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EVENING SESSION

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY CASH OUTFLOW

THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC BOARD

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 15

Item 1 (Continued)

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, we are dealing with the highway traffic board, and there are a few more questions that we want to ask the minister. We hope that we would be able to get the answers fairly quickly.

I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, if you believe that you have adequate staffing throughout the highway traffic board, in particular, on your patrols and your scale sites.

HON. MR. LONG: — I think that I, as minister, have some concerns about adequate staff. I'm not, at this time in my ministry, sure whether it's so much a shortage of staff as how they are organized — that sort of an approach. In a short time I hope to be able to address that problem.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Minister, I would take that as an agreement with myself on that particular concern, that in some quarters you are short-staffed, and I would suggest that in particular you are short-staffed at border-point scale sites. Looking at Moosomin as a start, it would seem to me that you have a problem in that particular area, as well as the Lloydminster area, which is your own, and Swift Current for that matter, which is not really a border scale site, but is more or less in the same general category.

I would like to know just what thoughts you do have on that, and really the point I want to make is: do we have direction emanating from you, as minister in charge of the highway traffic board, or do we have the direction coming from the personnel in your department and you're just rubber stamping the decisions and recommendations that they may make? That's basically what I want to know. I want to know — at this stage you've been minister of your department now for a while — if you've taken the time to look over some of the recommendations and reports that have been made, and to converse with some of your personnel in the various departments, and if you're aware of the particular situations?

You say that yes, you do have some reservations about whether or not you are adequately staffed. Given that statement, I would have to assume that maybe you have spoken to some of your officials, and maybe you do have some information that indicates that there are problem areas. I would like to know, more specifically, what indications you can give this committee as to any changes that will be forthcoming, and what those changes will be. and how soon they will be made.

HON. MR. LONG: — First of all, I'm sure the hon. member knows that the highway traffic

board is a quasi-judicial body, and while I am, in fact, the minister responsible for the highway traffic board and have to act as the minister in charge, I have to be careful not to get into a position of the minister telling the board what to do.

In terms of staff, I'm sure there are a number of departments in government that would like more staff. I admit I have some concerns in that area. There is no question about it. I haven't been around long enough to know for certain whether it's a shortage of staff or whether it's how we organize the highway traffic board staff to do the job better. If you look at the borders of the province, and the patrolling and policing of the borders, and this sort of thing, and the job that is to be done across the province, I think the member would agree with me, it would take a regular army to police the whole province, to police the trucking industry within the province. It would take a very large staff of officers to do that. I'm not certain we would be able to accomplish that, but certainly I am concerned about it. As minister I have been involved in studying and looking at the problem as far as the highway traffic board is concerned, and it is one of my concerns to see that the highway traffic board does a better job, to work with the board to try to accomplish a better job in Saskatchewan.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, in reality the minister has virtually nothing. He has said that he doesn't want to be dominating the staff. Certainly I can appreciate that. On the other hand, I don't want the staff dominating you. You're the minister. What I do want to see is a good working relation between yourself as minister and your senior personnel, so that, in fact, you know what they are proposing and can look at it, and it's put to you in such a fashion that you are able to get the gist of it and know the direction that's being taken. I don't believe that you really do know, in fact, whether you are short staffed or not. I don't think you really have a clue. I would just ask you about your own area, Lloydminster. Take the weigh scale site there. Is it open 24 hours a day year round?

HON. MR. LONG: — No, it's not open 24 hours all year round and it's not supposed to be. That's not the way it's set up. Certainly my area is a pressure area. There's no question about it. There's probably more trucking there than anywhere else in the province. We have moved some extra staff in there to address that problem, and we are concerned about it. To say that I don't know what's going on within the traffic board is not fair. I have been very involved with the highway traffic board and spent a lot of time with it. We are working toward the solutions of some of the problems which the highway traffic board has, and look forward to some improvements in the future.

MR. BIRKBECK: — How often is that scale site open?

HON. MR. LONG: — About 50 per cent of the time.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Okay. Do you know what percentage of the time the Moosomin scale is open?

HON. MR. LONG: — About the same.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, I find it interesting the Attorney General asked me to tell them. That's just the point in the whole exercise of estimates. It's a question of whether or not the minister knows his department. I don't have to know his department; I'm not the minister. That's going to come soon enough and when it gets here I can guarantee the Attorney General I'll know my department and will certainly have taken the time out to discuss at great length with the staff what recommendations they have

been making, and what their particular direction is, and whether or not I agree with it, and whether or not that is concise . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh well, now the Attorney General . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order, order!

MR. BIRKBECK: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your calling the Attorney General to order. He quite often gets a little unruly and that has to be the case. Did you miss your supper maybe?

I want to suggest to you that the scale site at Moosomin is open closer to 75 per cent of the time than 50 per cent of the time, or maybe two-thirds of the time — 66 to 70 per cent of the time. I suggest to you that particular scale site is understaffed. It does need more personnel and I would like to know if the minister has any immediate plans, or for that matter long-range plans to get some more people in there so that they can more appropriately handle the job?

HON. MR. LONG: — I already said to the member that I am addressing those kinds of problems and working with the board toward resolving the problem of service in the province of Saskatchewan.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Do you know how many different Acts the highway traffic board is being called upon right now to police?

HON. MR. LONG: — It's difficult to give the member the number of Acts and regulations the highway traffic board is involved in policing. I'm informed about six different Acts.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Yes, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister. There are in fact a number of them. First of all you have The Highways Act; The Vehicles Act; and, in the northern part of the province, a forestries Act which some of the boys have to deal with; The Fuel Petroleum Products Act; The Liquor Act, of course, and even the livestock Act. The highway traffic board people are having to be responsible for policing; as well and very recently, they have been given a further Act, in particular as it relates to their having to act as inspectors, quite frankly, for the transportation of anhydrous ammonia. And I would like to know, in that regard, what measures your department is taking to ensure that these highway traffic board employees, who have to do those inspections, are adequately trained for that particular kind of work, which is brand new?

HON. MR. LONG: — I would point out to the member that in fact the responsibility that you are talking about, regarding the movement of anhydrous ammonia, is not an Act in itself. It's a regulation under the labour Act. So, you're not talking about an Act; you're talking about regulations under an Act which is the responsibility of the Department of Labour, but we are responsible for those regulations. There has been no specific training, I'm informed, for the employees of the highway traffic board to deal with that responsibility.

MR. BIRKBECK: — But you do agree that they are going to have to deal with that particular responsibility. Well, my point seems reasonably well made. The highway traffic board people who are out there attempting to police have an increasing responsibility being placed on their shoulders as people out there doing the job. Then, it's my feeling that, number one, you don't have adequate staffing and, number two (and I know it may seem to you that this is an unfair or rather different approach taken by the Conservative opposition), I suggest they are in all probability underpaid. Usually

our arguments are that we have too many people as government employees and we've got salaries, in many cases, too large for the type of productivity we are getting out of those employees. But I suggest that in the highway traffic board the employees are not being paid sufficiently, given the new workload that's being placed on them, that and being understaffed, particularly at border point scale sites. What we have, in effect, is a government making laws, whether it be through legislation or regulation, that people are supposedly having to abide by, which the highway traffic board is responsible for policing, but isn't capable of doing. We have a law, but it only applies if you are so unfortunate as to be caught, once in a while.

I can give you an example. A number of years ago, the fine for using purple gas illegally was not all that great. If you used it 365 days of the year, you usually came out ahead at the end of the year. I could tell you of a number of people who did just that, and came out ahead at the end of the year.

You have a seat belt law, for example. I have never been stopped and checked for my seat belt. I don't know whether they do or they don't. I don't hear many reports of people being stopped for not wearing their seat belts. So you have a seat belt law. It's compulsory. You must wear it, and if you are caught not wearing it, you have broken the law.

I suggest to you that a law that can't be adequately enforced is a poor law to have put in place. That seems to be what the case is. I'm not arguing whether the laws are valid or not. In all probability they are. You know our position was to oppose the compulsory nature of seat belts. You also know that our position is to support people wearing seat belts. The Minister of Health over there is having a laugh over that.

The fact of the matter is that there is only about 70 to 75 per cent of the people wearing seat belts, if I can use the most recent statistics. I don't think the minister disagrees with me on that: that statistic is pretty close. I would suggest to you, that you should have the kind of advertising campaign for the use of seat belts similar to the one where you show a mother and her child on her lap going into the dash and the windshield: that is a very effective ad. Again, that is contrary to a lot of criticism you have received from the opposition about a lot of wasted money on television ads, particularly SGI. I suggest to you that an ad like that is effective. I want to commend you on that particular ad because I find it very effective.

If you had effective ads like that on television for seat belt use, you would have as many people wearing them today as you do under the current legislation, which is compulsory and, quite frankly, makes a number of law breakers out of innocent people. I say that with a lot of zeal because you don't have the staff or the people to police the very laws your government is putting in place.

I have alluded to the expanded role of the responsibilities of highway traffic board personnel. There is another area, as well, that I want to touch on, and some of the things that I didn't cover under the municipalities Act. There are certainly laws there that the highway traffic board is involved in. I have raised the concern and I don't think you disagree that there are laws in place that are very, very difficult to enforce. If you are not going to enforce them, then you should remove them. You either enforce the law or remove it — it's one or the other. If you are going to enforce it, the staff that you have currently will not permit you to do that, whether it be in purple gas use, or whether it be in the seat belt usage, for that matter, whether it be speeding, although I think you might be overstaffed in that particular area, judging from my own experiences. I travel the

highways all the time and it seems to me that everybody is speeding but me, and when I am, they catch me. That story holds true for everyone, I am sure. It goes on, you know; it really does.

