

April 2, 1984

EVENING SESSION

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Ordinary Expenditure – Vote 16

Item 1 (continued)

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, when we left off at 5 o'clock, you were trying to make it appear as though I was saying that you should be introducing the gasoline tax on the truckers. What I was asking, Mr. Minister, was: how much money do you feel, in your estimate, did we lose, or the Department of Highways lose from the gasoline tax regarding the trucking of potash between the IMC and the U.S. border?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, that question you'd have to ask Mr. Kleysen because I don't know what fuel his trucks consumed on that haul.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Beg your pardon, I missed that one, Mr. Minister. Sorry about that.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Your question was, what revenue was lost. I mean we don't know what, or how much fuel Mr. Kleysen's trucks consumed. I mean that's a question you'd have to ask of him.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Well, Mr. Minister, we know how many trips a day they make on that highway. It wouldn't be hard to calculate just how much fuel they might use, and what revenue we would be losing in that gasoline tax. So you could very easily figure out just how much money the department is losing because of the gasoline tax, and how much money you should probably be looking for from Kleysen's Trucking on that route to make sure that they are at least paying for the pavement that they are using, and the road that they are using.

You have said before that their cost now is even less than it was under the agreement before, and they've got even less to pay because they aren't paying gasoline tax any more. So what you're saying is that it's costing the taxpayers of Saskatchewan to maintain that road for the trucks to keep operating on, aren't you?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- No, I'm not saying that at all. And once again, yes, we could figure 25 trucks times . . . We'd have to get in touch with Mr. Kleysen and find out how much gas he burns per haul. I mean it would just be a very rough estimate. But it would be very difficult to come up with an accurate, because depending on times of the year, empty, loaded – very hypothetical question. Mr. Kleysen could answer that easier than I could.

Secondly, that no, I believe the saving is there to both the people of Saskatchewan and to the hauler as well by the new technology, the new piece of equipment that he's using on that haul. By putting another axle on there, there is less pavement stress on that haul by going to this new equipment.

MR. LUSNEY: -- I could hardly see it that the taxpayers are going to think it's a saving to them when they see everything increasing to them and yet, to Kleysen's Trucking, everything seems to be going down.

However, Mr. Minister, regarding of who has to pay for the road, and it appears the taxpayer does, do you intend to do any work on that road this year?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- We're basically going to finish the grading and do some bridge work in there, and also try and get the paving completed this year on that section of road.

MR. LUSNEY: -- In the work that you're going to be doing this year, Mr. Minister, what cost-sharing is there going to be between IMC or Kleysen's -- or whoever is going to be paying part of that -- what is the cost-sharing going to be? How much is it going to cost the department? How much will it cost either IMC or Kleysen's for the road work that's being done on there?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Basically, they pay that fee every year. We'll be a minute getting you the costs on what . . . You want the costs on what the grading and the paving, and that, is on that section of road for this year -- the budgeted costs?

MR. LUSNEY: -- If you could give me the budget costs of that road, the grading and the paving, and also from the last time that there was any work done on that road, what you received in revenue from either IMC or Kleysen's during that period.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, Mr. . . . the hon. member, we don't have that information here because we have to go back four to five years. We will go back that four to five years and provide you with that information later, in written form.

MR. LUSNEY: -- There were a couple of questions I asked prior to 5 o'clock, Mr. Minister. Do you have the answers for those questions now?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- First of all, you had requested a name of the advertising agencies employed by the department, I believe was one of your questions. The answer to that is: dome Advertising is the main agency employed by the department. On one occasion this part year, Roberts and Poole was also employed.

Another question that you had raised to a number of people here . . . Also, you wanted to know the number of employees in woks branch in 1982. There was 344, and now, in 1984, there are 129.

Also, I have a copy that I'm . . . (inaudible) . . . to share with you, and it explains maybe in a little more detail, and little clearer, the indirect costs, and that when we were doing a comparison between the public and private sector, and I'll send you a copy of that over rather reading the whole thing into record. It goes into a fair amount of detail. Give that to Mr. Lusney.

MR. LUSNEY: -- In regard to the advertising firms, Mr. Minister, you said Dome Advertising was your main firm that you used. Roberts and Poole was the other one. Have you done any business with Dome Media Buying Services Ltd.? Dome Media Buying Services? It's a subsidiary.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Yes. Yes, we have. And, to my understanding, it's the same company.

MR. LUSNEY: -- The same company with two different names.

Could you then, Mr. Minister, give me the amount of business that has been done with Dome Advertising, or Dome Media Buying Services, Roberts and Poole, what the cost of their services were? What services were provided by the three firms?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Yes. Dome Advertising: Advertising placements -- \$18,982.41; for arts services, \$42,053.97 for a total of \$61,036.38; Roberts Poole art services, \$535.25; for a total then of \$61,571.63.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Do you have a figure, Mr. Minister, or I suppose I could ask that under the subvote. I'll leave it till then.

The number of employees . . . When you gave me the number of employees with the department in '82, this is prior to your taking office -- prior to the number of people that were either let go, or laid off, fired, whatever, from the department under the former administration. Do you have those figures?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Yes. Those were the figures that I gave you on becoming Minister. Works branch had 344 employees in 1982. We now have 129 employees.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, could you tell me how many employees you have working for the minister in the Department of Highways and Transportation?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- I presume you want that in total? Last year, Mr. Chairman, we had in January for a total of 2,169; in August we had 2,652, and that increase will be partially due to seasonal employees.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister how many employees do you have working in your office at present?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- I have six, Mr. Chairman.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Does that include the clerk typist also?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Yes, that includes a clerk typist 3.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, I might go through a few names then, and there may be some that aren't working for you. Hazel . . .

HON. MR. GARNER: -- . . . (inaudible) . . . save you having to go through them. Then you can read them right off of here. How's that for co-operation?

