

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 16, 1981

EVENING SESSION

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY CASH OUTFLOW

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 16

Item 1 (Continued)

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, we want to pick up where we left off at 5 p.m. At that time we were talking about the fatalities and what the Department of Highways and Transportation deemed a fatality on the Trans-Canada. I used the example of a main access road from a town or village alongside the Trans-Canada, and the intersection of that access road with the Trans-Canada. I asked, if that would constitute a fatality on the Trans-Canada and the minister's reply was yes.

We want to pursue that particular aspect of fatalities as it relates to my central issue and my main concern — the policy and the criteria of new road improvement. I want to ask my colleague, the member for Indian Head-Wolseley, to direct a question or two to the minister in that particular regard.

MR. TAYLOR: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, I refer to a document put out by the department, under the previous minister, in 1979, entitled "Saskatchewan Traffic Accidents." I'm sure you have access to it there. Please look at page 20, Mr. Minister, at the numbers killed on the Trans-Canada Highway. The categories are Manitoba to Moosomin, Moosomin to Whitewood, Whitewood to Broadview, Broadview to Grenfell, Grenfell to Indian Head and Indian Head to Qu'Appelle. Now that is the area of the Trans-Canada Highway that is not twinned. Those figures indicate that there were eight fatal accidents in that area during 1979.

I would like to direct your attention, in particular, to the Grenfell to Indian Head area, (the area which is my home and with which I am most familiar) in which there was one fatality.

At the same time, Mr. Minister, if you would turn to page 35 of this document, which indicates traffic accident statistics by urban municipalities . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, that's rural on No. 36 but this is the urban area, starting on page 29. If you go down to the town of Wolseley, Mr. Minister, and look at the number of persons killed, you will see three.

You've told my colleague from Moosomin that accidents at intersections at towns are charged against the Trans-Canada Highway. Now, I tell you sincerely, I know those three people. They were killed on the Trans-Canada Highway at the approach that was just made there and wasn't marked correctly. I had raised it with the previous minister. There are three deaths which should be added into those statistics. Now, when you take three more and add that onto eight, you have a considerable percentage increase.

I heard you, in this Chamber a while ago, say that your criterion for twinning the Trans-Canada Highway to Webb (I'm not criticizing you for twinning it to Webb; I want you to twin it right across Saskatchewan, as you well know) was 0.09 (something like this) per kilometre, and in the area that I'm talking about, it was 0.07.

Now, Mr. Minister, I believe that you, as the new minister, have been misled by the previous minister and the department, because those three people were not killed within the confines of Wolseley. Sure, it's on the town limits, but you admitted that that's chargeable to the Trans-Canada Highway, because if you take every town along the Trans-Canada Highway (and many of your accidents are bound to occur at the intersections) and write that off against the urban centres, then certainly we have a very low percentage of fatalities on our highway.

I would like you to explain that situation to me, Mr. Minister, because I think your facts are erroneous. I think they are giving you, as the new minister, the wrong interpretation of the fatalities that happened on the No. 1 Highway east of Qu'Appelle.

HON. MR. LONG: — In reply hon. member, I am informed that the RCMP or the police make these reports and, if in fact, it was reported to have occurred in the town of Wolseley rather than on the Trans-Canada Highway, it might be possible that there is a mistake. We will pull that accident report and check it out and let you know. It's quite possible the mistake could have been in the police report.

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Minister, with due respect to you, I have checked it with the RCMP and they are very mystified why that would be in that section. I say your calculation is certainly all wrong. You admit there are eight. Well, you take another three, add it on to that and you do your arithmetic per kilometre as to which is the most dangerous highway, then that indicates that the traffic flow and the accident rates in the stretch that I'm talking about are more dangerous than the one at Webb.

I'm not criticizing you, because you weren't the minister, but I do criticize, and I always have, your predecessor who, I believe, took the political scissors in his decision-making in highway building. I just wanted to draw this to your attention because this is an erroneous fact — it's an out-and-out mistake (I'll be polite and call it a mistake) by the Department of Highways, which has most serious implications for highway building if safety is one of the ingredients.

Now, the other thing — when you talk about the condition of the road and the ability of the road to handle traffic and go on the assumption that 30 per cent of that Webb area . . . I want to make it very plain I'm not talking down that the area in Webb got the twin; it probably deserves it. But I'm trying to make the case that there are more areas that need it, too. True enough, there are passing lanes for 30 per cent of the highway, but if you're not meeting car after car after car, especially in the holiday period, Mr. Minister, you're meeting heavy transport traffic coming from Winnipeg to Regina. And I maintain some of them go through to Calgary and some go up to Saskatoon and through your area up to North Battleford. But the majority of the flow, all of the flow, in the heavy traffic and the transports come from Winnipeg to Regina. And I'm on that road every day, Mr. Minister. During the holiday period my colleague has pointed out that there are two cars per minute throughout the year, 24 hours per day, 365 days of the year.

In July and August (and there are members on your side of the House will agree with me 100 per cent), the traffic on that part of the highway is virtually bumper to bumper; it's holiday traffic, because it is on the main artery into Saskatchewan. It's

heavy transports and trucks. I don't care if they are single or double line, Mr. Minister — the chance of passing and having an accident there is tremendous. I just want to point these facts out to you. If you look into them, correct them and recalculate, I hope that will indicate to you the need which you know I have been trying to express in this House for two years.

HON. MR. LONG: — Mr. Chairman, in reply to the hon. member, I would point out that the figures that I quoted to the hon. member for Moosomin were the Gull Lake figures and the Qu'Appelle to Indian Head figures. Wolseley wasn't included in that section that I quoted to you. That's not to say we won't check this out. The figures I quoted to you were Gull Lake at 10.09 fatalities per kilometre and the Qu'Appelle to Indian Head at 10.07 fatalities per kilometre.

I would point out to you, sir, that's an important criterion. The traffic flow is an important criterion, but again you talk about the volume of traffic and the passing distances not being safe, even though there is a greater amount of passing distance in the east. I think that the real measure of the ability of a road to handle clear traffic is indeed part of the shoulder width (the decent width of a shoulder where traffic can pull over), while part of it is the amount of passing distance (the number of passing spots you have in a highway). I think that's what we took into account.

MR. TAYLOR: — I would ask you to recalculate your figures. I looked through these figures and it seems to me strange, if you look down page 35, that there are zero accidents. I see one here in Tisdale, a fair-sized town; I see one in Weyburn; and I see three in Wolseley, a small town of 1,000. And I say that is a very gross error in your department. I am blaming the department for this, and I'm saying that that is casting, and if you're doing 0.07 to Indian Head, that's fine, but let's go 15 miles down the road and put in another three fatalities, and let's see what your figure is then. That is a true, tried reading, and I can't understand it. I would ask your department why they would not have stumbled upon this? One little town, Wolseley, Saskatchewan with 1,000 people, had three people killed in it, and they know very well where they were killed. They were killed at the approach to Wolseley before that highway was adequately marked. That's as true as I stand in this Chamber and you can ask anybody out there. If I were part of that department and I looked down here and I saw one person killed in Weyburn, a city, and I saw another one in Tisdale, which is a fair-sized town in which it's quite logical there could be a fatal accident, and I saw three in the little town of Wolseley, I would be asking if that statistic is correct. I think it's gross mismanagement by the highway department, and it should have been detected. It should have been given to you as the new minister in your figures, so that you could make the correct pronouncements as to where the people are being killed on the highways of Saskatchewan, and the correct decisions.

HON. MR. LONG: — I would just like to point out to the honourable member for Indian Head-Wolseley that this is the first year for this operation. I think, quite frankly, this is a very fine document that we are putting out here and it's out there for a very fine purpose, and I really hope the member isn't suggesting that our efforts are in vain. We are out to do a job and to try to improve the traffic safety situation in Saskatchewan, and I really regret that you would criticize the department in its first effort in this area. I think that is very regretful. I think if there was a mistake made, it was made in the police report. We'll check it out for you and try to point out in fact, what the situation was.

MR. TAYLOR: — I just want to mention that I think you are being unfair. I think you know very well that I stand foursquare behind safety in that part of the highway and on any other highway in this province. But I do not tolerate incompetent reporting from a government department when it affects decisions that affect the lives of the people of Saskatchewan. As far as your document and what you're trying to do is concerned, I say fine and dandy. I stand for that; we do on this side of the House. But I say for goodness sake, when it affects the lives and safety of people, let's have our homework done correctly.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, as the record will clearly indicate when you replied with the 0.07, or the figure that you used, relative to the 0.09 figure from Swift Current to Webb, I had explicitly stated that I wanted figures from the eastern section of the Trans-Canada to the Manitoba border. I wanted the fatalities in that particular stretch of road. Now, if I'm going to be getting figures back that aren't in direct response to the question that I've asked, then it makes it rather difficult for me to do any kind of cross-examination of your department whatsoever. Had those figures been accurate, and had you not responded wrongly to me (obviously you did so inadvertently, and I don't suggest that you did so deliberately), and given the error that's in this traffic accident facts volume you have, then it would have made our argument (and I believe it still has). In reality, there are as many reasons to four-lane it from Swift Current to Webb, and that's why we are looking for the reasons for four-laning to Webb. We agree with that.

Just as the member for Indian Head-Wolseley and I have said many times before, we want to four-lane the Trans-Canada right across the country. We are not prepared to accept some of the statements of the former minister of highways, who said that, given the price of gasoline and small cars, there could be less traffic volume in the years to come than there is today. We don't accept that. When that happens, fine, but that isn't the case today and it doesn't appear that it's going to be the case over the next decade, and that's what we're dealing with. We're looking ahead over the decade of the 1980s.

We want to be on record clearly, as far as the opposition is concerned, that in the name of safety and in the name of saving lives, we want to four-lane the Trans-Canada from the Alberta border right across our province to the Manitoba border.

We have no objections whatsoever to this volume, except that it obviously hasn't been accurate. Now, we can accept some errors. Heaven only knows, we make enough of them ourselves. We don't want responses though, Mr. Minister, that are political; quite frankly, the work of your department is worthy. Certainly the work of your department is worthy but if it isn't accurate, and if we can't believe what we read in here, then, in fact, the volume isn't worth the paper it's written on. So we flagged that, and I think it's good that the opposition has brought that to your attention. That's why I raised the issue as to

whether or not a fatality on an intersection — a main access from a town to the Trans-Canada — would constitute a fatality on the Trans-Canada, as opposed to in the town. We had noted that error in this volume. We think that's a legitimate concern.

I want to deal right now with some of the constituency concerns that I have, before I go back to the subject of an overall examination of the estimates.

In Moosomin, you have projected to upgrade No. 8 Highway from Moosomin to Rocanville. The first thing I want to know is: when do you propose to do that? Do you have a month in mind? Or can I give you two months leeway? Can you tell us in which two-month period you intend to begin, and approximately in which two-month period you intend to have that particular stretch of highway upgraded? Can you give me an answer to that, please?

HON. MR. LONG — We haven't completely worked the tender schedule out for this year yet, so I can't really give you a definite date on when we will be starting.

MR. BIRKBECK: — All right. Then can you give me a definite date on the proposed resurfacing of Highway No. 9, running north of Whitewood to the junction of No. 247?

HON. MR. LONG: — Tenders are closing on that section of the highway, so we should be starting that in fairly good time in the spring — sometime in May.

MR. BIRKBECK: — I want to ask you a question with regard to the 0.60 kilometres of improvements that you propose on the weigh scales site. Can you tell me now what that is going to entail?

HON. MR. LONG: — I understand that it is to be a complete new scale site. The present site is considered to be obsolete by the highway traffic board. There will be new pavement and a new building. The whole setup, I understand, will be new.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Where is that going to be located, relative to Moosomin?

HON. MR. LONG: — We'll send the member the plan when we get it. Is that acceptable?

MR. BIRKBECK: — Almost. Which side, east or west?

HON. MR. LONG: — We're not certain. We'll have to send the plan over to you, and then you can pick it out.

MR. BIRKBECK: — How soon can I have the plan?

HON. MR. LONG: — As soon as it's ready. We're not certain, but we can let you know next time we're in the House.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, is the blueprint for the proposed new scale site complete, or isn't it?

HON. MR. LONG: — I guess the problem is that the district is working out the details. We really don't have a handle on it. We'd have to check with them to know exactly where they are on it.

MR. BIRKBECK: — As minister responsible for the Department of Transportation and Highways, do you not deem it reasonable that you would have had that particular blueprint from that district — and that's the Yorkton district servicing the Moosomin area — so that you could have been able to answer the questions here and estimates under your department?