Now, as I suggested, it moves into the area of transportation of anhydrous ammonia. I would like to know, Mr. Minister, what you are going to do as a minister, what recommendations you are going to make to your staff, whether your staff is currently working on these problems and, whether there is a report forthcoming to your office? I would like to hear some very constructive comments rather than some general statements such as, "Well, we are looking at all these things on an ongoing basis and we'll be making recommendations in due course," and all of that. Well that's an easy way to answer it. I am trying to be very sincere with you.

I lay these out as being problems that we have throughout the province. I think that as minister responsible for the highway traffic board, it is incumbent on you to respond. If you disagree with me, fine, but if you don't, possibly you might have some things in mind as to how you intend to make the necessary changes. So I just give you an opportunity to respond, Mr. Minister.

HON. MR. LONG: — Well, first of all, in the area of salaries for highway traffic board staff, I would point out to the member that highway traffic board employees are members of the SGEA (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association) and they negotiate their salary just as other civil servants in the government employ do.

In terms of policing the rules of the road such as speeding, going through stop signs, reckless driving and that sort of thing, one's chances of getting caught, even with the regular police, are about one in 300. So the chances are slim of getting caught and that's with the regular police force. I think, considering the operations, the way the highway transport patrol people conduct themselves and the job that they do, they don't do a bad job at all. I think it is a pretty good job.

Shortly after I became minister, a study was started of the highway traffic board, its operations and its structure. It will be presented to me in due course, I would think, hopefully in another couple of months, and I will be acting accordingly.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Would you be prepared to make that particular study available to me when it becomes available?

HON. MR. LONG: — I would like to say to you that it's a treasury board document and it's not available.

MR. BIRKBECK: — All right. I want to know, Mr. Minister, very simply, what do you know about the Canada plate provisions?

HON. MR. LONG: — Does the member mean CABR? That is an agreement between all the provinces across the country, except one, Prince Edward Island, which I believe isn't involved. It is an agreement for truckers across the country which gets away from a situation where in fact there was double taxation. The trucker pays the regular licence fee in his own province and pays a fee calculated according to the distance travelled across the provinces that he is travelling through, throughout the country. Roughly, that's how it works.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Yes, are the plates available here in Saskatchewan now?

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HON. MR. LONG: — As of tomorrow, April 1.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Why has there been a delay in the availability of the plates?

HON. MR. LONG: — That's when everyone agreed to start. It was co-ordinated to start on April 1 right across the country, except for the one province.

MR. BIRKBECK: — How many provinces are involved in that program?

HON. MR. LONG: — They've all signed up, except Prince Edward Island. But Quebec is not going until '82.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, is it not so that Saskatchewan's plate is not the same as the other plates? In fact that two or three provinces have similar plates but they're not uniform across the country?

HON. MR. LONG: — This is a reciprocity of registration of vehicles but not necessarily a reciprocity of operating authorities.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Yes. I appreciate the answer although the question was misunderstood. I was talking about the actual physical design and provisions of the Saskatchewan plate and two or three others. And I just wondered if you were aware of that. I'm talking about the actual plate itself. There is no conformity there.

HON. MR. LONG: — I assumed that we would use the Saskatchewan plate, but I'm informed there is an extra plate too that will be used, with a slot in which you can put a decal that indicates you're involved in the plan.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Now you tell me that there are two plates — one with a slot in the centre that you can put a decal in that indicates whether or not you're in the program. Is that correct? Did I read you right? If so, I'll let you reply.

HON. MR. LONG: — Okay. It has 10 slots and in each slot you put a decal that indicates a province you're involved in the plan in. If a trucker was involved in Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba, he would have those three decals in each of the three slots.

MR. BIRKBECK: — All right. Are we down to one plate now or are we still living with two? Why are there two plates? If you have one plate that has 10 slots you indicate which province you are based in by the placement of the sticker on a given slot. If you owned a truck and it was based out of Saskatchewan you'd put the sticker in the fourth from the left. Is that right?

HON. MR. LONG: — Well, I would just point out to the member that all vehicles have to be registered in their home province. That's the one plate. The other plate indicates that you are in the plan and there are ten slots. The decal that is in the slot indicates the province that you are involved in. You may be involved in five provinces; you may be involved in all the provinces right across Canada — all nine of them.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Yes, I may be a little slow to catch on here, but I'm unclear as to why we have to have two plates. First of all, I realize that when you register in Saskatchewan you're going to get a Saskatchewan plate. The only difference between the plates is

going to be that one will have marked on it PRP. All right? That in itself shows you are in the prorated program. It's going to be in the Saskatchewan colours and if you register in Manitoba, British Columbia or wherever, you're going to have a plate with the colours identifying the province and, as well, the PRP somewhere on the plate, indicating that you are in the program. I'm trying to get around to two things. Firstly, why do you need these ten squares? Secondly, what's the use of the other plate? Why do you need two plates in this situation?

HON. MR. LONG: — The one plate indicates the regular registration in your home province. The other plate shows that you're in the plan. The slots with the decals indicate in which provinces you are in the plan. Under the plan you may be trucking into five provinces. That's how it works.

MR. BIRKBECK: — All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. That clears up some problems that we had in ascertaining what the details were of that program. I might add, just before we leave this particular subject, that we agree with that from a trucking position. We think that that's a good idea. We believe that it's going to be a while before the wrinkles are out of it. It certainly has some problems right now and it brings you right back to the scale sites.

They are having some difficulties in figuring out just what's going on. Some of the boys have stuck the stickers on the wrong square and so on and so forth. It is creating a few problems. I wanted to say before we move on that we do agree with it. We will be, of course, monitoring the program ourselves and making any necessary recommendations to you as minister in terms of making that program more effective and taking the workload off the traffic boys.

It's, I might add, a unique program. It's something that I felt should have been in place a considerable time ago and I would just hope that it proves to be successful. As I say, we won't have a lot of information on it at this time but we will be looking at it, monitoring it, and forwarding any of our concerns to you as minister.

I just wanted to ask one further question. Then I want to allow some of my colleagues to ask some questions that they have prepared. There's one concern that I do have with relation to speed signs, and I don't know whether that would have been more appropriate under the Department of Highways and Transportation or not, but, none the less, it's just one simple question and, for that matter, a suggestion. When you are entering a town (I'll give you an example) any town where you have a warning speed sign set out, you're going to have to drop your speed down to 70 or 50 kilometres, whichever the case may be. I find that there isn't a great enough distance between the warning sign and the actual posted speed. That is to say, you have to apply your brakes, and that's if you hit it at the speed limit. I wasn't hitting it at 90 miles an hour, at least not regularly. I just wanted to make that recommendation because I have found that to be the case in Moosomin. There's a warning sign as you enter Moosomin and I have hit it right on the speed limit, taken my foot off the accelerator and was nowhere near the speed limit when I hit the actual speed zone.

You know, I've checked it out throughout the province and that's consistent. I find that be the case in a lot of other areas and I would like to see, in the placing of those signs, (and I make that as a suggestion) a greater distance between them so that we're able to get down to the actual posted speed limit without having to apply the brakes, all in the name of saving energy and so on. I just wonder if you agree with that?

HON. MR. LONG: — Well, the member knows that that's under the jurisdiction, of course, of the Department of Highways. I've never tried it myself. I will try it to see how it works out. I have a number of spots in my area and throughout the province which are like that. I'd be prepared to have a look at it.

MR. PICKERING: — Mr. Minister, I have a statement here from one of my constituents. (I know that you won't be able to give me a complete answer in the House.) He was charged with impaired driving and dangerous driving a couple of years ago on March 13. He was requested to report to a probation officer, and attend a DWI (Driving Without Impairment) course, and also attend the alcohol rehabilitation centre here in Regina. He did. At the time of his trial, he was advised by R. J. Neville, who's the judge in the area, that there was a possibility he might be able to get back his licence after two years. I would just ask you how he would go about applying — whether it be to the appeal board or whatever, in regard to getting his licence back now?

HON. MR. LONG: — If he applies to the licence appeal committee of the highway traffic board and he meets the guidelines, they'll hear his case and make a decision accordingly. So, he should get in contact with the highway traffic board's driver licence appeal committee and make his application.

MR. PICKERING: — Just another thing, Mr. Minister. Many people are charged on the 0.08. On the first charge, they get six months. Some of them aren't given a permit to drive during that period and some are, depending upon whether they need it to maintain their jobs. I know of civil servants who have lost their licences and needed them to keep their jobs. They would get them back in something like four to five days rather than serve their six months or apply for a permit. Is this true or false?

HON. MR. LONG: — They would make application to the driver licence appeal committee just as anyone else would, and apply for a restricted licence. They would be under the same guidelines as anyone else.

MR. PICKERING: — Mr. Minister, I know of one case in particular (I can't mention any names because I don't want to jeopardize the person's position, and he's made me aware of more) where a civil servant got it back in three or four days. Is that not true?

HON. MR. LONG: — There has never been any pressure put on the board by anyone within the government to do this sort of thing. I really have no knowledge and the board has no knowledge of anything of this nature.

MR. PICKERING: — Are you telling me, Mr. Minister, that this has never happened since you became minister or with any other minister prior to the 0.08 charge coming into being?

HON. MR. LONG: — It takes three weeks for the process to take place and for the OC (order in council) to get through to cabinet for restricted licences, so I really don't see how it could possibly happen.

MR. PICKERING: — Then, Mr. Minister, you're admitting to me that there isn't such a thing as a civil servant getting his licence back (not just a permit as it pertains to his job, but an actual driver's licence) four or five days following his conviction under the 0.08 charge? Is that what you're telling me?