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, you have six people working for you, and some names differ from the list I have, so I will tell you the ones that you've got listed here, and then I'll ask you about a couple of more. One is: -- you've got Kent Scott, ministerial assistant, for \$3,435 a month; John Weir, and that's ministerial assistant 4, 3,435 a month; Lauren Johnston, ministerial assistant 2, \$2,670 a month; Vera Nicholas, ministerial assistant 2, \$2,455 a month; Hazel Dickson, ministerial assistant D -- now you go the 2, 3, 4, the 1, 2, 3, 4, and it looks like you've got the A, B, C, D -- ministerial assistant D, \$2,266 a month. And clerk typist 3, Darleen Pearce, at 1,590 a month. Mr. Minister, you had a June Smith, I believe, working for you last year. I take it then that she is no longer working in your office? And Tracey Tomik, is she working in your office?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- No, she is not working in my office.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, in a Department of Highways, when we are trying to cut down on some of the costs of government, and when we are laying off people from the Department of Highways because the costs are too high, what would you need two, three, four ministerial assistants – five ministerial assistants – in your office for? I find it a little difficult to understand why, for one department, that you've got so many ministerial assistants when here you're cutting back on a lot of the work that you're going to be doing. You say you do not require a lot of the people in the Department of Highways; why do you require so many ministerial assistants in your office?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I mean I can just share with you and the other members of the Assembly comparison of duties between myself and the former Minister of Highways and Transportation . . . I'd been . . . Mr. Long was responsible for highways and transportation, highway traffic board, and he was a member of the treasury board. Myself, I am responsible for Highways and Transportation, highway traffic board, transportation agency of Saskatchewan; while I am now the vice-chairman of Saskatchewan Transportation Company, and I also sit on crown investments board.

So I think when you compare the duties, there are lot more duties, and because we have amalgamated all of these transportation-related issues, all of these transportation-related issues, Mr. Chairman, under one roof, to make it easier for the people of Saskatchewan. So if they come in with a problem on roads, they don't have to go over here, or a transportation problem – it's all under one roof.

And, Mr. Chairman, the member opposite said, yes, I have a legislative secretary. That's true. It's Mr. Ralph Katzman, the MLA for Rosthern, and he's doing an excellent job in assisting me – in assisting the people of Saskatchewan with their transportation problems and their transportation needs.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Well, Mr. Minister, you've increased your total cabinet in government. You've got 25 cabinet ministers, which is supposed to have reduced the work-load for each cabinet minister. You've got 12 legislative secretaries, I believe it is, that work with the Minister – an additional cost there. Yet you say you require more ministerial assistants at the same time, and this is supposed to be the government that was going to be a small government and not a big government. You were going to somehow save money for the taxpayers of this province by all that staff that you have within your office. How can you say to the public, Mr. Minister, that you are a government that believes in saving money and keeping this a small government and not to have as many people being paid for doing so little? Is that not what is happening today?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I think it's quite obvious we have a different philosophy than the NDP and that. With amalgamating all of the transportation-related activities and duties in the province under one minister's responsibility, I believe we have provided a better service to the people of Saskatchewan than what was presented to them before. And I mean we can go back to last Thursday night. I mean we had people driving here from all around the province to find out what was in the budget for them regarding Highways and Transportation. Those people drove in from Melfort, from Eastend, Saskatchewan, from all over this province to find out exactly what was in it for them.

To my knowledge, Mr. Chairman, we have come out with, I believe, a co-ordinated approach to transportation problems in this province. And I will say that my staff does work extremely hard and does a very professional job with problems coming in, from even members opposite, from their area. That job, I believe, is handled very efficiently, very effectively, and I don't believe that there is an over-abundance of staff.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, as you said, your government is a lot different than the previous government. And that's quite indicative when you see the number of staff, the number of ministers, the number of legislative secretaries. That surely is different. There's no question about it. We've also, Mr. Minister . . .

There's one other person I'd like to ask you about, and it's the former campaign manager of the member for Cutknife-Lloydminster. Is Mr. Jack Upshall working in your department?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Yes, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Jack Upshall is working. He's the head of communications. He's the director of communications in Highways and Transportation, and I believe we may have his resume here, and I will elaborate on that in a minute.

But maybe, Mr. Chairman, we should read for the record just how many staff the former minister of highways had with a lot smaller portfolio. I see Mr. Degenstien, D. Degenstien, B. Mayer, P. Oglan, C. Hansen, R. Clipperton, J. Ackerman, M. Semchuk. Now we'll just add those up, Mr. Chairman: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. We'll add up the staff that I have, Mr. Chairman: two, three, four, five, six. Isn't that amazing, Mr. Chairman, isn't that amazing! Additional responsibilities, and one less staff member under this government. I will not settle, and I will not stand for being accused of having too many assistants when we've got a larger responsibility, under Highways and Transportation. The previous minister here, by print, had more support staff.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, you know very well that those people were not in the minister's office. They were not the minister's legislative assistants. Some of those people worked at Humford House. They worked within the department, but not as legislative, or ministerial assistants. So that is a little different, Mr. Minister. I think if we added up some of the people you've got working within the department, we'd find a lot more than seven people. I would also assume, Mr. Minister, that Mr. Jack Upshall was not a political appointment, even though he did work as the campaign manager for one of your members. I would assume that that was because he was a very qualified political or a civil servant, and this is why he is working there. Mr. Upshall, if I might say, Mr. Minister, replaced a career civil servant, I believe, when he took the position that he had. I might be wrong, but Mr. Minister, could you tell me who Mr. Upshall replaced?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, I have Mr. Upshall coming down to be present in this chamber so that the people can see him, and then I'll talk about this resume after that. But just a couple of other points. Mr. Chairman, and first of all, Mr. Upshall did take over, did take over for a Mr. Hansen; Mr. George Hansen, where his biggest claim to media fame was being a rodeo announcer. That's the expertise that was in Highways and Transportation before. I don't believe that's what the people of Saskatchewan need for a head communications director.

Further to that, Mr. Chairman, member opposite, the member opposite was complaining about the number of staff. A Mr. Semchuk, former defeated NDP candidate . . . What didn't show up in the blue book, he was under contract to the minister of highways and transportation. So I mean, there you have seven people.

Now, about Mr. Upshall. Received his Bachelor of Arts, has an extensive experience in the media field, photography, reporter, advertising salesman, editor of a regional bi-weekly. And I would just simply ask Mr. Upshall, how many years experience have you got in the communications field? Six years in the communication field. None in the rodeo business, sorry, not in the rodeo business; but in communications, from newspapers to everything else. That's the kind of talent that we hire, Mr. Chairman.

MR. LUSNEY: -- I see the minister has put a different light on hiring political appointments; so I can understand that the minister would feel obligated to hire Mr. Upshall, and I guess we can't dispute it. We see a lot of that happening within the departments. We see much of that happening in the department. Mr. Minister, I might ask you, do you have any people within your department that are working under contract?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- No, absolutely not. No, I'm sorry, we don't.

