing rail line abandonment, and effects of rail line abandonment, can. But we can't just expect them to throw the whole burden of rail line abandonment on the backs of Saskatchewan taxpayers. We can't allow that to happen. If it happens, then I suppose we'll have to face it sooner or later.

But remember this, the taxpayers of Canada and especially western Canada have paid dearly for two rail lines over the years with land and minerals and everything else. Now those rail line people are saying forget about that. They're backing out of their responsibilities and trying once again to have the taxpayers of this country build yet another transportation company after they have reneged on their responsibilities. I don't think any member on this side or that side is going to agree that we should just bow our heads and say yes, and amen, every time they throw more of this burden on it.

**MR. PICKERING:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I would have to agree with a portion of what you had to say, but not necessarily all of it. Just one final question. There have been

May 5, 1980

numerous accidents and numerous near accidents at the junction of Highways 13 and 39 at Weyburn. That has to be the most controversial interchange I've ever seen. I've heard a lot of people talk about that. I would certainly think the engineer who designed that . . . I would just ask you this question, is he still with your department?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Would you repeat the last part of that?

**MR. PICKERING:** — I would like to ask you if the engineer who designed that interchange is still with the Department of Highways?

**MR. KRAMER:** — We could check to see who the actual designer was. But I think, in fairness, once an intersection gets a bad reputation people believe that a lot of accidents are occurring even after they've stopped. Last year there were three accidents at that location which is far less than the average intersection in a lot of other places similar to that. Mr. Chairman, I want to say that when we do the paving we are going to make some modifications on that particular area. I can't tell you what the configuration is but my staff tell me there are some plans under way try to improve that over what the situation is now. but I have to say that over the last year or two it hasn't been one of the most hazardous areas we have in this province.

**MR. PICKERING:** — Mr. Minister, I would only make one suggestion. I think it would probably help a lot to rectify the problem there right now to install overhead signs with arrow lanes. I know that would amount to a considerable amount of money but if it saved one life I think it would be well worth it.

**MR. D.G. TAYLOR (Indian Head-Wolseley):** — Mr. Minister I heard you saying a few minutes ago to the member for Swift Current that the four-lane on No. 1 is coming and that it won't be too long. I notice there is some survey work along the ditch from Indian Head to Grenfell. Can you tell me what the purpose of that present survey is?

**MR. KRAMER:** — The staff doubts our people are doing any survey. We have no knowledge of it. We will check it out and let you know if in fact any of our people are doing any work in there. But, I would be surprised if it is our people doing the survey.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — I came in the other morning and there were a bunch surveyors out there. There were trucks and a number of flags and I'm sure they were not Celebrate Saskatchewan flags. I would appreciate it if you would look into it and let us know what is happening.

While you are looking into it, I'd like you to explain to me why, when you built the road approach at Wolseley (which I must say wasn't, and still isn't necessarily in keeping with what the local citizens wanted, but you saw fit to change it), did you not put a passing lane in there? That intersection isn't marked, Mr. Minister. I have many times to have it marked and improved. I think the first excuse was that you had a backlog of work. It has been some time. When are you going to get around to doing it?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Our staff seems to be rather surprised you are saying the people or that area are not satisfied because all the markings, all the design is standard for that type. I will be happy to look into it. I will find out what the problem is and see if we can correct it. But, there is some surprise back here that what was done has not been satisfactory.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — They shouldn't be too surprised because they must realize that after it



was done, within a short while (after urging from me and the town of Wolseley) you did make the approach on the south side of the highway, Mr. Minister. But the response I keep getting (and I tell you honestly this is a concern, and the people are not happy) is that there are no markings whatsoever. As you well know, I travelled this province last summer, and I have seen better markings to picnic sites and to towns that are not much more than an elevator. I tell you in all sincerity that I appreciate your comments. If you get out there, have a look at it and go one more step. Let's get those passing lanes and markings in before the heavy tourist traffic hits that area around the first of June.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Thank you for the comments on it. We will have a look at it and someone will be in touch with you.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — The other thing — and you said it wouldn't be too long — can you give me some idea as to when that four-lane will be going east from Qu'Appelle?

**MR. KRAMER:** — It seems to me you want to hear something I don't remember saying . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You wrote it down? Well, I'd like to check the record. I'm sorry if I left that impression. There are certainly no immediate plans for a four-lane on that section of road this year. I would like very much to tell you. Frankly, I believe the four-laning for another 15 or 20 miles or so was from necessary going east than going west. However, I think you will agree that once you start four-laning between two major centres like Moose Jaw and Swift Current you can't really stop in midstream and have a narrow spot between, so we finished that.