HON. MR. LONG: — No way. It can't be.

MR. PICKERING: — I didn't hear your answer, Mr. Minister. I'd like to hear it again.

HON. MR. LONG: — I said no.

MR. PICKERING: — Did you say that this has never happened?

HON. MR. LONG: — Not to my knowledge; that's for certain.

MR. PICKERING: — Well, to the knowledge of your department, has it ever happened? You have all your wheels there.

HON. MR. LONG: — Not to my knowledge; that's for certain.

MR. PICKERING: — Well, to the knowledge of your department has it ever happened? You have all your wheels there. Ask them.

HON. MR. LONG: — No. Why would you call them wheels?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. LANE: — I wonder if I can have the permission of the Assembly to introduce some guests to the Assembly? Thank you. Mr. Chairman, members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce some 20 Cubs from the 79th Cub Pack at Judge Bryant School. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery. This is their first tour of the Assembly, and I assume that they are enjoying themselves by the looks on their faces tonight. They are accompanied by Cub leaders William Spicer, Don Stapleton, Gerry Barsi, and Vernon LeMaire. Mr. Chairman, I will be joining them for drinks in a couple of minutes, and I hope they have some interesting questions. At that time I'll explain the proceedings tonight. I would like to have all hon. members join with me in welcoming the Cubs to the Assembly.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SMISHEK: — I wonder whether I might join the hon. member in extending our welcome from the government to the 20 or 21 Cubs, the Cub master and the two Cub leaders as well as the three people who brought them here. I hope that their short stay and visit to the legislature will be a rewarding experience. Welcome to the Chamber.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY CASH OUTFLOW

THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC BOARD

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 15

Item 1 (continued)

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Minister, I'm just a little concerned (and we brought this up before 5 o'clock) regarding the 114 locations you have throughout the province for people to be able to take their driver's test and so on. And you tell me that you have 26 instructors and 5 superintendents. Now, I think we've even talked about this before. There seems to be a bit of a problem and it surfaces not just in our area (I mean in your constituency and

in mine) but all over the province. They are behind in their workload, and they cannot keep up and people are waiting 4 to 5 weeks sometimes in order to be able to take their tests. Now, with 26 people in 114 locations I can see why they are getting behind in their workload. In what I call our oil side of the border, many people are waiting to get class A licences, etc. What plans are you or your department looking at in the future to improve this situation? It is bad, and if something isn't done it's going to get an awful lot worse.

HON. MR. LONG: — I think the member will recognize that not all of those 114 points are as busy as some of them up in our area, and I recognize it as a problem. As I said earlier, shortly after I became minister a study did begin on the highway traffic board. I am waiting for the recommendations on that study and hope, either through the organization or whatever methods are needed, to improve that situation considerably.

MR. GARNER: — Well, I mean, are you looking at hiring because that 114 locations . . . I would like a copy of every one of those locations where people are unable to take a test. You can send that over; I don't need it right now. I'm just concerned. We can't keep studying this for another six months or another year. The problem is here and it's here right now, and I think corrective measures are going to have to be taken within six months — not the studying of it for six months. I think the corrective measures are going to have to be taken now so that they are in place within six months.

HON. MR. LONG: — I might just point out to the member that out of the 114 points, which we are currently testing licences in, more than 60 aren't really fit for testing, say, a class 1. They have to take them into the more major centres anyway to get a class 1 or a higher class of licence. So you have to take that into consideration, too.

MR. PICKERING: — Mr. Minister, about a year ago I did some checking throughout southern Saskatchewan and portions of central-eastern Saskatchewan on the backlog of driver examinations, and found out it was, in some cases, as long as three months, in other places, as long as six. Has this been improved to your knowledge at this time, so that there isn't this large backlog?

HON. MR. LONG: — I think where there has been a backlog, the highway traffic board has acted by sending more license testers into that area to try to clean up the backlog, and they have done that. They have allocated their resources according to the load and caught up that way; so we've had some success in doing that. I agree that the load is heavy in some of these spots. It's a concern of mine, and it is one of the things that we are trying to address through this study.

MR. PICKERING: — Mr. Minister, where did you get the extra people to try to bring this back up to date?

HON. MR. LONG: — We moved them out of areas where there wasn't the same amount of pressure. We were able to move them in from other areas.

MR. PICKERING: — In the schools, Mr. Minister, they have driver training. Have you ever given any consideration to having these people conduct driver examinations? I feel, if they are good enough to instruct young people to drive, to get their learner's licences and so on, perhaps you could get them to help cover this backlog. Have you ever considered that?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, we have looked at that idea. One of our concerns is that there may be a little conflict if they have to test the students they've instructed. So that's one of our concerns. But that's one of the things that we have been looking at. There's no question about that.

MR. PICKERING: — Mr. Minister, the majority of these places are within 25 to 30 miles of where they can take these examinations. Would it not seem all right to you and your department to interchange them, so that they could conduct the tests? The ones from Milestone who are instructing could go to Avonlea, and vice versa, Would that not work?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, I suppose that's one possible suggestion, no question about that. I think we'd have to take a careful look at it. The testing that we do now, I think, is of a high quality. We'd want to continue that. I think it's a very important service that these driver examiners perform. I think it's just as important as many of the services that other government agencies (in fact, more important) provide, and I think that we'd have to be very careful to see that that kind of level of service was provided, and that the high standards were kept. I think that's a concern.

MR. LANE: — I would like to direct a question. Would the minister be prepared to supply the names of the board and all those board members who hold hearings and a list of all payments made to them, including expenses, etc. during the last year, since the public accounts statement? I gather the minister is nodding in the affirmative.

Secondly, I have a concern. I wonder if the minister is aware of any court challenges. If an individual is found guilty, say, of driving while impaired and is suspended for a period of six months on a first offence, it turns out that the surcharge or suspension by SGI or the board does not come into operation until such time as the sentence is served. Now, that indicates to me that we are really in a position of double jeopardy. Perhaps the Attorney General could comment on that if he wishes. The individual is, in fact, being sentenced twice. He is being sentenced once by the court, then at the end of the court sentence, the suspension period operates, certainly, for the calculation of SGI. The period runs much longer than that of the court order and the court decision. I am wondering if the minister has legal opinions as to the validity of that operation. If so, would he table them?

Secondly, why was there the policy decision on not having concurrent sentences? In other words, once someone is suspended for, say, six months, SGI and the board prohibitions could operate at exactly the same time, instead of one coming into effect when the sentence is over.

HON. MR. LONG: — Well, I think the member is aware that that really is in SGI's ball court. They assess the extra fees for the licence. It really has nothing to do with the highway traffic board. We assess the period of time for which they lose their licence — six months. I am not aware of any court case in that area, certainly not as far as we are concerned.

MR. LANE: — I asked you the second question as well. Do you have any legal opinions? I'm assuming the answer is no; I am also assuming that I have the assurance that if I ask the same question of SGI, I am not going to be met with the defence that this is something handled by the highway traffic board. Is that correct?

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HON. MR. LONG: — Yes.

MR. LANE: — I gather that is correct.

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes.

MR. SWAN: — Mr. Minister, I would like to have your officials and you give me the reason that you demand an R licence on a tandem axle farm truck. More and more farmers are getting to the point where they are using a tandem axle truck because of the distance to market and savings on time and fuel consumption. Is there any problem within your department with licensing a tandem axle truck with a farm licence?

HON. MR. LONG: — Basically, it is the point at which we differentiate between a vehicle which uses purple gas and one which doesn't. That is the situation. We haven't seen fit at this time to extend it to R plates.

MR. SWAN: — You didn't really answer my question. Is there a problem, as far as you are concerned, in issuing a farm plate for a tandem axle truck? I know you have the distinction where you don't want them to use purple gas. I think we can change that. The Minister of Agriculture infers there is a problem with putting a farm plate on those trucks. If it is a truck used for hauling a farmer's own produce, I can't quite buy your argument so far. I want to know if there is a problem with your department in putting a farm licence plate on that size of truck.

HON. MR. LONG: — There isn't any technical problem as far as highway traffic board is concerned. But I think there is a problem in that the class F trucks have traditionally been allowed to use the good neighbour policy where they can truck grain for their neighbours using an F licence — that sort of thing. And at this time it hasn't been seen fit to extend to tandem trucks that kind of a policy.

MR. SWAN: — Mr. Minister, there was a time when nobody used trucks and they all hauled their grain with a horse and wagon too. But I hope we're not going to stay in that age. You know the times have changed. I think if you were to go back 10 years, you wouldn't have found anybody with a tandem axle truck on the road. But if you go out today, you'll find that on the same farms a tandem axle truck is used extensively for hauling a farmer's own produce. So I'm trying to get the message across to your government that it's time for change. It's time that you, as a government, recognize the need for catching up with the times, so to speak. You're behind at least 10 years. It's time for change.

Can I suggest something to you and get an answer from you? Are you willing to take this as a proposal to your cabinet colleagues and have it discussed again to see if you can bring it on to the floor as a topic that needs a resolution?

You know this is causing a lot of concern out in the country. I'm sure it's causing concern in your own constituency. I know I'm getting many, many letters from my constituents. Will you take that before cabinet and have it discussed again and catch up with the times?

HON. MR. LONG: — Policy matters of this nature are continually under discussion in cabinet. We're always reviewing this sort of thing. I assure the member that it will be discussed again.