MR. YEW: -- Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Mr. Minister, there were hundreds of jobs lost 24 hours after your budget was presented in the House; and there's a lot of concern and frustration expressed by the public, by the people of this province. But more specifically, more specifically, I understand that people are concerned in Cumberland House that the hundreds of people that you fired may affect about nine ferry operations in this province.

One of those ferry operations that maybe affected could very well be Cumberland House. I wonder if you may put the record straight with respect to the ferry service at Cumberland House, and advise as to whether that ferry operator will be affected by the recent announcement of the people that were either fired, or transferred, or whatever.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, I could answer no to that, but ferries are under Rural Development. They have nothing to do with the Department of Highways and Transportation. You'll have to ask the Minister of Rural Development about that.

MR. YEW: -- You really are confusing the people in the northern administration district with this expansion of a huge cabinet in your government. Getting back to Cumberland House, Mr. Minister, in the last couple of years people in Cumberland House, Cumberland House being the oldest community in this province, have pleaded with your government to provide for a permanent access into this community. Can the minister advise people of the north-east side that they will have a bridge under your government, and how soon this will come about?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, once again . . . I mean it was this fall, late fall, that is the first time that, to my knowledge, that a minister was up to Cumberland House to take a look at the situation. The Department of Highways and Transportation assisted them, assisted the community in putting their winter ice road in.

In fact, when I was up there I met one of the department personnel that were measuring the thickness of the ice. I did that tour with the mayor, Mr. Winston McKay, of Cumberland House – I think the hon. member was in the Chamber – I met with him, where you introduced him to the Assembly. We've had two or three meetings about it since, and that, and I mean it's quite easy to sit there and . . . stand there and blame this government for not building a bridge or any kind of an access to Cumberland House in two years.

I guess I can throw it back to you. What did you do in 11 years? What did your government do for the people of Cumberland House in 11 years? There was no bridge there because when I went up there, no one had moved it away. It just wasn't there. I mean at least, I, as a minister, I'd gone up there. So please don't blame us for in two years not building a bridge when you did absolutely nothing in 10 or 11 years.

MR. YEW: -- Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You didn't get to the question at all, Mr. Minister. I was raising a specific question with respect to your commitment for Cumberland House. Will you, under

your administration, provide a permanent access to the community of Cumberland House by way of building a bridge? And in terms of the reference to the last 11 years that I have been in power, I want to inform the Minister that I was never in power. I came into the provincial politics in '82, and I never had occasion or opportunity to be on the government side of the House to tackle that very issue with respect to Cumberland House. That is very unfair of you to try to evade the question. But anyway, can you specify very clearly and concisely what your commitment is with respect to Cumberland House?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, once again I don't want to mislead this House. I couldn't do something like that. Mr. Chairman, when I said the hon. member was in power, I meant that his party was in power, and my Legislative Secretary tells me that he was a special assistant to the Minister of DNS. Well, surely to goodness, if this was such a pressing problem up north and with DNS that the special advisor to the Minister of DNS wouldn't have heard about the Cumberland House bridge – wouldn't have heard of a request for this – so, no, I guess maybe you weren't in government then, you weren't a sitting MLA. The NDP was in power then. I'm prepared to look at it, but I'm sure not prepared to announce something until I know that budgetary funds are in place in order for that project to go ahead. I will continue looking at it, I will continue meeting with the council and any one from Cumberland House, but I won't make a commitment until I know the funds are in place.

MR. YEW: -- Mr. Minister, don't you agree that there is a problem with respect to access into this community? Don't you believe that that community deserves access like any other community in this province?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- I couldn't agree with you more. I agree there is a problem there, and I'm just wondering when I remember bringing into this Assembly about a half a million dollars worth of studies that were done on the problem and no corrective measures being take. I agree there's a problem. I couldn't agree with you more, but I'm not prepared to stand in this Assembly and promise something until I've got the dollars for it. Other governments have maybe done that; I'm not going to do that.

MR. YEW: -- It seems that the minister has misplaced priorities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to the \$829 million deficit that we have now. You have all types of incentives: royalty incentives, and tax cuts for the wealthy and the rich, and your government is paying huge interest payments to the banks, the bond dealers, and you talk about job creation. Twenty-four hours after your budget was announced, you fired hundreds of people from your administration. I say that you have misplaced priorities.

I look at your project array, Mr. Minister, and I have yet to ask you whether or not the top half of this province is a part of this province – the northern administration district, is it a part of this province or not?

I look at your project array and there is not one single mention of Highways 102 going into Southend, Highways 105 going into Wollaston Lake. There is no mention of Highway 106 and 165 that leads into Pelican Narrows, Sandy Bay, and Creighton. There's no mention of Highway No. 169, the road between Montreal lake and Timber Bay. There's no mention of Highway 123, the highway into Cumberland House. There's no mention of the permanent access bridge into Cumberland House.

I study your project array and there's practically, practically complete total neglect of the northern administration district. There's about 23 kilometres of grading here for a little portion of road, perhaps 12 miles, between Buffalo and La Loche, that's about it. I can't see any other project going into the North, in terms of highways, in terms of upgrading and maintenance for northern Saskatchewan. There is just nothing in here. That's why I say that your administration has gone peanuts.

You talk of promoting tourism. How in the heck do you expect to have major input by the tourist industry if you don't repair and upgrade the northern access roads?

I ask the minister: can you identify to me what you have, if you do, in fact, have some preference for the northern transportation system at all? Do you have nay money at all for upgrading and maintenance of those northern access roads, more specifically perhaps, the roads that I have mentioned?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all, before I get to some of the roads in that northeast part of the province, the member opposite will remember that he had a delegation in here from Sandy Bay and requested that I meet with them. I did meet with them after a sitting of the Assembly one night. I did make the commitment to them, and I hope that they shared that commitment with you, that one of us would be up there to take a look at their specific road problems – their specific concerns.

And when I hear you say about, well, there's this big deficit, and yet you should build more bridges. You know, you can't have it both ways. I hope the member isn't saying that we should cut health care in the province of Saskatchewan, because I don't believe that'd be the direction to go, and this government won't be cutting health care. We're number one in Canada, and we're going to stay number one.

But I'll just share with you some of the projects from that area of the province, and I look here at Little Bear Lake – grading Highway 106, 32 kilometres north of park boundary to Big Sandy Lake, \$1,700,000 is going to be spent there. I look over here on Highway 106 – completion of oiling, \$101,600. I look here – Highway No. 2 south of junction Highway 165, \$1,424,000 to be spent. Highway 102, English Bay campground – clay cap the road, \$9,000. Highway 106, Little Bear Lake – grading access road, another \$50,000. Highway 2 – landscaping and access, \$4,000. You know, I could go on and on.