I might, while I'm on my feet, Mr. Chairman, say the member for Shellbrook has said, "Why should we?" I should think, for the information of the member for Shellbrook, that they should have that information here for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan. This is a government that is supposed to be the brother's keeper of the people of Saskatchewan and, in that vein, Mr. Member for Shellbrook, I should suggest to you that, being part of that government (unless you're planning to join some other political party), you would want that kind of information here under the minister's department so that he could answer the questions.

HON. MR. LONG: — In a full year of contracts, we just don't have everything on my desk as yet. It takes a little time, and it's still in the district office. As soon as we get it, we can send you the plan, and you'll know exactly what's going on.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Yes, I can appreciate that, Mr. Minister. What I want from you, though, is a simple agreement. Can you not agree with me that it seems reasonable that that information should have been available to your department so that you could have answered the questions from the opposition under the estimate projection for the Department of Highways? I want that agreement. Can you not agree with me on that? It's simple enough.

HON. MR. LONG: — At this time of year, before the construction season is even close to starting, I think it's probably unreasonable to expect that. Again, I will say that we will be happy to supply you with the plans when they are available; we will be very pleased to do so.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I intend to be rather persistent. I would like, again, to ask the minister if he could not agree. All right, now listed, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister. I don't care when the construction period in this year starts. The blueprints have to be done before the construction starts and you must have the blueprints. In fact you admitted that the blueprints were in that district, and that's the Yorkton district. Well, why then wouldn't you have those blueprints here? You get up and say that the construction year hasn't started yet and you don't know when it's going to start. My goodness, it could have started in February, with the winter we have had. What I am saying to you is, if you plan to do construction — you have it down here in project array — then you must have blueprints, because there is no contractor that's going to start a road or even a weigh scale, for that matter, without a blueprint. What I am saying is that you must have the blueprints, and I am asking you if you couldn't agree that it seems reasonable that you should have had them here in preparation for your estimates. And if you can't agree with that, simply stand up and say no, you disagree with me.

HON. MR. LONG: — I would like to say to the hon. member that we aren't going to be starting construction for probably, at least, six weeks, two months. Who can say?

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, with that, then, I will assume that the blueprints aren't even drafted. I have to draw from that . . . The minister shrugs his shoulders and nods his head as if to say, "Okay, you draw from that whatever you like." But I have to draw from

that that the blueprints, in fact, are not even prepared for this proposed weigh scale site. You don't know which side of the town it is going to be on. No wonder you couldn't answer that; you don't have the blueprints for it.

AN. HON. MEMBER: — Where is the preliminary sketch?

MR. BIRKBECK: — Now, Mr. Minister, this leads into the question of the whole validity of your project array. Now, as I have just started to ask questions, let me ask you another one. Do you have any blueprints done for the upgrading of Highway No. 8?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, the designs are available in the Yorkton office.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, when you finally get a blueprint for the scale site, would you mind sending that to my office, along with the blueprint for the proposed upgrading of Highway No. 8?

HON. MR. LONG: — No problem.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Concerning the preliminary survey work with regard to a decision on the extension of No. 8 to the south of Moosomin, there was a proposal to swing through approximately seven quarters of land in order to line it up with main street and bring it down the street. Firstly, I want to know if there were any surveys done out there in that rural land at all? Secondly, I want to know if there were any surveys down to Moosomin or west of Moosomin as they would related to the continuation of No. 8 going south past Moosomin, either down Cook Road or to the west? Are there any preliminary surveys?

HON. MR. LONG: — No surveys have been done at this time.

MR. BIRKBECK: — All right. In other conversations that you and I have had, Mr. Minister, we have been looking at the problem of carrying No. 8 south at some future point. We are going to get it graded. Hopefully, you are going to come up with some blueprints; we are going to be fortunate enough to get some contractors, and we are going to get it done in '81-82, as is proposed in your project array. Now, hopefully, somewhere down the road (if it's anything like the progress in the past, it will be about another five years) you'll progress to the south.

Now, I want, for your benefit as Minister of Highways, to explain to you, as far as I can at this point, the position of the people out there regarding that extension of Highway No. 8. Firstly, they do not want it down main street and, secondly, as of about three days from now, I should, in all probability, have in my hand a petition from the residents of Cook Road (that is not my decision; that's their decision) stating that they do not want it down Cook Road. Now, governments have done wonderful things, but they have never learned how to suspend a highway. We have to put it somewhere. Now then, the member for Shellbrook is interrupting me again. It's too bad that he couldn't . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to know what the position of the Minister of Highways and Transportation would be regarding a loop to the west of Moosomin — if that is something that could be considered by the department — or have they made up their minds that it's going down Cook Road or that it's going down main street? I suppose, the basic question is: has your department made any decision now? Obviously, you can't have, but I should ask the question. You don't have any blueprints or sketch surveys done, so I would have to assume that you don't have any decision, but I better ask the question anyway. Do you have any idea where Highway No. 8 will go when it heads south?

HON. MR. LONG: — I think it's fair to say that we're open to all suggestions and ideas from the community. I'm glad that the member was able to ascertain that there was a petition. I believe it was I who made you aware of that the other day. So you were home on the weekend and were able to determine that there was. I appreciate that kind of information to go on.

MR. BIRKBECK: — I have to correct the minister. There was not, in fact, a survey under way at the time you spoke to me. Under no circumstances was there a petition or whatever in place at that time. The petition was a result of my being in contact with the reeve in Moosomin, a representative of the mayor, and another town councillor who said that he would do some groundwork for me over the weekend — and, I suggest, for you as well, Mr. Minister — to ascertain what the feelings of the residents of Cook Road were regarding a continuation of Highway No. 8 sometime in the future. So that particular petition was put together as a result of my telephone call on Saturday afternoon. He said in a phone call today, just after lunch, that he thought that he could have a letter in with the signature on it, in approximately three to four days. So, I hope you stand corrected. Obviously, you must. The facts are the facts; the truth is the truth. And I never speak anything but the facts and the truth. Therefore . . .

AN. HON. MEMBER: — Mr. Nice Boy!

MR. BIRKBECK: — Yes, well, I like to hear compliments from the government side. Every once in a while they refer to me as nice boy and Mr. Honest. You know, I can accept those kinds of compliments.

So, Mr. Minister, those are the things we're facing there now. They don't want it down main street and we are running into opposition putting it down Cook Road. Before the grading project of Highway No. 8 to the north can take place, there has to be, in my opinion, a decision made on that, because you can't very well upgrade Highway No. 8 if you don't build into that what your plans are going to be five years down the road. If you're going to put a loop around the west side, which would be approximately a mile (I'm just guessing) or a little over a mile, then that would put you right through the wheat pool livestock division. I don't think that that would be very readily accepted now. We have a thriving wheat pool livestock division down there. I think that is what has to be done.

Now, knowing full well that we're going to be discussing these estimates tomorrow, I hope that we can arrive at some consensus. I would ask if your department would undertake now to send someone out there to take a look at that particular area and the feasibility of putting a loop to the west side. I understand that the town owns some of that property out there. Whether that loop would run through land that the town already owns or not, I don't know. There's a dairy operation located close to Cook Road as well, which would be caught between Cook Road and the loop going around the west, if that's what we propose.

I don't know how that would work out. I think the only way is to have your department send someone out there to take a look at it and see if it is feasible. If the feasibility is there of taking a loop around the west side, if we don't run into any major obstacles there or objections from the farmers, I think likely, just off the top of my head at this time, until further consultation with our own people, that that might be where it has to go.

I can agree with the government; I can agree with the Department of Highways, and yourself as minister that it has to go somewhere. They don't want it down main street. They don't want it on Cook Road. Maybe the farmers won't want it running through the rural areas. But it must go somewhere, and we are going to have to put it where it's going to please the majority of people, I suppose, and that's the bottom line, that that is what we are going to have to do. So could you give me any assurances that you could send someone out there in the very near future to do a preliminary survey on the west side of Moosomin, so that we can get that underway and we can know where it is going to go? Then we can, hopefully, get working quickly on the blueprints for No. 8 and get that graded under the estimated time which you have here in the 1981-82 fiscal year. Can you give me those assurances?

HON. MR. LONG: — Arrangements have already been made for Department of Highways staff to travel to Moosomin and meet with the people of the R.M., the town council, and any other interested people to deal with the suggestions which you are making.

MR. BIRKBECK: — When will that particular meeting take place? Give me a 30-day time frame.

HON. MR. LONG: — I believe it should be within the next 10 days. I am not certain (I talked to the Department of Highways staff the other day about the matter), but I believe it will be very shortly.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Would the minister be so kind as to give me about a three-day notice of when that meeting is going to actually take place?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes.

MR. BIRKBECK: — I am almost finished with the riding's concerns. I want to just talk a little bit more about this Highway No. 8 improvement. Do you know at this time, do you have any indications from any blueprints which might be lying around, as to where you are going to go through Rocanville? Are you going to be by-passing Rocanville or going through what is currently known as No. 8?

HON. MR. LONG: — At this time, we are not planning any change at Rocanville or planning to go through Rocanville.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Then if you are not planning any change, are you telling me that there is enough room, width-wise, to put an improved, graded No. 8 through Rocanville? Do you have enough working room there? I mean, I have to assume that you do, but I question that. I wonder if your officials could just elaborate on that bit through you.

HON. MR. LONG: — I am informed that it is reasonable to put it through at its present site, to rebuild it at its present site.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Okay, then if I understood you correctly, you said that you were going to rebuild it at its present site?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, I said you could do it that way.

MR. BIRKBECK: — "Could," "may" and "can" are different terminologies. All right, you

obviously haven't made a decision as to whether you are going down the old side, or whether you are going to go around where there is already a rough outline now. There is a by-pass there now. It is just not called No. 8. Am I understanding you correctly — that you haven't made a decision as to where it will go, whether it will by-pass or go through Rocanville? If you have made a decision, could you indicate it to the committee, please?

HON. MR. LONG: — There is no decision made as yet.

MR. BIRKBECK: — When will the decision be forthcoming?

HON. MR. LONG: — After we consult with the people of Rocanville to see what their opinions and needs are.

MR. BIRKBECK: — I have already consulted with the people of Rocanville. They would be quite content, at this time, with Highway No. 8 going through the present location, if they were given a guarantee that there wouldn't be a potash truck rolling through there every 10 minutes, as is currently happening on Highway No. 9, which is used by IMCC (International Minerals and Chemical Corporation). Can you give the people of Rocanville that assurance?

HON. MR. LONG: — We would have to wait and determine whether there was that kind of traffic travelling through Rocanville and make a decision accordingly.

MR. BIRKBECK: — The feelings expressed to me at this time by the community are such that if there were going to be a very heavy volume of traffic via the movement of potash by truck, they would just as soon have Highway No. 8 by-pass their town. On the other hand, if there weren't going to be a heavy volume of traffic, they could live with it going through. I would suggest, for your benefit, Mr. Minister, that you put Highway No. 8 through the present location and proceed to build a by-pass, designating it solely as a truck route. This would eliminate the traffic flow on Highway No. 8 and by-pass it around the town.

I throw this out as a suggestion; it would satisfy both groups. It wouldn't put the truckers out any; in fact, it's a far better route for them. It's a straight road — you come in and head east and then south and that's it. If the trucks go through Rocanville (even if it were designated as Highway No. 8), the speed limit would be substantially reduced. They would have to do a lot of down-shifting and I suppose, given the volume of truck traffic you have on Highway No. 9, there would be a great loss of fuel over the course of a year.

I give you this suggestion because their main concern now is that they don't want a heavy volume of truck traffic on Highway No. 8, if the highway runs through their town. Can you give me any indication or assurance you will look at this proposal, given that it is the position of the community of Rocanville? I appreciate you would want to verify the community's position as I have given it to you tonight.

HON. MR. LONG: — We are certainly prepared to look at the member's recommendation and hear what the people of Rocanville have to say about it; sure, we're prepared to do that.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Could you give me some indication of when you would be prepared to meet with the people of Rocanville on this issue?

HON. MR. LONG: — We would have to set the meeting up and notify the hon. member. We don't have any plans for a meeting as yet; it's just a little too early, but we will be doing that.

MR. BIRKBECK: — May I throw out another suggestion for the purpose of expediency. Could you not call the Rocanville people to a joint meeting with the people of Moosomin when you go there to discuss their particular problems? You could have the Rocanville people there because they're concerned about Highway No. 8, too. They travel to Moosomin quite frequently and they're going to want to know where the highway is going. Quite frankly, I think you could have both towns involved in the same meeting; I don't think there is any problem. Could you take it under consideration and possibly report back to me?

HON. MR. LONG: — I can appreciate the hon. member's suggestion, but it has been my experience in dealing with various communities that they like to be met on an individual basis. They like individual attention; they like to meet on an individual basis and deal with their individual problems. I think that is probably the way we'll do it, but I'll certainly take your recommendation into consideration.