MR. SWAN: — I want you to look at a different topic and that is the inspection depots that you set up for semitrailers and tractors. It caused a lot of concern in one town in my constituency and I think we have corrected that one. I'm sure it is causing the same kind of concern around the province. Basically what you did was order a man who sold International trucks to take them to the Ford dealer to have them inspected. It didn't go over very big. A man who goes to the International truck depot to buy a truck doesn't look very favourably on going over to the Ford dealer to have an inspection done. Along with that the Ford dealer that you licensed could not inspect trailers. So they had to take the trailers from the Ford dealer to Saskatoon and inspect the trailer. You know it's not a very reasonable process of inspection. Have you looked at it across the province — to have the inspection done on a more sensible basis?

HON. MR. LONG: — Well, as the member will know, it's a new program and there are some growing pains. But the International dealer in your town could have been registered as an agency to do this kind of work just as the Ford dealer was, providing the International dealer met the standards. There's no question that he could have checked his own vehicles. I see no reason why an International agent such as that couldn't probably be registered. I'd like to know if he has applied for registration as an official place to have the trucks inspected. It can be done that way. It shouldn't be any problem. The Ford dealer can do the same thing.

MR. SWAN: — Mr. Minister, could you provide me with a copy of the regulations or criteria that you use to decide whether or not a garage qualifies? Is it possible for any garage that has a heavy-duty mechanic on duty, who is properly trained, to become licensed to do these inspections?

HON. MR. LONG: — I'm informed that no garage has been turned down yet. No agent has been turned down yet. No agent, such as a General Motors dealer or a Ford dealer or an International dealer, this time, has been turned down.

MR. SWAN: — What did you use as your criteria to select the first select group, so to speak, which you handed these privileges out to?

HON. MR. LONG: — In terms of the location of the towns, we tried to locate the towns in an area where there was a large truck population — that were sort of central. In terms of the actual agents who were qualified or licensed as inspection agencies, as people to do this kind of work, if they were regular dealers there was no reason why they couldn't get it, even if there were two in the same town.

MR. HARDY: — Mr. Minister, I have one question in relation to farm trucks, especially in overweight situations, not necessarily just tandems, but any farm trucks. I wonder why they haven't been allowed to haul overweight during the winter months when the roads are frozen.

A lot of trucks (and I am sure it relates to especially the northern part of the province) haul rapeseed a great distance and it is quite an inconvenience for them to either have to haul a smaller load or on an overweight permit. I was wondering if your department has considered allowing farm trucks to haul farm products, especially grain seeds and oil seeds, on the roads during the winter months when the frost is in the highways?

HON. MR. LONG: — Well, the question that you pose is in the jurisdiction of the Department of Highways, but as far as signed highways are concerned, we have increased the legal limits through the winter for all trucks, right across the board. Now, I

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can't speak for municipal roads, but as far as highways are concerned there shouldn't be any problem.

MR. HARDY: — But, Mr. Minister, in my area quite a few of the farm trucks are being picked up for being overweight. These are farm trucks hauling grain into the elevators and that again falls back into your department. Has your department considered allowing these trucks to haul during the winter months when it is frozen and they cannot damage the highway? I am referring specifically to farm trucks.

HON. MR. LONG: — Well, all the highway traffic board is doing is administering the Department of Highways and Transportation policy. I guess what I am saying is that I should take this concern as Minister of Highways, rather than as minister in charge of highway traffic board. I will do that if there is a problem that way. I certainly will do that.

MR. HARDY: — What you're saying is that you'll take it back and give it serious consideration. It's quite an important issue especially in the North where rapeseed is hauled to some of the crushing mills quite a distance. Generally, it's hauled during the winter months by farmers who have the time and have tandem trucks. It'll be necessary for them to be able to do that.

I have one other question. The highway traffic board, I understand, right now is reviewing the STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) bus line from Hudson Bay to Canora. Have you any knowledge of this and are you going to have any input into it?

HON. MR. LONG: — Of course I have knowledge, but I would remind the member again that it's a quasi-judicial body and, as minister, I am in charge, but I don't tell them what to do.

MR. HARDY: — What you're saying then is that you actually have no control or no say-so. But whatever this body recommends is what you are prepared to do. Is that correct?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, that's right. That's the situation. I am the minister in charge, but it's a quasi-judicial body and there's not supposed to be ministerial interference.

MR. ANDREW: — I've a question, Mr. Minister, to the highway traffic board. What appears to be happening, certainly in the west side of the province if not throughout (and I believe there was a challenge at highway traffic board this summer on this question) is that a large Alberta trucking firm comes in, buys out a small one-lunger trucking firm with general rights, or grandfather rights. The Alberta firm then is able to simply turn around and sell the rights back to the person it bought them from. It has thereby circumvented the requirements to go through to get the proper authority under highway traffic board.

The net effect is that a fair amount of damage has been done to the bona fide truckers who are working, in this case, in the oil industry, by some Alberta trucking firms which are in a slack period of time because the bulk of their hauling perhaps is in the winter months in the North. They're slack during the summer when the oil program is in place in Saskatchewan and they have basically circumvented the entire Act. Now, that matter went through highway traffic board this summer and I think you probably know which case we're talking about. Are you taking any steps to stop that type of thing or to change the rules so that, in fact, doesn't happen?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, I'm very aware of the member's concern and the problem he

has brought up. We are considering legislation to deal with it. I hope to deal with it this session and plug the hole these people are finding.

MR. ANDREW: — Okay. And your view was that the highway traffic board in itself did not have the authority to solve that problem?

HON. MR. LONG: — The legal advice that I get is that we don't have authority to deal with that problem right now, but with the legislation we hope to change that.

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Minister, will you give me the list of executive personnel and their salaries? Do you have that? Also, Mr. Minister, will you give me a list of the directors of the highway traffic board and their addresses, please?

HON. MR. LONG: — Board members?

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, I want to cover a few more points that I have here. First of all, just before we move too far into the other questions, the member for Rosetown-Elrose raised a very valid concern of Saskatchewan farmers. We have been bringing this problem to you repeatedly. But I want to give you another example to emphasize the need out there in rural Saskatchewan to have these tandem axle trucks licensed with farm plates.

I had the opportunity of having approximately 100 farmers in one room. We discussed the subject, and they want that licensing for tandem axles so badly that they would be prepared to give up using purple gas in their half-tons if they could have it for the big trucks used in the movement of grain from farm to market. That's how important it is to the farmers.

Now, perhaps you want to leave it until election time and then you're going to throw it out. I don't know. But I would suggest to you that now is the time to act. The member for Rosetown-Elrose has said that you are 10 years behind the times. I don't know whether you are 10 years behind, or 5 years behind, or 15 years behind. It could well be that if we'd locked you in the closet we'd be as far ahead today. But, Mr. Minister, on that particular issue, the sooner that you can bring down some recommendations and changes, and make that kind of licensing available for farmers, the better it is going to be for the agricultural industry. And you know that the agricultural industry right now is, as it has been for a number of years, in the cost-price squeeze. It has forever been in that position. Couple with that added taxes and added costs that have been thrown onto the farmers and, in particular, the government's own 20 per cent tax across the board. Throw into that, as well, the fact that you've removed the farm cost reduction program. All these very serious factors are contributing to a cost-price squeeze in the agricultural sectors.

Let me put it to you this way. If the Minister of Agriculture, or Minister of Revenue, Supply and Services isn't prepared to provide some assistance, as they have in the past, to the farm cost reduction program, then I say to you, Mr. Minister, that that responsibility now becomes even greater on your shoulders. They need that benefit even more now than they did before. If they wanted it two years ago, they really want it today. I tell you very seriously that the member for Rosetown-Elrose, I, and our newly elected member for Kelsey-Tisdale, just about every one of our members, are finding that a lot of farmers want that particular regulation changed. Don't just reply again, "Well, we're constantly looking at things." The farmers are tired of you looking at things.

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They want action in that regard right now, and I want to know if any of your officials have examined that situation? Have any recommendations been forwarded to your office or to the former minister of highways?

HON. MR. LONG: — I would just say to the hon. member that I haven't had any recommendations from my officials regarding this suggestion you are making. I know it is one of concern, and one that we're constantly reviewing within the government, as I said before. I'm not prepared to make any commitments at this time, but this is certainly something that I'll take into consideration and, as I said before, will be reviewing.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, Mr. Minister, I want to pin you down to a time frame. Are you prepared to say in this committee that you are not going to move on it within the next year?

HON. MR. LONG: — No, I'm not prepared to say that.

MR. BIRKBECK: — In other words, then, Mr. Chairman, the minister is unprepared to commit himself to any time frame as it relates to farm licensing of tandem axle trucks, at a time when the farmers desperately need it.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Give us your arguments why you won't go that route.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, that would be interesting. The member for Souris-Cannington is suggesting that you give us your arguments why you won't go for that route.

I've already laid that out. In fact, as I've said already (and I'm not being hard on the minister because he's a new minister in his portfolio) I don't believe that he's taken the time that he should have at this point to bring himself up to date on the changes that are required, in particular, in this case, under the highway traffic board. I suppose as an opposition we are going to have to accept that you are going to be reviewing it, and constantly looking at changes. But I suppose on the other hand, as minister, you are going to have to accept the consequences of not bringing those changes in within the next six months or at least within the next year.

Now I would like to move on to a different subject. I would like to ask you if in fact The Vehicles Act is going to be changed at all in the next year.

HON. MR. LONG: — I have been considering changes to The Vehicles Act. I haven't yet made a decision on them, but I am looking at some changes.