I'll read some more of them to you, you know. Highway 102 – landscaping La Ronge airport to the river, \$10,000. Highway 2 – special safety improvements on the MacLennan River bridge guard-rail, \$25,000. Highway 2 – special safety improvements, repair sharp drop off at La Ronge, \$49,000. Highway 102 – special safety improvements, Otter Rapids bridge sidewalk, \$105,000. You know, and on and on, for a total of approximately, in that area, of \$4 million. Well, you know, I don't know how the member can stand there and say we're not spending any money. Like \$4 million is a fair expenditure.

MR. YEW: -- The next question I have, Mr. Minister, is with respect to local labour policy. Does your department have a local labour policy like the former administration had with respect to jobs that may spin off from these projects that you've just outlined?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Same policy that was in place before.

MR. YEW: -- There is a lot of concern expressed over the course of the past couple of months with respect to the selling off of major highways' equipment in northern Saskatchewan. This equipment, apparently, as I understand it, was used for training of Northerners in heavy construction. Mr. Minister, maybe perhaps one of my colleagues may have raised this question before, but I wondered if you did have nay comments on that.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Basically, there's been no charge, because the grading crew, as we've said, is going to be working on a project up there, and they do some training right on the job while the crew is working. So there's basically no change from before.

MR. KOSKIE: -- Mr. Minister, last year, in this House, you indicated that you had fired 139 employees of the Department of Highways. Last year, in this House, we asked you whether you had done an assessment of whether or not the cost of highway construction, by the private versus the public sector, whether you had done a cost analysis. And last year, in this House, you said that you undertook to fire 139 employees of the department – and the transcript will indicate that you had done none whatsoever, you had not, in fact, done a cost analysis. But you fired them, and when pushed, you were asked if you were going to get better highways this year, because you were going to move over to the private. Now this year, what you have come forward, and you fired another 270-some employees, you come forward and you concoct now a comparison which suits your needs to justification.

I want to point out, first of all, Mr. Minister, what you have done is to show a total disregard for the employees of your department. First of all – I'll indicate in two ways. First of all, you fired them without consultation or discussion; secondly, you made allegations as to the quality of their work, and they had no opportunity in which to defend themselves. You know that. Secondly, you indicated that, while they were being fired you were going to guarantee and monitor that they were going to be employed, those that were pushed out of a job. You tried to justify it on the basis of bumping rights, but obviously, last year, 139 people went through the system bumping.

I want to ask the minister, in respect to his first firing episode in the department, can you indicate whether you have monitored as to precisely whether or not the 139 employees, how many of them were able, last year, after they were fired, to get employment in the private sector with the private contractors? The reason I ask you this question, Mr. Minister, is in fact, in the Humboldt area, and throughout my constituency, last year under this government, a lot of young people were searching for work. There were young engineers, young chartered accountants or in commerce students, there were education students, and there were others. And many of them came to me requesting opportunities to work, in order that they might, in fact, be able to help finance their cost of education, and continuing their education. And I want to tell you that I went to bat as much as I could for these people, and I phoned up a number of the major contractors in this province – and I'm not going to mention their names – but I phoned them up, and I asked them whether or not the young people of this province, if they would have an opportunity, an opportunity, an opportunity. I wouldn't tell you anything because you can't be trusted, Mr. Minister of Justice, because you have ravaged people across this province, and you know you have.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOSKIE: -- I contacted contractors who have been in this province for a number of years, contractors which were active contractors during the period of Ross Thatcher, and continued to operate in this province when the New Democratic Party was the government. And I went to these contractors, and I said, "I have a number of young people who are seeking to find opportunities for summer employment. Is there any opportunity of them being flag men or working for the particular private contractors?" You know what they told me? They phoned back. They said, "We'll check it out; we know the situation of young people in this province." And they phoned back and they indicated that they were sorry they weren't able to, because the permanent employees which they already had were not even going to be able to be called back. And he says, I can't, I can't really not take back a permanent employee and take a student in exchange. So I'm saying to you, students are trying. And I've contacted a number of the contractors, and they indicated that they were not fully employing their regular staff. So what I am asking you, in respect to those 139, can you indicate what monitoring you have done, and can you indicate the number of them that have, in fact, obtained employment with the private sector?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, first of all, as the Minister of Highways and Transportation I have never said anything last year, nor anything this year, about the quality of work that was done by these employees – never, about the quality, quality of work.

Secondly, last year there was a larger number of vacancies that these people moved into right within government. Yes, some did go to the private sector. Now I hear the member opposite saying he'd had all these calls. He talked to all of these road builders in the province. You must be talking to a different bunch of road builders than I'm talking to. I mean I have breakfast with them once very three or four months. Once a month I meet with the president of the Saskatchewan road builders and the executive. They would bring forth these concerns to me if they were under capacity, if they weren't getting enough work. I mean they would tell me, the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Secondly, if you had this big concern, why didn't you phone me and share these names with me. I would have seen what I could have done to help those people. But I can't deal with people that don't have a name. I have to have names.

Secondly, I had two calls last year, and the deputy minister had none. Now if people have got a real problem finding a job with Department of Highways and Transportation, surely to goodness you'd think they'd call the minister. If they didn't want to call the minister they'd call the deputy minister. So, as far as I'm concerned, there was no real problem because of that.

MR. KOSKIE: -- Well, it's not very reassuring to the many people who were employed last year, and you fired, and are subsequently without jobs. And for the minister to stand up here, in his arrogance, and say that he is satisfied, while he drove a number of families into a situation of no employment and no support for their families . . . And he says, "I'm satisfied with what happened."

I want to say, and to repeat what my colleague has indicated: I am absolutely, totally shocked, and I have indicated this to the public before. Here in this province, we have the largest cabinet that this province has ever known. And I want to indicate that we have the largest number of legislative secretaries in the history of this province. And what is happening here is what they're building up – building up their political machine at a cost to the taxpayer, and what they are doing is to destroy individual, hard-working citizens, many of them who have been working with the Department of Highways for 20 years – have had a career in it, and they've been thrown out.

I think it's important here that we . . . I want to indicate here, and to draw to the attention of the public, exactly the priorities of this minister. Here is a summary of the employees employed in the minister's office. He has Ken Scott and John Weir and Lauren Johnston and Vera Nicholas, Hazel Dickson, Darlene Pearce, and on it goes.