MR. BIRKBECK: — All right, if I was able to arrange a joint meeting that was agreeable to both parties could you accept that?

HON. MR. LONG: — If the people of the two communities agree, I suppose it could be done that way. Of course, I think my highway staff are concerned about the success of such meetings and the involvement of the people in both communities, so I suppose we would have to give them a chance to comment. How effective that kind of a meeting would be, I am not sure.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Can you give me an assurance that you won't make any decision on No. 8 as it affects the town of Rocanville until such time as you have met with those local people?

HON. MR. LONG: — There is no question about that. We wouldn't even consider doing that.

MR. BIRKBECK: — I have had some problems, Mr. Minister, in the past in getting intersections lit — in particular where No. 8 turns into Rocanville. They've been asking for the lighting to be improved there and to date, to my knowledge, it hasn't been. Can you give us an assurance that when you lay out the blueprint for the grading of No. 8, you'll involve in that whole scheme of things adequate lighting at all intersections?

HON. MR. LONG: — If it meets the criteria of our present policies, we'll do that.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the answer is hardly sufficient, but I can assure the minister that if the lighting is not sufficient to the standards that the people out there feel it should be, their objections will be most adamantly voiced through me and them, as well as through special committees that may well be coming in to see you on it. It has been a problem in the past and unless you set out proper lighting at those intersections, it's surely going to be a problem in the future, and they're going to want some assurance that it is going to be done. I find it unfortunate that you can't give me that assurance tonight in light of your comments that your whole building program and policy is taking safety into consideration as a priority.

Now, I want to move into the other phase of your improvements in the Moosomin constituency or rather, I should say, the lack of improvements, and it is with regard to Highway No. 48. This has to be one of the saddest issues that has ever faced the people of that particular area. I am talking about Highway 48 as it runs through Kipling. They have had promises back to 1968 and again in 1972, 1975, 1978, but today they are not on the project array. Now when we go back again, as I started out in my cross-examination of your department's estimates, to establish the criteria and the policy for your new road construction programs, you said safety is a concern. I agree. We say that you must four-lane the Trans-Canada, and I say to you, Mr. Minister, that if you are not going to four-lane the Trans-Canada from Indian Head to the Manitoba border, then you only have one other choice and that is to divert the traffic.

The only way to divert the traffic is to take it to the Yellowhead Route or take it to No. 48. I wouldn't want you taking it to 48 right now because it is nothing more than a cow trail, and it has been for a long, long time. But if you improve No. 8 up to the Yellowhead Route, you could take traffic and divert it right from Moosomin, as the people enter Saskatchewan, up to the Yellowhead. And they can continue on their way across Saskatchewan on the Yellowhead Route. Get them off the Trans-Canada where it isn't four-laned. Secondly, anyone wanting to move from Regina to Winnipeg, for example, could move directly through Highway 48, if Highway 48 were improved to the Manitoba border and that hasn't been done. I know that my colleague, the member for Indian Head-Wolseley is going to want to comment on those stretches of highway that run through his riding, in particular Highway 48. Mr. Minister, I can almost guarantee you at this point in time that you're going to be petitioned. You're going to have a lobby group in from that Kipling area, and they are not going to need any prompting from me, because it's a deplorable situation.

The Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources should be irate about this situation. We have one of the best parks in Saskatchewan at Kenosee Lake. The people of Regina and this part of the province who want to travel to Kenosee Lake should normally go down Highway 48. But they don't go down Highway 48; they go down the Trans-Canada to Whitewood, and then they take Highway 9 straight south to Kenosee. They do that because that road is so rough that if they took a camper-trailer down there, by the time they got there they wouldn't have anything left in the cupboards. It's just a deplorable situation, the state of that highway.

We had the opportunity one time to take a senator down that strip of road. I don't think he's been back to Saskatchewan. Has he been back to Saskatchewan since? No. We had a meeting out that way and we were able to pick him up at the Hotel Saskatchewan. He said, "Well, are we in for an exciting evening?" I said, "You sure are; and it won't be at the meeting. It'll be en route there and en route home. "Why?" he asked. "What's going to happen?" I said, "You've never seen a road like this." And it is true. There can be no question.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Hogwash!

MR. BIRKBECK: — Now someone says, "hogwash." Which member was that? The people of Kipling would like to know which member said, "hogwash." Oh, that's the Minister of Education who says, "hogwash." Yes, he's not sitting in his place; he's away back there right out of things, as he usually is. But the Minister of Education is now on record for the benefit of the people of Kipling area. He thinks it's hogwash that Highway 48 needs to be improved. Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Chairman, the hogwash is with the

Minister of Education after the way he answered questions here today.

Now, Mr. Minister of Highways, if you can justify resurfacing Highway 9 north of Whitewood to Highway 247 (which to the people of the Kipling area is already a super slab — you could land a Learjet on that thing), how do you justify not putting some improvements on Highway 48? It affects the people of the Kipling area right through to the Manitoba border, so that in fact you could divert traffic off the Trans-Canada. Run it straight out of Regina right through to the Manitoba border, right through to Winnipeg. It links in a direct line to Virden, then back onto the Trans-Canada in Manitoba. And then you'd have three primary arteries across the province instead of the one, or rather, the two — the Yellowhead is pretty well-used. There is no mechanism now, because of the poor roads, of getting the people from the Trans-Canada up to the Yellowhead, and there's no way of getting them down Highway no. 48 except down to Montmartre (I think that's where it ends).

Can you make some comments, for the record, for those poor people in Kipling who are absolutely irate? I've talked to them. They want to know. They said, "Well, let me know as soon as you hear." I phoned them that very day, and said, "There isn't anything on that project array." And they are absolutely furious. Now, Mr. Minister, just for the record, for those people who are so distraught over the fact that you haven't seen fit to put some improvements in that area on Highway No. 48, could you make some comments as to why and when they might dream of a possible improvement to that road?

HON. MR. LONG: — The section of Highway No. 9 that the member speaks about and calls a "super slab" is now in the condition where it needs some revitalization. Rehabilitation I believe is the term that we use. It's starting to just depreciate a little with the heavy traffic, and so we feel it's necessary to rehabilitate it this year in order to save an investment that the people of Saskatchewan have made in that road. That No. 48 Highway, I very much appreciate, is an important highway. Indeed, we are addressing ourselves to a section of Highway No. 48, as you know, east of Candiac to east of Montmartre, involving some 16.08 kilometres of grading this year. So we are starting to work our way toward the communities that you mentioned.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, Mr. Chairman, for the people to try to console themselves with the statement that you are heading that way — you've been heading that way since 1968! You've had about 10 years in office as a government and all through those years, and all through those elections, you haven't been able to see fit to put improvements in that particular strip of road. I'm going to come back to this issue just a little later on this evening — in about half an hour — and I think I have the reason why that particular stretch of road has not been improved.

I want to just ask the member for Indian Head-Wolseley to ask you a couple of questions that relate to that strip going through his riding. When I said that that stretch north of Whitewood was a super slab, I said it was, relative to Highway No. 48; so I suppose, Mr. Minister, you are going to have to listen just a little more carefully to how I phrase things. All right? Relative to Highway 48, it's a super slab. I can appreciate that it may be getting the surface knocked out of it a little and it's going to be requiring some resurfacing, in particular, because I foresee a pretty heavy movement of potash down that road in the future.

MR. TAYLOR: — I would just like to add to the comments of the member for Moosomin regarding Highway No. 48. I think he's laid this scenario out pretty plainly; the traffic to Kenosee Lake is becoming heavier each year, especially the weekend traffic. If No. 48

were better, it would divert some of the traffic from No. 1.

But when you talk about bending and curving as being one of the criteria in passing capability, I tell you that, down in our part of the country, they call Highway 48 the "turkey trail," because it's just curving and bending every which way. If the ability to pass and the width of the road, as you told me, are your criteria for safety, then with the increased traffic flow that's on No. 48 Highway, I think it's imperative that it become improved and widened, as it is from Montmartre to Regina and all the way down to Kennedy at the junction of No. 9. I think that would certainly be a big improvement for the highways in that area as the traffic flow increased and with the construction there. It was a fairly good highway, I suppose, back in the '40s, when the traffic flow was very minimal, but today it is simply not meeting the demands that are being placed upon it.

HON. MR. LONG: — I think the member is pleased with the section of highway we are building for him. I'm sure that he's pleased with that section of grading that we are doing. It's interesting to note how parochial members can be when dealing with their own constituency. You know, I was the same way when I was in the back benches, but when you become Minister of Highways, you suddenly discover there's more than one constituency out there. There's the total province to service and you have to make some harsh judgments — and they are pretty tough judgments sometimes. You make the decisions according to your best judgment and try to meet as many of the needs of the province as possible. I think members, if they really think about that, will very much appreciate it.

MR. LANE: — A question to the minister. I've maintained for the last several years that your Ring Road program in the city of Regina has frankly been a design disaster. It has cut off parts of the city from others. It has divided, for example, Glencairn from the rest of east Regina.

AN. HON. MEMBER: — Not so.

MR. LANE: — "Not so," says the hon. member. Do you want to fight that election all over again? Do you know what happened to you in 1975 when you had the Ring Road policy, and what the people of Glencairn and your old friends and neighbours told you what they thought of it?

Anyway, it took a great deal of public pressure from the residents of University Park to try to get additional access after the department had, for some years, refused to give that additional access. You had given all sorts of excuses to the people of University Park and Gardiner Park as to why you couldn't do that. Then finally the pressure became too great. My first question is: when you originally planned the Ring Road and the access for University Park, did you have the plans for the growth of Gardiner Park and that subdivision?

HON. MR. LONG: — I am informed that the plans for the Ring Road were in place before these other subdivisions were in place.

MR. LANE: — Well, you did a flyover at Arcola. Was that flyover not planned at the time the subdivisions were known — the flyover at the Ring Road? It is called an overpass. It is like some of your guys there should have right here in the House; they have been passed over by cabinet so often.

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, that particular interchange was planned at the time the Ring

Road was first on the blueprints.

MR. LANE: — Did you have the growth projections for University Park and Gardiner Park at the time that was in your plans?

HON. MR. LONG: — I am informed that the city didn't have any plans or any studies at that time in terms of how much growth would take place there.

MR. LANE: — Well, yes, you can blame the city of Regina, but let me tell you something. The reason I ask those questions is that those subdivisions, particularly Gardiner Park, were all the result of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and the Department of Municipal Affairs, as it was known at that time, now known as the Department of Urban Affairs. I strongly suggest to you that it's perhaps not your department's fault, but this is certainly another example (the second one today) of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing. The Department of Highways failed to contact the Department of Urban Affairs or Municipal Affairs to find out what the growth projections for the city were to be. Now, I am going to ask you, on the uncompleted part of the Ring Road for the city of Regina, particularly the northwest, are you going to continue the same plans which you have now — which is very limited access from the northwest onto the Ring Road — or are you going to downgrade that level of highway so that more access can be added to it, so that you're not going to run into in northwest Regina what you've run into in Glencairn, University Park and Gardiner Park?

HON. MR. LONG: — I would like to just point out to the hon. member that the section of the Ring Road that he is talking about is the responsibility of the city. We fund part of the cost of the construction, and if you want that kind of information you will have to talk to the city about it.

MR. LANE: — Boy, I'll tell you you're a very naive little man over there — or big man. I shouldn't say little; I should say the Wuthering Height over there. But I'm going to ask . . . Let me tell you something. Every public meeting — and the hon. member from Dallas across from you can tell you this — on the complaints of the citizens of Regina about the Ring Road had to have the Department of Highways officials there. I'll tell you who did the planning of the Ring Road. It was the Department of Highways. They may be paying for it — oh yes — but those plans are being done by the Department of Highways, as the minister, I think, knows full well. You're funding it. You've got the input into the planning and it's the Department of Highways that has been going to public meetings and saying what they're doing. Now, surely you can't stand up in this House and say it's all the city's fault? If the city had had their way, they would have done it altogether differently.

HON. MR. LONG: — The city hired the consultants and they did the planning, and we funded our share of it. Our officials were at the public meetings because we were involved in it, in terms of funding we want to know what's going on.

MR. LANE: — Are you prepared then, if the city were to ask you to maintain the funding and let the city do the balance of all the design, planning and everything else, to maintain your commitments to the funding that you've already made, and then have no further part in design or building of that highway?

HON. MR. LONG: — If we pay for 50 per cent of the funding then we'd like to know what's going on, so we're certainly going to be in contact with the officials and discuss it with them.

MR. LANE: — That's certainly a significant retraction from your earlier statement. I'm going to ask now, seeing that you've got your 50 per cent and you're involved in it, whether you are now prepared to reconsider your longstanding objection to more access for Glencairn subdivision? I welcome the limited retraction for University Park and Gardiner Park. Are you now prepared to reconsider your objection to further access for Glencairn and, in fact, to increase the access for Glencairn so that the people in that subdivision are not cut off from the rest of Regina?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, we have been discussing it with the city, but there hasn't been any decision made yet on it.