MR. BIRKBECK: — If you're looking at some changes, it would be reasonable to assume that someone in some back room, office or somewhere in government is working on new regulations and new clauses in The Vehicles Act. In other words, there must be somebody, somewhere in government, rewriting The Vehicles Act. If you're prepared to say in this committee that you're looking at some changes but are not prepared to say when, I can appreciate that. But are you prepared to admit, at this time, that The Vehicles Act is currently being rewritten, is going to be rewritten, or has been rewritten?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, it's a fair assumption that we have people looking at changes to The Vehicles Act. As far as the regulations are concerned, we will address the regulations after the changes which we require are in place and deal with them in that manner.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Can you indicate to the committee, at this time, who is responsible for rewriting The Vehicles Act and who's doing the groundwork on it at this time?

HON. MR. LONG: — Various staff of the highway traffic board are responsible for suggesting changes and reworking The Vehicles Act at this time.

MR. BIRKBECK: — All right, thank you, Mr. Minister. I guess I'm safe in assuming that you're not prepared to give us any time frame as to when you're prepared to introduce those new changes? I see you're nodding your head. I take it that your answer is no.

I would like to just touch on one other area with regard to the livestock Act. There's definitely a problem there. I've alluded to some of the problems which your highway traffic board personnel are going to have in terms of policing and inspecting anhydrous ammonia transportation. I would also suggest that you're going to have (in fact, have had) many problems with your highway traffic board personnel attempting to police the regulations contained under the livestock Act.

I'll throw this out as a suggestion to you, Mr. Minister. I suggest that you be in touch with both federal and provincial officials (since federal officials are involved in the livestock Act) and have them possibly add some more staff, because that seems to be, by and large, the problem.

Again, we have to use an example to illustrate the point we're trying to make. Take the pool livestock division yards at Moosomin as an example. We have a trucker who comes rolling in there with a semi and picks up a load of cattle. He doesn't know whether he is overloaded, underloaded, or if he has too many calves or too many cows. Those are certain regulations which are under the livestock Act. There aren't staff people at the livestock division to see that those trucks are being loaded properly. There's somebody there who has been given signing authority. The truck is loaded and John Doe goes on the signature line. It's cleared and stamped and away it goes. In fact, that truck is improperly loaded. Then it hits the road. Your highway traffic control people are out there. They make a routine check. They stop a truck and take a look. "Whoops! You're improperly loaded."

I don't say that it's necessarily the fault of the highway traffic board. It could well lie under the jurisdiction of the livestock Act. Possibly we have to have more input from our livestock producers. Maybe we do. Maybe we have to have some pressure being applied to those groups to see that the livestock Act is being properly enforced in terms of its regulations, so as to reduce the increasing load (which I referred to earlier), on the highway traffic board personnel. They're the boys who are ending up with the job of policing the whole thing. That's creating quite a problem for your people. I throw that out as advice and suggestion. That's one of the problems. Take a look at it. Mark it down. See what you can do. Maybe converse with the people who are responsible for the livestock Act.

Now, I want to ask a question with regard to regulations in the trucking industry. Can you give me any specific or definite examples of where your department has undertaken to deregulate in the trucking industry?

HON. MR. LONG: — The highway traffic board has had some discussion with the people who truck household goods, but there hasn't been any discussion for about six months, so there has been nothing in that area.

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I wanted to say a few words concerning the livestock Act. I agree with your assessment of the situation. The highway traffic board is responsible for the safety of livestock in transport. When you are policing it's always difficult, as I indicated earlier, to be on the spot every time there's an infringement in the law. There is no question about that. You have to rely on the concern and possibility in the minds of people that the police may show up to check them. I think that's part of policing, and I think that's part of the psychology that the highway traffic board works on, just as any other agency does. That's a necessary thing to accept. It would be nice if they could be at the loading site when they are loading; that might be an approach. They could occasionally drop in to check on them as they're loading, rather than out on the highway. We could take a look at that approach.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Thanks, Mr. Minister. I want to ask you one question with regard to a recent supreme court ruling. The Supreme Court of Canada recently made a decision that the Criminal Code section stating that it is an offence to drive while prohibited is unconstitutional. The highway traffic board claims there are 200 eligible and, in fact, there are 400 seeking reinstatement. I would just like to know how you arrived at that and why the other 200 aren't eligible. Two hundred are; what's wrong with the other 200?

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, I am certainly aware of the Boggs decision that struck down subsection 238(3) of the Criminal Code of Canada, and declared it ultra vires. There are a number of people who may be eligible by virtue of the fact that they are not disqualified, other than the section 238 ruling. There are probably in the neighbourhood of 4,000. Each one has to be checked carefully, and the records reviewed. It takes some time and it is an unfortunate position we find ourselves in, due to a supreme court decision.

MR. BIRKBECK: — As minister responsible for the highway traffic board, you are saying that you are understaffed and to process these many claims is very time consuming. Is that the correct assessment?

HON. MR. LONG: — I am saying that the process of carefully reviewing each driver's situation is a very slow one. Reviewing very carefully each driver's situation and determining whether he is disqualified other than under section 238 is a very difficult, slow process.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Minister, I want to ask another question in a different field. Fees and charges which are payable under the highway traffic board will be collected by the Minister of Revenue and Supply and I just would ask why that is going to be the case?

HON. MR. LONG: — There are no changes as far as the fines are concerned. They're just as they were before.

MR. BIRKBECK: — I would have to refer, Mr. Minister, to order in council OC44281, March 19, 1981, The Vehicles Act, The Department of Revenue Supply and Services:

That it is considered desirable and in the public interest that the Minister of Revenue, Supply and Services be authorized to collect the fees and charges under subsection 201 of The Vehicles Act . . .

I won't go any further than that.

HON. MR. LONG: — That always has been the case, as far as I know.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, what do you do, write an order in council for it every year?

Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I wonder if the question which was asked by the member for Wilkie regarding salaries could be forwarded to the member for Wilkie while I'm asking the remaining questions I have. I think you are aware of the information he requested. You must have it available. If you have, send it across to the member. He's sitting over here now, waiting for it. I believe the question was regarding executive personnel salaries, top administrative staff. He wanted to know what the salaries were and he wants that information now if it is possible.

I want to ask you something with reference to safety. What effect and what influence does the safety council, as a local autonomous group and body studying accidents and the problems surrounding accidents, have on your department in terms of changes that it may or may not make? In other words, do you listen to the Saskatchewan Safety Council?

HON. MR. LONG: — Well, I think we're constantly in touch with the safety council. We work very closely with it. Mr. Shiels, our safety officer for the board, is a member of that council and is very closely involved. Certainly recommendations it makes at any time, the board takes into very serious consideration. Of course, the board safety operation is integrated and operates very closely with the safety operation within the Department of Highways. There is very close liaison between not only the Department of Highways and the highway traffic board, but also with the safety council.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Okay, that's good because I had earlier suggested to you that you should be looking at the problems we have in terms of safety. I touched on some of the changes I felt were necessary. I wondered if your staff was making recommendations to you and what those recommendations were. I didn't get a lot of answers in that regard. We raised concerns regarding seat belts. I suggested to you that a very good advertising program as it relates to seat belt usage would be very beneficial. Pardon, Attorney General?

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Are you people in favour of seat belt law or not?

MR. BIRKBECK: — We are very much in favour of people wearing seat belts. Yes (in reply to the Attorney General), we are very much in favour. Given the minister's own Department of Highways statistics indicating that there are a greatly reduced number of fatalities through the use of seat belts (I certainly am not in a position to verify your facts and figures, but I would have to assume that they are reasonably accurate), again I emphasize our support for seat belt usage. Again, to reiterate, we believe very strongly that if you were to come up with a very good advertising campaign, you would get a very high percentage of people wearing seat belts, and the compulsory nature of the law, Mr. Attorney General, would not be necessary in reality. I suppose it could be summed up by saying that we, in opposition, give the people of Saskatchewan a lot more credit for their intelligence than maybe does the government opposite, in particular, the Attorney General's department.

AN HON. MEMBER: — You would do away with the law, would you, Larry?

MR. BIRKBECK: — Yes, as a matter of fact, if I could prove, Mr. Chairman, through a

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good advertising program, that seat belt usage could be increased to 85 per cent, we would be able effectively to remove the compulsory nature of the law. That would reduce the onerous responsibility on our police force, which is a rising cost. As you know, Mr. Attorney General, that is a problem which you have to deal with, with regard to who is going to fund it, whether it is going to be municipal, provincial or federal. What you have to do, obviously, is reduce the workload, either that or increase the amount of money which is going to have to be spent in any given area. So what I am looking at here is something which is going to serve a twofold purpose.

If you do come in with a good advertising program which increases seat belt usage, you are going to reduce the number of fatalities, accidents, the cost to SHSP (Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan), and the cost to either the municipal, provincial, or federal or all three levels of government in terms of policing the regulation being compulsory. Therefore, it serves a number of purposes, and not just one specific purpose.

I have a news clipping in front of me here, "Safety Council Workshop Looks at Ways to Reduce Number of Accidents." Now, if we just look at the first two or three paragraphs and some of the recommendations:

Every 11 minutes last year, there was a traffic accident somewhere in Saskatchewan. There were 25 persons injured every day, and one person killed every 30 hours in traffic accidents. They became statistics.

Those are some figures in the first report from the provincial traffic accident information system set up in 1979 to monitor how, when, and why accidents happen in this province.

Now, if we go along a little further in the article and take a look at some of the recommendations:

Among other recommendations presented by the 40 delegates from Saskatchewan were regional traffic safety meetings rather than centralized gatherings. The workshop in Moose Jaw is the first of its kind following a 1978 workshop in Prince Albert where abuse of drugs, alcohol and traffic accidents were discussed: mandatory defensive driving courses before issuance of a driver's licence; probationary licences for young drivers; traffic safety consultants to aid communities to develop better awareness of possible traffic trouble spots; standard seat belt designs.