I want to tell you that the cost, the cost – just adding up the cost of these, it comes to \$15,851 a month -- \$15,851 a month. The minister indicates that he is on a restraint binge – that he is going to, in fact, cut back. Restraint is so necessary. And here he has, at the taxpayers' cost, in a small department like Highways, which is very technical, where much of it is done, and the plans and so are drawn up by the engineers and by the staff in the department.

Now I could see it if it were, in fact, in the Department of Social Services, which is tremendously people-oriented. But here is a minister who has a political staff at the cost of \$15,851 per month. Multiply that by 12, and you can obviously see that it's well over 160,000. And the situation is – and it has to be clear – that each and every minister in this government is running a political machine in their

office at the taxpayers' cost of between \$160,000 and \$200,000; \$200,000 a year. That's exactly what they're doing.

I want to ask the Minister of Highways: in respect to the over 200 employees that you fired this year, I'd like to ask you what monitoring steps are you taking to ensure that they will be able to have contact with the private sector? Are you, in fact, indicating a list? Are you making lists of those that have been fired, with their qualifications, known to all of the contractors throughout the province? Have you, in fact, met with representatives or their union, of these highway workers that have been turfed out? And what system have you set up in order to help to guarantee that these individuals will, in fact, find work in a Tory province where jobs are becoming more and more scarce, as the young people of this province are finding out?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, I have -- after all of those questions -- I have a great deal of information I want to share with you. First of all, we have a sheet here that we saved from last year. If the member will just be patient and quiet for a minute I will share this information with him and other members of . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: -- Order, allow the minister . . . Order! Allow the minister to answer the question.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, last year, of the original 139 abolishments . . . this note here, as of April 28, and I'll read it into the record:

Of the original 130 abolishments, 81 employees have been bumped or placed in vacant positions; 16 chose to go on a re-employment list for future vacancies; 13 chose to resign; 29 have not been placed to this date. Actions taken by the employees who were bumped by the abolished positions are shown in first, second . . . (this is a bumping column, little chart that we had set up.) As of April 28, 1983, there is a total of 36 employees who wish to work, who have not been placed. We expect to offer a position to at least 30 of these employees during the next week.

Now this was as of April 28, 1983. Mr. Chairman, this points out to me now why we didn't get a lot of calls, because most of these people were re-employed or filled existing vacancies within the government, point number one. Point number two, Mr. Chairman . . . and I don't like to get into this. I mean, I've already explained to the transportation critic in this province, the member from Pelly, about the comparisons in office staff where the former minister didn't have the responsibilities that I have, and had one additional member on his staff, and it was hired under contract. I mean, there is no increase in staff.

But I think, Mr. Chairman, that we have to share this other information so the people of Saskatchewan just see exactly who was hired by the former government --not hired by our government, Mr. Chairman -- who was hired by the former government. I've got a Deanna Koskie, wife of Morley Koskie, in AG's department as admin. Officer 3, salary \$2,912, sister-in-law to Murray Koskie, former NDP cabinet minister. Another one, Mr. Chairman -- Linda Koskie, clerk-steno 4, OC appointment to Provincial Secretary, December 16, '75, sister-in-law to Murray Koskie, former NDP cabinet minister. Number 34 -- Morley Koskie, vice-president of SGI, brother to Murray Koskie, former NDP cabinet minister. Mr. Chairman, there's another one here yet. Ted Koskie, appointed executive assistant to minister of consumer affairs, May 6, '75, brother of Murray Koskie, former NDP cabinet minister. Mr. Chairman, well . . .

MR. KOSKIE: -- I think we are discussing the Department of Highways, Mr. Chairman. And while the members may be amused, I asked in respect to how we could justify paying out a total of, in a year,

\$196,712? That's the cost of the political staff. And what I asked the minister to do, how he can justify having an expenditure for political animals, and listed them, plus a legislative secretary, for a hundred . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: -- Order, order! Get to your question. Get to your point of order.

MR. KOSKIE: -- The point of order is that I asked him a question, and he's off the department completely, all over through the government. What's that got to do with – what relevancy – we'll be here all . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . What I'm talking about here, Mr. Chairman, is the staff of the Minister of Highways, and how he can justify it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: -- Order! Order! Your point is well taken. The question before the committee is Highway and Transportation estimates.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, just in speaking to that point of order a bit, what I was just trying to point out to the members of this Assembly was that the people that are working in my office (there is less people working in my office), they're not related to me, they're not related to any other MLA in this Assembly. I mean it's different. It's different than the way the former government ran their shop. That's all I was trying to point out, Mr. Chairman.

MR. KOSKIE: -- Mr. Minister, you have, in indicating and touting around the province in respect to certain contracts, comparisons of contracts done by the private and comparisons of contracts as done by the government crews.

Then it is my understanding that here is an . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no, just a minute . . . internal Department of Highways memo, and it reads in parts as follows . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . just a minute. I said it's an internal Department of Highways memo. And this memo reads, in part, as follows: . . . “attached is a summary of sealing costs for all types of sealing done by district crew in Swift Current.”

In the comparisons in this here particular document which was prepared by the members of your department – they referred to a couple of contracts which you indicated that you had no knowledge of, two of them which were done in the Swift Current area – the numbers were No. M83023, the cost of approximately \$155,000; the other one is a contract No. M83017, read the cost of approximately \$169,000. So those are the facts that I want you to be aware of.

Now you indicated this afternoon to the member from Pelly that there are standards required by the department's pavement technology manual. Typical application rates, and part of that particular document indicates this: that for 16 millimetre aggregate top size, an asphalt rate of between 1.36 litres per square metre, and 1.63 litres per square metre. That is concluded as the standard of the application in your manual.

I want to indicate to the minister of the information that we have in respect to these two contracts – is that, that the asphalt rate as per surfacing manual, on all treatment using 16 millimetre aggregate is 1.36 to 1.63 litres per square metre. Now I want to indicate that, in respect to the one contract, the average application rate on the contract was 1.31 litres per square metre; that on the second contract, the application was 1.15 litres per square metre; and I want to say that also there is a comparison of the kilometre of the district highway crews.

And the comparison is with the district highway crew whereby they, in their application, met the standard of 1.48 litres per square metre, and in the analysis within this document, prepared by your department, they indicated that the kilometre that was built by the highway crews or that portion met the standards. In other words, it was in the area of 1.48. The cost per kilometre for the district crew was \$1,628 per kilometre. One of the other contracts which I mentioned, as by code number, was \$1,635 per kilometre, and the other one was 1,573 kilometres.