At the same time the costs have gone up and we, not just Saskatchewan but all of us, are fighting like blazes to get a federal policy in place that is going to do the job and do it right. Otherwise it will be on a piecemeal basis. The wealthier provinces may be able to do more than the others but will not have a consistent road system across this country. Now that's praise. I'm not very envious of our neighbours to the south, but at the same time they collect taxes on a national basis and have for years. Their interstate highway system doesn't stop at a poorer state or at a richer state; it goes straight on through. And it's not by accident the fatality rate on American highways is 25 per cent less than on Canadian highways . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You almost made me change my mind.

They have to do something good once in a while; it's very little, but I'm saying that's one of the reasons we want to see a consistent national policy. I have no hesitation. I told Mr. Pepin I wouldn't have objected to an increase in fuel tax if he had earmarked a percentage of that money for trans-Canadian roads. Good roads save money, bad roads cost money, and I think that is something we have to recognize.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — While we're on No. 1 Highway — a few years ago a vehicle went off the overpass here by the television station, and I understand another one went off just recently. Have your engineers looked into the cause? Is it the wind gusts? I know you have a sign up, but there have been two of them since that was constructed. Have you look at it in view of this recent accident?

**MR. KRAMER:** — We don't know what the conditions were when that particular car went off the road, but we have a notion it wasn't wind gusts. At the same time, we're continually looking at it. It is true that when a new system of interchange takes place some people do make mistakes. They make some bad judgments, but to the best of our knowledge that is an accepted design and works well in other places it's being used. It should be saving lives, not costing them.

May 5, 1980

**MR. TAYLOR:** — My colleague from Moosomin cannot be here right now, but he wanted me to ask about Highway No. 8 from Rocanville. There's some talk that potash may be coming south down that highway from the Rocanville mine. Do you have any plans to upgrade and improve Highway No. 8, south from Rocanville to Fairlight, Redvers, down that way?

**MR. KRAMER:** — There are a number of studies going on which the potash haul has affected, as well as some municipal roads, and discussions with both Sask Potash and some of the private potash companies, because they're using municipal roads in some cases, and in some cases, ours. I can't elaborate on it further, but we know there's a problem and we're trying to meet the challenge.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — Are you saying that maybe Sask Potash would put some money into constructing that road?

**MR. KRAMER:** — If it's a highway, I rather doubt it. But a lot of that traffic is going west into Manitoba on municipal roads. We believe that if it's mainly potash haul, whether private or Saskatchewan potash, they ought to contribute.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — We discussed Highway No. 48 last year from Montmartre through to Highway No. 9 at Kennedy. I think we had a discussion about how fast you could take the turns, and if I remember you were exceeding the speed limit, but that aside — what are your intentions there? That is one of the poorer highways in the area. Are you going to upgrade that one? If so when are you looking at that?

**MR. KRAMER:** — We would like very much to continue on with that road. If finances hold out and we have some surplus left we might even get a late tender call on that one, he said. But I don't want you to take that as a promise. We recognize there is a need for upgrading there; it is high traffic count; it is higher on the priority list than some highways.

**MR. TAYLOR:** — What about the plans of the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources for the loops through the Qu-Appelle Valley? I am talking of loops coming in at the border and up to Round Lake, around Crooked Lake down to Katepwa. The hearings I attended said they didn't want main highways through there. What they were looking at were some scenic paved trails. Is there anything of that type in the offing for the Qu'Appelle Valley and that area from Katepwa Lake east to the border. Well, there is one good highway down there around Crooked Lake or Round Lake.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I am informed that the Qu'Appelle development group are looking at the total development, but they are not pushing the highway at this point until the development expands and starts to fall into place so they know exactly what is needed.

One thing I can assure you of is that I believe tourism and the Department of Highways and the development group, the local people, don't want to see great gashes of super highways going through that valley. They will conform, as many of them have, with the terrain, try to disturb as little as possible and yet allow people to move comfortably.

**MR. H.J. SWAN (Rosetown-Elrose):** — I would like to ask you a question that was raised by the town of Rosetown and the community around it. I think they wrote you a letter. I have a copy of it. Their concern is with Highways 4 and 7, where they junction right in the town of Rosetown. Somehow they have the idea you are going to reroute those

highways to by-pass the town. They want them to remain because they feel it is bringing the business right into town. So I would just like your comments. What are your plans for those two?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Mr. Chairman, there are no plans whatever to change any of the routing complex at Rosetown, that we are aware of.

