

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

April 28, 1983

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly this afternoon a large number of students, 56 in number, from the McLurg School here in Regina in my constituency. These are grade 8 students. They are situated in the Speaker's gallery and they are here this afternoon with their teachers and chaperons, Mr. Larry Howlett and Mr. Ross Brown. I shall have the privilege of meeting with them immediately after question period for pictures and then for refreshments, and I would ask all members of the Assembly to welcome them here this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boutin: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you, 29 students from Cudworth, Saskatchewan. They are grade 8's who are visiting with us today and they're situated in the west gallery; also Mr. John Kosmynka and Jim Bridgeman. I'd like the Assembly to join with me in welcoming them here today, and also, I'll go for pictures and drinks after question period.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Weiman: — Again it's with a great deal of pride, Mr. Speaker, that I introduce another one of my fine schools from my constituency. The school is the school of Fairhaven. There are grades 7 and 8 students, 41 in number. I realize that they don't exceed in number the number of students that the hon. member from Regina Rosemont has introduced this afternoon, but I humbly would like to point out that that is the fifth grade now that has attended this Chamber from our constituency in the last two weeks, which I think is indicative of the keen interest that my constituents have in the political process.

I, too, would be more than happy to meet with my students and their teacher today, Nora Sutherland. I will be meeting with you at 3 o'clock in the rotunda area for pictures, to be followed by refreshments. Again, I thank you for coming. I hope you have a safe trip home and I ask that we all give them a hearty welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Crow Rate

Mr. Engel: — I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. We discussed yesterday the fact that Pepin is possibly hedging on his plan, and suggested that he would bring in a revised plan in the next week or so. Have you, yourself or through your

staff, endeavoured to put forward Saskatchewan's position because of the urgency of the time? And in particular, are you trying to get a commitment out of Pepin to assure the farmers of Saskatchewan that he will not consider a variable rate?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, we have on several occasions met with federal officials and the federal minister and other members of the federal cabinet. I think the most recent meeting of a cabinet minister from Canada and a cabinet minister from Saskatchewan was yesterday when the Premier of Saskatchewan met with the Minister of Energy, Mr. Chretien, at which time the Premier again set out our position relative to the Pepin proposal. And as it relates to your question on variable rates, this government has and is and forever will be opposed to any mechanism that will allow the railroads and their monopoly powers to design prairie Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that assurance. Now the other key issue, that is key . . . Key is a new question, Mr. Speaker. The other key issue is that Saskatchewan farmers are concerned with fixed rate in statute that we have known as the Crow. Hall suggested that once you change it even a little bit, you will lose it all in time. Are you pressing on Pepin and the federal officials that we will not barter away the Crow rate fixed in statute as is?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite voted with us on our nine-point resolution, and I think point number one was that the rate must remain statutory. And as it relates to whether or not we intend to barter away the Crow, I would remind all hon. members that it was members from that side, while they were sitting on the government side of the House, that put 50 per cent of our energy revenues on the table for Crow. It was members on that side that bartered away several of our rights in the constitutional negotiations, and they should recognize clearly any evidence of us bartering anything because they have an understanding for it. I'm sure they will very quickly tell us if there's any evidence of that.

Mr. Engel: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The minister seemed to be hiding behind former actions and it seems to be a favourite trick of his. I've never heard a Saskatchewan minister in the former government ever say that farmers are willing to pay more, like you said in Melville. And you publicly on a number of occasions both to the Palliser Wheat Growers in Calgary and Melville said that the farmers are willing to pay more. Are you bartering away the Crow rate as fixed in statute that we have now, or are you putting forward the position that is supported by 90 per cent of Saskatchewan's farmers, that there be no change to the Crow, period?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, number one, at no time did I ever say Saskatchewan farmers were willing to pay more. No one would willingly pay more. I've said on many, many occasions, Mr. Speaker, that farmers would be prepared to pay more providing there was a link, a safety net, to the price of the commodity that was being transported. And when you say that no minister of the previous government ever made such a commitment . . . Four years ago, four years ago the former premier of this province, at a SARM convention in Saskatoon - it might have been five years ago - said that now is the time that the Crow should be adjusted.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Speaker, new question. I appreciate the minister's honesty today, at

least. For once he is answering some questions. How much more, or what percentage are you willing to barter the farmers' share of the Crow rate? How much more are you suggesting that they should pay?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I have never suggested, ever. I have argued with almost every fibre of my tender little body, Mr. Speaker, to urge the federal government, if they indeed are determined to proceed with the Pepin proposal, to urge them to accept the principle of tying the freight rate or the additional cost to a weighted average of the price of the commodity being delivered - argued for that principle. You voted for it. I don't know what you're complaining about. I don't know what you're complaining about. If that principle is accepted, Mr. Speaker, then I will start arguing for what level.

Mr. Engel: — One final question, Mr. Speaker. There was no formula in that resolution that I supported that indicated there would be a change in the Crow rate - a fixed rate in statute and that number that we had was a half-a-cent a bushel a mile like we have today - and that stays, period, as a fundamental principle. Are you prepared to argue that position for the farmers and that the subsidy be made to the railways to take care of the additional costs?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we've always argued that the feds should be picking up the cost, recognizing that we do deal in a competitive international market. And to make us less competitive takes us out of that market, and that takes \$6 billion out of the Canadian economy or the Canadian balance of payments. And surely, if all Canadians benefit from the export of our commodity, then all Canadians should be prepared to pay the bill to get that to export position. We've always argued that the federal government should be picking up the tab, and that in fact farmers shouldn't have to. But farmers are responsible people. They're prepared to shoulder some burden providing the safety nets are there to protect them.

Farm Bankruptcies

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. I would like to know, in light of federal statistics released yesterday that indicated that farm bankruptcies were up over 500 per cent in Saskatchewan from this time last year, whether or not he is anticipating picking up on the suggestion of the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture, that a committee be set up jointly between his department and that group to study the severe increase in the number of bankruptcies in Saskatchewan, this period last year over this period this year.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm quite frankly a little reluctant to take the suggestion at face value because obviously the guy's math is a little off and perhaps his judgement in other areas as well. But from seven last year to 11 this year is 500 per cent but about 100 per cent. And that is bad. We're not very happy with that, Mr. Speaker - 11 bankruptcies in 1983. They really don't want to hear this. In 1983 . . . I take you back to 1978 when there were 18 under farm-administered programs alone. That was FarmStart and land bank. And there's no question, Mr. Speaker, that we are, as an agricultural community, caught in a serious cost-price squeeze. And we're doing what we can to address those problems, as are the financial communities. Farm Credit has in fact agrologists counselling people in financial difficulty. The banking institutions in Saskatchewan have now about 24, 20 to 24 consulting agrologists where a few years ago they had none. And they're recognizing these problems.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, under the farm purchase program, about 3,000 applicants

with mortgages totalling over \$350 million have either received approval for entry into the rebate scheme or have been identified as qualifying for approval under that scheme. That's 3,000 people, Mr. Speaker, that this government has helped already to ease their financial burden.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, for the 400 or 500 farmers who have been able to use the farm purchase program out of 67,000 have applied for, but 500 who have used it out of 67,000, you may have helped them a bit. But what the original question was, Mr. Minister, is whether or not you will pick up on the suggestion of the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture to set up a committee that will deal directly as a liaison between the farmer who is finding himself in financial difficulty and the lending institutions.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, again the member opposite either chooses to ignore or doesn't understand that 3,000 people have qualified under the farm purchase program for \$350 million in capital dollars. As it relates, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the number of bankruptcies, 11, we're not pleased with that, Mr. Speaker. In Canada there are 115 to date. Eleven in Saskatchewan to date. I think disproportionately low in Saskatchewan considering we have 60 per cent of all the arable land; the highest number of farmers in any jurisdiction in Canada, and 11, although not rosy, compared to all other jurisdictions in Canada, I think it's very good. In 1978, we had 18 bankruptcies on the government sector alone - FarmStart and land bank. When members opposite were in power in 1981, when that government was in power there were 19 bankruptcies in the province, 261 in Canada. So you can see that our position is improving proportionately. We're not particularly excited about the speed with which we're getting things done, but it's happening, and the improvement is shown statistically and we make no apology for helping the farming community during these difficult times.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, those interesting statistics from 1981 where there were 18 bankruptcies in a year, the minister is trying to compare them with . . . 1978 . . . trying to compare a year's average with the first quarter of 1982 is an interesting position for the minister to take, but I don't think the press or anyone else will fall for that simple story. But what I would like to say is whether or not, Mr. Minister, you are about to get into an agreement with the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture to help out those farmers who are facing bankruptcies in the province today. The third time, if you could just find in your sweet heart, as you say, to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, our caucus committee in Agriculture has met with almost, if not all, agricultural groups in the province of Saskatchewan. I've met with them; our officials have met with them; we will continue to meet with them. I will not be entering into an agreement with any of them. I don't rule that out for all time, but certainly not in the short term.

Arrears in Northern Housing Branch

Mr. Shillington: — My question is to the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. It concerns reports, Mr. Minister, which have been carried in the media in the last 24 hours concerning a housing subsidy agreement entered into between by colleague, the member from Cumberland, and the northern housing branch of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. And I might add by way of

background, the matter is under discussion in public accounts. My question to the minister is: can you inform this House by what authority or prerogative are government back-benchers in possession of agreements and documents relating to an individual's private dealing with a department of the Government of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — No, Mr. Speaker, I could not. I wouldn't know how they became aware of their . . . (inaudible) . . . My understanding is, Mr. Speaker, that I was approached by the press out here yesterday, and they told me they have also had it for about a month. So I guess it's been public knowledge for awhile. I was unaware of it.