In other words, there's two things that is noted in respect to this information that I'm putting forward. One is that there is evidence by your own documents that some of the contractors, private contractors, have, in fact, not met the standard that the department has set, that they have put on, indeed, less of the cover, asphalt, than what is required. And secondly, what is the distortion that you have been providing to the people of this province, that you are not, in fact, making equal comparisons. Because here is a document, prepared by your own officials, which indicate that if the same application – if they had met the standards, the two privates, that the district crew cost would be 1,628, the other contract private, 1,694, and the second private contract, 1,775.

So what I'm saying to you, Mr. Minister, what you have been doing is to, to denigrate as against the quality of the work that many loyal employees of the department have been doing for years. You have come out and distorted . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . distorted the facts, in claiming that there were massive savings if you went to the private sector. And now what I want to illustrate is that by your own admission, when the private is doing under the document from your own department, your own officials indicate that cheaper by the highway crews gets the same standard. And I want you to indicate whether you are, indeed, aware. Are you aware of this situation in respect to these contracts? And secondly, is it going to continue that inferior roads are going to be built as a result of the private contractors taking over?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, the rates of 1.36 or 1.63 litres, for one square metre are guide-lines only, from our manual. They are not specified in the contract, and if rates are lower than the guide-lines, we are then saving dollars, because we supply the asphalt for the contracts, Mr. Chairman.

MR. KOSKIE: -- The fact is that what you're doing is . . . this particular document, Mr. Minister, you're missing the point. The fact is that it's been prepared within your own department. And it clearly indicates that, with the same application, it says here, that the district crew – it would cost 1,628 a kilometre, and the two private contractors which are identified by numbers, would be 1,694 per kilometre, and the second one, 1,725.

Now are you disputing the fact that if you, in fact, meet the requirements . . . or are you, in fact, saying that your standards do not have to be applied? And are you saying that you get a superior highway with less application?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, these are only guide-lines, and depending on what area of the province you're in, depending the type of aggregate that you are working with, you can get a better base with a thinner coat. I mean it's like crushing gravel. Some areas of the province, it costs you more to crush gravel because the rock and the gravel, the aggregate, is harder to crush. I mean we have the information that there is no problem from the district – the Swift Current district – which is the area the member is referring to. There is no problem with the jobs that were completed out there. The district engineer is very confident of the quality of work that was done by the contractors on these two jobs.

MR. KOSKIE: -- Well, this afternoon, this afternoon, Mr. Minister, you indicated to my colleague that you were not, in fact, even aware of these particular contracts. Are you saying now that you are aware of them?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, in the spirit of co-operation, the operations manager called the district engineer over the dinner hours, checked with him to make sure what the information we were giving to members opposite was accurate and correct. He did verify that, that there was no problem in the area whatsoever. I can't put it any other way.

MR. KOSKIE: -- I want to get this specifically from the Minister. These particular construction of roads are in a similar area. And I want to ask you: are you telling the House that the one contractor who, in fact, applied the 1.15 litres per square metre that that road is as good or better than the application of the higher amount of 1.48 litres, as was applied by the district crews?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, certain aggregates take more asphalt than others. I've tried to explain that to the member opposite. And I'll say it one more time, or ten more times, however many times he wants me to repeat this. We did consult with the district engineer, Mr. Don Metz, over the dinner hour, to find out if there was nay problems with these specific contracts. He said, "Absolutely not." He was satisfied with the type of work, the job that was done on this. If there's a specific problem, if the member wants to table his information, I'm quite prepared to investigate it thoroughly. But right now, the department officials are telling me here there's no problem. The district engineer is telling me there's no problem. I don't know where the problem exists. Only in the mind of the member opposite.

MR. KOSKIE: -- First of all, I would think that when you set up your manual, that it is, in fact, a basic guide-line, and you're familiar, as I indicated to you, what your guide-line says within your own departmental . . . It's between 1.36 and 1.63. 1.36 litres per square metre and 1.63 litres per square metre.

Now, what I'm asking is . . . What I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, is . . . You have set up the established guide-line. Now presumably it has the effect of indicating the application, or the amount of the application. And what I'm asking you: to what extent can you apply to the surface . . . To what extent can you go below the lowest minimum that is set out in your manual; that is, can you go right down to less than one? Because this one contract is at 1.15 litres per square metre. The minimum that you had within your guide is 1.36 to 1.63.

And what I'm asking you . . . Here we have three contracts, all within the same area, some by the district crews, some by privates. And you're saying you're satisfied with all of the contracts. Then I'm asking you . . . Certainly by adding more material it would seem that it would obviously increase, to some extent, the cost of the construction. And here what you have is the cheaper cost being done by the private, but a far less application. So what I'm really asking you is: how far can you go below the minimum number that is indicated here? Can you give examples of where you have consistently gone with much lower than the minimum, as set out in your standard book?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, we don't have that information here, but the deputy tells me that it could go as low as 1 litre per square metre. But, I mean, these are guide-lines only. I . . . and once again, I tried to point out to members opposite that we pay -- the department pays for the asphalt, no matter whether the government forces do it or the private contractor. We pay for the asphalt that goes into the project.

Now I had stated to the critic for transportation, the MLA from Pelly, that we would personally look into and investigate these two contracts, to find out if there was a problem. The district engineer says there's no problem. The deputy minister and his staff say there's no problem. I've made a commitment to check it further, provide him with a copy in writing.

Mr. Chairman, I don't know what more I can provide to the members opposite. I can invite the member opposite, if he wants, to come out and measure it with me, if he wants. I mean, I'm prepared to cooperate with them, Mr. Chairman, any way I can. I don't think I can go any farther than what I've asked, what I've already stated.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Well, Mr. Minister, basically a similar question. You have stated you can go down as low as one litre per square metre. Now, when you do that you're going to be doing it with different types of aggregate. You can do that with 9 millimetre aggregate, but in these two contracts we're talking about 16 millimetre aggregate, and if you're going to be using 1.15 litres per square metre on 16 millimetre aggregate, you're going to have a surface that is not going to hold out very long because there is not enough asphalt in there.

That is where the problem comes in, Mr. Minister, and we are saying you should look into these contracts, and when there's a specific type of aggregate being used, that they apply the proper amount of asphalt in it so that those roads would hold out.