**MR. SWAN:** — I would like to, also, have you tell me what you are going to do for the two municipalities that I brought to you at the time of the municipal convention. Victory and Canaan and the road they are asking for to connect up to the Riverhurst ferry. Are you prepared to do anything in that area?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I can't say that I am prepared to do anything. We are discussing the problem with the Minister of Municipal Affairs. There is no doubt that something has to be done, whether it is done as a super grid or highway. I think the way the situation is now it is, in fact, the responsibility of municipal affairs. Discussions are going on; we are looking at it. The requests haven't fallen on deaf ears, but other than that I can't give you any commitments as to what is going to happen. I am waiting for some information from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and his people. We will discuss it further after that. If there are any developments I'll be letting those municipalities know or the minister will, to see if there is some way we can work out the problems that seem to be evident there.

**MR. G.S. MUIRHEAD (Arm River):** — Mr. Minister, I have a letter written from the Kenaston Council to you on August 23, 1979. Their complaint was about No. 15 highway crossing No. 11. The motorists are not aware, in some cases, of this being a double highway. They cross the one highway and then they take off. There have never been any serious accidents but there have been a few minor ones. We just wondered what you've done in this respect.

**MR. KRAMER:** — We had the situation under study. It's not easy to find a solution to a problem where there's no reason for anyone to get into difficulties, but some people do. Whether you can work out a system that is going to make everything foolproof, I'm not sure. If we can do something to improve that situation, I'm sure our safety group will be coming up with an answer. If not, I guess the only thing we can do is hope people will use the brains they were born with and try to use the roads, follow the directions and not be going the wrong way or making the wrong turn.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — I was talking to someone on the council tonight from Kenaston and they're really quite concerned about this. When they complained before, someone from the Department of Highways did put up a sign saying four-lane highway ahead or double highway. They would just like to see something in lights. It seems to be at dusk that these accidents are happening. People will pull up on 15, strangers, and they just think it's one highway, you see. They cross the one and take off. It's the second highway they get hit on. They're suggesting some kind of a reflection light and a sign right beside the stop sign where people have to stop, saying double highway. This is what they're suggesting to you, Mr. Minister.

**MR. KRAMER:** — We lit that intersection so that there should be no . . . It's well lit. I go through there a good many times. It's one of the places that I haven't identified in my mind as a hazard. We'll have our safety people take another look at it, but the information on that intersection ought to have cured the situation. If it hasn't, we'll take another look.

May 5, 1980

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — O.K. Thank you. I would just like to turn to Highway No. 2 from No. 11 to Watrous. How many more years do you expect it will take for this highway to be completed? They've been working on it for years and years.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Well, I'm informed it ought to be finished this year. I don't think that is too bad when you consider there's been a section of that being either rebuilt or paved every year for the last number of years and you can't roll them out instantly.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — How many years since they first started that project, No. 2 Highway? Do you recall or does anyone know? How long has it been since they started?

**MR. KRAMER:** — It's about seven or eight years that this has been going on. When you consider that you take 10 mile sections and then there's 10 miles of pavement which has to go over top of that again and we've run into some wet years as well — there have been some delays but it hasn't been bad.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Maybe it is fine to run seven or eight years but the complaint I have on Highway No. 2 is that it seems to be each fall when they finish off. I have noticed the last two or three years there was only a mile or two or maybe up to five miles partially done. When spring comes it is such a mess. They end up doing it over again completely. If they would finish up completely before they tear so much up . . . I am not telling you how to run your department, maybe you have no other way of doing it. But it looks to me and the people who live there that there should not be so much done over and over again. I am not on that highway; I am going by what the people there say.

But what I am really concerned about on Highway No. 2 are the signs. I wrote you several letters last summer. We corresponded over it. I think there is a misunderstanding with the municipalities over signing.

It started in the Dilke area. The people wanted stop signs coming onto the highway. I received a letter from you saying, and perhaps you are right, that it is the municipalities responsibility to do some of these signings. What I would like you to do, if I brought you the names of these municipalities, is to say there is a misunderstanding and send them a letter telling them whether it is their responsibility or yours. Because there have been about five municipalities from the Dilke area up as far as Imperial which all have the complaint.

Now, especially when they are building highways, there are a lot of signs that get knocked down. The people in the municipalities want to know whose responsibility it is to see that the signs are kept in place while you are building highways. Is that the municipalities responsibility or is it the Department of Highway's responsibility?

**MR. KRAMER:** — It is our responsibility when the highway is under construction to keep those up. It is also the responsibility of the contractors. When we issue a tender and the contractor goes ahead, the time he takes to do the work is up to the contractor. He contracts to do it within a certain period of time. If he chooses to do it inefficiently, he has to do it over again. The cost is his.