Mr. Shillington: — I might add by the way of background that the member from Cumberland was the last person to be informed of the matter, and that doesn't strike me as being fair. A new question to the minister in charge of the housing corporation. If you don't know, will you undertake to find out?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as you're well aware, when we took over northern housing, there was many, many situations of arrears. In fact, I did some research after yesterday, and I understand that of 1,500 units that were out there, about 1,100 of them were in arrears. There's a total number of millions of dollars out there. We did not in any way make any exception for anybody. We're looking at it all in a very broad scope. And we have not, Mr. Speaker, made it public from my part anyway.

I've been aware of some of the situations for a long time, and I could name a lot of them, but I would not do that. If it's been brought up in public accounts, it's because somebody wished to do so. However, whatever has been brought up there certainly would not be from me, or anything to do with me. I have a concern for the people of the North because there's many, many homes up there that are in arrears - some as much as 10 years. We're looking at it all in a very broad scope, and I hope all these cases would be dealt in the same avenue. And I'm sure that the hon. member, if it is true that he has arrears, will be dealt the same way.

Mr. Shillington: — My question to the minister is - if you can save us the lecture on the DNS - if you don't know how the government back-benchers came by the information before the member from Cumberland was apprised of it, will you undertake to find out, to prevent similar injustices in the future?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly I'll make an effort at trying, but I would not know where they come from or how they got ahold of them at the present time. The hon. member probably . . . I see he has a copy; they probably come from public accounts. I don't know. I'm not aware of where they come from. We'll make an effort to try to find out, but I can't assure the member that we will be able to.

Mr. Shillington: — One final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will you undertake to report to this House on the results of your investigation, since it involves a member of this House?

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I just said a few minutes ago, I wouldn't want to report on anybody's. There's 1,100 of them up there. I wouldn't want to report on each and every one, and I certainly would not report on a member from this legislature. I would not do that. I feel that he has the same rights as every individual in this province. All the people in the North have the same rights. I don't think they'd want their affairs brought up in here and made public, and I certainly will not be doing it on this member or anybody else in the North.

Cruise Missile Testing in Saskatchewan

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask a question of the Minister of Justice, the minister who, in this House in the past few days, has been tap-dancing around the truth. That's putting it politely. Stumbling along might be closest. Anyway, yesterday in this House, Mr. Minister, as I understood him, the minister confirmed that he has sent no official protest to the federal government on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan over proposed cruise missile testing in northern Saskatchewan and in Canada. Will the minister now please confirm that with a simple 'yes' or 'no'? Have you, or have you not, sent an official protest of any kind to the federal government opposing the testing of the cruise missile in northern Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The hon. members opposite express some surprise every time I bring out new information and they may well face more surprises.

An Hon. Member: — Like a cat on a hot tin roof.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The hon. member says its like a cat on a hot tin roof. I think it's more like the cat who swallowed the cream.

Mr. Speaker, I have reiterated, since last summer, the position of this government. I've made it clear what the position of this government is, and we've reiterated it numerous times. And I recall to the hon. member's attention, agreement made in 1953, signed by their predecessors, the CCF, signed by one J.H. Brockelbank and I could go on again and again and again as to who signed it. Your predecessors in office - the first half of your name. And let me tell you what that agreement says:

The province will reserve the area for the exclusive area of Canada for military activities.

Military activities. Secondly, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . If I could answer the question, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

The hon. members opposite are so embarrassed, so embarrassed by the actions of themselves and their predecessors . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please! Everyone will get an opportunity to speak in the House and to ask questions. But when you've asked a question I think it's only right that you give the minister an opportunity to be heard to give the answer.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The agreements goes so far, Mr. Speaker, as, one, not to exclude, as I indicated yesterday - the agreement signed by the CCF-NDP - not to exclude nuclear weapons testing, which frankly should concern everyone in this province. It also requires, Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan to provide policing up in that area. I suppose that's to make sure that the public cannot protest nuclear and cruise missile testing.

I have indicated, although, Mr. Speaker, the hon. members seems not to believe me, I have also indicated and quoted the addendum to the agreement which reiterates the whole agreement and brings it back up to date and shows the true feeling, the true feeling of the former members opposite when they reiterated the agreement in 1981.

I would like to bring some new information to the hon. member's attention, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to bring some new information. I find it very, very strange, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite take the position of unilateral disarmament, and I ask them where their friends in the Socialist International were protesting in Moscow against missile testing and the development of nuclear weapons. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, it may well be, it may well be that this weapons testing is necessary to protect their right to be able to speak and to protest and to protect the right of every other person in North America to speak and to protest and to demonstrate, Mr. Speaker. And I urge the hon. members opposite to consider their position.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to our position, our position is right here, Mr. AG, regarding our opposition to the cruise testing in northern Saskatchewan. It's in the form of a motion. Now I want to ask you once and for all, Mr. Minister, where is your protest? Have you got a letter, a communiqué protesting the testing of the cruise missile? Can you table such protest in this House?

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I suppose I could repeat again, but I ask the hon. members and the people of this province: what is the effect of a letter written by the former attorney-general allegedly protesting? In reality he's protesting the fact that the government wasn't consulted. What is the effect of such a letter when you stand it beside an agreement which tells the Government of Canada: 'You go ahead and you test nuclear weapons, if you want, in the province of Saskatchewan. You want to test missiles in the province of Saskatchewan; you want to test all sorts of armaments in the province of Saskatchewan. We're giving you the exclusive use of Saskatchewan territory to test such weapons'?

Where does such a letter stand beside a signed agreement? I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the letter signed by the hon. members was a sham and the phrase 'smoke and mirrors' - I hate to use the word 'smoke' when you're talking about missile testing, but I suppose it's accurate - and in fact your position is so hypocritical, so hypocritical, Mr. Speaker, that they should be embarrassed by their position.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. members opposite apologize to the people of this province for signing this agreement, for renewing this agreement, in effect, in 1981, and apologize, Mr. Speaker, for trying to play cheap, political politics with such an emotional and such a dangerous issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 32 - An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the Reorganization of the Structure of the Government of Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to effect a number of changes arising out of the already introduced reorganization bills. For the most part,

these changes are simply alterations to the department references in a number of existing pieces of legislation. I would like, however, to highlight a major feature of the bill which extends beyond the simple name change. They are as follows:

Section 19, amendments to The Department of Agriculture Act to allow the department to administer the matching grants for international aid. This function has been assumed from the department of intergovernmental affairs.

Section 20, The Department of Social Services Act is amended to enable Social Services to carry out the function identified already with the residential care act.

Section 24 amends The Education Act to authorize the department to provide for the production and distribution of education programs and materials. This amendment allows for the continuation of certain programs previously handled by SaskMedia.

Section 34 amends The Housing and Special-care Homes Act, resulting from the transfer of continuing care program from Social Services to Health.

Section 47 amends The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act to reflect the new structure of government departments arising out of the reorganization. In addition, the amendment allows The Department of Executive Council to assume certain functions, including intergovernmental affairs co-ordinator, the administration of the agent-general's office in London and Ottawa office, which were previously the responsibility of the department of intergovernmental affairs.

The telephone department is amended to allow the assumption of communications responsibility from the department of intergovernmental affairs.

Before moving the bill, Mr. Speaker, I would beg to inform the Assembly that His Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor, having been informed of the subject matter of this bill, recommends it to be considered of the Assembly, and I move Bill 32, An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the Reorganization of the Structure of the Government of Saskatchewan. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading.

Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's perhaps an indication of how dull yesterday's proceedings were that I actually took time to read through this bill. I heard all of what the Minister of Finance said. Granted that it's not all a change of name. I think one might say, though, that there was nothing here that hasn't been announced before, and he's not telling us in his speech anything that we haven't already heard with respect to corrections and the shell game that members opposite are playing with these various responsibilities. Indeed, I think this might have been a proper candidate for the non-controversial bills committee except that I gather it has to be passed before we do estimates and thus that's not an option open to us. But whatever objections we have to the substance of the reorganization, we're not raising in this consequential bill and thus we will be allowing the thing to pass today.

Motion agreed to, bill read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole at the next sitting.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 16

Item 1 (continued)

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, about a week ago when we were working on estimates, you had promised to provide some information regarding some names of people that were laid off. Could the minister send that over?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — For the hon. member's information, the DM has it and he's on his way here. He's coming from treasury board. He should be here shortly. I'll give it to you as soon as he comes. If you've got some other questions that we could go to right now . . . But the information is here and will be provided to you as soon as he arrives.

Mr. Lusney: — Well, Mr. Minister, maybe just a comment on that. I phoned your office regarding some of that information yesterday and it's unfortunate that we have to waste the taxpayers' dollars this way, wasting time at it. And I suppose I can waste some time waiting for that information to get here when we could have gone through it, and maybe I wouldn't have even had any questions on it. However, at this point I'm going to just delay it long enough to . . . until we do get that information.

One of the things that was mentioned the last time we were into estimates was the fact that you had said that you were trying to get most of the work going into the private sector, and that you didn't want the government crews involved in it. You thought it was not their job, so you're directing everything towards the private sector. And you indicated, in some way, that what we were trying to do was take the work away from the private sector and give it all to government crews, or have nothing more than a monopoly on all the work within the government itself. I think if the minister looked back at some of the information he would find that that was not true.

He had made a statement himself, in one instance, when he was questioned on some oiling that was done in communities, and he said there were some 30-odd communities that had work done on their . . . The oiling urban surface program, was it? No. It was the Open Roads 2 program. And out of that, one contract was let, and that was done by the private sector for more than a quarter of the cost. And that meant that about 29 of the other ones then were done by government crews, and that would mean that the government crews were really doing nothing more than just the small jobs - small jobs that probably the private contractors didn't even want to bid on, or if they did, they would bid on it very high because they weren't interested in moving their equipment from one job to the other if they couldn't make enough money on it. And I don't criticize them for that whatsoever.