MR. LANE: — When can you expect the decision to be made?

HON. MR. LONG: — Well, it's a city decision. I mean, we're involved in talking to them, but they make the final decision.

MR. LANE: — You are now prepared to allow the Department of Highways to change its policy and allow more access into the Glencairn subdivision?

HON. MR. LONG: — We're willing to discuss it with them and try to work out something.

MR. LANE: — That's all you're prepared to do. Do you know how long the discussions have been going on? Do you know how many years of discussions have been going on? You do know. How many? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The fact is, you don't know. The fact is, you don't know how many years, but the department has always objected to more access to the Glencairn subdivision because, supposedly, that highway is designed as a high speed road and does not lend itself to more access.

I suggest to the minister that if he takes a look at the growth patterns in east Regina, he will find that the people of a major suburb of Regina are being forced to go down to Highway No. 1 to get into the city or down through a narrow port (for want of a better phrase), down Dewdney Avenue East. And, really, that is their access to the city of Regina and that's it. We're looking at city planning for somewhere from 10,000 to 12,000 people who are being channelled down the divided Highway No. 1 or through two lanes on Dewdney Avenue East. That is very unfair and I say an unfortunate position for those people to be placed in.

I want a commitment from you that your department is prepared to propose design recommendations — I said that very carefully, keeping in mind your previous answer — for the consideration of the city of Regina, so that the people in Glencairn can get more access.

HON. MR. LONG: — The member is a little out in his facts. In fact, the people in that subdivision can make an approach to the city on Dewdney, Glencairn and Fleet streets.

MR. LANE: — Well, I'm not going to tell you where Glencairn Avenue ends, nor where Fleet Street ends, but they seem to end on Highway No. 1, which is precisely what I said. The fact is that they are channelled right down to Highway No. 1 and if that's the answer, you just proved my point. I asked you a very simple question. Is your department prepared to draw up design proposals for the city of Regina to consider, so that the citizens of Glencairn and Glencairn East will have more access back into the

city of Regina?

HON. MR. LONG: — We are prepared to discuss it with them and see what can be worked out. That's it.

MR. LANE: — You're not prepared to go to design proposals for the city's consideration?

HON. MR. LONG: — Not at this time.

MR. LANE: — Okay. Are you prepared at the overpass of Dewdney Avenue East, the Ring Road, to expand that from the present two lanes into four lanes so more traffic can get through there? There's a tremendous bottleneck.

HON. MR. LONG: — We have been discussing that particular intersection with the city of Regina and no decision has been made as yet.

MR. LANE: — When do you expect the decision to be made?

HON. MR. LONG: — In due course.

MR. LANE: — Is that due course this year?

HON. MR. LONG: — When we get together with the city and it makes up its mind, then we'll deal with it.

MR. LANE: — You're saying the reason that it's not now four lanes and widened is the city's fault? So you're only waiting for its decision? — that's what you said. Is it the city's fault that you don't have a decision?

HON. MR. LONG: — Of course not. The city is working out its proposal and we'll discuss it in due course and make a decision in due course. And that's all the member is going to get at this time.

MR. LANE: — Are you prepared to assist, and have you given any studies to the Park Street and Dewdney Avenue East intersection, which is probably one of the most congested intersections in the city of Regina? The reason it is congested is because of the traffic from Glencairn, Glencairn East, and to and from . . . at a very heavily trafficked intersection, which is causing a great deal of inconvenience to the people of that part of town.

HON. MR. LONG: — The particular intersection you are talking about really doesn't have anything to do with us at all. It's just a city intersection.

MR. LANE: — Well, let me tell you why it should have something to do with you. It's that doggone Ring Road which is so poorly designed that it's causing all the traffic problems out there; so we're right back to square one. That particular design has cut off part of the city; it's the result of some poor planning. I suggest that if there were ever a monument to a good idea gone wrong, it's that Ring Road in the city of Regina.

I hope the minister takes a look sometime to see the problems caused by that particular road and to make sure that it doesn't happen again in any future plan, because the

citizens of that part of the city deserve better. I suggest that people in Glencairn and Gardiner Park (and the hon. member says the northwest) deserve a lot better. I predict as well, that if the same considerations go into the Ring Road in north Regina, as have gone into it in east Regina, we're going to have the same areas cut off. We're going to have the same problems with the traffic flow. We're going to have the same problems with children trying to get to school and parents being concerned about them. I suggest to you that that Ring Road is a highly inappropriate design for the city of Regina.

Now, the original proposals for the Ring Road I thought had a great deal of merit. I hope that the department will take those original proposals and rethink and reconsider them because I believe they have a great deal of merit. They allowed a great deal more access and had a lot lower speed than does the present proposal.

My next question to the Minister deals with the Qu'Appelle Valley. Would the Minister tell me, at what stage are the design proposals for a Qu'Appelle Valley scenic route?

HON. MR. LONG: — We built between Highway No. 6 and Craven, but there is nothing more programmed at this time.

MR. LANE: — Does the government have any interdepartmental planning group to deal with a scenic route through the Qu'Appelle Valley?

HON. MR. LONG: — I understand there are some plans being prepared by the Qu'Appelle Valley Development Association. But at this time the government doesn't have plans for a scenic route through the valley.

MR. LANE: — Do you have any estimates from the association, or do you have your own, indicating when such a scenic route would be started? Have you made a commitment to such a scenic route down the Qu'Appelle Valley?

HON. MR. LONG: — No.

MR. LANE: — Are you expecting to make any commitments this year?

HON. MR. LONG: — No.

MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, as you said before, we're interested in our own constituencies and I have several . . . I hope how, and I know this to be the case, that this is one area that you know well. So I would think we'll go through this rather quickly.

First of all, there are a couple of things I would like to compliment the department on. I know that any time they have heard from people in the Meadow Lake area over the past number of years, it was about Highway No. 4. Here is a bit of a compliment on Highways No. 4. It's in the best shape it has ever been (that is, south of Meadow Lake). Certainly, we hear comments about it being narrow and so on, and I agree with them. I think that at some future time you might look at widening it as traffic increases, but certainly the surface itself is the best it has ever been. I'll give you credit for that.

Also, dealing with No. 4 from the west junction of No. 55 north to Meadow Lake Provincial Park, I would also give you some credit there.

I notice that although you had the surfacing or paving of No. 4 from the junction of No. 55 to the Beaver River on your project array last year, it didn't get done. I see exactly the same thing back on this year. There are two different places in that constituency where that happened. Pierceland to the Alberta border is another area. I would like your assurance that it will definitely be done this year, because people were expecting it to be done last year.

The other thing I am glad to see on there is the section of Highway No. 4 from the Beaver River to the junction of No. 224 which goes to the provincial park. I know the people of Dorintosh area and all of that area north of Meadow Lake will be very pleased finally, and I say finally emphasizing that word, to see that road included in your project array to the extent that they can hope for a good surface on it. I know the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources will be happy about it, too, because I think it will have a tremendous effect on the number of people using that park.

Having said that, Mr. Minister, I would go on to another corner of the constituency which you know even better. You mentioned something here earlier about members being parochial and looking after their own constituent's needs and so on. I would suggest that you may have done this, to the benefit of my constituents as well as yours, when your department came through with some dust freeing of Highway No. 21 from Paradise Hill to the Peck Lake access. This is used to a great extent by people from your Cut Knife-Lloydminster constituency. Whatever the reason is, thank you for letting it happen. If it's political, you are following your predecessor's footsteps, but it is to our benefit this time at least. I would say to you that it is a beginning on No. 21.

I have one question about that, now that you have gone to this commitment to dust freeing on No. 21 to Peck Lake. As you know, the proposed heavy oil project in Cold Lake in the Pierceland area will have a tremendous effect on our area in terms of the number of people moving in, and so on. And that will have a real effect on those highways. When can we expect dust freeing to continue through to Pierceland on No. 21?

HON. MR. LONG: — We will certainly be trying to deal with that road as soon as possible. I want to point out to the hon. member that some of the surfacing that we did not get done in your constituency last year was due to bad weather, so we hope to be able to have that done this year.

MR. McLEOD: — You will agree with me on the effect of that Cold Lake project on our area (in all kinds of areas, highways being one of them), and that that is an important area. Why not be ahead of the game rather than have a full season with that dusty road? What I am asking is: will you commit your department to dust freeing that road before the influx of traffic begins?

HON. MR. LONG: — I would just like to point out to the hon. member that the whole of northwest Saskatchewan is important to me, and I think we have to do a lot of work up there.

MR. McLEOD: — I couldn't agree with you more, Mr. Minister, and, after listening to you say that, I want to go back to a statement you made to my colleague, the member for Moosomin. At the beginning of these estimates, he asked you to list the criteria that you use in determining whether to rebuild roads and whether to undertake new construction on roads. I think you listed them in this order: safety, the ability of the road to handle the traffic flow, maintenance costs, industrial development (roads that lead

to any type of industrial development), grain movement, and roads that have a relationship to northern development.

Taking that criteria into consideration, there is not one in the six criteria which you listed, and that I repeated to you now, that doesn't apply to Highway No. 304, which goes from the junction of Highway No. 26 in the Loon Lake area across to Meadow Lake. There is not one of those criteria that does not apply to that road. There has never been mention made in your project, since I've been around, of anything to be done on that road (Highway No. 304), and I know the minister is familiar with it.

You mentioned here in the House about the winding, curving road, and that's exactly what that is. It's a road that was transferred over from the LID (local improvement district) at that time to the highway department. You can go the full length of it, 51 kilometres or whatever it is. There's not one . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . along the whole way. It's just a dirt road with a little roll of tar paper rolled down. You call it a blacktop road. From the safety aspect, the curves in there are just unbelievable. The tankers that come across — you talk about access to industrial areas — the traffic on that road increases every year, coming from Lloydminster, from Edmonton, across into Meadow Lake, and then on north. Certainly your maintenance costs have to be increasing every year, because every year the crews are out there even more often and they're patching and patching and patching, and it seems to no avail.

When we come to the grain movement section, the crushing plant in Lloydminster and in your constituency — our area is a major rapeseed growing area — the amount of rapeseed that goes over that road to the crushing plant at Lloydminster is increasing every year. Yet, that road is not mentioned for any kind of development, any kind of rebuilding. Can you answer that one please?

HON. MR. LONG: — I can certainly appreciate the member's concern about the highway that he mentioned. I am aware of that road. I've driven on it a number of times, and certainly it meets many of the criteria that we use in terms of road construction. But, I point out to the member, the amount of dollars that we are spending in his riding this year is nearly \$5 million, and I don't really think that he should complain about that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Now, the boys over here are getting a little anxious when I say that, but I think that recognizes some of the needs in your constituency. Certainly we're aware of this concern, and we'll take a close look at it in the future. I assure you of that, but we have to spread the dollars around according to the need, and if you like we could possibly move from one of your other roads to that one. It's a possibility.

MR. McLEOD: — You may think that's a real fine answer. You're getting a little bit glib on this, because you can tell me that you're not going to be able to continue saying, "This constituency gets that many dollars, and that constituency gets that many dollars." You know the particular problems that are involved in building roads in the northern areas. Certainly, it costs your department more money to build roads, for every kilometre of road that you build there, than it would in some of what you would call the more settled areas. I recognize that, and I know that your officials recognize that. It to stand here and compare dollar for dollar with other ridings in the province, where there are more settled areas, doesn't do justice to the people who do live in the sparsely populated areas and need better roads, and you have to agree with that.

HON. MR. LONG: — I would say to the hon. member there isn't that much difference in road construction in Meadow Lake than in Cut Knife, Lloydminster, Redberry or Turtleford, or any other section of the province — not that much difference in terms of

cost. That's a lot of money to be spent in Meadow Lake. I think you should be happy and pleased with that kind of a project array for Meadow Lake.

MR. McLEOD: — You can tell me I should be happy all you want, but it's not me who should be happy. I'm telling you that the people in that constituency and that area are certainly not happy with the Department of Highways. I will admit to you, Mr. Minister, that in this province as a whole, I don't think that highways is one of the biggest issues. I don't believe it is, in the province as a whole. There are certain areas in this province that have excellent highways going through. I've heard them in this House complimenting your department on that task. But, Mr. Minister, although it may not be a big priority in certain parts of the province, I come from one constituency where it is probably the number one priority or in the top two or three priorities.