That is where we are saying the problem is, and will the minister check those contracts, and if, if, there has been a smaller amount used with that certain type of aggregate, will the minister, then, look into every contract and make sure that the contractors live up to the number, or the amount of asphalt that's supposed to be applied? And that they do the job. If they don't do that then, that you have a hold back in their costs or their tenders.

But basically what my colleague was saying, Mr. Minister, was that the contractors cannot do it cheaper using the right amount of aggregate, the right amount of oil or asphalt in it. They cannot apply it any cheaper than can the departmental crews. And you have maintained in the past and you see to think that somehow the private sector was going to do it a lot cheaper. But they can, I can see it, if they do what's happening with these two contracts.

And I am saying to you, Mr. Minister, that we should not be allowing these contractors to apply less on a road that is going to last for only a couple of years before it starts breaking up when it could be done once, and done properly, and last a lot longer.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Now, Mr. Chairman, we'll, we'll try it one more time. We can use 16 millimetre aggregate, but depending if there's finer material in it, it will absorb more asphalt. But I stated to you (I believe it was somewhere around 3:30, 3:00 o'clock this afternoon) that you were real concerned about these contracts. I told you then that we would personally look into it, check into the type of job that was done. The district engineer is happy with it. The deputy minister and his staff are happy with it, and I mean, Mr. Chairman, I don't profess to be an engineer. I don't think the members opposite profess to be an engineer. I deal with the expertise that is within the Department of Highways and Transportation. The district engineer has the talent and the expertise, so does the deputy, and so does his support staff. If they're comfortable, they're happy with the job. I don't see how a couple of politicians should go out there and start telling them how to build roads. I mean they're the people that have the expertise and have the talent.

Now I've said to the member, and I'll go on record one more time – yes, I will look into these two tenders for his benefit, not for the benefit of the district engineer, not the deputy minister, nor the engineers that have the expertise to now what kind of a job was done.

But you know, Mr. Chairman, I did share with the member opposite the information of the direct and indirect costs. They're right there. Those have to be outside of this other little tangent that he's on on these two contracts. There it is. The black and white, right there, the indirect costs. That's why it costs more for the department forces to construct these roads. It's right there in black and white, and the member has a copy of it.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, the figures that you gave me in black and white are worth as much as that paper that's printed on, unless you have more detail with it. And I am not exactly interested in what your engineer is satisfied with when you phoned them over the dinner hour, or what your deputy minister might be satisfied with, because I'm sure he didn't see that piece of road, or he's not aware of the fact that there has been less asphalt used with 16 millimetre, aggregate on those two contracts.

What I'm interested in, Mr. Minister, is: are the people of Saskatchewan, who are paying those bills, getting the value for their dollar, or are they going to get a road that's going to have to be repaired again in a couple of years? That is the concern, Mr. Minister. Is your department concerned enough to go out there and check with the engineer if he has taken samples, if he's made tests to make sure that the proper amount was applied, or did he just walk by and say to the contractor, "Did you apply the right amount?" the contractor said, "Yes," and that was the end of it. Did you check those contracts to make sure that the proper amount was applied, and if it was, that would be different, but it indicates quite clearly that it wasn't.

The department itself usually applies . . . somewhere in the centre of the tables that are set out in your manual, and they have applied in most cases anywhere between 136 and 163 of the manual. It would depend on the condition of the surface they are putting it on, where they might apply even more asphalt to it.

This in the two contracts, did not happen. They didn't even apply the amount, the lower amount that is listed in your manual. They applied an amount of asphalt that would be listed under 12 and 9 aggregate.

That, Mr. Minister, is the difference. That would indicate that the costs on those two contracts, would be less, but apparently they weren't that much less. It's going to mean that that road I not likely to stand up as long as the better type of road would be. And I think, Mr. Minister, if it's going to cost us an extra \$100,000 to do the job properly like it was with departmental crews, that road would last at least 10 years and not two, or three, or five. That is the thing that's in question, Mr. Minister. We have to do the proper job for the money that's being spent. If it's done the way it's indicated in these contracts, then you can be sure that the public funds are being wasted. They are not being used the way they should.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, now the same member that professes to be defending the personnel of Highways and Transportation where their jobs were abolished, he is now attacking them. And we better set the record straight, Mr. Chairman. Oh yes, we'd better set the record straight, Mr. Chairman.

He is saying that the Department of Highways and Transportation resident engineer, on the job, that does the inspection before the contract is paid for, doesn't know what he's talking about. Says the job is no good. So the very people that the member from Pelly is supposedly trying to defend, he has now turned around and attacking their integrity, their professional ability in building roads in the province of

Saskatchewan. That's just what he's done. The record will state that, Mr. Chairman. He has just done that. He has attacked those resident engineers that go out there on every construction job in the Saskatchewan and, Mr. Chairman, I just say that's a very shameful thing for the member to do.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, you are indicating that somehow I am attacking the engineers that are out there. Well, Mr. Minister, I'm not. I'm just saying that there appears to be some discrepancy in these two contracts. Now whether your department was notified of it or not, I am not aware. I have here a memo that states that there was a discrepancy, and yet you are saying there wasn't. Now somewhere, someone is not telling the truth, and I am interested in finding out whatever reason, that does not condemn every engineer. There is a lot of good engineers out there that have done an excellent job over the years, and those engineers will continue to do good jobs, or would have if you hadn't fired the majority of them.

But, Mr. Minister, what you really trying to do with some of these cases, I think, in allowing contracts like these go by, is just to make it appear that somehow the private sector can do the job a little cheaper, and in this instance they could. They could, but that's not the point. The point is that if you are going to do a job a little cheaper, is it going to be a job that's going to last for any length of time? And even with the figures that are in here, it does not indicate that they could do it cheaper. It does indicate that the private sector or the public sector would not do it cheaper one way or the other. In fact, the public sector could do it a bit cheaper, using those figures, than what the private sector did.

So I am saying, Mr. Minister, check with your own department. Check on those two contracts, and make sure that, in the future, the public isn't wasting their money with a contractor that will be skimping on the asphalt and trying to cut corners to make a quick buck because he tendered a little lower than maybe he should have. I don't think we can afford to have that happening in this province. And I don't think that you, as a minister, should be allowing that to happen.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, once again, and I think we discussed it this afternoon that we would agree to disagree. I did send you a copy of the indirect costs. They're there; they're real. They have to be taken into account. When you take the costs of what the tender is versus what the direct and indirect costs of the Department of Highways, and . . . I'll read it through them again if you want. I'll read through them again.