We should also get clear that we are not against private contractors. They did the majority of the work in the past, and they did a commendable job. So I, in no way, criticize private contractors. They did a good job. But there was also a place for the government crews. The government crews did jobs that the private contractors would bid awfully high on because it was in areas that were rocky, or areas that were difficult to build, or areas that were wet. And the private contractor would bid high because he didn't want to take a risk on losing money, and we can understand that he would do that. That's why, when the private contractors would bid high, we had the government crews

that could be moved into that area and they would do the work in most cases cheaper than what the bids were coming in for. So there was room for both even though the majority of the work was being done by the private contractors.

Mr. Minister, your decision to move more of the work to the private contractors (and although we don't disagree with the work the private contractors will be doing, or have been doing), but you didn't base that on any particular information that you may have received. You didn't really base it on economics. You didn't base it on a study that you had done showing, or one that would indicate that the private contractors were doing the job cheaper than what your government crews could do. You have just made a unilateral decision to do away with government crews and give it all to the private contractors.

If the minister had made a study, and that study would indicate that it was cheaper to go via the private contractors, I don't think that we would be very critical of it. But that was not the case, Mr. Minister. You chose to just make a decision, an in-house decision, or government decision, because as you stated, your philosophy was to put everything to the private sector and not to have the government involved in any aspect of dealing with the public, or dealing with any departments, or any areas concerning the public. That, Mr. Minister, was your reasoning for doing what you are doing, and I think the reasoning of the government for doing away with a lot of the departments and crown corporations as they're trying to do away with now.

Mr. Minister, you also had stated at one time that going in that direction - and I can maybe go to a news release that you had sent out back in March 2nd, that letting some of this work go to the private sectors, and this relating to the highways in the North - that this would not only be providing employment opportunities, but the private sector will be doing almost all of the work, and that was your statement. And in that same news release you stated: 'In particular northern residents and northern contractors will benefit.'

And I asked you that question before and I will ask you again, Mr. Minister. How can you say that when you put a contract out for tender that a northern contractor was going to get it, or that he was going to employ northern people on that job? What I am saying is that the statement you made here is really not accurate, because if you tender a job, it could be a contractor from the South if he put in a lower bid. And if you're going to go by what the bids are, that would mean that you could not guarantee that the northern contractors are going to benefit, nor that northern people are going to benefit from the employment on those jobs. That is a misleading statement, Mr. Minister, and I would like you to explain how you could assure the northern contractors and the northern people that they are going to get those projects.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I mean I think it goes back to a change in philosophy that took place April the 26th, 1982. It's going to enable residents of Saskatchewan, whether they live in the North, the South, the West, or the East, to work anywhere in the province of Saskatchewan. We're not saying that northern Saskatchewan residents can only work in northern Saskatchewan. They can work in southern Saskatchewan, and vice versa.

I will share with the member opposite this information regarding the employees, but just further to that northern employment, I believe that it is a fair and just way to enable every citizen in the province of Saskatchewan an opportunity to work regardless of where they live.

Mr. Lusney: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's quite obvious there's been a change in philosophy all right, but what I'm saying then is that news release that you put out is misleading the people of Saskatchewan, because that news release says that the opportunities or the fact that you are letting out these contracts by tender and putting all the work out there to the private contractors, that somehow the private contractors of northern Saskatchewan are going to benefit. And you said, in particular, northern residents and northern contractors will benefit. And this was relating to some work that you had tendered out in the North. And that, Mr. Minister, is very misleading - misleading because you cannot assure those northern contractors or the northern people that they are going to get that work. That is, Mr. Minister, what I was asking you to explain: how can you justify making that kind of statement, and how could you assure the contractors and the people of northern Saskatchewan that they will get those particular jobs?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, the residents of Saskatchewan, whether it be contractors in the North or contractors in the South, have the opportunity to tender on work anywhere in the province of Saskatchewan. And I know myself, if I was a northern contractor in the province of Saskatchewan and I had to hire either cat operators or motor grader operators and there were motor grader operators living right in my same town or somewhere in the location, if I was in northern Saskatchewan, I would be hiring them. I wouldn't move someone in from the South. I mean, I'm the last person, Mr. Chairman, to come and start telling the contractors of Saskatchewan who they can hire, who they have to hire. The opportunity is there for the private sector to do the work; the opportunity for employment is there to the residents of Saskatchewan, I believe it's going to be a betterment for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lusney: — True enough. I don't think you should be telling the northern contractors or any contractors to where they should bid or where they could be working. I still say that that statement is very misleading; that news release is misleading, because you can in no way, and you have admitted that, you can in no way assure northern contractors or northern people that they are going to get the jobs on some of those northern contracts.

If there was a government crew that happened to be working in that area, yes, they could then employ people from that area. But when you put it all on tender you have no way of assuring anyone from a given area that they are going to get that work. If the contractors comes from the South, and if he has his own crews with him, he is going to take that crew with him to northern Saskatchewan, and that does not mean that northern people will get that job. So you have made some very misleading statements there, Mr. Speaker, and I can only say that it may be popular in the short run but eventually the public of Saskatchewan will see through what you are saying.

Mr. Minister, could you indicate to me the amount of material that has been moved in 1982, the cubic metres of earth that has been moved in 1982 throughout the province in your contracts that have been let?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — 7.5 million cubic metres of earth was moved in 1982.

Mr. Lusney: — Was this in total with the government crews and the private contractors? Do you have a breakdown on the two?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Approximately one more million was moved by government

forces.

Mr. Lusney: — Do you have an estimate for 1983-84, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, we can give you it, but that will just be a prediction, because it will depend on weather, etc., and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon? Yes, it'll be a rough prediction depending on the length of construction time and that, but we can have that for you in just a minute.

The projection for '83 is approximately 8 million for the private sector, and about 900,000 to 920,000 for the government forces.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, could you indicate to me just what you are going to be doing with the Borden Bridge this year?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — We will be spending approximately half a million dollars putting the approaches in for the abutment to the bridge in about mid-summer of this year.

Mr. Lusney: — Are you going to be using the old bridge also, or are you going to close the old bridge and use the new bridge once you have it constructed?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Once the new bridge has been completed, we will be taking and analysing the traffic flow, and what cost it would be to, number one, correct the approaches and that to the existing facility it is right now; and what costs it would take to put into place to using that for another bridge, to have two-way traffic on both sides of the Yellowhead.

Mr. Lusney: — Did you say two-way traffic? Or are you saying that you can use one bridge for traffic going one way, the other bridge for traffic going the other way?

Are you planning a level crossing on the new bridge - a railway crossing?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — We're still analysing as to whether we can use the existing facility there right now - the existing underpass - or whether we will have to go to the construction of another one.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, could you indicate to me, going back to the explanation of moving of earth, could you indicate the cost per cubic metre in 1982 and the anticipated costs for '83-84?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — The costs were approximately \$1 per cubic metre in '82 and we've got dirt contractors coming in right now that are at about the '82 level, so we don't presume that we're going to have any great additional earth-moving costs for '83. But that will depend when the tenders close on all the other projects.

Mr. Lusney: — Could you also give me a cost of the hot mix or the AMOS (asphalt mat on subgrade) for 1982, and your estimate for 1983?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — We're looking at \$9.18 for '82; '83 we're expecting a slight increase, but nothing very dramatic.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, talking about surfacing and in the application of oiled surface, you know when they do that eggshell treatment (I'm not

sure just what the terminology is or what you'd call it), much of the work was done by your own crew, where you had your packers and graders and spreaders, and then you'd hire contractors to haul in the aggregate, and compaction. As part of your program to get out of the contracting business are you releasing and then putting up that equipment for sale as well, and getting out of that aspect of the work, the oil sealing and . . .

Hon. Mr. Garner: — There may be one or two chip spreaders, which is used for putting the actual AMOS (asphalt mat on subgrade) mix on - you're talking about the sealcoats now I presume, and that. There may be one or two of those and we're still trying to round up all the equipment from DNS and we're looking at having an auction sale some time in '83 - it might not be till '84, until we have got a complete list of all of the equipment that we have rounded up. But some of the distributor trucks that were used on the seal crews that were working is going to be used in the districts for doing repair work.

Mr. Engel: — When you are putting down a pavement, like take 13 highway for example, around the Assiniboia area. You call that a class B pavement, I believe. And the surface was prepared similar to what you would do for putting on a hot mix, and then they just put this temporary B - I don't know if it was an inch and one-quarter or an inch and one-half or whatever - but you'd put that six- or seven-coat seal and the highways crews were doing most of that kind of work. What was the difference in cost per mile when you're putting on the \$9.15 a yard versus spreading oil and gravelling and sand over top in a six- or seven-layer seal?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, I just need clarification. You're talking about comparing the sealcoat to either AMOS or to a pavement life, what we call a pavement B. Which do you want the comparison on?

Mr. Engel: — The highway there was surfaced and I was told when they were doing, they recalled, the sign went up as though it was a pavement and then when they went out there with their oil trucks and spread oil and dumped gravel on top and left it like that, the guys came hollering and said, 'Hey, that's not a pavement.' And so I found out the difference between a class B pavement and a regular lift pavement, where you have a regular spreader going down putting on four inches-plus pavement, or however - I don't know how thin you go with the pavement.

But on a normal pavement like you'd pave a road that gets put on with pavement and rolled down as a hot-mix pavement versus the eggshell treatment, as I call it - I don't know what the exact names for those are.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — It's a comparison between a sealcoat, which is about a three-quarter inch seal with oil and gravel mixed - that's what you're comparing - and a one and one-half inch lift of pavement.

Sealcoat costs are approximately 5,000 per kilometre. A one and a half inch pavement lift is 40,000 per kilometre.

Mr. Engel: — When you were calling tenders, Mr. Minister, could you get reasonably close to the same price of \$5,000 per kilometre by the contractor as you would by doing it yourselves? Or did you have some of that work contracted out? Were all the sealcoats done by your own crews or did you have some contracted?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Okay, we're tendering out approximately a third of that work now. Before, it was all done by the Department of Highways and Transportation. The contract prices that are coming in now are slightly lower, and we feel that when the contractors gain additional experience after having done it one year, the bidding will become more competitive, and prices will even drop lower.