Our people have to travel a number of miles just to haul their products to market. I have heard your boys over there, wailing away about rail line abandonment, about all these things because some guys in their ridings have to haul their grain for 16 miles instead of 8 miles. The guys from my riding have been hauling their products for 50 and 60 miles since they started farming up there, and you guys haven't done a thing about putting those roads in. You say \$5 million. I am saying, if it is \$5 million (I don't know the figures; you do), I am asking you for more, and justifiably so.

Mr. Minister, I would ask you about another road which I mentioned very briefly, and that is Highway No. 224, the road which goes through the Meadow Lake Provincial Park from east to west. The Minister of Tourism and Renewal Resources knows the road well. It is a very scenic road, and a tourist artery. I know you know it well, too, Mr. Minister. Your department has had requests in the past from two R.M.s, especially from the R.M. of Beaver River, to build a road in conjunction with the Department of Rural Affairs across the south of the Meadow Lake Provincial Park from the Goodsoil area, across to Dorintosh. What is happening now (and this is the reason I am bringing this to the attention of your department) is that there is, on that park road, a tremendous amount of machinery and it's increasing every year, as people from the Goodsoil area are conducting their farming operations over in the Dorintosh area.

I know that the Department of Tourism and Renewal Resources has had complaints about this. Whether it has come to this level or not, I don't know, but I know it certainly isn't local. I don't have their names, but my information is from people from the R.M. of Meadow Lake who asked officials in the Department of Highways about this. It is two or three years now since the first request. The Department of Highways officials informed them that they should apply to have that section of the road put under main farm access. Certainly, some of the criteria for main farm access wouldn't apply there, because I know the traffic isn't great in terms of numbers. But it is great in terms of the size of machinery. If you think of what the alternative is — putting it into that tourist area where there are camper-trailers and so on — the machinery has no place there. I think the answer received from the Department of Rural Affairs at that time by the R.M. of Meadow Lake was that they had never heard anything about it.

My question to you and your officials is: would you be willing, at least, together with the Department of Rural Affairs and those R.M.s which are involved here — Beaver River and Meadow Lake — to look at building that short section of road and then have the R.M.s maintain it? Would you give that some consideration.

HON. MR. LONG: — I just informed the hon. member that I met with one of the R.M.s concerned at the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) meeting

last week and we discussed it then. I don't have authority, nor is it the policy of this government, to take grid roads into the system. This isn't even a grid road as yet. But I think the R.M.s should be talking to the Department of Rural Affairs about the possibility of main farm access or something of that nature, getting them involved and seeing if it can't be done that way. You talk about taking grid roads into the system. I mentioned earlier this day that traffic counts are important, and we have grid roads in Saskatchewan that have a traffic count of over 600 a day. I doubt this traffic count would be very high. The serious problem here is the movement of the machinery through the park. I think they should approach rural affairs about it.

MR. McLEOD: — I wasn't asking your department to take that section of road into the system. I was asking that you build that section of road because that suggestion was made to the R.M. of Meadow Lake. I have no reason to disbelieve it. Officials of the Department of Highways, under your predecessor, suggested they should approach rural affairs and ask that it be made a main farm access road because of the special circumstances. I believe, and I hope that you understand, that it is not an ordinary situation. I am not asking you to take it into the system. I am asking you to get together with rural affairs. This R.M. has made its petition to you and I am asking you now, between the two departments, to come up with some answer for me and for those R.M.s.

HON. MR. LONG: — I am prepared to take it up with the Minister of Rural Affairs and discuss it.

MR. McLEOD: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I have one other issue. It has to do with the Meridian Bridge which I know you are very familiar with. Can you give me an overview and a timetable of your plans for Meridian Bridge at the present?

HON. MR. LONG: — The member will know we had hoped to get started on the approaches to the bridges last fall, but because of the location on the Alberta side and some of the difficulties the Alberta government is having with land acquisition, the whole project has been held up. I am planning to meet with the Hon. Henry Kroeger very shortly in Lloydminster, together with the MLA from the Alberta side, to discuss the problem with them. We hope to get started on the approaches sometime this year, and carry on with the bridge accordingly, but we have been held up because of land acquisition problems on the Alberta side. The Alberta government hasn't as yet moved to take over the land.

MR. McLEOD: — I have one last question and it has to do with the requests I received from one of the R.M.s in my riding. Apparently in the past (I don't really know by what method), they were in receipt of copies of the descriptions and so on of abandoned gravel pits that the highway department is no longer using. They tell me that they have been in receipt of these things, probably from some official in the department. I don't think they realize there was anything wrong with this. They made a request to your department for those plans because what very often happens is that when there is a small amount of gravel involved (I will point out here that they aren't complaining about the accessibility of gravel), and they have asked for granular material from your department, they have had no problem; they get good co-operation. They are wondering why they can't have those plans, so if they go in to use what you would call an abandoned pit, but one they might be able to make use of, they can register the location they are hauling from and just take it from there.

HON. MR. LONG: — There is no reason why they shouldn't have those plans and I am sure we can make those arrangements.

MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Minister, I have a copy of a letter here from one of your officials to Mr. Widdup, secretary-treasurer of the R.M. of Meadow Lake and I quote:

This is in reply to your letter to our department dated February 12, 1981, requesting gravel pit plans. It is against the Department of Highways' policy to send prints of gravel pit plans and logs to personnel other than department employees . . . If you need material, sure, we will be glad to provide it.

I just wanted to bring this up. I am pleased with your answer, and I am sure the people of the rural municipality will be pleased to have those plans from you.

MR. HARDY: — First of all, I would like to commend the member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster on his appointment as Minister of Highways. It's a new position for him, as this is a new position for me, and he probably has the same type of problems as I have. I do have a few questions I would like to ask him. One refers to a statement he made in his opening remarks, that there is going to be about \$3.3 million spent on timber road access. Could you explain to me what that is?

HON. MR. LONG: — The Carrot River east and the Wapawekka Hills Road are examples of these kinds of timber access roads. They are part of an agreement that the government has with DREE (Department of Regional Economic Expansion), and they are put in place, of course, to access good stands of timber in the North. It is something we will be doing more of in the future, hopefully. We have done it in the past.

MR. HARDY: — You're referring to the road that would be Carrot River east (No. 3 east) and then across to the junction of — it wouldn't be No. 3 — the highway running east out of Carrot River with a junction across the No. 3 Highway coming in at Veillardville at Hudson Bay. Is that what you're referring to?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, that's the one.

MR. HARDY: — I realize that this would open up some areas that are woodland, but it isn't a very heavily wooded area. I was just wondering about the principle of the thing or the spending of the money. I feel there is a good road which we do have to the North: the No. 9 Highway. I don't know whether you are aware of it, Mr. Minister, but it's a highway that was originally built by the DNR (Department of Natural Resources). It is a winding road, and on your last report I believe it only had a traffic count of 90. In the last year, the Saskatchewan Forest Products Corporation and MacMillan Bloedel have been hauling refuse or other material to the pulpwood mill at The Pas and there has been a heavy truck count there. That heavy truck count, with the car traffic and the dusty conditions, has resulted in a few accidents already. I feel very strongly that there could be some fatal accidents there in the future.

I realize your next year's budget is probably drawn up, but I was wondering if that No. 9 Highway north of Hudson Bay toward The Pas could be considered in your highway program for upgrading. The bridges are narrow, the road is terribly winding. I would like to see it taken into consideration. I would also like to see your report on it.

HON. MR. LONG: — Our plans are to extend the Carrot River Road, which we mentioned earlier, down to Hudson Bay. I believe the road is currently used for the movement of

wood chips from Hudson Bay to Prince Albert. That will be the plan

MR. HARDY: — Have you considered, in any of your future plans, the upgrading or straightening of No. 9 Highway north of Hudson Bay to make it safer? I believe in your opening speech you mentioned safety as one of your priorities, and it is definitely, I think, a priority of every member in the Assembly here. If you travel on that road, I think you would find it very unsafe due to the heavy truck traffic that is being imposed upon it. I would like your department to take a serious look at upgrading it — especially widening the bridges and general upgrading.

HON. MR. LONG: — I note the member's concerns, and I'm sure we'll be dealing with construction of that road, somewhere in the future. I can't give you a definite commitment at this time, but it is certainly one that concerns us and one that should be dealt with.

MR. HARDY: — Another road in my area which has been a concern of a lot of people and which I brought forward in my opening speech in reply to the throne speech and mentioned here a few days ago again, is the grid road system between Porcupine Plain and three miles east of Mistatim, the junction of Highway No. 23 and No. 3. I think it has been asked for several times and I would again urge you to take another serious look at it to see if it couldn't be brought into the highway system. I believe part of it is already grouped as an industrial road plan now, and I would like to see it taken into the highway system. I would like a comment on it.

HON. MR. LONG: — As I said earlier, and the member I am sure will realize this, we're not planning on taking any grid road into the system at this time, at least. If we were to take every request that has come to us, I'm sure we would have probably an additional 500 or 600 miles, as an estimate, into the highway system in no time. I think we have to recognize that the municipalities have a certain responsibility in the maintenance of these roads and in the construction of them, and that the highway system can't handle the whole thing. If those policies should change, we'll certainly take a look at it.

MR. HARDY: — One final question about that road. At the present time, that road is in very bad need of repairs. The road base is gone and it has very heavy traffic on it due to the alfalfa plant along the roadway. It is a road used considerably by people coming from the east going to the Greenwater Lake resort and also to Porcupine Plain and that whole area. I think it should be rebuilt within the next year or so, anyway, and I just wondered if, instead of re-building it under the grid plan, could it not be taken into a highway plan, made a substantially dust free surface road, and thus alleviate some of the problems for two of the municipalities concerned?

HON. MR. LONG: — I wonder if it hasn't been considered as part of the supergrid system? We are promoting and building a supergrid system across Saskatchewan and surely some of these roads that are carrying that kind of traffic should, in fact, be in that supergrid system. The funding from the provincial government through the Department of Rural Affairs is pretty substantial, and I wonder if the people in that area have looked at this possibility?

MR. HARDY: — There's just one comment I'd like to make on that. You come from the same type of area as I do, so you realize that supergrids are not very logical in our area. This is basically because of the heavy moisture content of the area. The upkeep for the supergrid would be almost astronomical. It would have to be into a highway type of road before it could be kept up.

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Minister, I have just a couple of quick, short questions. On your project array here, it states: "Highway No. 17 Macklin north, 26.5 kilometres; Highway No. 21, Kerrobert to the north, 33.91 kilometres." Now, what I am concerned about is that it does say 1981 and 1982. Can you at this time give me the decision as to whether this is going to start taking place in 1981 — and hopefully not in 1982? When can we be looking for a little further expansion on Highway No. 21? When will you be calling for contracts for that road?

HON. MR. LONG: — Part of the section of No. 21 north of Kerrobert will be tendered later this spring. There will be two contracts there, I believe. Am I correct?

AN HON. MEMBER: — Two contracts, Bob?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, two contracts there.

AN. HON. MEMBER: — Starting this spring?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, it should go later this spring. The other section of No. 17 will be likely later in the summer. We have to stage these contracts so that the contractors have something to do all year.

MR. GARNER: — Yes, okay. I can completely agree, but we will be starting on No. 21 for sure this coming summer?

AN HON. MEMBER: — Not for sure.

MR. GARNER: — Well, now look, I'm going to stay on the highroad on this. I'm talking to the minister; I won't talk to you. We'll wait until we get to your department. But will we be starting on No. 21 this coming summer? I've listened but I can't hear an answer. Okay. That's fine.

One other question, maybe just a bit off this for a point. Where does the Department of Highways buy its propane fuel for all its operations?

HON. MR. LONG: — We really don't have any idea. It's tendered through the Department of Revenue, Supply and Services. That's all I can tell the member. It's tendered through them and we get it accordingly.

MR. GARNER: — Okay, then I can bring this question up when we get into the Department of Revenue, Supply and Services because you get it from them. Mr. Minister, I think you are aware of the delegation from R.M.s 382, 352, 322 and 392 regarding bringing that primary road into the highway system. Do you have any plans in the upcoming year or what criteria are you using in order to get some of these roads in these R.M.s into the highway system? I do believe these gentlemen had a very good case and presented an excellent brief to you. I think your answers were, and you can confirm or deny this, that we could go with the Alberta government and go down the border or secondly, go to the oil companies, but basically it's not coming from there. It's going to have to come from highways, either through budgeting or through the department taking over primary grid roads. If you could explain what your policies in that are, not so much in the past, but, since you are the new minister, from now on?

HON. MR. LONG: — My policy now is not to take any grid roads into the system; I don't

have any plans to take them into the system. The delegation you mentioned certainly did present a very convincing brief and made a good presentation. But as I pointed out to them, the traffic count is marginally over 100. We have grid roads that are still within the municipal system in the province with traffic counts of over 500 to 600 per day, and in some parts of the province, 350 per day. I think you have to take that into account. If, as I mentioned earlier, we were to take into the highway system all of the grid roads that were requested of me, it would just simply be an impossible task for highways to handle. I think that the R.M.s out there still have a responsibility to supply services and provide for the needs of people and provide those kinds of transportation services.