We can't hold his hand continually because the efficiency of the contractor has a bearing on how quickly the job is done, whether it is finished. The weather has a bearing on it. I was just informed there are 80 miles from Highway No. 11 up to Watrous. That's

not bad in seven or eight years.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — I have one more question or suggestion. I would like to see your engineers or whoever is responsible for these signs to really take precaution (and maybe it's throughout the province too) because at Stalwart where the traffic comes from Etters Beach, there was no sign there. A man crossed the highways and was killed from lack of a sign. The people in the Stalwart area are quite concerned about this. They don't know which is to blame for the sign not being put up — The Department of Highways or the municipalities. But whichever is responsible we ask you to watch this issue.

**MR. KRAMER:** — As I said before, we are continually looking for ways and means. But even in doing so, we took over sections of highways last fall north of Maymont, Saskatchewan. We put up stop signs. The next week all of them had not only been knocked down but they had been taken away, because it was too inconvenient for some of the people there to stop when they hit that road. So in order not to be fined, I suppose, they just picked up the sign and took it away.

Now, there is no way we can guard against that kind of nonsense. It is up to the local people and ourselves to say, look, the sign disappears or is knocked down. For God's sake, get on the phone and say the sign is needed. That is the only way we can guard against this, because our guys can't be everywhere.

**MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Just one last question then. If I get the names of these municipalities to you, will you straighten out whose responsibility it is? That is all I ask. I guess as far as my constituents in Arm River, I'm sitting in the centre of some of the best highways in Saskatchewan and have very few complaints. I thank you, Mr. Minister.

**MR. McLEOD:** — Mr. Minister, I believe my colleagues have all finished their own constituency concerns here. Now I just have a few questions. I would ask you what is your policy, or do you have a policy, regarding the use of grid roads or R.M. roads as feasible detours during highway construction, especially during periods when it's extremely muddy?

**MR. KRAMER:** — In practically all cases our policy is to keep the traffic moving through. The contractor is aware of that. One of the ideas is to keep as little of the road opened up as mentioned earlier here. But very seldom do we ever propose a detour or choose to advise people to detour; only in exceptional circumstances.

**MR. McLEOD:** — What would you call an exceptional circumstances? I'm thinking of two particular cases. One on which you had some correspondence at least, to do with a situation in R.M. No. 555 I believe, at Big River where they used the Ladder Valley grid road. I believe there's quite a bit of concern in that R.M. regarding the use of that grid and the fact that they had just regravelled the road the prior year. It was in pretty bad condition afterward. Certainly there was an awful wet spell on the rebuilding of Highway No. 55 there. And that was a major problem. What have you done about that problem?

**MR. KRAMER:** — The Department of Highways and Transportation never advises anybody to use the detour. If they were advised to use the detour it certainly was not by us. The Department of Municipal Affairs has put some very generous grants into that municipality and you can check the record. Their claim is simply not valid.

**MR. McLEOD:** — I'll get back to this one in a minute. One other case of that was on the construction of Highway 4 from the junction of Highway 55 six miles west of Meadow Lake and north where you were constructing on Highway 4. There was an awful lot of traffic on No. 4 Highway going through the Meadow Lake Provincial Park, not only local traffic, but an awful lot of tourist traffic with trailers and all of the other paraphernalia pulled along behind cars and campers and so on. They were using the grid roads in the R.M. of Meadow Lake last years. It's a similar situation. You are saying municipal affairs put generous grants in there and so on, but certainly that was not to bear the kind of traffic that a highway would. In highway reports, if people phone your highway hot line or whatever about the condition of roads, is it not the case that where there is construction under wet conditions and so on, people will say to use an alternate road. They may be saying use an alternate highway route but in some of these cases like 55 and 4 there really is no other route to get to their destination.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I'm not aware of any advice being given but if there has been advise given by our people, in radio reports, we would consider some responsibility. But in the final analysis you know you can't have instant roads. And when roads are under construction there's got to be a period of some discomfort. We put out an information map indicating to people where the problems were. They can pick those up at any tourist booth. They can even plan their trips if they want to avoid construction because after all there's a number of parks; we've got a lot of them, a lot of good ones in Saskatchewan. So we just can't simply go piecemeal trying to cure every little problem. Going back once again, the sharing on grid roads in Saskatchewan with municipalities is generous enough so that they can bear a little of that burden. Because after all, they are Saskatchewan too, so I don't think they should be trying to nitpick because a few extra wheels go over a piece of road for which, in some cases, the province has already paid 80 per cent of 75 per cent.