Mr. Koskie: — Yes, I'd like to direct a question to the minister, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to ask the minister: what steps is he taking to upgrade and expand the traffic safety services, which was so well developed under the previous government, and the contribution that the late Mr. Art Thibault made in establishing traffic safety services in this province? I am wondering whether you could outline some of the proposals which you are taking in order to strengthen and expand the safety services.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Okay, a couple of points there. Since 70 per cent of our traffic is urban traffic we're going to be continuing with an urban traffic safety program. There will be some additional funding put into that, as well as a closer liaison with the different groups involved, whether it's RMs, city councils, Sask Safety Council, etc., to move towards a safer system.

Under capital, some of the things that we're doing under capital this year will be putting in collapsible guard-rails again, and going to flattening out approaches beside the major highways.

Mr. Koskie: — As the minister will be aware, the SGI support staff for providing safety services has been deleted by this government. And I'm disturbed at the direction of this government in sacrificing the safety services that were being built up in the province. And I want to say that in 1982-83 the amount of expenditure was \$2.7 million, and this year you have reduced it to 2.4 and you have cut staff by 13. I want to ask: how in the name of heaven are you going to provide a higher quality safety services when you have slashed the budget from 2.7 to 2.4, you have deleted 13 positions, and you have in fact got rid of all the safety services in the Saskatchewan Government Insurance? I'd like you to comment on how you are going to provide a greater amount of safety services by cutting the budget, cutting the staff, deleting it in SGI. Obviously a program which has been very useful to the people of this province is being downgraded and destroyed by the so-called efficiency of this government.

And I want to say that there is great efficiency in providing safety services, because there has been a decrease in the number of deaths by the program that was established under the direction of the late Art Thibault and expanded in the former government. And here today we are witnessing a cut, a major slash, in the safety program - 2.7 million down to 2.4, 13 staff slashed, and in SGI you have eliminated completely all of the safety service programs that were being provided. I'd like you to square with the people of Saskatchewan, tell them that you have abandoned, as you are doing in a very rapid way, the safety service program which were being supplied to the people of this province.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, the members opposite don't seem to understand that giving a bunch of, as they did in the past, NDP hacks a bagful of money to run around the province was going to save people's lives. We're bringing in, Mr. Chairman, a new vehicles act - a new vehicles act for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman - with input from the people of Saskatchewan. The legislation wasn't drafted by the politicians, by the bureaucrats. It was direct input from the people to what their

concerns were. People out there know what the problems are.

We're talking about in the new vehicles act, Mr. Chairman, a DWI program - Driving Without Impairment. We're going to offer that, shall we put it, as a reward for getting your licence back if you take this course. I mean, we're not going to force it on people; provide them with the opportunity, freedom of choice. We're going to try and cut down on the drinking drivers in the province of Saskatchewan. When you look at 40 per cent of all deaths are related to alcohol in the province of Saskatchewan, it's a very serious concern, Mr. Chairman. I think it goes without a shadow of doubt that I am very concerned about the safety of all the motoring public and all the tourists that are coming to the province of Saskatchewan now. We want to build better roads for them.

The members opposite left The Vehicles Act on the shelf because they didn't have the courage. They were afraid, afraid to take it off the shelf. They weren't going to ask the people of Saskatchewan what they wanted for legislation. We have done that, Mr. Chairman. They can condemn the SGI safety hound. Let the minister respond to that himself. Don't believe a hound running around the province is going to save a lot of lives. But I do believe if we have people's input into a new vehicles act, into new legislation, attacking and taking a very serious look at the driving problems that are in the province of Saskatchewan - that's the direction to go. We're trying to build and we're going to build safer roads for the people to drive on. And once again, it's a change in philosophy, Mr. Chairman. It isn't a matter of giving a bunch of their friends, as they did when they were in government - to give them a bag full of money to run around the province having a bunch of studies. We've asked the people. We've got the input from the people of Saskatchewan. We will be bringing forth this legislation in the very near future.

Mr. Koskie: — I want to make a comment in reply, Mr. Chairman. The minister indicates that he is going to be bringing in a new vehicles act. One of the areas that he's going to be addressing is reducing the number of accidents as a result of driving while drinking, or drunken drivers. And that certainly is a commendable direction. But I want to say that as we have indicated in this legislature before, that on the one hand the government is indicating that they are going to control the number of drinking drivers. On the other hand what we find is a relaxation in the liquor laws, and the availability of liquor with special outlets: the probability of it at sports events, Taylor Field, at the Coliseum in Saskatoon. I think that there is a contradiction that's going on, and I think it should be addressed, and the people of Saskatchewan are concerned by this contradiction. But the fact is, Mr. Minister, while you can talk about bringing in a new vehicles act, we have been waiting here for legislation, for some form of concrete legislation for over . . . What is it at now, 30 days?

An Hon. Member: — 29 days.

Mr. Koskie: — 29 days. 29 days we've been waiting for one piece of substantive legislation, and we haven't had one piece of substantive legislation before us on the order paper. And so, if that's the indication of the speed of this government, I suppose we'll be waiting some length of time before the minister will get around to having it drafted.

In respect to involving the public, I want to indicate to him that there was no better use of the public, and the involvement of the public, and a more thorough study of safety in Saskatchewan, than what was done by the committee headed up by Mr. Art Thibault, the late Art Thibault. I want to say that if what you are doing is attacking the work that

that committee did under him, then I think it's a very unfair position to be taken, because I think throughout Saskatchewan, the contributions to highway safety that was made by Mr. Thibault is well recognized.

But I want to specifically ask you, in view of the cuts in SGI, all of their safety staff, and you relate to one item that there were many people involved in SGI that were released from their positions in the safety services, and what you have done is cut 13 positions in your own department, and you have cut the budget by 300,000, from 2.7 to 2.4, what I ask you is how do you intend, or obviously you don't intend, to maintain the high quality of safety services that were being provided before?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member opposite states that he's been sitting around for 30 days waiting for legislation to be brought forward. That's true, that's true. But I just tell you, Mr. Chairman, the people of Saskatchewan waited for the socialist government in the province of Saskatchewan, more than 10 years to screw up their courage and take the new vehicles act off the shelf. They were cowardly; they couldn't do it, and they wouldn't do it. And on April 26th, the people said enough is enough and they threw them out.

Now, I don't want to get wound up, Mr. Chairman. We talk about, they waited 30 days for the legislation. Of course, because when they did legislation their socialist sickle came out, they brought their boys out of the back room, and they did it without talking to the people.

We went out with a white paper on The Vehicles Act, throwing out some suggestions and asking for input. We got over 5,000 pieces of correspondence. We put out a layman's draft in the first part of April, once again asking the people of Saskatchewan for their input: did they like this type of legislation; did they want to see other changes? We're still receiving correspondence back from the people. I know that's hard for the members opposite to understand, Mr. Chairman. That's fact. That's why we're here and the gang of eight is over there.

Another point I would like to discuss. He talks about, we're going both ways. Philosophy has changed again, Mr. Chairman. We are not trying to control people's social habits. The socialists wanted total control of everything from cradle to grave in the province of Saskatchewan. We don't want that. People's social habits are their business.

Where the problem is: people are not going to be allowed, and we're trying to point out to them that it is against the law, to drink and drive. Because, Mr. Chairman, those coroner reports that cross my desk and those accident photographs that cross my desk . . . If the NDP would have had the courage to have brought this legislation in before, we'd have had less funerals in the province of Saskatchewan. We care, Mr. Chairman; the socialists don't care in the province of Saskatchewan. That's the big difference.

Mr. Koskie: — I want to ask the minister, since he indicates that he is a great believer in involving the public: can he explain to me the inconsistency of his government's actions? When they go to put in expansions of liquor outlets in fact they bring in the bill and they don't even include it in the white paper to allow the people of Saskatchewan to determine whether they want more liquor outlets. And when they expand the gambling throughout this province, there was no consultation with the public. I'd like to ask the minister: where is the consistency in respect to the consultation in respect to the public?

You're talking about your actions in respect to liquor. Surely there's an inconsistency. If indeed you're going to go to the people in respect to The Vehicles Act, why aren't you going to them if you're going to expand the number of liquor outlets, if you're going to expand gambling? You didn't do it.

Mr. Chairman: — Order! I don't think gambling and liquor outlets have anything to do with the Highway estimates.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, I just want to explain my position . . . (inaudible) . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Are you challenging the Chair? Wait till I'm finished making my ruling. We're on highway estimates and I think you should keep your questions to highway estimates.

Mr. Koskie: — I want to say that the minister indicated that he has a consultative process in respect to The Vehicles Act. I say that this is inconsistent because, in other policy areas, indeed it has not been followed. I want to say in respect to the introduction of liquor changes, it wasn't consulted. I want to say in respect to the advance of gambling, there was no consultation. I ask you: where is your consistency?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm quite prepared to handle any questions that have to do with Highways and Transportation. I don't intend to get into the NDP's plot of bringing in most likely compulsory gambling in the province of Saskatchewan, because the Lord only knows what they'd want compulsory next.

I am just trying to point out to the members opposite that we were starting to discuss safety concerns in the province of Saskatchewan. This government is very concerned with the safety of the people of Saskatchewan. That's why we've taken the corrective steps that we have taken, and the legislation will be coming forward after we have received all of the input from the people of Saskatchewan. There's nothing more I have to add to that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Koskie: — I want to ask the minister: will he agree that he has cut 13 positions in respect to the safety services?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, there is only really, in essence, 10 in total. Three positions were abolished due to amalgamation. Due to efficiency and productivity there were seven. Six were transferred to other DHT positions.