That's a very important one — standard seat belt design — in that when you get in a friend's car, you're groping around trying to find out what kind of a seat belt system you're dealing with. It's all right when you're driving your own. It's very easy — you grab it and snap it on. You jump in someone else's car and it's very difficult. For that matter, it's difficult to try to find how to get the window down, or get the door open, let alone how to put the seat belt on. That was one of our recommendations.

The other very important point that they've raised here, which I've spoken on before, and again today, is better use of media to convey the need for improved traffic and safety awareness. Now, they're telling you the same thing that I'm telling you. That's why earlier I asked you if you had taken into very serious consideration some of the good reports and recommendations the Saskatchewan Safety Council makes. I believe that that certainly will enhance Saskatchewan's position in terms of accidents and fatalities.

Taking a different perspective on it, just to conclude — in Ottawa a traffic committee decided to increase seat belt wearing, or usage (whichever word you like) from its 59 per cent level to 80 per cent. And they were able to reach that goal within two weeks. The objective was set, the media contacted, and the police cracked down, and those without their seat belts on were caught. The crackdown was announced in advance, and the objective was easily reached. In two weeks they went from 59 per cent of the people wearing seat belts to 80 per cent, and the program cost them \$125.

So, I just want to conclude on what I believe is a very positive note, and that's safety. I know that if there was any common ground, it was on safety. I very much believe that you must take a look at the current situation regarding the compulsory seat belt legislation and introduce a program, Mr. Minister, whereby advertising will be greatly enhanced, and thus the use of seat belts will be greatly enhanced. If it can be established that people will wear them through a good advertising campaign, and compulsory seat belt legislation is not required, then yes, certainly you would be able, at that time, to remove the legislation. I don't know why you wouldn't remove the legislation. If, in fact, you had more people wearing seat belts without compulsion, if you had a good advertising program, I don't know why you'd have to have compulsory seat belt legislation. I really don't.

All I would like to leave with you is the suggestion that you do look at spending some money in advertising. Maybe the ads have to be dramatic, I don't know. I think that you're going to have to come out with some initial ads that are going to be fairly hard-hitting to bring to people's attention the merits and positive aspects of wearing seat belts. I would very much appreciate it if you could move in that direction within a reasonable length of time. That's coupled with the fact that you're not exercising the right that is there under the law to, in fact, enforce the law. I don't believe that it's being enforced. As I said, since the law was introduced, I was never at anytime stopped and checked for my seat belt — not at any time. I'm not suggesting that it hasn't been done; certainly it has. I know that it's been done here in the city of Regina, where you set up certain points where you were going to just check seat belts. But I suggest there are two things you should do. I don't think you really have any effective ads — only the one that I've seen. Start using some good, very effective ads in terms of seat belt use. If you're going to have it compulsory, as the Attorney General supports, then I suggest that you start to enforce the law that you have.

So, those comments, Mr. Minister, would conclude my questioning in the highway traffic board estimates. My colleagues have a few questions to ask, but those will be further down the line during clause by clause and I will leave it for them. If you want to respond to some of the comments I made, I'd appreciate it and after that we'll have a few short questions.

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, I very much appreciate the hon. member's concerns regarding safety on the highways and byways of Saskatchewan. I just want to say that we're certainly ready to co-operate and accept any suggestions the Saskatchewan Safety Council makes, whether they are in the area of advertising or anything of that nature, to promote the use of seat belts.

I would point out to the member that prior to the implementation of the seat belt legislation about \$1 million was spent in Ontario promoting the use of seat belts and the use of seat belts did not rise appreciably. The Ontario experience was that, immediately upon implementing the legislation forcing the use of seat belts, it went up right away. You talked about the Ottawa experience with advertising and policing, and

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the combination of the two. I would just suggest to the member that by far the most effective of those two approaches was probably the policing.

Item 1 agreed.

Items 2 and 3 agreed.

Item 4

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Minister, just a question here. In here we see the value going up from \$2,073,000, with 83.0 person years, to \$2,473,000. Why that increase in money with just the 2.7 increase in person years?

HON. MR. LONG: — I am informed that the extra \$400,000 comes about because of one extra safety officer and some summer employment and the other dollars come about because of an increase in salary. There was an increase of 20 per cent for some of the staff.

MR. GARNER: — Then you're saying one extra individual was hired and the rest was an increase in salary of about 20 per cent?

HON. MR. LONG: — One extra individual was hired full-time; there was some part-time summer help; and the other part was an increase in salary — a 20 per cent increase, roughly, for the traffic officers.

MR. GARNER: — Okay. How much summertime help? How many people?

HON. MR. LONG: — I'm informed about seven people extra for the summer.

MR. GARNER: — How many people are we talking about here, who got this increase, Mr. Minister? We were talking about a \$400,000 figure. I'd just like to get a little clarification on that.

HON. MR. LONG: — It involves an increase for about 54 officers. It also involves their travel costs, costs while on the road, and that sort of thing. It's all included there; I'm informed there were also some computer service costs.

MR. GARNER: — Okay. Well, just going back then, maybe you'd better give me the travel costs for the rest of these senior employees as well. I don't need it right now, but send it to me.

HON. MR. LONG: — Yes, we can do that.

Item 4 agreed.

Items 5 and 6 agreed.

Item 7

MR. PICKERING: — Mr. Minister, back in the 1981 estimates you started the traffic safety department, which I am definitely not against; but there is \$310,250 allocated for 1982. Where was the split made? Where did these people come from and what's required of this department?

HON. MR. LONG: — Three people came from the transportation agency and were transferred to the highway traffic board. Their job is to promote safety. As I mentioned before, they work closely with the Saskatchewan Safety Council, and the people involved in safety in the Department of Highways. They carry out ongoing studies to improve our driving habits and that sort of thing in the province of Saskatchewan.

Item 7 agreed.

Item 8

MR. GARNER: — Just a minute. Mr. Minister, I'm just going back to the 1980 estimates where it looks like the big cash injection into our wondrous SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) went from \$3 million to \$4.482 million in 1980. In 1981, there was not too much of an increase; in fact we dropped \$100,000. Now this year we're up from \$4.477 million in 1980-81 to \$4.539 million. Could you give us a little run-down on the reasons for this cash injection into SGI?

HON. MR. LONG: — The member will know that the purpose of this transfer is for the services which SGI provides for the board, the services of dealing with the registrations, the licensing of people and vehicles in Saskatchewan. The increase is a natural increase because of an increase in the number of registrations and licences, which is common, and an increase in the cost for the SGI staff in terms of salaries. They have a natural increase there and just other inflationary increases, as far as SGI is concerned.

MR. GARNER: — Well, then, Mr. Minister, you are telling me that with the increase in SGI salaries you are paying the total cost of increases to SGI employees?

HON. MR. LONG: — It's a shared cost; we pay half of the program and they pay half.

MR. GARNER: — Well, when we go back to the year when SGI started losing money, we see this \$1.4 million injection and this new licensing system that has come onstream, which doesn't seem to be the greatest program. The people of Saskatchewan are not overly excited about it. SGI has been losing money. Now it is costing more money (injected into SGI) for the highway traffic board. Is this just another example of how this government is propping up SGI to try to bail it out?

HON. MR. LONG: — I am informed that the major difference between the 1979-80 year and the 1980-81 year was a substantial increase in the revenues paid to licence issuers out in the country. There was quite an increase paid to these people.

MR. GARNER: — Naturally, you are going to say you have to ask that in SGI. Of course, when we get into Crown corporations committee we can only go back to the year under review. It is quite easy to say, "Well, it went out to licence issuers." But we can't find that out from SGI; yet there was \$1.4 million that went out there. I honestly don't believe that that money ended up in the hands of the licence issuer. It ended up in this little Mickey Mouse (and I can't even think of the proper terminology I want to use) cash injection by the highway traffic board to prop up SGI. It is nothing more than a political move by the NDP to try to bail out SGI. It didn't go to the licence issuers.

HON. MR. LONG: — Between the year '79-80 and '80-81 there was an increase to the licence commissioners of about \$1.2 million. Across the country, the commissions

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received increases of that much. The member talks about a cash injection to SGI. He doesn't really have any idea how tough it is to get money into the highway traffic board, or any other department. You are not going to throw your money away, not even to SGI. You have to be very careful about how you spend your money; you must spend it in a proper way and as prudently as possible to get the best value for your dollar. I assure you that we are not injecting any funds into SGI.

MR. GARNER: — What percentage then was the increase to those licence issuers?

HON. MR. LONG: — It is roughly in the order of 35 per cent. We'll get the exact percentage for you.

Item 8 agreed.

Item 9 agreed.

Vote 15 agreed.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Yes, just before we dissolve the committee on the highway traffic board, I would just like to take a moment on behalf of the opposition to thank the minister and his staff for their time earlier this afternoon and this evening. And although sometimes the line of questioning may have been questioned by the staff, as it was by the minister, in terms of the time, we want to assure you that there were good reasons for asking the questions and we appreciate the answers that we were able to get, in particular, the answers that were provided by the minister's staff. So, again, thank you very much.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY CASH OUTFLOW

ENVIRONMENT

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 9

MR. CHAIRMAN: — We're on the environment estimates and I call upon the minister to introduce his staff.