MR. ANDREW: — I would like to follow up on the question from the member for Wilkie. I was also part of that presentation of that brief, as you know, Mr. Minister.

A problem advanced by that group of four R.M.s along the border was that two rail lines have been abandoned in the area in question. You at that time a back-bench MLA and the guy who was out in that area at all the retentionist meetings talking about having to provide the services to these farmers so that they don't have to haul (in some of these cases) 40 to 50 miles. What's going to happen now?

So you were out there saying we have to retain these railroads (and I agree with you on that; we have to provide that service). That's number one, Mr. Minister. That's gone for them. Secondly, what we were talking about is right in the centre of one of the few areas left in the province where there is still some active drilling going on. As you know, that goes into the Cactus Lake and south of Cactus Lake into some fairly significant finds in development of heavy crude and up into the heavy oil area.

The problem that the R.M.s are running into is that one small R.M. (I don't know — maybe runs 10 miles by 10 miles) is paying . . . The provincial government is receiving something like \$4 million in revenue from land area. There is a lot of heavy equipment in there and when the rains come the roads are flattened. Their point is basically this: why should the farmers in that part of the province have to build and maintain the roads for the oil industry to use with their heavy equipment? They are the people damaging the roads. As you know, when it rains a farmer wouldn't use the road but the oil industry would. Great large ruts, etc. are a large expense to the local RM Their problem is that you as a government are the people making all the money and yet you are not taking any of the responsibility with regard to maintaining and paying for those roads. I think they have a legitimate complaint and not just because it happens to be in my riding or in his riding. We're not saying that. We're saying it doesn't seem to be very fair that the province is taking all the money and putting exactly nothing back and making the farmers provide the roads for the oil industry.

So your answer to those people, Mr. Minister, was basically this: (1) go over to Alberta and get them to build a road for you or half of it; (2) if that doesn't work get the oil companies to build a road for you. And the oil companies will say, "Well, if we are losing 13 or 14 cents a barrel to produce oil, tell me why we should build the road." And I think they have a legitimate case. "Failing that," you told them, "go build it yourself." And so they walked away very disappointed and left with one particular option open to them. The only thing that the farmers can probably do next year when the rains come and the oil activity increases (hopefully it will) is to block those roads off. And the oil companies will pay then because they won't be able to get the revenue from that production. And that's what those people are basically saying to me and to you, Mr. Minister. As I said before, I think that is not a question of a constituency concern, but a legitimate concern of those farmers. They shouldn't be the people who have to pay.

HON. MR. LONG: — Well, I don't know where the member gets his figure of \$4 million out of one municipality. That's a fair figure to collect out of one municipality.

I think he misses a point when he says that the government doesn't provide anything for a municipality. I see a figure in the estimates of some \$38 million that rural affairs is putting into revenue sharing for rural municipalities and surely some of those dollars had to go into that municipality.

He suggests that I said to the farmers, "Go to Alberta and get them to help you build a road." I said to you and the farmers, "I might be interested in looking at a road down the border because it would be 50-cent bucks." I was talking about highways and you know that. They would be 50-cent bucks and we might be able to build a road down there in co-operation with Alberta. It might be something they need and we need. It would be a kind of joint venture, just as we've done on the Meridian Road, all the way down No. 17; and just as we're now doing in the constituency of the member for Wilkie at this time. They're 50-cent dollars. We're working together with Alberta on that. We've done it on No. 17 north in my riding. That's the suggestion I made to them.

It's all very well to suggest to me that I should take that kind of a section of road into the highway system. The traffic counts simply don't suggest the activity you're talking about. You talk about the greater movement of the grain because of the abandonment of railways. I would suggest to the member that he should join with me in talking to the federal government about that. They're the people that suggested we abandon the railroads.

Now, he reaches for manna from heaven — that's what he is suggesting. But it is fair and true to say that they (the Hall recommendations were such) suggested the federal government should put dollars into roads in Saskatchewan if it were going to abandon any railways.

I'd suggest to the member that this is what he should be doing. He should be criticizing the federal government rather than the provincial government in this area.

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Minister, No. 307 there — your officials will have the map. When did No. 307, which was a primary grid road, come into the highway system? Could you tell me that?

HON. MR. LONG: — About 1975.

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Minister, I happen to know that country fairly well . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Good country.

MR. GARNER: — The member says it's good country. Yes, it is good country.

That was taken into the highway system then, basically, or at least partially, because of the oil development there.

We can talk about traffic count. Maybe the traffic count is low there. We can have 100 vehicles going over there — or less than 100 half-tons driving over there — and we can talk about the speed of it then. But we can have 50 big oil tankers rolling down those

roads, the same as in what I call the bottom corner of my constituency. Five of those oil trucks will do a lot more damage to those roads in wet conditions. I think I've expressed this concern to you before. I am concerned, Mr. Minister, when I go out to that area and see school buses full of kids halfway in the ditches because these roads are very badly damaged. I have some recent pictures where another school bus has been in the ditch.

These R.M.s are trying their very best with the dollars they get from the government, but it's just not enough with the oil exploration and development that has taken place there. The roads are partially built, but they're being destroyed. Let's fact it, these oil truckers are all taking different roads in there. Mr. Minister, it's not your policy and I know you have stated before that the revenues have to be spread around the province, but something must be done. The R.M.s are very sincere — not only their brief, their concerns.

You and I are fortunate. You have some better roads in your constituency and you need them. That's fine. I'm not complaining. I'm very pleased with the roads that you're building in my constituency this year. I think it's been about 10 years since we've had any roads in there, so we're going to catch up with the times a little bit.

But what I am concerned about . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, now, the minister wants to get in the act. Mr. Chairman, I promise you tonight that I'm going to stay on the highroad.

But what I am concerned about, Mr. Minister (I think you are aware of it) is that we are going to have to take a closer look at this road, and I think the government is going to have to accept its responsibility with the oil development that is taking place there and the increased royalties that are coming to the provincial treasury. When we start seeing school buses full of kids in the ditches, I get concerned, and I know you do, too, Mr. Minister. I would beg you to take a closer look at this and see if you could work it into your budget for next year, or perhaps make an exception in this case. I don't say you can take over all the grid roads and put them into the highway system, but in special circumstances, with certain types of vehicles using those roads, I think we have to make a little more concerted effort.

I have two more quick questions, Mr. Minister. As your deputy minister is no doubt aware, we did have some problems when we were talking about Highway No. 21, going around the curves in what's known as the Muddy Lake area. I understand one of your officials from Saskatoon had gone out there and made the statement that the road was going to go — bang, bang, bang — here and there. He had about 15 farmers out there pretty excited. I would just like to thank the deputy minister for getting a handle on this, and you, Mr. Minister, for getting this all settled down.

Now, what I am asking you is: before we make progress on the 20 miles north of Kerrobert, before the final decision is made on that last 16 or 17 miles of road, can we meet with some of your officials and the people from that area to get a concrete proposal forward before a final decision is made on the final routing of that road from there into the town of Unity?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, I would say to the hon. member we can make those arrangements; there would no problem with that when it comes about. I just wanted to say a few more words about your request to take the grid road into the system. I met with, I suppose, 15 or 16 different R.M.s at SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) the other day, and, believe me, there were 15 or 16 very special

situations. That's the problem; they all have special situations and special requests and special needs. The member for Meadow Lake suggested a road south of the provincial park was a very special kind of road.

Following the line of the provincial government and the revenues that we take in from oil, I would point out to you that we were talking about the movement of grain and the abandonment of rail lines again. And I would point out to you that the export tax that the federal government collects from Saskatchewan amounts to some \$500 million. I think that the job that we have to do is talks the feds into getting involved in some of this road construction, too. I have on several occasions in this House called on the federal government to get involved in meeting some of the educational needs, some of the road constructions needs, and help us out in that way. They certainly are taking those kind of revenues into Ottawa, so why shouldn't some of the money come back?

MR. GARNER: — Okay, we'll get off that, Mr. Minister. I think we can discuss that in the upcoming summer.

What plans do you have for Highway No. 21 from Kerrobert through to Macklin, and what were your repair costs to that road last year? I know there was some repair work done on that road. You don't have to give them to me here tonight. As long as they are sent to me within a week or so, I will accept that, Mr. Minister.

HON. MR. LONG: — We can give you the repair costs for Highway 31. You said No. 21.

MR. GARNER: — Highway 31, I meant, Bob. Sorry.

HON. MR. LONG: — Okay.

MR. ANDREW: — Question, Mr. Minister. With regard to Highway No. 7 as it enters Kindersley, there is presently a fair expansion going on in the town of Kindersley, including a fairly large shopping centre being built on Highway No. 7. The problem which we have there is that the highway, as it enters Kindersley and the new subdivision (from the east into Kindersley and Highway No. 7) is just a two-lane highway. It becomes a very dangerous thing with a lot of traffic, especially weekend traffic — the Calgary, Saskatoon traffic.

Is there any chance the Department of Highways, in conjunction with the town, could broaden that road so that there is a turning lane? I believe that, a couple of years ago, two turning lanes were put in in the highway system, in the town of Kindersley. There needs to be a third one. As I understand it, the request has come from the town to widen that road to allow for a turning lane.

HON. MR. LONG: — I'm not aware of the area you're talking about, but we're prepared to take a look at it. Al Popoff, the safety engineer, I'm sure would be involved in that. We will get back to you on what's going on.

MR. PICKERING: — Mr. Minister, one thing about my constituency is that I can still ask the very same questions I've asked since 1978, because I have had absolutely nothing done, with the exception of a little bit of upgrading on Highway No. 13. The only reason that is being done is because it will join Alberta, eventually — if they ever get it done.

I noticed on last year's project array that you were to pave the highway from Weyburn to

the junction of Highway No. 28 going south to Radville. All summer I was asking the department if it was going to pave this, and they informed me that they would. In August they told me that it was still on, to be completed this year. It wasn't done. We had a sand and oil surface to keep the dust down. I see it's back on again this year. It's the same old thing.

I do notice on Highway No. 13, from Assiniboia to Limerick and Shaunavon to Eastend in the NDP riding, they seem to be able to do them. It's amazing. I don't know if politics are involved here or not.

The former minister said that his number one priority was safety. If you come out to Bengough-Milestone, I will take you for a ride. It will be a long one. I do have a lot of bad roads. So, be prepared to come for two or three days.

I've always brought up Highway No. 334, leading from Crane Valley to Avonlea. I think the traffic count is very high. They spend thousands and thousands of dollars maintaining this highway each year. Highway No. 36 from the junction of No. 2 south to No. 13 is similar.

The highway that runs from Perdue to just south of Regina (10 miles) is gravelled from Riceton to Perdue. The people from the junction of No. 35 are certainly interested in getting that fixed, because there are a lot of windshields broken on that road, and there is a lot of traffic going to Regina. Many people use that route.

My first question would be: are you planning on finishing the paving of highways, under the project array in 1981, from Weyburn to the junction of Highway No. 6?

HON. MR. LONG: — No.

MR. PICKERING: — Okay, Mr. Minister. I also notice, and I brought this to the attention of the former minister, the grading of Highway No. 35 from Colgate to Tribune. That was brought to my attention because of the fact that they discontinued the elevators at Goodwater and Colgate. Can you give me any indication whether they are going to widen that area and grade it this year? Or is it going to be left until 1981, as the rest of my riding has been left out since I was elected?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, that section of the road is on the program to be graded this year.

MR. PICKERING: — I brought that to the attention of the former minister. I think the hon. member for Weyburn, if he were here, knows the junction of Highway 13 and Highway 35 at Weyburn is a very dangerous intersection. I asked the minister if he would look into it and put up some warning lights (flashing red lights) at that intersection. There have been numerous accidents over the past few years. It has been a mess ever since day one, and I'm wondering if they're planning on doing anything with that this year.

HON. MR. LONG: — I'd like to inform the member that in the past five years a number of geometric and sign changes have been made at that intersection, and the city of Weyburn is requesting further changes and relocation of the intersection. It has been presented to the municipalities involved, and we are presently assessing their proposal to relocate the intersection.

MR. PICKERING: — Mr. Minister, I'll get away from my constituency for a moment and

move to the traffic count going south on No. 6 from Regina. You have on the project array a widening of the shoulders for something like 17.44 kilometres south of Regina. Have you given any thought whatsoever to four-laning this road out as far as Corinne, because it is the main route to the U.S.? It joins Highway 39, which goes on to Portal and Highway 6 going south to Regway.