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I found it a little interesting in your comments when you stated that what the former government believed in was sending their political hacks around the province with bagfuls of money and doing studies. Well, Mr. Minister, if there's any government that has ever sent a lot of their political hacks around the province, or I shouldn't say political hacks; they've got their Legislative Secretaries going out there doing studies with bagfuls of money. That's where it's coming from. And this government is one that is doing more of that than any government has in the past.

You have indicated to the public, the people of Saskatchewan, that you were going to be introducing your highway bill sometime in this session. Are you still intending to do that, or are you doing . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The Vehicles Act that you were going to make changes to? Are you going to introduce that in this session or is it going

to be at a later session now?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, yes, we intend to introduce this bill as soon as we have all the input.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to share one other thing with you. The members opposite accuse us of being hypocritical in different things, and I'd just like to share with the committee a letter. It was a request from an individual and it's addressed to the chairman of the liquor board, 1660 Park Avenue, Regina, Saskatchewan, December the 7th, 1976:

Dear Sir: Re Special Vendor. I have had some inquiries to establish a special liquor vendor at St. Gregor, Saskatchewan. Please advise whether there are any appointments available and whether they board would approve establishing a special vendor in St. Gregor. As you may appreciate, we are endeavouring to keep our small businesses viable in the small communities. The local hotel and general store are both interested. We are looking forward to your early reply. Yours truly,
Murray J. Koskie, MLA, Quill Lakes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think this just points out that the member opposite is being very hypocritical. He condemns us. He condemns us, when under the table, and before, he sent his letter. I just want to clarify that for you, Mr. Chairman.

Back to the Highways estimates and the hon. member's question opposite - as soon as we've got all that input and gone through the final draft, I'll be very proud and very pleased to introduce the new vehicles act into this Assembly.

Mr. Koskie: — I just . . . Completely off the topic actually. The point, Mr. Chairman, was raised previously, but since you have allowed him to introduce the letter from the liquor board, I think I have the right to respond. And what I would like to say is that I am pleased that the minister would have the decency to read a letter which I wrote on behalf of my constituency and my local town asking them to, in respect of the review of the liquor board, that I was acting as a particularly good MLA, and I guess that's the reason I was re-elected. So I thank you for supporting the way in which I act on behalf of the constituency of Quill Lakes, one of the better constituencies in the province, long to be represented by the New Democratic Party and a candidate.

Mr. Lusney: — Getting back to Highways estimates, you have stated a few days back on your sealing crews and the reasons for why you were disbanding your Department of Highways sealing crews. You stated that somehow this was going to be more efficient by allowing the private contractors to do this work, and that you are very likely going to have better work done at the same time, and maybe sooner.

Mr. Minister, I find it a little difficult to understand why you would be going in that direction, and if you want to look at a province like Alberta, and that's another Tory province, and they have their own sealing crews operating. Because I think they have found that if you got a good, steady crew, one that has the expertise in doing this kind of work, you find that they will do better work and they can do it more efficiently and a lot faster than some of the private contractors if they are mixing that in with their grading operations and trying to do the sealing at the same time.

Mr. Minister, you'll find that Alberta's doing it; other provinces are doing it, and it has been done in Saskatchewan. The private contractors have been quite satisfied to do the amount of grading that has been available. And if you would put a little more money into your budget, it would make them a lot happier, because they would be able to put their bids in on more contracting, make more money, and they wouldn't need to buy extra equipment for sealing highways.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, Mr. Chairman, a couple of points there, and I think the hon. member's done an eloquent job of pointing out that we're different than the socialists who were here before us. Part of the problem is the member opposite. While I think my hon. colleague from Pelly understands it, the fellow from Quill Lakes is having a little bit of problem getting it. But, we'll try it again very slowly.

We are turning over, not all of the sealing work in the province of Saskatchewan, one-third of it, one-third of it, allowing it out to the private sector. Now, we're not totally destroying the Department of Highways. I believe we're going to be improving it. The difference is that under the department there's direct and indirect costs. And I'll just share with the members opposite some of the indirect costs that aren't taken into consideration when the department forces do different projects.

We have interest on investment; we have pay-roll surcharges, management, and administration, overhead, office space, repair depot, space rental, and I could go on, Mr. Chairman. Insurance and bonding also has to be looked at, as well as legal costs.

Mr. Chairman, the difference is that when we get a tender in on a sealcoat we know exactly what it's going to cost the people of Saskatchewan in real dollars; those are actual costs for us. The private sector, they have to figure their own direct and indirect costs into their tender that they submit to the Department of Highways and Transportation. I think that points out the difference between works branch and DHT doing it, or the private sector, the road builders of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lusney: — Well, Mr. Minister, you bring in all the costs of insurance and office space and housing for equipment and everything else, and you say without having done a cost analysis, which you admitted the other day. You're saying that somehow the private contractors are going to do a better job, but we won't get into that at all. I don't know how you can say that that is going to be the case, because without the cost analysis you can hardly say that this is the case. However, we'll leave that; we've gone through that before.

I would like to ask you, Mr. Minister, in regard to some of the private contractors at this point: have any of them contacted you regarding some difficulties in getting bonded? Have any of the private contractors contacted you that they were having some difficulty in getting bonded?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, there have been one or two private contractors that have shared their concern with me that they have a problem getting bonding but they're going through, I believe, other channels. I don't believe it is a large problem in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Koskie: — I have had a couple of contractors discuss this matter with me, and they are indeed, Mr. Minister, having problems with getting bonded this year through SGI. And I wonder whether you have been able to discuss with them what are the particular problems that they're having which they didn't have in the past? And have you been able

to resolve this problem which will allow the private contractors in fact to bid on the jobs? Any delay in the bonding, as you know, will prevent them from qualifying for the tender, even if they are the lowest bidder.

And this is a very major concern. I don't indicate that it's widespread, but I do in fact . . . have had it raised on several occasions that the bonding procedure apparently has become much more difficult for some unknown reason, and they've never been explained to them why they can't in fact get it from SGI as they had before. And I want to know: have you taken any steps to make any inquiries in respect to this problem and can you relate what your inquiry led you to find out?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, there has been no change in the bonding practices in the last year . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Just be patient and I'll answer your question. One of the contractors I know that was in my office with a problem was a low bidder on a project the other day. He has since, to our knowledge, been able to obtain a bond and will be awarded that contract because he is the low bidder. And I have said there was only two and I haven't had any correspondence from the other one. So he must have solved his own problems.

Mr. Koskie: — Obviously they have come to you, and they have come to me, indicating that they are indeed having a problem which they didn't encounter before. And what I'm asking you: have you analysed with them, the nature of their problem that they're encountering this year as opposed . . . which they didn't have the previous year? That's what I'm asking you. Have you listened to them? Have you made a presentation to SGI or what have you done?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I am prepared and have listened and have met with . . . I don't think there is hardly one road builder in the province - there might be one or two that I haven't met with in the province of Saskatchewan - that we haven't either met at Saskatchewan road builders' breakfast meetings that we have. At the convention, I spent two or three days with them. Some of the ones that are having bonding problems, of the one or the two - two that I remember that were in my office as I stated previously - one was low bidder on a contract. It looks like on the tender, it looks like he's got his bonding requirements in place and we will be, once his, the bonding requirements are in place, we will be awarding that contract to him. The other gentleman that was in to see me had a problem. He went over to SGI. I haven't heard from him since.

So I know that they know that I have an open-door policy. If they have a problem, come and see me and I'm quite willing to sit down and do whatever I possibly can to assist them in obtaining bonding or working in the province of Saskatchewan. I throw this out to the member opposite. If he has a couple of individuals that are having problems - I don't want him to raise those names in the Chamber because I don't think that should be thrown out to the people of Saskatchewan - but if he would bring those names over or come up to my office any time, we can sit down and discuss it. And I'll assist those members in whatever way, shape or form that I can, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, I don't want to prolong this but you relate your little story about meeting with some having difficulty and finally getting it. But I'm telling you that there are particular problems and you said you'd do anything that you could. It has been brought to your attention that there is an increasing problem with it and what I'm asking is: have you made any representations? Have you explored to see whether or not there's a new change or policy in SGI? Have you analysed the problems which they have

presented to you and have you found a solution? I mean, just saying your door is always open hardly resolves the problem. You have indicated that some have had concerns. And have you or haven't you taken any concrete steps to draw it to the attention of one of your colleagues, or your cabinet colleagues? And certainly I think that every individual that had previously been contracting for highway construction should be given the equal opportunity of being able to tender as he did in the past, and that merely getting a bond should not be a restrictive covenant for him qualifying for the, indeed for the tender.

In another instance, the bonding is a problem. In a C&D project, the same thing happened. The individual put in the low bid, and always had been able to get his tender, his bonding. And lo and behold, he had phoned in as he did in the past and had no problem with it. And somehow it was advised that it had been approved, and indeed it wasn't. So something is going on in respect as to who is qualifying for bonding. Maybe that's how you qualify who is going to get the tender, is by determining who is going to qualify for the bonding.

I want to ask you: have you indeed addressed yourself to the concern that I express here? And indeed it's a major concern of a number of the private contractors.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, Mr. Chairman, once again I will just re-emphasize what I stated to the member previously. There were to the best of my knowledge, I believe, two contractors in the province of Saskatchewan that came to meet with me personally regarding bonding problems. The one it looks like is taken care of. The other gentleman went over to SGI, has not been back to my office since. As far as I'm concerned there is no great serious problem.

I have talked to the minister responsible for SGI. I talk to him once a week at least, if there's any very major concerns. We had discussed this a bit. There was no big problem, so once again I throw it out to the member opposite. If he has some contractors that have come to him with a problem, please come up to my office. We'll sit down and discuss it, and take whatever corrective measures the Government of Saskatchewan can do to enable these contractors to work in the province of Saskatchewan.