**MR. McLEOD:** — Well, I'm not trying to nitpick on this either, Mr. Minister, and I don't believe the RMs are either in those particular cases. Was there a time when the Department of Highways did make arrangements with RMs and was there some reason that this policy was discontinued because of an inability to make agreement or because they were difficult to deal with?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Thirty years ago. In exceptional circumstances once in a while, we do and where we do (for reasons which may be peculiar) we do pay for the damages to the road and restore it to its original condition. Where gravel hauls occur because of construction, the municipality takes a look at the road and the contractor who uses the road has to pay to restore it to the condition it was in prior to a concentrated gravel haul. All those things happen but these are only exceptional circumstances. Over the last 20 to 30 years we have gradually gone to where we'll keep the traffic moving through the construction areas because we find that the least expensive.

**MR. McLEOD:** — I have a concern which was directed to me by a couple of bus drivers. Their concern is regarding the signs approaching highways where you have gone to signs which show the direction the track crosses the highway, directional signs. They say these signs have replaced — I'm not sure exactly what they replaced but you will know this probably better. They say they have replaced signs which were of a distinct shape, a round shape which clearly indicated railways in difficulty driving conditions, in sleet storms or whatever. The signs you now have, the directional ones (I wonder if you have ever heard anything like this from people or if this is just a couple of individual cases) . . . They say they have trouble if there is any kind of a problem where they can't see the sign. The shape doesn't really tell them they are coming to a railroad track.

**MR. KRAMER:** — We don't have any knowledge of it. We will check into it, but apparently there is no knowledge of it.

**MR. McLEOD:** — O.K., that's fine. On page 34 of your annual report, under the heading, permits, it says a new policy on winter weights which allow heavier loads to be hauled on may secondary highways was implemented in '78-'79. Now I would be interested in how you designed which highways would come under this winter weight policy and restriction policy?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Mainly between main centres where the traffic flow warrants it and delivery routes are. As I say, it was experimental, for the second year last winter. It seems to be working out reasonably well — mild winter last year and we haven't received the reports. We are a little bit worried they may not have worked as well. But on the whole the pattern is developed on the basis of the major hauls into the main centres and communities. We have those traffic counts and patterns to work on. I could give you a more detailed report on paper.

**MR. McLEOD:** — My concern here is a specific one, Mr. Minister, and I believe that your people in your department would have some requests on this, albeit the requests may have come a little late. The concern which I had is in my own constituency on the difference between Highway No. 55, in the Goodsoil area, coming east of Meadow Lake was designated as a highway to carry extra weight whereas Highway No. 26 going from Goodsoil south was not designated. I have people who farm south of the junction of Highway No. 55 and Highway No. 26 in the flat Valley area (I think the minister's aware of that area) who haul to St. Walburg on Highway No. 26. As you know, that's a great distance to haul. They have large trucks and so on and their concern I think is a valid one. I'm sure you'll agree with that. But I wonder if you'd look into it and when you continue the program next winter, if you would include Highway No. 26 for that reason?

**MR. KRAMER:** — There's going to be a complete review done. This is our second year. We went into it late the year before. This year we've had the advantage of a mild winter. We can study it. In fact I'm a little surprised that south to St. Walburg was not included. sometimes you're faced with a very weak bridge but I don't know of one on that road. Anyway, we'll check it. As I say, it is under review and we may develop, we may expand.

**MR. McLEOD:** — This is the final question I have, Mr. Minister, and it is also a local concern. It has to do with the speed limit. As you will know (and people in your department have also heard about this one) in the north end of the community of Goodsoil, along the highway as it goes up toward the provincial park from the highway to the end of Highway No. 26 north, a portion of that highway has been taken into the community and there are a number of residences up there. The school is along that highway as well. There's a great deal of concern among residents there about the speed limit. I believe it's at 80 km. per hour and they've made some requests, at least some initial inquiries, about lowering it because of the pedestrian traffic, especially their children. I don't believe they have an answer that says it would be reduced. I wonder what the position of your people would be on that?

**MR. KRAMER:** — We'll certainly take a look at it. We weathered quite a storm east of Meadow Lake on Highway No. 55 when we put the speed limit down there but lately, in the last year or two, the storm has died down a bit. So I think we could take a look at that in the interests of safety. That community is spreading to the north and we'll take a look at it.

**MR. R.L. COLLVER (Nipawin):** — Mr. Minister, I would be interested to find out just how your department goes about preparing its budget estimates for you to then present to cabinet to strike the budget. Could you possibly explain to this Assembly what the members of your department and the officials in your department do to arrive at the numbers they present to you that you then take to cabinet to strike a budget?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Well, the capital budget is one that is studies and the capita programs are selected for the year to come on the basis of need, traffic counts, various other priorities and even the weather situation. If some areas are very wet it might have a bearing on the selection of the capital program. That's pretty straightforward. The maintenance program is even more straightforward.