HON. MR. LONG: — I think it's fair to say that we're going ahead with the regrading and doing the two lanes now and will be looking at further improvements in the future.

MR. PICKERING: — Mr. Minister, I noticed last spring in my travels back and forth during the session for something like two months, that they were putting new railings on the overpass bridge just south of Regina at the junction of Highway 6 and Highway 1. What was the reason for having to put the big railing on that? The bridge isn't that old, and I was just wondering why they had to spend thousands of dollars on it.

HON. MR. LONG: — We'll have to look into that bit of construction and get you the information on it. We don't have the answer here.

MR. PICKERING: — Okay, Mr. Minister, you'll definitely be doing the widening this year, though, on Highway No. 6 south to the correction line?

HON. MR. LONG: — It's on the project array.

MR. PICKERING: — That isn't what I asked, Mr. Minister. Are you going to do it or are you not?

HON. MR. LONG: — The intention is to do all we can this year.

MR. PICKERING: — Well, Mr. Minister, it would seem to me that you're not going to do it. All the machinery companies in Regina are complaining. They have to move machinery down this highway. It's a main route going to the southern part of the province, the wheat belt of this province. And, as a result it is holding up traffic and is very dangerous to the public. I would insist that you give me an answer — yes or no — as to whether you are going to do this or not summer. We have been after you for a long time now, ever since 1975 at least.

HON. MR. LONG: — It is literally impossible to give the member a completely sure answer on any of these projects. It depends on the weather, the contractor, how the season shapes up — the contracting season. A lot of things go into it. It to ask me to say for 100 per cent sure that I am going to carry out that project is just not fair.

MR. PICKERING: — Do you have any projects in the province that you are sure of carrying out this year?

HON. MR. LONG: — If it rains all summer, a lot of them won't be carried out.

MR. PICKERING: — It didn't rain at all down my way last summer and there was nothing done there either. As a result, we had a short harvest. Mr. Minister, I have one last question. I would like you to supply me with the information on the cost of the upkeep for secondary Highway 334 from Corinne to Avonlea over the past five years.

HON. MR. LONG: — We'll supply you with that.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, as usual I notice that there is no highway construction in my constituency. We all know why so we won't even get into that issue. But the members for Redberry and Biggar have a couple of concerns in their seats. I thought I'd ask about them since they don't seem to want to do it. First, the Borden Bridge is very dangerous. Are there any designs or engineering studies being done to improve the situation at that corner of the bridge

HON. MR. LONG: — I would point out to the hon. member for Rosthern that the members for Redberry and Biggar have often brought this problem to my attention. Every other day they do it in caucus. At this time there aren't any specific plans to deal with the Borden Bridge problem.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, one other piece of highway that I am wondering about, before I get into some areas of my own concern, is at Chamberlain. What is the plan and what is going to happen there? Are you still tied up with the CNR or CPR, arguing over right-of-way, or what's the story?

HON. MR. LONG: — My understanding is that to four-lane through Chamberlain we have to move the CNR and that is pretty expensive, so we may have to put up with the two lanes through the town for several years.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, one thing that causes a lot of cost to the R.M.s is your limited-access highways. Once you have closed off an access and a piece of land is allowed to be developed in that area, because it has sufficient land mass and meets all the requirements, you put a very expensive burden upon the R.M.s. In some cases they go 50 feet or 100 yards and come onto a highway, yet they have to build a mile-and-a-half. I can state several cases, if you wish, where this has happened. Could you not consider picking up part of the cost because it is your limited-access highway that has caused the additional burden on those R.M.s?

HON. MR. LONG: — I point out to the hon. member that we are rather proud of our limited-access highways and the fact that we have some 3,400 miles of limited-access highway in Saskatchewan. All the major roads between the major centres are limited-access roads. It is important on those kinds of roads with those kinds of traffic and it's better for the travelling public to have that kind of limited access in place. I would just point out that perhaps what we should be considering here, when you talk about developments, is that the developer should be responsible for a part of the cost of supplying the road with a proper access to the highway. Perhaps this is the route we should be going.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, I think you're off on the wrong track. If a person has a quarter section of land, he is allowed to build a home on it. What has happened with the limited-access highways you have been developing where they cannot get to any road without the RM building a two-mile stretch, or 1.25 miles (which has been the shortest that I am aware of)? I am suggesting that when you cause that problem with limited access, you should consider a grant for that special program. I have no arguments with limited access; in fact, some of the ministers over on your side want to give us limited access by never being here for question period. But this is normal; for example, the Minister of the Environment doesn't want us to have hearing on the refinery near Saskatoon — limited access.

But back to the highway. Can you not, or will you not, consider a financial grant in the

cases where your limited-access highway causes an extra burden on an RM? I can give you cases within my constituency because of the amount of limited-access highway I do have in my riding.

HON. MR. LONG: — It is not our policy to do that at this time.

MR. KATZMAN: — In other words, it's your policy to cause a burden on the R.M.s but not to relieve it — that's what you are saying.

Mr. Minister, one other question I would like to discuss. (I keep hearing the Minister of the Environment yapping from his seat; I wish he had something to say about the environment instead.) Mr. Minister, causeways will work (I believe) on waterways that are controlled. For example, the South Saskatchewan River is now controlled because of the Gardiner Dam and Diefenbaker Lake. Coming down the flow, there are three ferries I am aware of further downstream which you could consider replacing with a causeway type of construction. There have been studies done within the government, I understand; they were done by DNS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan) originally. I have had several engineers check the possibilities for me. I'll give you an example and let your engineers have a look at it.

Within the city of Saskatoon, at what is called Sutherland Beach, very near where they're building the new bridge, there is a space of approximately 250 yards at the very most which has low water and a causeway could be built because on both side of the rivers is river level access. Therefore you don't have steep embankments, but a narrow channel with a good flow of water. Using 18 foot culverts with a rock base and certain other components which are used in buildings causeways, as is done in the Maritimes, you could cut your cost of building crossings considerably. Would your department do some checking into this and also explain what has happened to the previous studies that were done?

I realize that in areas where ice flows swiftly, it may be more of a problem, but on that one site it is possible. It's possible at the Warman Ferry, at the Hague Ferry and further downstream, once again strictly because the Gardiner Dam controls the flow. In fact, sometimes the ferries at Warman and Hague cannot even run because of the low level of water. I think it would be reasonable to consider a causeway and you'll find it will save money. I also think it will create less traffic in certain areas through Saskatoon.

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, we would be prepared to take a look at the hon. member's proposal. I understand there have been some studies at the university, and we would be prepared to study it more closely.

MR. KATZMAN: — I have just one final comment, Mr. Minister. In talking to the people in the Warman area (strictly those in the area), there is, from what I understand, a very large abundance of stones to use for the channelling of that area. The people, with your assistance, would be willing to co-operate in attempting to build one by bringing the stones from their land. You could supply the culverts and the bulldozers to place them. The suggestion has been kicked around. The people are interested in assisting you. Try it and let's see if we can save the department and the citizens of Saskatchewan some money and have more access.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Minister, I'm going to perhaps rehash some areas that were covered earlier but they are an extension of what was discussed. First of all, I want to start with your report. How accurate do you consider the figures in this annual report?

HON. MR. LONG: — They are as accurate as the reports we get from the police force, which records these accidents.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — I'm going to show you some discrepancies and then I am going to ask you to co-ordinate them. I'm sure the police haven't given you two sets of figures. If we look at the front page, you show total reported accidents as 47,510; when we turn to page 16, you talk about accidents as being 62,836. Then we look down a little farther and we have 229 fatal accidents. On page 4 of this report you indicate the total number of accidents is 290. I refer to a letter which was written by your predecessor which says:

Death and injury rates from traffic accidents have been reduced 25 per cent in the last year.

Well, it may be a good point until you start looking at the figures, and they are not accurate. For example, fatalities dropped from 306 in 1974 to 290. That's not 25 per cent. Then if you look at injuries, they drop from 9,955 in 1974 to 9,081 in 1975, which is about 10 per cent.

Next we look at the registered motor vehicles. This is a very interesting one because your government has published four different figures for the number of registered vehicles in Saskatchewan in 1979. You show 692,000; the minister claims 699,000; SGI reports 697,000; and there is another one. I don't have the figure with me right now but I can get you four figures published by your government.

Let's look at the number of licensed vehicle operators. You indicate there are 591,337; the annual report of SGI shows there are 666,367. Now, I can go on and on and on with this and give you several more inaccurate figures with large discrepancies. I can give not only two but several different figures, as I indicated under motor vehicles.

Why can't your own book be accurate or carry the same figures throughout and why can't you co-ordinate the figures with say, the highway traffic board, SGI, the motor vehicles branch and so on? Is it impossible for your department to first check with another departments to find out if the figures are accurate? How are you arriving at the figures? Are you pulling them out of the air? Now, I'll start with that one because it intrigues me considerably to find out what you are doing with these reports.

HON. MR. LONG: — Would the hon. member be prepared to give us the figures that he has quoted?

MR. ROUSSEAU: — I just did it.

HON. MR. LONG: — All right, we can get it out of *Hansard*, and we'll get you the answers that we can come up with in due time.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Well, if you want. I can take them one at a time right now, or I can discuss them with you later on. It's up to you. I'll leave you with the decision.

HON. MR. LONG: — I don't care.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Well, Mr. Minister, you say you don't care. I care. I want to know whether or not you're going to be giving us accurate information. All right, let's take an example. Why would you indicate in your "Quick Facts" — on the front of the book — that there were 229 fatalities in 1979, when in fact, there were 290?

HON. MR. LONG: — I think the confusion that has arisen here is in the number of fatal accidents. Possibly you are comparing the number of fatal accidents with the number of fatalities. There may be three fatalities in one fatal accident, and that may be where the figures don't jibe. That may be our problem.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Okay, then I'll just go on. Before I carry on with you, I'm going to make this remark. The Minister of Education, for example (and if you want me to get to you, I will in a second) says, "Who cares?" Well, perhaps that's the attitude you take with your own department. Right now I have an interest. Now, if you want to continue, I have a remark to make to you, so if you want to try your luck on me, just carry on . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, he's getting awfully close, awfully close. Licensed vehicle operators — 591,337 as compared to SGI's report of 666,000. Could you explain that one?

HON. MR. LONG: — I believe the discrepancy there may be between the number of licensed motor vehicles and the number of licensed automobiles. That might be the discrepancy.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — You'd better try that one again. It says in the front that there are 692,000 registered motor vehicles, which, by the way, is different from SGI's figure. However, you do say "estimated" so I'll accept that. The number of licensed vehicle operators has nothing to do with the number of registered vehicles. That's operators, you know — drivers. You say 591,000 and SGI says 666,000. I'm not going to dwell on that problem, but I would ask you not to put out figures that perhaps suit your purpose, in order to make some political points of some kind. Co-ordinate them and let's have the same figures from the different departments all the way through, so that the people of Saskatchewan, when being informed by your department or another department, are in fact getting both accurate and identical figures.

Your predecessor was given some research on noise pollution on Highway No. 1. Your deputy is well aware of this. I have the research project in my hands, and you have a copy of it. It is for noise abatement on the Trans-Canada Highway abutting the Wascana Park area of Regina, which happens to be in my constituency.

I point out the level of noise, and I'll quote from her report:

The outdoor noise level (leq) the 24 hour equivalent sound level is 62 dba along the Trans-Canada by-pass, Whitmore Park, Regina. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation frequently will not finance new construction unless, through barriers, the outside noise can be brought to a 55 dba, or an leq.

Has your department presently given consideration to do something along this stretch of highway? If you have, when can we see some action on that particular problem?

HON. MR. LONG: — Whitmore Park, the area you are talking about, came in after the

highway was located. For that reason it is the city's responsibility. That is the position we are presently taking.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Have you discussed it with the city at any time?

HON. MR. LONG: — No.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Before you make a statement that it's the responsibility of the city, perhaps you check with the city of Regina to determine if they feel otherwise. I can assure you, Mr. Minister, that they do. First, it's your highway. It's the Department of Highway's highway. It doesn't belong to the city of Regina. The noise coming from it affects those residents living in that area. The city of Regina says that it is the responsibility of the Saskatchewan Department of Highways. So, before you stand up in this House and make the statement that it's somebody else's responsibility, will you give me the assurance that you will discuss it with the city of Regina and meet with them to find out whether or not arrangements can be made? Have you inquired as to the cost of putting up a sound barrier in that area?

HON. MR. LONG: — If the subdivision was located there after the highway was located, it's their responsibility. They will deal with it.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Will you meet with the city to deal with it?

HON. MR. LONG: — If they request a meeting. We will always meet with the city. That's our position.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — The member for Qu'Appelle earlier today talked about the Ring Road. Last fall in the question period, I asked the Minister of Urban Affairs if he was going to accept responsibility on behalf of the government to build the Lewvan expressway committed back in 1969 and reaffirmed in 1975, with 100 per cent of the cost to be absorbed by the Government of Saskatchewan.