But just one more point. There's been no change in the bonding process for the last X number of years. It's not a new problem, but it's not a massive problem that has come across my desk.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, I just want to say that I don't accept what the minister is saying, that it is not a new problem. Because the contractors I have been talking to did not have the problem in the past. And so what I'm saying to the minister, I think what he is saying is that he is not prepared, in fact, to address and to review the situation. He is denying that there's any change in the policy even though I raised the situation that there are contractors who are having problems.

So accordingly, I will advise those who seek my advice in respect to the problem that it's no use going to the Minister of Highways because he doesn't even follow up where one contractor came to his office. And he said, 'He left my office and I haven't seen him since.' And he assumes, I suppose, that everything is fine. I would have thought that the minister would have said, 'The one got it, I'm sure of that; the second one, I have followed up, and now I have discovered that he did qualify.' But he hasn't even followed

up, so I guess he has no concern with a major problem facing the private construction companies. And I leave it at that, but I am certainly disappointed in the actions of the minister in refusing to even have a follow-up when problems had been brought to his attention.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not going to belabour this point any more. I'll try very briefly to get through to the member opposite. The two individuals that were in my office: one, the problem was taken care of practically right away in my office; the second one, when the individual left my office . . .

If the member is trying to get a name out of me to exploit the private sector in the province of Saskatchewan, he's not going to get it. And I don't want him to share any names, with any supposedly road builders that have come to his office that are maybe in financial distress. That's not the way the free enterprise system and democracy should work in this province, and I wish he would try and understand that.

When the second individual left my office, I said, 'If you cannot reach some kind of an agreement, please come back; my door is open.' The gentleman didn't come back; the door is still open. They never kept the door open in the province of Saskatchewan and that's why the people threw them out, and that's the difference.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, could you indicate if you anticipate taking any municipal roads in the highway system this year?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Yes.

Mr. Lusney: — Could you indicate to me where those roads will be?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, we have taken over one grid road in the province of Saskatchewan. It was from P.A. west. I call it the river road. The reason for the takeover was there is a massive, and I say, a massive, gravel deposit at the west end of that road. Gravel is a commodity that is used in the building of highways in the province of Saskatchewan. The road that is there will not carry the traffic, outside of a traffic flow.

We are looking at each one on an individual basis. We have something like 6,000 or 7,000 approximately miles that RMs have requested for a grid road take-over. We take a very close look at each individual one, some of it being wither it is a main connecting link to a major highway, whether it has tourism development, oilfield activity; it could be a potash haul. These things are all taken into consideration, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lusney: — Have you been approached, Mr. Minister, by any towns for assistance on some road that may be leading through the town? I can give you a specific one, and that's Kamsack, that has had a problem. They've rebuilt one of their streets for the last couple of years. It's a road that leads off No. 8 going to Madge Lake. Everybody travels on that street and heads out to Madge Lake. Has the town approached you, Mr. Minister, in regard to some assistance on that street?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, I have met two or three times, I believe, with His Worship Mayor Becker from the town of Kamsack. He's in my office, well, it's almost quarterly. And I'm going up there to have a personal inspection of a second arterial road that they would like to have funding with. I had told him that I was going to be there this morning, but knew with estimates being on I wanted to be in the Chamber to give the members opposite all of the information that they required. That's why I wasn't in

Kamsack meeting with His Worship Mayor Becker this morning. But I'll be going up there at another date to take a personal inspection of that road.

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I hope when you do that you give it your serious consideration because I believe that the town should have some assistance with that street since the public uses it practically daily.

Mr. Minister, could you indicate to me or send me a list of the people that you have released from the Department of Highways since you took over that office?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, I need clarification. Did you not receive that one list that I sent over today, on lay-offs? Did you not receive that list? I need clarification from the member opposite, Mr. Chairman, as to what, and whom he's referring to.

Mr. Lusney: — The people I was referring to, Mr. Minister, were the people within the Department of Highways itself - not necessarily employees on construction crews or oiling crews, but people that were released with compensation from the administrative level of the department. I can give you a name of one - George Hansen. Was a George Hansen released from the department? Was he paid compensation? Was he fired or did he resign or what was the situation?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, he resigned, and he was given severance pay.

Mr. Lusney: — You're saying he resigned of his own free will and was given severance pay also?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — A mutual agreement was reached between himself and the deputy minister.

Mr. Lusney: — Was that on his . . . The mutual agreement was reached on his resignation, was it, Mr. Minister? I believe this isn't the practice of most departments to allow a guy to resign or to just have him resign on his own, then give him a severance pay on top of it.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — . . . (inaudible) . . . Mr. Chairman, it was a mutual agreement between Mr. Hansen and Mr. Sutherland, and the severance package was the negotiation.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, do you have a figure on that severance pay that was negotiated?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Just a little over \$24,000.

Mr. Lusney: — I gather then, Mr. Minister, that . . . Or maybe I should ask you: was this done with other members that were released or have resigned? Have you provided them with a similar type of severance?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Arlyne Stoneham was the other individual. Arlyne Stoneham.

Mr. Lusney: — I'm not disputing the severance, Mr. Minister, but did you ask or did someone within government ask for the resignation of these people?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Arlyne Stoneham was an OC appointment and an OC

cancellation.

Mr. Lusney: — Was Mr. Hansen asked to resign?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — He wasn't asked to resign; it was a mutual agreement, I believe, between himself and the deputy minister.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, what current agreement do you have with IMC regarding the road between Rocanville and the U.S. border, I believe it is?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, it's just an extension of the previous agreement, and it's not between - I forget the town you mentioned - Rocanville. It's between Esterhazy and the U.S. border. But there's just an extension of the original agreement.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, you have in your - I guess I better get the blue one out here - you have in your project array a road between Moosomin and Rocanville, and this was used by the potash trucks, I believe, also. Are you asking the potash company to cost share the construction of that road?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — There's no special haul on that, and, no, we haven't asked the potash corporation for any compensation on road building.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, you're saying there's no special haul when you have potash trucks running on those roads. They are the ones that usually break up the pavement more than anybody else. In the past they have been asked to cost share some of the road building and the oiling, the paving of these roads. Are you saying now that you are no longer going to assess the potash companies anything for rebuilding these roads or repaving them when necessary?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — There are some truckers coming up from the States bringing corn up, taking potash back to the States, but they are legal load limits and there's no special agreement as there is with IMC.

Mr. Lusney: — That the agreement with IMC then still stands and any road that they travel on that have to be repaved or rebuilt, you will be assessing them a certain amount of that cost?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — That's correct.

Mr. Lusney: — Would you indicate, Mr. Minister, what the agreement is with IMC? What you will be assessing them when it comes to paving or rebuilding?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — The free is presently being negotiated. We're just continuing on from the previous agreement, but we're renegotiating a new fee with them right now.

Mr. Lusney: — I don't suppose that the minister would indicate what direction he is going in when he's renegotiating that agreement. Are you proposing that they should be paying a little more, or are you saying that they will be paying less?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, I'm not prepared to start negotiating in public, but I will share with the member opposite that we're going to get the best deal for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lusney: — Could you indicate to me, Mr. Minister, what the agreement was

before? what percentage they were paying?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — They pay approximately \$1 per tonne road fee.

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I wasn't in at the time, but I'm aware colleagues asked some questions about grid roads and the possibility of getting one into Highways. Can you give me some specific criteria you use for an RM or a group of RMs to get a road, and what needs to be considered? Have you got some specific criteria that they need to follow before that road will be taken into Highways?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — About, maybe, seven or eight points we look at: we look at traffic flow; we look at if there's, as I stated on the river road, a gravel deposit or industry; a connecting link between two major highways; if it comes near a tourist facility; could be an oilfield haul; also, depending if a branch line has been also removed - I mean, the federal government is quite willing to pull these branch lines out but aren't prepared to compensate the province of Saskatchewan for these. These are just some of the criteria. Each one is looked at on an individual basis. And the one thing, if there's more than one RM involved, I like to have a consensus amongst, say, four RMs, two RMs, three RMs, a consensus of agreement amongst those RMs first. They make the recommendations as to what they want.

Mr. Engel: — Now, I've visited the former minister of highways and some of the staff you have there, with a couple of RMs that are not in my riding. But it's a road that affects my riding very much, and I'm talking about a connecting link between Gravelbourg and getting on the No. 19 Highway at Chaplin, north. A lot of young people in our area, from Lafleche and all the way to that whole south country, funnel up that way and take a short cut across to get to Saskatoon.

There's traffic between there and the No. 1 that is a fairly good, strong point that can be made there, that it is a connecting link; there's some tourism in that area; there's gravel in the area; there's traffic there. This road has been before the department for some time, but seeing the member who resides in that riding doesn't really draw it to your attention that much, I would again like to impress on you like I did in the last estimates, that you consider that road from Shamrock to Chaplin.

There's two problems there. My kids have travelled that a lot while they're going to university. I insisted that when they get to Chaplin, they phone home, in the winter-time especially. And when they get to Chaplin, phone home, because so we know you made it through. One RM will remove the snow Monday morning; the other RM will do it Saturday. And in between, it blows - the snow-ploughing is never done together at the same time and it's a pretty rough gravel road.

I really would impress on the minister that for the sake of holding that riding, that you would take that road into consideration, seeing it's in a riding that you have held and the Liberals held before that and the Liberals before that and the former premier held it. Take a good look at having that one go into a . . . and be taken into your highway system, even if it's a 300 highway, just so that we could get some connecting and unified maintenance on it that it would be in service to the people, particularly young people going to university. I think it's a . . . Saskatoon trail . . . people using our University Hospital at Saskatoon, and that kind of traffic is important. Ambulances rush up that road. It's partly a gravel road. I think it's really worth considering, taking it into Highways. Would you consider it?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, I consider every grid road in the province of Saskatchewan that can help people. That's the bottom line to it. I notice the member did mention that it's been before the department for some time already. I mean, I could get into debate on that but I won't. Now I'm quite prepared to take a look at all roads regardless of what area or whose constituency they're in. I asked the people of Saskatchewan, 'Where do you want the roads built?' or 'Where do you want the roads taken over?' That's the direction we're going.