The urban assistance program is chosen to some extent by the demands of the urban municipalities. The sharing programs are put forward: the projects of Regina, Saskatoon an Prince Albert or any of these places that qualify for sharing are put forward and on the basis of the priorities set by them and urban assistance. That falls into place. I think it's a fairly straight forward method of putting the program together on the basis of the general need throughout the province.

**MR. COLLVER:** — You didn't quite answer my question, Mr. Minister. I'll attempt to express it in a different way. You've mentioned the three areas of concern in your department capital budget, ordinary and maintenance budget, and urban assistance program. I'll start with the urban assistance program.

Did the municipalities in the province of Saskatchewan request, in this budget year more than the amount allocated in this budget?

**MR. KRAMER:** — Yes, they asked for more money than we have provided. But they have done this in the past, to our embarrassment. One of the reasons we have underspent, some years, in our budget is that they have put programs forward and then not gone ahead with them. And then it was too late to switch, to borrow it over into other places. We found there was \$1 million or so left in Saskatoon or Regina and some other places — unspent — which went back into consolidated funds, but could have been spent, had we known, in some other area.

**MR. COLLVER:** — I sincerely hope the minister is not decrying the fact that moneys were underspent. I'm sure that's not the case. Oh, he'd rather see the money spent! That's interesting. Mr. Minister, a portion of the ordinary and maintenance budget which you put forward here, did your officials request from you more money that has been allocated in this budget?

**MR. KRAMER:** — You've approached another area. Before the budget is struck the budget bureau talks to the various departments. It talks about the possibility; they take a look at the potential revenue for next year. They put forward the maximum, based on the history of spending in the various departments. They say, here, we would like you (and they will be doing this very shortly) to suggest three levels of spending. For example, this year we have \$105 million. Now we have the capital budget; throw the extra few millions in that we took last year and overspent, if you wish and it would have been more. Set that aside. I'll try not to get fuzzy. There are three or four levels set in July. Our people are going to say, O.K., this level, maybe 1, 2, and 3. The top feel this year might be — they might say, what can you do with \$115 million capital? What could you do with \$110 million capital? What could you do with \$106 million or \$107 million capital



budget this year? After those programs are put forward, and the budget bureau has determined whether there is going to be a general increase in speeding — well, this year it's slightly over \$2 billion. It may be \$2 billion and other \$250 million. That would be allocated, so much for highways, so much for others, on the basis of priorities and on the basis of needs.

**MR. COLLVER:** — Mr. Minister, I'm sorry. When I talked about ordinary and maintenance budget, I was going to come to the capital budget. You have answered my question on the capital budget now; you didn't answer my question on the ordinary and maintenance budget. I asked you whether your officials had requested more funds in order to do an appropriate job in Saskatchewan of maintaining the highways? Whether they had asked you for more funds than what you have in this budget? However if you would like to answer that question, take that question as number one.

Question number two arises from the comments you just made. You said there were three or four levels of spending for capital expenditures for highways. Could you tell me if this level estimated in your budget is the lower level, the top level or the middle level? Let's say there are four levels. You said that the budget bureau comes to you and says, suppose we have \$120 million, suppose we have \$115 million, suppose we have \$110 million or \$105 million, what projects could you accomplish with that level of spending. Your department officials then go through it to work out in their assessment what projects could be concluded with that level of spending. Could you tell me on this capital budget for 1980-81 which level of capital spending is that: the lowest level, the highest level or the middle level? So that is question number two.

**MR. KRAMER:** — I would say that you couldn't just identify one particular level. I would say we never get as much as we ask for in capital. Neither did we accept as little as may have been suggested. So somewhere between levels two and three, presuming there are three or four or more levels.

**MR. COLLVER:** — I am sorry to have confused you by asking two questions at once, Mr. Minister, so perhaps I will ask them one at a time.

In your ordinary and maintenance budget for 1980-81, did your officials ask you, when they presented their budget and their requests to you as the minister of the department, for more funding than you are allocating in this budget?

**MR. KRAMER:** — I don't think the staff requests to me. In fact, I know they don't. They don't request to me personally because this is worked out once the recommendations are made. That has to be done at the management levels by the general managers. The general manager sits beside me and argues these things out before they come along finally, later in the fall and say, here, this about the best we can do. What do you think of it?

**MR. COLLVER:** — Mr. Minister, are you trying to suggest to me that last fall, when your managers brought the budget to you for the ordinary and maintenance work for the highways in Saskatchewan for 1980-81, the numbers we see in this book of estimates are the numbers they brought to you? That is the question that I am asking you.