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce to the House the members of my staff: Nick Carter, who is to my left here, deputy minister; Bill Howard, executive director of the environmental protection service, who sits directly behind me; and Ken Brehm, director of administration.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Item 1

MRS. DUNCAN: — Mr. Minister, I'm glad to see the member in his chair; maybe it will keep him out of the States. There are a number of major topics that we'd like to discuss with you during your estimates, namely, water in Saskatchewan, mercury contamination, chemicals, acid rain, and waste disposal.

The new Environment Act, pertaining to the assessment of the impact on the environment of new developments, is one I would like to start off with as it pertains to

the Saskatoon chemical plants, if you don't mind. Did they provide you with all the necessary documentation as laid out in the Act? What was their proposal? I would like to know who did the assessment of the information they gave to you before ministerial permission was given to go ahead.

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — The matter was dealt with as a normal decision-making process. The information was provided to the department and it was assessed by the officials before any ministerial decision was made with respect to the decision in Saskatoon.

MRS. DUNCAN: — Was this information made available for public review?

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — No. The information and the process we used in this particular case was not provided to the public. It could be at any particular point in time. However, the project was not considered to be a new project. Therefore, the process of the environmental impact assessment was not followed in detail as it would be in the case of a new project or a project that was not an expansion, as was the case with the Saskatoon chemical plants.

MRS. DUNCAN: — As you are most likely aware, there were some concerns raised in the Saskatoon area. Though it may not be a new project under the terms of the Act, development means any project or any alteration or expansion of any project, operation, or activity. Have you had any requests for the information that was provided to you by the Saskatoon chemical plants?

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — I am not sure that we had requests for any specific kind of information. We have had a number of letters indicating they would prefer that we go ahead with the normal environmental impact assessment and have public hearings with respect to it. We have resisted that up until this point in time, not that it couldn't be done if there were enough public objection to the process which we used. On the basis of the information which was made available to us and the assessment which we did in the department, it was determined unnecessary to go ahead with a full environmental impact assessment and the public hearing process which some people were asking for.

MRS. DUNCAN: — Don't you think that's circumventing the legislation as it is laid out? You must be aware that in the type of world we live today a major portion of the population is very concerned about expansion of chemical plants and use of chemicals and that type of thing. I would say even if it were just a half a dozen or a dozen people, don't you think the concerns of this particular group would warrant a public hearing in that area?

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — Mr. Chairman, we didn't think so. It's a judgment matter, as to whether or not one should have gone the route of a full environmental impact assessment with subsequent public hearings being held. We felt that the plant was there; there was nothing new being added or being done in the plant that hadn't been assessed (that we had been apprized of, at least) and therefore, in exercising our judgment in this case we felt that it was not necessary. I'm saying that if enough public interest or request for it were felt, we could still go ahead and have a public inquiry and involve the public in this matter of a Saskatoon chemicals plant. But on the basis of the information which we had and on the basis of the proposal which was made, we thought it was not fully necessary to go ahead with the complete process, as I've already indicated to the member.

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MRS. DUNCAN: — Could you give me the date that ministerial permission was granted to Saskatoon Chemicals to proceed with its expansion?

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — I'm not sure that we can give you the actual date. I would be making a guess at probably three months ago, or in late fall, but I couldn't give you the actual date of my letter, or at least I can't give it to you tonight. I could bring it to you tomorrow.

MRS. DUNCAN: — While we're on the matter of chemicals and, in particular, the disposal of chemicals, I'd like to say that when you talked to the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation in February of 1981, one of the resolutions that was passed at the convention was to ask the provincial government to establish permanent fenced areas for chemical containers at all landfill sites for collection and disposal by the provincial government. You went on to say and I quote:

Mr. Bowerman praised the SWF for the resolution, and said the disposing of chemical waste is definitely a problem. He said that there are about 650 landfill sites in Saskatchewan where 1.6 million 5-gallon cans, just from agricultural chemicals, are disposed.

Have you done any follow-up on the resolution as presented, and what are your decisions?

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — There has been no further detailed activity since the resolution and since my meeting with the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation. I don't know whether I was quoted correctly in the article or whether you were perhaps not reading it fully or I misunderstood what you were saying.

We have not advocated that the chemical cans be taken to central sites for burial or for dumping into a landfill site. We believe, in fact, that it would be better if farmers would retain the cans, rinse them out, bury them on the farm, put some lime on top of them, and cover them over. There is a potential hazard in bringing that many cans (the number of which I think was correctly stated) to landfill sites. Many of these cans are likely to have some residual chemicals in them. As a result they well may, if put together into a common pit or site, become a hazard. So it hasn't been our suggestion to do that.

The resolution, as the member points out, was passed by the wildlife federation. There was also a resolution passed by SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), I believe, suggesting or advocating the same kind of solution. We would prefer that they go the other way. We would prefer that individual farmers, at this particular stage of our process, take their own particular chemical cans, wash them out, bury them on the farms, and cover them over. That way, I think, they would be better disposed of. They would not create the kind of hazard which they might if they were brought together in one place.

MRS. DUNCAN: — So you don't agree with the resolution as specified at the meeting? You're quoted in the paper as praising the resolution. The 650 landfill sites in Saskatchewan — are those town dump sites? Is that what you were referring to?

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — The rural and urban landfill sites, I believe. With respect to the resolution (just making a point on that for the hon. member), yes, I think I did praise the wildlife federation. What I was doing was indicating my commendation for their considering the fact that there's a problem out there. I think I would not have,

specifically, endorsed the proposal. Rather, as I have said, we would prefer that individual farmers retain their cans.

MRS. DUNCAN: — Your department would estimate that there are at least 650 landfill sites with approximately 1.5 million cans as of now. Is that what your estimation is?

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — There are over 600 landfill sites in the province. There are about 1.5 million of these five-gallon chemical cans used each year. Our information, from an assessment which we made last summer in the southern part of the province, is that the chemical cans were being disposed in the manner which we prefer. They were not going to the sites. So, we continue to advocate that they be disposed of in that way, and that, at this particular point in time, they not be taken to the landfill sites, because we think that that's going to create a particular environmental hazard in itself. We don't know what the complications would be, and we don't know how to deal with them.

There was the other little proposition that was advocated, and that was, as you may well know, that there has been developed a hydraulic instrument into which you put a can and it crunches the can together. Each farmer is having one of those done. They were trying to do that. I think SARM was undertaking a program of that kind. They were bringing cans to one place and doing that, and the objective was to take the metal out and burn it — put it through the kilos at IPSCO — and recycle it for metal purposes. But the problem with that was that we didn't know the residual amounts of chemical that would be put into the furnaces. As a result, I'm not sure what the implications would be on the health and safety of the workers in the workplace. We didn't know whether or not the chemicals would be completely destroyed or burned, or what amount would go up the stack. So we didn't advocate and didn't support that proposition, either.

I emphasize for the benefit of the hon. member and for the Saskatchewan public and the farmers, in particular, that they retain their cans and bury them on the farm, if they will. Today, most farmers have a front-end loader or something like that. It doesn't have to be a deep pit. Two or three times over with a front-end loader and they can dig a pit that's deep enough to bury the cans. Or walk over them with a tractor. They can flatten them out, put some lime on them, put the dirt back over top, and they disappear. We think that that's the best way to do it.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Mr. Minister, you don't think it would be more successful if they had some kind of an initiative program to pay the farmers or the people who are using these cans? Maybe they could bring them back and recycle them so you know that they are under control that way. It could be just a few dollars paid for each can brought back so someone under environment could control them instead of just hoping that every farmer in Saskatchewan buried them. I'm sure there are many, just like on your farm and my farm. They end up in the rock piles and maybe, if we were told here in this House that burying them is a good suggestion, we would go home this summer and do it. But will all the people in Saskatchewan? I'd like to get your thoughts on something like that.

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — Well, the problem is, Mr. Chairman, that I don't think it's a question of paying a dollar or 50 cents or whatever it is to have them assembled. Our problem is, as I've tried to point out, a question of the residual chemical in the can. If we could be assured every farmer would rinse it out and dispose of the chemical on the farm and then bring the cans together, the potential hazard wouldn't be as great. But, if you assemble a number of these cans — a million-and-a-half of them or a million of them — into one or two or half a dozen or a dozen places, we don't know what the complications will be. As you mix different chemicals with each other, they form a

chemical of their own. We don't know what the complications will be. We don't know about the mixing of chemicals like 2,4-D and captan (you name them) or whatever other kinds of chemicals we use on the farms these days. You mix those together and as a result of coming together into a common disposal area they may well develop into a chemical which has its own kinds of complications and its own kinds of acidic problems. We wouldn't know what to deal with and we wouldn't know how to face and overcome it.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Mr. Chairman, I agree with the minister. He has a point there but this is really a very, very serious situation we're in with chemical cans in this province. I'm sure the minister is aware of it, but I just feel that we need something policed here (and I don't know how it's going to be done).

If it can't be brought into the areas and controlled under environment, we have lots of other laws in the province. Could we not have it policed in each community in the same way that you can't throw your garbage out on the street? I'm sure if I lived in a town (I don't, but if I did) and I just tossed it out on the street, I'd soon be in trouble. Well, maybe we have to get an educational program to the farmers. I'm just making suggestions here and I don't know. I'm sure we're both right on line here, Mr. Minister; something has to be done to encourage the farmers to take care of these cans.

I know many people believe out on the farm that "If I throw that can into a slough, that's the end of it," not realizing maybe that runs off into someone's drinking well down the road. There's the serious problem. Farmers are getting water tested; there has been more testing done in the last few years than ever before. And they are wondering why these things show up in their drinking water wells. I'm not saying there are chemicals in them but there are things which aren't fit for human consumption, so people close the wells. I have on my own farm a water run that runs for 12 miles and maybe I've been guilty without knowing it, because I've been using chemicals since 1949. I just say it's not our job as opposition; it's your job as Minister of Environment and your people's as government to ensure that this very serious situation of throwing cans out is policed and something is done about it. That's all I want to say about it.