Mr. Engel: — The question is: what consideration have you given to this road as far as this year's estimates are concerned? I know the RMs have made a presentation to you and your staff and they've been very concerned, and just at the last SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention they told me they met again with you for the seventh or eighth time that they've met with the Minister of Highways. I'm now very concerned about this road. There's two RMs involved, and what are you trying to do with that particular road?

I don't mind you making a general statement because that's a great improvement from when you first took over Highways and you told a contractor - and I'll name the contractor; it's Kay Construction - you told Kay Construction that you've got roads around your farm that are much more important to build than one down in my colleague's riding which happens to be in Tory country. You refused to honour a contract that that contractor had, and the grounds for refusal, Mr. Minister, and I got it from - and I believed the contractor when he told me this - and the grounds for refusal were because it wasn't Tory, in the red square of Saskatchewan. And those are the words he used.

Now I appreciate your conversions. I appreciate your turn-around where you're saying you'll work the same all over. But this happens to be a Tory riding. This happens to be a seat that's held by a member that sits on your side of the House. It even was in the cabinet at one time. The road from Shamrock to Chaplin is in a Tory riding, and I've been making presentations on their behalf for a long time, and I wish now that you would really take this into consideration.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, I'm prepared to look at all of these roads. But when the member stands up in this Assembly and starts flirting with the truth it upsets me. I'll bet he doesn't even know who owns Kay's Construction, so I'm going to tell him. Mr. Penner from Manitoba. Who is his foreman in the province of Saskatchewan? Mr. John Barkman.

After the member had raised this, I believe it was in the last estimates, I sat down, I believe it was at the Saskatchewan road builders convention, and asked them about this supposedly conversation they had with you. They didn't remember. They didn't remember having this conversation. They didn't remember having this conversation with you.

So, I mean, Mr. Chairman, I can only go on the assumption that the member is taking another conversation out of the air. I mean if you have something, an article or a letter, if you have a letter from Mr. Barkman, or a letter from Mr. Penner, who is the owner of Kay's Construction, I'd be quite prepared to discuss it with you. But these hypothetical conversations that you seem to have with these individuals, and then when I talk to the individuals personally they don't seem to remember talking to you about it . . . They said, if we've got a concern about contracts, if we've got a concern about highways,

we're going to go to the government. We're going to go to the minister. We have no problems. We have no concerns. The private sector, the Saskatchewan road builders are quite pleased with the new Devine government in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Engel: — thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the minister denying that he told Mr. Penner, is the minister denying that he cancelled the contract that Mr. Penner had for close to \$1 million right shortly after the election? Is he denying he talked to him, and is he denying that he used for an excuse that he's not building that road in the red square? Are you denying that?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, we need a clarification here again for the members opposite. It was tendered but was not awarded. That's the difference. It was tendered but not awarded. And part of the problem being, Mr. Chairman, when I took over as Minister of Highways in the province of Saskatchewan seven out of every ten roads announced by the previous political minister of highways, there wasn't funding in place for them. Every project that's been announced for '83-84 construction will begin this year and the dollars are in place to build these roads. No more smoke and mirrors. It's a fact and a reality that we're going to be doing from now on is, quite simply, telling the truth to the people of Saskatchewan. If we haven't got the money to build a road, we're not going to tell them we're going to build a road. When the dollars are in place - and the Minister of Finance is doing an excellent job on running the finances in the province of Saskatchewan - then we're going to build roads.

Mr. Engel: — Thank you for that clarification, Mr. Minister. You said that I was flirting with the truth when I told you before that Mr. Penner talked to me about not getting a contract. Was Mr. Penner the low bidder? It's not the year under review, so you don't have to say it. All I was saying, and the only reason I referred to that this time, is that you made the statement in this House that you will build a road anywhere. You will build a road anywhere. I will stand on my reputation and the people of Saskatchewan can be the judge. I talked to that contractor. He told me he had a meeting with you, and he asked me who he should contact to see how he could get through to you because of what a good Tory he's been all his life. And that's the message he gave me. And I talked to him, and I can tell you, and I told you, you have to look up last year's records. I indicated where I talked to him, and what office I was at at the time.

Back to this road between Shamrock and Chaplin. Have you had representation, since you're minister, regarding that road?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Yes, we have had representation from them. And to clarify a couple of other points, yes, Kay's Construction was the low bidder on that job, but when it comes to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, maybe that's how the members opposite, that's maybe how they ran the Government of Saskatchewan, that it depended on who you knew whether you were going to get a contract or not. That doesn't work any more, and any road builder or contractor out there better realize that. The low bidder is going to be getting the contract. I mean, Mr. Kay was the low bidder. The contract was not awarded because there wasn't enough dollars in place. You hadn't been telling the truth to the people of Saskatchewan. Please try and understand that.

Mr. Engel: — I can understand that. You refuse to spend the money and that's why so many contractors are having trouble. And I won't raise the issue about bonding because I understand my colleague has already raised that. But you still haven't assured . . . And I'd like to be able to get a message to the people in the Gravelbourg

area. Will their road be considered from Gravelbourg north to Chaplin? Will that be considered in your highway estimates in the very near future, say, in the next two-year planning?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, I am considering every one of the roads in the province of Saskatchewan, depending on the priority that the people put on them. This is up to the people. It's their choice. When the funding's in place, we either are going to take roads over, or we'll be building additional roads. We're already going to be building a lot of roads this year. I mean, what more can I say, Mr. Chairman? It's in place. I'm not trying to stand in this Assembly and say that I'm going to take over any certain road because whether it's in . . . I don't care whose riding it is. I don't look at the political riding the road is in before it's taken over.

Mr. Engel: — I asked you for some specific criteria that you would look at to build this road. You listed it to me. That road falls into that criteria. What should those people do? You said when the people decide they want that road. They've made presentations over the last six or seven years to the minister of highways - maybe longer than that. They've been working on it to get the road into highways. Now you say, 'if it falls into certain criteria,' and you've already accepted a road into highways. When are you going to look at this one to accept it? In the next year, in the next two years? In your priorities from one to ten, where do they rate? Give them some idea.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, I have stated previously the criteria. The member tomorrow, maybe hopefully could get someone to read it to him out of *Hansard* if he has difficulty reading it. And I will be looking at this road and every other road and I will be continuing to meet with people from all over Saskatchewan. As I stated to the member from Pelly, I'm going up to Kamsack to talk to the mayor there regarding a second arterial road and I'm prepared to meet with RM groups, town councils - I don't care who it is - any time. I have an open door policy and that open door policy will continue.

Mr. Engel: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister, but the point is: these people have met with you. They've presented their case year after year after year. They now want to know what are you going to do. What are you going to do about it? What should they have to do? Should they move into Regina and come in every day or every second day? How can they prove to you that they want that road? Are you going to make up your mind to give them consideration? Is it in your three-or four-year plan, or two years? How long should they wait?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, Mr. Chairman, we'll just maybe point something out to the other members, now that other members of the Assembly understand it. I think the media understand it. To the members opposite that they've been talking to the previous government for six or eight years about it. You know, I mean, I've been the minister for one year. They've been dealing with it in their little socialist circle for six or eight years. Well, one thing I will guarantee you, it isn't going to take us six or eight years to get the road system back in shape in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — Is that a commitment that the minister is making: that in the next six years he'll take this road into highways?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — I'm not going to make any commitment here today, or in this

Assembly any other day after one consultation with the individuals, the RMs involved. We may have to meet a couple more times over the next span of years. But one thing I will say, it's not going to take us eight years to try and undo what the NDP did in eleven.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, I have a little slightly different question now. And I'd like to base this question on this map that you've printed for 1983 with the big 'We're Open for Business' slogan on it.

Mr. Minister, could you indicate to me what the cost of this map was?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Here we are: 500,000 maps; cost, seventy-two thousand . . . pardon me . . . six hundred and three dollars and four cents.

I just maybe should add another point here, Mr. Chairman. As you know, last year when we became government there was a number of highway maps left over from the previous administration. We did not fire up a shredder or use a big microwave oven to get rid of these maps. We continued using them till the supplies were run out. They ran us right through 1982 and, if my memory serves me correctly, I believe when there was a change of administration or change of minister under that administration. There was, and I can get the details for the committee of maps that were destroyed just through a matter of changing a minister's picture. We didn't do that; we saved thousands of dollars for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, was this cost for printing or was it printing and design work also? Was the design work done by the department or was it done by an outside organization?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — The department did the . . . General Graphics photography of Saskatoon produced the plate-ready negatives. Dome Advertising designed the layout, typeset, and selected photographs, colour separations, produced inter-negatives for a total cost . . .

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, I'm sorry I didn't quite hear that. Could the minister repeat who did the production work; who did the printing, again please?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — General Graphics photography of Saskatoon produced plate-ready negatives and dye proofs. Dome Advertising Ltd. - and I repeat it once more - Dome Advertising Ltd. designed the layout, typeset, selected photographs, colour separation, and produced inter-negatives, for a total cost of \$12,000. That's what Dome got was \$12,000.

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. In your budget, Mr. Minister, you have stated that you are having a 12 per cent increase in this budget for Highways. Is it not true that in 1982-83 you had a separate budget for some \$11.8 million for highway traffic board? You had over a half-a-million dollars for the transportation agency. You had some \$3.8 million for airfields. You had 185,000 for DNS capital. Did you not bring all of these other departments into Highways, which constitutes your whole budget now?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, that's correct. The highway traffic board and transportation agency were in the '82-83 budget book. They're all now under Department of Highways and Transportation. What we're basically saying to the people of Saskatchewan is that you now have one-stop shopping for transportation needs in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, with all of these different departments that were brought into Highways, it becomes quite obvious that even with the figures that you quoted before, the amount of earth that was going to be moved in 1983, the construction industry is going to have somewhat less work done than it has had in the past.