**MR. KRAMER:** — The numbers we see in this book are one of the sets of numbers they brought to me.

**MR. COLLVER:** — Mr. Minister, I don't think you are answering my question. It is a very

specific question and there is a reason behind it. I am trying to found out whether or not you believe this budget allocates to highways sufficient funds to do what the department feels is necessary and desirable to do in Saskatchewan in the year 1980-81. We have seen in the last year a 12 per cent inflation rate. I would like to know whether this budget allocates sufficient to the Department of Highways to do what you would like to have done in the province: to maintain the highways in a proper fashion; to building the highways that have to be built; and to provide urban assistance as requested. Obviously you can't do it as requested because you said the municipalities asked for more.

**MR. KRAMER:** — The member is asking a question that apparently is a different conception than the fact. Let me take you through this again. The central planning group, the budget bureau, are the bankers. They know what we can afford to spend in any particular year. Or we have to assume they do. They say here, this is the best we can do under the circumstances. Certainly we would like to do more. There's not a single department that would not like to build a few extra miles. There are a few projects that have been suggested here tonight.

But if you say, is the department satisfied that it can manage the maintenance and keep the roads in a fit condition and improve them, I have to say (and I think I can say without any fear of contradiction from any of the rest of the staff here), yes we can. With the budget we can do the job necessary to keep Saskatchewan moving. And we've done this. We've done this over a period of years. And in the main, with some exceptions, Saskatchewan truckers and car drivers are enjoying a better ride on Saskatchewan roads than anywhere else in Canada.

**MR. COLLVER:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I believe the minister in his own words tonight betrayed that fact. The minister said in the United States, for example, there's 25 per cent fewer accidents, a 25 per cent better accident rate. The minister said that himself, which means that if the allocation to the budget for highways in the province of Saskatchewan is insufficient to do the job the minister thinks needs to be done to improve safety, then the fact the budget for highways has been relatively declining every years for the last five years means the minister is responsible for those extra deaths in Saskatchewan. That's what it means. It means the roads are not as safe as they could be or as they should be. It means the minister, for some reason, has not been able to take the case for better highways to his cabinet colleagues.

Now, Mr. Chairman, it's interesting to note the total budget for the province of Saskatchewan, capital and ordinary lumped together, is identical to that of last year — exactly the same amount of money is allocated in 1980-81 for ordinary and capital as was budgeted for last year. And that doesn't include the supplementary estimates the minister has submitted to this Assembly for approval that he spent last year.

That means that because we've had 12 per cent inflation, we will accomplish 12 per cent less in the province of Saskatchewan this year than we accomplished last year relative to highways and urban assistance for highways — 12 per cent less. And, Mr. Minister, for what it's worth, for the last five years highways has received each and every year a decreasing share of the budget of the province of Saskatchewan. Yet, in your own words, Mr. Minister, we do not have the kind of accident rate that saves lives in Saskatchewan when compared to other areas.

During the debate in this legislature which the minister himself participated in

pertaining to mandatory rear seat belts in Saskatchewan, he stated that accidents in Saskatchewan were increasing. During the debate in this legislature this session the minister stated when talking about SGI, when talking about insurance claims and the necessity for increased premiums, that the claims on SGI had skyrocketed in the last year. That means more accidents and that means worse accidents and it means more costly accidents.

The minister himself tonight, Mr. Chairman, stated the accident rate is a function of roads. Am I correct there, Mr. Minister? The accident rate in the United States is 25 per cent less because they have better quality roads. That's what he said; it's a function of the quality of roads. Yet, Mr. Minister, if you are receiving an ever decreasing share of the budget in the province of Saskatchewan, it means that you are responsible if all roads are not up to that standard, if they're slipping behind.

The minister made a big thing in this Assembly when talking about rear seat belts, about safety. He said the reason for it is to save lives. Mr. Minister, far more than rear seat belts, quality roads will save lives in Saskatchewan.

Tonight in this Assembly we heard the standard response from the minister to every question asked of him. We are fighting with the federal government to get the money to do the job. Mr. Minister, when do you fight with your own cabinet colleagues to get the money to do the job? When do you stand up as Minister of Highways and explain that an ever increasing administration cost for welfare isn't going to save lives, ever increasing interest burdens for the finance minister aren't going to save lives? But quality roads are going to save lives. Why, Mr. Minister, do you go to your cabinet colleagues year after year and get an ever decreasing share of the budget? Why? What is the reason for it? Is the reason for it that your officials don't want to improve the roads; they're not asking for enough; they're not asking for sufficient capital? Is the reason you're not getting this ever increasing share because you're not able to explain to your cabinet colleagues that the decreased accident rate in the United States of America is in fact because they have better roads? Of course they have better roads because the federal government in the United States collects highway taxes and in turn allocates them, no matter whether it's a poor state or a rich state. Of course that's true.