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — I don't want to prolong the discussion and I acknowledge what the hon. member has said. I take as a point that governments are, obviously, the ones responsible here for seeing that legislation is such that they can deal with it. Our problem is a bit more difficult in the sense that not only do we not know what is in the chemicals but we don't know the composition of the chemicals. The composition of the chemicals is a registration matter for the federal government and it is not prepared to advise us what is in the chemicals. We don't know what's there, so we don't know what the implications are. It's unfortunate that seems to be the situation at present. But that's the way it is, and I acknowledge the hon. member's point. We will certainly do our utmost to resolve this matter and have farmers dispose of those cans on the farm; we think that that would be better. Maybe we can come up with some better technology in the future.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Mr. Chairman, in the estimates of environment this is the third year that I've been involved in asking you questions. I'm not the critic this year, but I have some very important questions. I'll just outline a few of the topics that I'll be covering. I want to ask a few questions about the harmful chemicals, about the 128 ester that they're concerned about. I want to ask you some questions about the 900 studies that were going on between the States and Canada last year, and at that time there were

450 completed. I want you to perhaps enlighten this House on what's going on.

I also want to cover a topic that you and I have been discussing in this House for three years, and that's drinking water in Saskatchewan. This is a serious situation at Buffalo Pound and in Regina. I'm sure that no one in Saskatchewan, especially the city of Regina, will disagree with me when I say we can't have another summer like we had in Regina last year for taste and odour. Something has to be done because we're sitting now with perhaps less run-off than we had last year. Unless we get a snowfall in the next couple of weeks, we're going to have no snow run-off. This will be the fourth spring that Buffalo Pound has not been flushed out. I feel this has led to a lot of our problem with taste in the Regina drinking water.

I have some specific towns that I want to ask you questions about. Last year you were not able to answer all our questions concerning the Federal Pioneer spill. We're not going to get into that too much this year, but there are a few questions that I'll be asking you. Last year you said it was in the courts, and we weren't able to get too far into it. I don't know whether it's still in the courts but I assume that it isn't, so I'll be asking you some questions on that.

I would like to just ask you now about this 128 ester. This is the last year we're going to be able to use it and any chemical with ester base. I've been using it for some 30 years, washing my hands in it the same as you have, and now they tell us that it's harmful to us. Now I'll go along with this and I suppose we have to quit using it, but will they come along in a couple of years and tell us that amines are the same way? They say we can use amine. What have you done to check into what's really going on here, because I don't think the public understands? I've talked to farmers and this is their feeling. "We've been told we can't use a chemical. We were told 30 years ago it was safe; now it isn't safe, and unless we can get some knowledge from someone who is in a position, like you . . ."

AN HON. MEMBER: — Don't put too much stock in that!

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — Mr. Chairman, to clarify the point on 2,4-D esters and amines, I think it's not true that you won't be able to use 128 ester this year. You can buy it. What the federal government has done is ban it at the manufacturer's level (it's my understanding), but whatever supplies are out there are to be used up. So, if you have some or if you can buy some or if you can tell me where to buy some, we'll continue to use it up this year.

We have a written communication at least; we don't get all the information we ask for, by any means. We have been asking the federal Minister of Health and Welfare about the composition and what problems are associated with this 2,4-D. We have not been successful in getting an answer from the federal department of health as to what the composition of 2,4-D ester is and whether or not we should be taking a stricter approach to them at this time. However, the Department of Agriculture, federally, is the one which registers the chemicals for Canada. They have been registered for use in Canada.

I have to indicate to the hon. member that until we have more information than we have at the present time, we in the Department of the Environment will not be taking more action than the Department of Health and Welfare, other than to apprise the citizens of Saskatchewan, as we are able, of as much information as we have. That would not be adding to the wealth of information out there, because our information is not greater

than theirs at this particular point in time.

I can't say to the hon. member, with any precision, what decisions will be made by the federal Department of Agriculture with respect to the amines. There is some testing going on and I would suspect that the federal Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of Health federally will be making some announcements on that in due course. I can't speak for the federal ministers.

MRS. DUNCAN: — Would you not agree, Mr. Minister, that the reason given to you for not releasing that information is rather feeble? Ms. Begin says that the information submitted to the Crown under the Pest Control Act (Canada) and its regulations is confidential and subject to common law protecting trade secrets. I don't think there is anything else in Canada that you can purchase through retail facilities which doesn't have the exact ingredients listed, although perhaps not in percentages. But any foodstuffs or drugs you buy must have a list of the contents, plus any possible adverse qualities. Could you advise me, if possible, what alternative means you are pursuing at this time to obtain the information?

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — Let me back up and try to answer the first question which was whether or not I agree there is much sound logic in the position which the Hon. Madame Begin has taken with respect to the Pest Control Act, that is, not revealing to us, at least, the information on various chemicals because of the provisions of that Act and some secrets relevant to the formulation of chemicals. Personally, I think that is not a good position for the minister to take and I have said it publicly. That is the position which she has taken; that is the position which she maintains. Therefore, I can't change her mind unless I continue to try to persuade the minister that because of the fact that we issue permits in this province for the use of chemicals — and various other chemicals, not necessarily 2,4-D — we think we should have some privilege of knowing what the formulations of those various chemicals are.

I think the problem which she has is the Industrial Biotech Laboratories tests have indicated that the testing done on some of these chemicals has not been accurate. In fact, it has been fraudulent, and, therefore, I am not sure whether she is fully conversant with the formulations herself. I wouldn't like to say or not say that that's the case, but I think there is a whole area of complication around chemicals, the formulation of chemicals and the various constituencies of chemicals that is either not known or not adequately tested. Therefore, the matter, in so far as the federal government is concerned, simply because they are the ones responsible for the registration, and they have registered these chemicals on the basis of tests which were inadequate, I think it leads us into the whole area of the federal government, at this point in time, wanting to find out more precisely what its position is. Hopefully it will come forward with more information in the future. We are going to continue to pursue the matter with the minister. We will even pursue the matter beyond the minister if we can, that is beyond the minister to the companies, although I am not sure we will get very far. But we will try to get information wherever we can with respect to the chemicals we use in Saskatchewan.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Mr. Chairman, I asked the minister if he explained the interpretation of the 23 chemicals the status of which no longer depends on IBT studies. There is no point in naming the chemicals; I am sure you are familiar with these 23. There are a hundred and some other chemicals that IBT was doing a study on last year, and when I spoke to the federal Department of Health, approximately one year ago, it told me there were 900 studies going on with these chemicals, taking place between Canada and the

United States. At that time there were 450 completed, and when they all were completed, there was supposed to be some statement to all environment ministers in Canada and the United States on the outcome of these tests. Can you enlighten this House on what you know about this, Mr. Minister?

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — I understand that as a result of the tests that have been done they did remove these 23 chemicals that were on the list as being questionable, but there are still 89 chemicals that are under suspicion and under question as a result of the testing that was done by the IBT and some of the other laboratories that were doing testing in the United States.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — You are saying that these are still under study but there have been no final results. Do I understand that correctly?

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — That's right.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Mr. Minister, I am really concerned about what we are going to do to ensure the people of Regina that we will not go through another year like 1980 with people so upset about the drinking water in the city. Have you any plans to ensure the people that we won't go through another year like this? We have no run-off to flush things out, and we might be heading for a worse year in '81. If you look back, the last three years have been getting worse for taste and odour in Regina. It's an old subject that I have been on, but it is very important to health. I am sure you must agree with me. We went through all this before and I won't go into too much again.

I have done much testing, and I still hold in my hand tests we have done in Regina before and sent out of the province to be done. If we take the results of any one given time concerning Moose Jaw and Regina drinking water. I don't think it has ever been fit for human consumption — and I've been talking to Ozzie Mang at Buffalo Pound. If we take American standards, this water has many times not been fit for human consumption. Has anyone ever taken a look at why the American standards are much more severe than ours?

The one that you and I have done a lot of arguing about is about the sulphates and nitrates in water, especially sulphates and sodium. Satisfactory quality is up to 300, and Regina has 250 to 300 all the time. That's milligrams per litre. By American standards, if it goes over 150 or 200, it's not fit for human consumption. And have you ever looked into the reason this standard is different from ours?

HON. MR. BOWERMAN: — The officials tell me that the American standards, as you call them, are not standards any more than ours are. They are guidelines or objectives which they attempt to meet and they might, as the hon. member indicates, set their objectives for human consumption lower than we have set ours. But as I have said to the hon. member on previous occasions, while we have an abundance of ground water in Saskatchewan, our water quality generally is less favourable than in many other parts of North America. And if we're going to have water in the quantity which we need then we have to meet this situation. I don't know what you do with it except to go into very expensive water treatment facilities, which I'm not sure we would be able to afford in Saskatchewan.

With respect to Buffalo Pound Lake, I presume that we could release water from Diefenbaker Lake and flush out, as he says, Buffalo Pound. I'm not sure that would change the quality of the drinking water in Regina to any appreciable extent. It might if

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you were to keep it up. I'm not sure that there's enough water in Diefenbaker Lake to make that much difference in Buffalo Pound. And you just couldn't keep pouring it in at that rate, otherwise you would have serious problems along the Qu'Appelle River which might be worse than the problems you're trying to solve by improving the taste and odour of the Regina water supply.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:33 p.m.