On the highway traffic board, Mr. Minister, can you indicate to me what the functions were of the highway traffic board previously?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — The board has not changed the functions. They are still the same. There's still the driver's licence appeal board. There's still the motor carrier side of the board. They've just been amalgamated all under Department of Highways and Transportation. There's been no change. It's still the motor carrier as well as driver's licence appeal. They're still an independent board. They run their own show except it was under highway traffic board before. They're now just under Department of Highways and Transportation, under the reorganization.

Mr. Lusney: — The reason for this reorganization, Mr. Minister . . . Could you give us an indication of why you decided to group the different departments all into one? Did you make a study that would indicate that it would be cheaper to operate these out of Department of Highways alone, or did you just make the decision to move them into Highways for whatever reason that may be?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, it was studied very close, and it's basically going to give us a saving in administration, personnel, and communication. But I think, to point out one thing for the members opposite - and I think they will even agree with the government in this case - that instead of one arm of transportation being over here and another arm of transportation being over there, we now have transportation under one roof. So, any of the citizens of the province of Saskatchewan have a problem concerning transportation, they can come to one minister and get a great deal of co-operation for solving their problems.

Mr. Koskie: — Just in view of your answer, Mr. Minister, that all problems in respect to transportation is under one jurisdiction, was it the opinion of the government that the Crow rate issue was not a part of transportation? Or was it because they wanted someone other than you to handle it?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, the Minister of Agriculture, I think, has answered it, Mr. Chairman, but I'll just re-emphasize not only my very strong support for a minister that is doing an excellent job as the Minister of Agriculture, but as he has stated, he started the Crow debate; he will end the Crow debate; and the people of Saskatchewan will win with the Minister of Agriculture. Once the Crow debate is over, it will all be under, I guess, my house, as Minister of Highways and Transportation.

But it's just another example of . . . When the socialists were running the province of Saskatchewan, each minister had his own little empire and moved that little empire with him. The people of Saskatchewan weren't the beneficiaries.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, are there going to be any program cuts or reductions in activities in the department or the highway traffic board as a result of this change?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — No. No program changes whatsoever.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, in your transportation agency which is now a part of Highways, there was an advisory council on transportation. Is this going to be continued, and if it is, could you give me a list of the names and the qualifications of the people that will be on that council?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — The membership is currently under review on that council.

Mr. Lusney: — So at present there are no changes to it, but there could be in the future. Could you give me a list of the present membership on that council the, Mr. Minister? You can send that over to me if you wish, or you can just read it off if you have it - whatever.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, for the hon. member, is it okay if I just send you a copy over so I don't have to read them all over? Excellent.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, does that council have any current assignments regarding transportation? Does that advisory council have any current assignments?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — None right now.

Mr. Lusney: — Are you, Mr. Minister, through the agency, promoting rail transportation passenger service at all?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, I was in, I believe it was Melville, two or three weeks ago meeting with Transport 2000 and sharing their concerns and stating the government's position that we would definitely like to see rail transportation not only kept but expanded, passenger rail expanded and kept in the province of Saskatchewan because I believe the blow that was dealt to us by the federal Liberal government, when VIA was almost wiped out, had a dramatic effect on towns like Melville, Yorkton, Saskatoon, and to points further west. The bottom line to it is definitely, I support passenger rail service in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lusney: — What, Mr. Minister, is being done through the Department of Transportation regarding air service in the province? What is the department doing regarding air service in the province?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I can give you a couple of examples. If I know where the member is coming from, I could help him out. The minister responsible before to the transportation agency sent letters to CP Air requesting them to get back into the province. Gabrielle Air also got letters of support from this government for service from Swan River to Yorkton to Regina, and Perimeter Air - Yorkton, Winnipeg, Saskatoon - have also received letters of support from this government for air service in the province.

Mr. Lusney: — Letters. Mr. Minister, the transportation agency used to give grants to different organizations. Could you indicate what grants are being paid out now, or whether they're still giving grants out?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, we give to the Fort Churchill development board, \$30,840; Hudson Bay Route Association, \$2,000; Transport 2000, which I had stated to you previously, receive a grant from this government of \$3,600; Western Transportation Advisory Council, which is WESTAC, which is a fantastic organization

where we have business, labour, and the politicians sitting around the table discussing transportation needs, they receive \$46,600 from the province of Saskatchewan - for a grant total of \$83,040.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, do you provide any grants to the Saskatchewan Transportation Company for the community bus service subsidy?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — No, not for CTS.

Mr. Engel: — How much did the community bus service subsidy amount to last year, last budget? You said you're giving them nothing, a big goose egg, this year. What did they get the former year?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — None budgeted for last year, either.

Mr. Engel: — What about '81-82?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — There was a grant given in '81-82, but we don't have that information here. We can get it for you and send it to you, but we don't have that information here. We can get it for you though.

Mr. Engel: — It was about \$150,000. I was wondering why you cut Transportation 2000 grant from 1981 down to about a third of what they got from '81-82 year. Transportation 2000 - a great big \$3,000 from you this year, and they used to get \$9,000. It's quite a cut.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — The reason why the cut-back is because some of the funding is now coming from Urban Affairs.

Mr. Engel: — You don't know how much, eh?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Not for Urban Affairs, I don't.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, on the Sask Transportation Company subsidy that was given for community bus service, I notice that you're not giving that \$150,000 any more. Does that mean that you will now have to be cutting a lot of the services that were provided through STC, or are they going to be getting funding from elsewhere?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — We have no plans of subsidizing that, but if you've got any specific questions regarding STC I believe we're going into crown corps within the next week or 10 days and I will have all that information for you in regard to STC.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 and 3 agreed to.

Item 4

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, I see a substantial increase in the funding for that one department. Could you explain why it's increased?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — It's because of the amalgamation of the transportation agency and the transportation policy coming into the department.

Item 4 agreed to.

Items 5 and 6 agreed to.

Item 7

Mr. Lusney: — On public communications, Mr. Minister, I see other expenses have increased a fair amount. Could you explain what those expenses were?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — The reason for the increase is the public communications aspect from highway traffic board is moved into the Department of Highways and Transportation.

Item 7 agreed to.

Items 8 to 14 inclusive agreed to.

Item 15

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, in the Saskatoon district I see you've cut back by about four people there, yet your expenditure for staffing is about as high as it was, in fact, higher than it was before. Could you indicate what happened there? Are you paying higher wages for the people, or what's happened?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — To try and provide a more efficient operation, we moved the gravel location section from Saskatoon to North Battleford. That's all we did.

Mr. Lusney: — My question was on the personal services, Mr. Minister, where the amount spent was higher than last year and yet you've reduced the numbers by some four people.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — 1982-83 difference in budgetary provisions for personal services. The 1982-83 budget was finalized and the blue book was printed late in the calendar year of '82. Therefore there was no budgetary provision for any positions that had been vacant to that time nor for any that were projected to remain vacant for the remainder of the '82-83 fiscal year or '83-84. A full twelve-month salary provision is included for each position at the salary levels in effect on September the 30th, 1982, plus 4 per cent across the board.

Item 15 agreed to.

Items 16 to 19 inclusive agreed to.

Item 20

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, the revolving fund, is this money that has been left over from last year's operations or where did this 887,000 come from?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — It's the difference between the gross expenditures and the gross revenues.

Mr. Lusney: — For 1983-84, are you talking about, or '82-83?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — '83-84.

Item 20 agreed to.

Items 21 to 23 inclusive agreed to.

Item 24 agreed to.

Mr. Lusney: — After item 24, there are two - northern district and central survey and mapping - that there's no funding being provided in it in this year. On the central survey and mapping, Mr. Minister, could you indicate where that service is going to be provided from at this time?

And the other question is that, if I can indulge in just asking another one of you: could you also, at the same time, provide to me the names of your staff, executive assistant, special assistant, or Legislative Secretary, or whoever you may have working within Highways and Transportation or highway traffic board?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — First one: mapping services were transferred to revenue, supply and services. That's why they're not listed.

Second one: we have June Smith, executive assistant to the minister; Lauren Johnson, executive assistant to the minister; and S. Kent Scott, special assistant to the minister. Do you want to just send it over to you?

An Hon. Member: — Are you going to tell him to read it for you, Norm?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — No, Norm's doing a good job. Leave Norm alone.

Item 25 agreed to.

Vote 16 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Capital Expenditure - Vote 17

Item 1

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, part of this apparently was in Department of Northern Saskatchewan last year. Could you indicate how much of that was brought into Department of Highways now from Northern Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Capital, 1.6 million.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 and 3 agreed to.

Vote 17 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC BOARD

Ordinary Expenditure

Nil vote.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Ordinary Expenditure

Nil vote.

Mr. Chairman: — I'd like to thank the minister and his officials for being here and answering questions. What is the next item of business?

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Chairman, I'd also like to thank the minister and his officials for providing the information to us. As I said, I only hoped that the minister would have had a little more money to spend on Highways, but we'll hope that next year he can do better.

Hon. Mr. Garner: — Mr. Chairman, I would also like to thank the officials that are just doing an excellent job at administering the Department of Highways and Transportation, the province of Saskatchewan, and enabling the motoring public to have an excellent level of service. I would also like to thank the one member, the member from Pelly, for his excellent line of questioning, and look forward to estimates next year.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

SOCIAL SERVICES

Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 36

Item 1

Mr. Chairman: — Would the minister introduce her officials?

Hon. Mrs. Smith: — Yes I will, thank you. To my left, if I could, the deputy minister, Mr. Walter Podiluk, and directly behind him, the associate deputy, Mr. Steven Pillar. And I have Mr. Art Uhren to my right, behind me, and at the back I have Con Hnatiuk, Mel Gill and Loretta Eberts.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that we call it 5 o'clock.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.