That doesn't take away the necessity for you to have a sense of responsibility in Saskatchewan. If the Department of Highways, Mr. Chairman, in the province of Saskatchewan were receiving its fair allocation of the budget, a more reasonable allocation of the budget, you could go a long way, perhaps not all the way, but you could go a long way to accomplishing the improvement of the roads to the extent that those lives would be saved.

Mr. Minister, surely its necessary, surely it's essential in terms of the Department of Highways, to more adequately present our facts to the cabinet. I must say, Mr. Minister, I don't know, perhaps it's an off night, but when I asked you for some facts tonight, I must say you weren't convincing to me. Now, perhaps when I sit down, you'll be very convincing.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Maybe you had better sit down.

**MR. COLLVER:** — Well, maybe I will. And then again, maybe I'll wait until the next time we meet. Then the Minister will be able to get right into his facts and present to this House, convince every member of this Assembly, the same as he should do to convince his cabinet colleagues, that highways are important, more important, Mr. Minister,

May 5, 1980

than administrative costs. The member for Bengough-Milestone has just suggested that they are in a mess. I must say that I don't represent, as the member for Arm River does, a constituency with the best highways in the province. Please, Mr. Minister, stop around Carrot River and test the roads up there; test the road over to Ridgedale. Please, Mr. Minister, come and check the road over to Aylsham in Nipawin and see how safe and sound it is . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Minister has mentioned the roads in Arizona, by George they are awfully nice roads, Mr. Minister, awfully nice roads.

In the minister's own words there is 25 per cent fewer accidents there. In your words, not mine — 25 per cent fewer accidents brought about by, in the minister's own words, better roads, Where is it, Mr. Minister? Where is the convincing nature that you are supposed to have?

Let's talk about the Canadian revenue. Let's talk about the Saskatchewan part. Let's talk about a budget that has gone up 15 per cent and the Department of Highways allocation that has gone up not a dime. I hope you are going to come back. Well, Mr. Minister, I don't know but it seems to me the total budget of 1979-80 was \$157 million and \$156 million, that's for ordinary. Now, let's go to capital. Ordinary went from \$60 million to \$64 million. I am sorry, Mr. Minister, you are up \$3 million. I really apologize — \$3 million in a total of some \$240 million. That's all — \$60 million to \$64 million. You keep sitting there saying, nonsense.

When the minister rises in his place I am sure he will explain all of these figures . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The heritage? Oh, well the heritage fund can spend more as it likes. That is not an allocation on highways, surely? Oh, he is going to allocate money . . . Oh, \$9 million and there wasn't anything last year, is that it? Oh, there was some there last year. You haven't even gone by the rate of inflation, Mr. Minister.

I don't see it, Mr. Minister. On ordinary expenditure alone you went from \$60 million to \$64 million. That is \$4 million on \$60 million. That is less than 8 per cent, Mr. Minister. Now you might think that is more. You might think that is the rate of inflation but in everyone else's judgment, including my own, the rate of inflation was far more than 8 per cent in 1979-80. Mr. Chairman, the fact remains that the minister has not been convincing. He has received time after time for the last five years an ever-decreasing share of the budget.

Now, isn't that interesting, Mr. Chairman, that the members in his own department are looking — I am not calling attention to them — I am just saying they are looking a little hang dog. I bet you, Mr. Minister and Mr. Chairman, that those same men came in to see the minister, time after time in the last six months, and said, our highway system has to decline. It has to decline because we are not allocating sufficient resources to it.

Far more than the value of inflation, Mr. Minister, the value of construction has skyrocketed in the last year. Construction costs have skyrocketed in the last year. So even though you are not even receiving the inflation area increase, you are doing far less work this year than you did last and the year before that and the year before that because it is not important to this government.

I think and I suspect, Mr. Chairman, it is not important to this government because this Minister of Highways likes better being the dean of the House than he does being Minister of Highways. I think this minister prefers to rest on his 22 years or 23 years in this Assembly instead of going into cabinet and fighting for what the people of

Saskatchewan need and that is better roads, to save lives. They are a mess! You don't have to come to Nipawin, Mr. Minister, go to Bengough-Milestone. Check the highways down there. They're a mess . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . They're worse than a mess, Mr. Chairman. The fact is, Mr. Chairman,, I believe very strongly that the budget of Saskatchewan should allocate more to roads to save lives and less to administrative costs and less to interest rates.

Mr. Chairman, I think we should call it 10 o'clock.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:02 p.m.