HON. MR. LONG: — Well, the member errs when he said we made a commitment in 1969. That was another government. I'm not really aware of any commitment we made in 1975. I would, however, say to the member that we are actively considering the project. We will in due course, hopefully very shortly, meet with the city to discuss that project and try to resolve it to our mutual benefit.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — You may not be aware of the commitment made in 1975, but I believe your deputy minister will be aware of that commitment. Keep in mind that at that time the portion of the highway or road we're talking about was part of the city of Regina and not outside as it was in 1969. Do I take from your reply that you are considering the cost as being absorbed by the province of Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. LONG: — You can take from my reply just what I said. We are meeting the with city of Regina to discuss it.

MR. BIRKBECK: — In estimates tonight I asked again what the criteria and the policy were for new road improvements. We got the reply that it was safety and took into consideration factors like development projects along the highways, the different geographical structure of the layout and so on and so forth — an array of problems. But I want to ask the minister if the road improvements, were in his mind, in any way political. Did the riding they were in have any bearing as to whether or not they were

going to be done?

HON. MR. LONG: — I would just point out to the member that the average number of dollars to be spent in PC constituencies is \$1.7 million. The average number being spent in NDP constituencies is \$1.5 million.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — I want to come back, Mr. Chairman, to a question that I asked earlier and perhaps you can give me the information on it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order, order.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can you tell me when that section of the by-pass along Whitmore Park was built and when Whitmore Park was subdivided for housing? Do you have those dates?

HON. MR. LONG: — I am informed that in 1955 the by-pass was constructed. We're not certain of these years. But Whitmore Park was set up about two years later.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Was the second lane of the by-pass built much later than that?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, the second lane was built about two years ago. But it is farther away than the other lane. It has been built over a period of time.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Obviously, neither one of you seems to have the accurate figures. Will you get them for me, please? I know the one that I'm talking about. That section along the south part of Whitmore Park was a lot more than two years ago. And I'm not too sure about when Whitmore Park was subdivided, but I'd like to have those figures, if you'll provide them to me.

HON. MR. LONG: — We'll provide you with the highway figures. You can find out when Whitmore Park was subdivided from the city.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Okay, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Use your words carefully.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Yes, I will use my words very carefully. I had intended to wind the estimates up tonight at 10 o'clock, and I'm sure that the Minister of Highways would have very much appreciated that. But I don't any more appreciate your manner in this committee than I'm sure other members of this opposition do. And if you want to yak away over there and be ignorant as you have been this evening, then it will be on your heads that the estimates are being delayed.

So, we're not getting off them tonight. Political embarrassment — that's what is causing the catcalls and the noise from that side of the House. We're trying to be fairly responsible here and trying to ask the questions. The members have been asking questions as they relate to their ridings. The member for Regina South has been asking some pretty valid questions. He was interrupted thoroughly right throughout and particularly by the Minister of Health, who has no credibility whatsoever. His response in this committee, Mr. Chairman, is just further evidence of his absolute ignorance.

Mr. Chairman, if that's the way they want to play the game, we're more than prepared to accommodate. I'm sure that the Minister of Highways will have a few words for his

fellow colleagues tonight, since he could have gone home tonight with his estimates wound up. But we'll not have much difficulty in coming back with a whole lot more to discuss with you tomorrow. If we get a whole lot of yapping from that side of the House, and in particular from the Minister of Health and the Minister of Sask Tel, we'll be here for another day. You people will be responsible for delaying the estimates, not the opposition.

If you want to talk politics as it relates to your highway programs, then we're prepared to talk politics. The Minister of Highways says he spent more money in Conservative ridings than he has in NDP ridings, and we're going to have a pretty pat answer for you tomorrow.

But I want to give you some statistics — some pretty interesting statistics. I took some time — in fact, quite a bit of time — to go down your project array and break it out on a riding basis into Conservative ridings and non-Conservative ridings. And I found some pretty interesting statistics.

I would just like to question the minister. Mr. Minister, do you know how many miles or kilometres, whichever you prefer to reply in, of road improvements you have in your own riding?

HON. MR. LONG: — I don't have the kilometres down pat, but the budget for my riding is about \$11 million. Most of it is carry-over, Mr. Member for Moosomin. I would like to take the responsibility, as minister, for getting those in place, but I happened to be a backbencher at the time that most of those projects were put in place. They're a carry-over from a former year and they're needed in that riding.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, I want to inform the minister that when I drive down the road I see on my odometer that it's kilometres that are winding up, not dollars and cents. We get the dollars and cents at the gas pumps when we pay your silly 20 per cent tax. I might add, that's the third tax placed there because that 20 per cent is a tax on top of royalty tax and federal government taxes that are already built in.

So let's just keep it simple, all right, just for your benefit, Mr. Minister responsible for highways. The fact of the matter is that you measure your highways in kilometres, not in dollars and cents.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Right on!

MR. BIRKBECK: — I'm going to use some figures that are pretty reasonable, within a few kilometres. There are approximately 1,980.35 kilometres covering all 30 ridings, and that breaks down to 66.01 kilometres per riding. If we take a look at the Conservative ridings, we have approximately 426.46 kilometres over 10 ridings, that's an average of 42.65 — 42.65 is considerably less than 66.01, which is the overall average.

Now, if we move into the NDP ridings, we look at a figure of 1,553.89 kilometres over 20 ridings. That's an average of 77.70 kilometres of road per NDP riding.

Let's take a look at the cabinet minister's figures. We have 655.43 kilometres covering eight ministers, which averages out to 81.93 kilometres per cabinet minister's riding. Now, if that isn't politics, I'd like to know what is.

There are 10 PC ridings and if we use an average index — okay, the average index for the Conservative ridings — that's 660.10 kilometres. Right? That's the average over all the ridings. If we use the average over all of the ridings and apply that to the Conservative ridings, we would have received 660.10 kilometres per Conservative riding, as opposed to 426.46. No let's go on further, if we had used the index that the NDP ridings had, which was 770, and applied that to the Conservative ridings . . .

SOME HON. MEMBER: — You'd have roads right . . .

MR. BIRKBECK: — Right? Well no, if 77.70 were applied to the Conservative ridings, we would have had 770 kilometres of road. And then if we went one step further and used the cabinet ministers' index of 81.93, that would have given us 819.30 kilometres per Conservative riding as opposed to that paltry 426.46. So, in other words, the cabinet ministers got twice as many, proportionately, kilometres of road for their ridings as did the Conservatives. It is very clear to me, Mr. Minister of Transportation and Highways, that you and your department have been very political in establishing where new road projects are going to be.

I have made some effort and I am not done with it. I am going to get it completed and nicely typed out, and I am going to make sure that the people of Saskatchewan have these statistics.

They will really laugh it up, because what they are saying in Conservative ridings, and justly so, is, "Do we have to vote NDP to get some road improvements in our riding? Is that what we have to do?"

SOME HON. MEMBER: — You'd better throw that one away.

MR. BIRKBECK: — No, I don't have to throw that one away. I am going to talk to the member for Assiniboia. Yes, I am going to talk to you. Sure, I am going to tell you that what I am going to tell the people isn't going to hurt me at all, because when they look at a government that uses its political power to place road improvements in its own ridings (as opposed to the opposition's, or better still as opposed to all of the ridings) on a basis, a criterion and a policy as outlined earlier this evening by the minister responsible for transportation . . . Those figures, Mr. Chairman, make something near a liar of the minister responsible for transportation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, don't worry. You can get on the edge of your seat, but I'm not asking for trouble. You're in trouble as a government for being highly political in your decisions as to where to put road improvements. And the people down in Kipling, when I talked about Highway No. 48 in my riding — the very thing they've been plagued with is that they haven't had a member who has been a member of a government. Yes, it bothers you. It doesn't plague me at all because what I'm going to be telling, not just the people of my riding, but the people of this province, is that we are faced with a very dictatorial government, a government that has taken power unto itself and that is going to reward its own in preference to other people in this province.

How many times have we heard the Minister of Telephones say, "Well, I'll cut your phones off," or some silly comment? He catcalls from his seat where he knows he can't be reached. It's all recorded in *Hansard* — threatening comments coming from that side of the House. The Minister of Health is full of the same kinds of accusations that they are prepared to make from their seats in the legislature, but they're not prepared to make standing in their places in this Assembly.

But your decisions are made on a political basis and nothing short of that. Yes, and the Minister of Health now says I'm nuts. The comments you make in this House, Mr. Minister, are going down in *Hansard*, because I'm putting them down in *Hansard*. Believe me, I'm telling the people of Saskatchewan what kind of nut you are.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Listen, I think that the catcalls back and forth, both ways — nuts and near-liars and terms like that — are a bit unparliamentary. Maybe we could come back to order.

MR. BIRKBECK: — You would note, Mr. Chairman, that it's not me that who is initiating them; they're coming from that side of the House.

The fact of the matter, Mr. Chairman, is that the government's policy in the Department of Highways is not consistent with what the minister says. It is not, and I don't blame the Minister of Highways for that entirely. I blame the people who are advising the Minister of Highways. Mr. Chairman, those same kinds of people who are advising the minister must obviously be the same kind of people, or represent the same kind of thinking, that we have in SGI. When we see the kinds of direction that you are taking in road improvements, they don't make any sense. That's what we were getting here tonight from every member of the opposition. They couldn't justify in their minds, and they couldn't understand what your building project was all about. They couldn't get that through their heads and this is why they couldn't get it through their heads. It isn't the matter of what road really needs the improvement or whether there have been deaths on those roads. It doesn't matter if they are winding, or if they are twisting or what they are. The final decision by your department and your government is to make sure that the NDP ridings are well rewarded for electing a NDP member.

When the people who live in non-NDP ridings find out that that's the policy of the government, they're not going to elect an NDP member to get road improvements. They're going to defeat the NDP members all across this province because of that very policy that you seem to have adopted.

I want to give the minister five or six minutes, a few moments anyway, to reply. I don't expect him to have all of these figures in front on him. I expect him to have them sometime tomorrow. He has a staff. Maybe when he gets up he could tell me what the staff consists of because if you ask me what my staff consists of, I'll tell you it's pretty skimpy. All I have for a staff is my wife.

Mr. Chairman, whatever the figures I have and whatever work I've done were to determine for the first time whether in fact your estimates are responsible, in terms of your new projects, or political or based on sound, economic, common sense proposals. And I would expect that if I'm not right in my figures, if I haven't calculated within a few kilometres or a few miles, then you'll be more than happy to get up and say, "No, your figures are all wrong." And if I'm wrong, I would be more than prepared to apologize to you for my charge that your decision on road building has been political in terms of how many NDP ridings got more kilometres of road than did Conservative ridings.

If you can prove that my figures are wrong (but I've taken them from the project array), and if you have some people . . . I'm sure you have all kinds of people who have nothing better to do, or at least have the ability to stand before two maps — a Saskatchewan map and a constituency map — and figure out where all these roads are. I know it is difficult. I thought that you, as Minister of Highways and Transportation, might have known at least how many kilometres of road you have in your riding. But you didn't know

that. You didn't even know how many kilometres you had in your own riding . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Why shouldn't he? He's the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

When the minister made his reply to the budget and released this project array, I happened to be sitting over here and I couldn't even wait until it got to my desk. I got up and reached across to the page who brought it to me, because I was so anxious to see what my riding received. I was accustomed to getting nothing since I was elected in 1975 — absolutely nothing except a small strip on Highway 48 since I was elected. And I was pleased, Mr. Minister, to see that for once I got something. And then I was disappointed tonight when I came to the House and started to ask you some questions. You don't have the blueprints; they are up at Yorkton. Well, now you laugh at that, Mr. Minister, but I don't think it's a laughing matter.

If for goodness sakes you have on a project array for 1981-82 a plan to build a road, it seems reasonable to me you would have a blueprint for the thing. And that's what the questions from this side of the House were about. The member for Bengough-Milestone asked, "Do you have any blueprints?" He wanted to know if you have any proposals for building roads or if you have just a piece of paper. Given my statistics that it is all going into NDP ridings anyway (or at least a majority of it), maybe it would be better if it were just a piece of paper and that the blueprints never did become a reality. Maybe you had better scrap all the blueprints in the NDP ridings and just leave the ones in Conservative ridings intact, because that would make up for some lost time over the last five years. You would need to do that for about five years, just to get caught up.

Now, Mr. Chairman, it seems reasonable to me . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's too bad. I don't mind at all, because I have the floor. I would venture to say that there aren't any NDP members on that side of the House who know how many kilometres of road they will have in their ridings. I would venture to say that they don't.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:02 p.m.