The fuel tax, DHT doesn't have to pay the fuel tax. Interest on investment . . . You've got a copy of this. I shared it with the hon. member. Payroll surcharge; you know there's Canada Pension; there's compensation; there's superannuation. Labour payroll represents 40 per cent of projected costs, for 4.8 per cent. The costs, those are indirect costs. They have to be taken into consideration. Management and administration; overhead; insurance and bonding; legal costs; unidentified business costs – this includes property tax, organizational dues – brings a total of 29.8 per cent over and above the cost.

The problem isn't with, as you specified, on a couple of contracts. I told you we were going to look into that. Two contracts, and I don't know how many contracts they'll total in a year, but our district engineer who's a very qualified individual, or he wouldn't be the district engineer, has the expertise. He inspects these jobs. He's content with them. He's the professional. I don't think it's the role of two politicians to stand in here and argue about the expertise of an engineer unless either one of us are an engineer, and we're not.

I think we have to go the professionals that are out there. We have to go and put some faith in the resident engineer that's on the job, that still works for the Department of Highways and Transportation. They're the people that inspect the job. If the resident engineer says the jobs is good, he passes it and

approves it. Then the contractor gets paid for the tender. If the resident engineer doesn't approve it, the contractor doesn't get paid for the job. He has to go back and do it again. I mean . . . there it is . . . black and white. I can't explain it any other way.

MR. KOSKIE: -- I think that the point that we were trying to make has been made. But I want from the internal information that we have, to allow the minister to understand exactly what has been said. It says the district crew's average application, as I indicated, was 1.48, the other two contractors, there's 1.31 and 1.15.

Now you know, if you ignore the difference in the asphalt application, if you ignore it, then the cost figures come out as indicated as 1,628 kilometres for the public, for the two privates respectively as 1,635 and 1,573 per kilometres. But if, in fact, as they indicate, that you have to, in fact, taken into consideration the increased cost in the additional application, that that gives you a different cost figure for the private and the public application.

And the final figures is the district crew, if you consider they all applied the same amount, or if you decrease the amount back to where the other two are, that the district crew would, in fact, apply it to a kilometre for \$1,628 and the other two private contractors come out respectively at \$1,694 and \$1,725 per kilometre. And this here is information within your own department.

And it's clearly that there has been, as I said, a distortion of the figures that you have given in the comparisons of a private and public. And I think, suffice it to say, that this document here will clarify to the public because it is an internal document of your own department – indicates the competitive nature, in fact, the lower rate of the application by the public sector. And I think that clears up the myths that you have been trying to place before this House, and to unjustifiably make false accusations against the highway crews which provided excellent service to this province for 11 or more years, and were respected, I may say, in working in conjunction with the private sector when we were government. I think that anything that the minister says does not, in fact, detract from the figures of his own department, and I want to leave it at that and go on to the next item.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, no, no. You know, members opposite can make assumptions; they can make allegations. I've shared with them black and white print, I think it's only rightful . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: -- It's your document.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, my document, okay, I have said that I'm prepared to check into these two contracts.

Now I ask the minister opposite if he has the courage to prove his assumption and lay that document on the table down here so that the people of Saskatchewan can see this document, not just the NDP caucus. I have shared information with him and the people of Saskatchewan, and I'm quite prepared to share any more information. But anyone, Mr. Chairman, can stand up in this Assembly and wave a sheet of paper around and not put it on that Table to have to prove their facts.

Mr. Chairman, the member opposite – he said to talk to the press lay that document on that Table, the members of the press then can see it, they can then make up their own mind. Let's make that document public to the people of Saskatchewan. Let's not suppress it. You can stand there and make all the accusations, all of the allegations, but not have to prove one little point.

Incidentally, on top of this supposedly document that you have, it doesn't take into consideration the indirect cost. So I challenge you here today, member in the opposition, lay your document on the Table, and let the people of Saskatchewan take a look at it.

MR. KOSKIE: -- That's a wonderful challenge that the hon. minister puts forward, after he has gone through the Department of Highways and decimated it, without even consultation with the members of that department. Now he asks us to put forward further names, in order that he can further raise that department.

You have the information, Mr. Minister, to come clean on these particular contracts; and you know very well that the information that you've been giving, in respect to the comparisons of private versus public, is a myth that you've made up to try to justify your actions of firing people, many of whom have 20, 25, 30 years of service in a department. You ruthlessly destroyed many lives, and many families; and that is upon your conscience, Mr. Minister. And I'll tell you I'm not giving you the names of anybody else that you can go forward and try to destroy.

I think that the people of this province are very concerned, Mr. Minister. We had a budget come down on Wednesday which was touted to be the great budget of North America; and the very next day you came into this, you made your big announcement of firing hundreds of people at a time when there is no employment in this province. I think that this has been the disgrace of any government in Canada, what you have done.

And I'll tell you, the people of Saskatchewan will have an opportunity to judge your actions, your ruthless actions, and the way in which you have unmercifully attacked individuals who have, for years, have served the public with distinction. And I think that for you to ask, for you to ask, to have the utter audacity now to stand up in this House and to ask the names of individuals that made the particular report in respect to this, these three contracts, I think you're asking more than you deserve to get; and accordingly you will not be getting that information. Because I'm not going to destroy any more lives, or be a party to you destroying more lives.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I think we have to set this record straight once again, because, you know, it happens many times, I guess, in this Assembly when we're dealing with the opposition. I haven't asked for any names, Mr. Chairman. I've asked them to lay their document on the Table. They take . . . If there are some names on there, take the names. I'm not interested in names. I'm interested in material where they say that these contracts are all haywire, and there's corruption in there, and everything else. These are just nothing more than blatant allegations, half-truths by the opposition, Mr. Chairman.

AN HON. MEMBER: -- Fantasies.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Fantasies, one of my colleagues said. Yes, it's a fantasy. And what it's just pointing out, Mr. Chairman, that the member opposite is strictly just a legend in his own mind.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, when you talk about fantasies, I would have to say that probably there are a few fantasies in your life too. And one happens to be when you talk about the fact that the private sector can do work a lot cheaper than the public sector; when you talk about 25 or 35 per cent cheaper. And the figures that you gave me here really prove nothing. I asked for a detail for a job, of what it cost, what you used in calculating your figures. You said you would provide them.

Aside from that, Mr. Minister, I might be wrong, but it seems to me a number of years back, the now Lieutenant Governor of this province did a study on the private-public sector operations and the cost of each. And I think at that time, if that study could be found in your department, it would show that the private sector could not do the work cheaper than the public sector; and once again, Mr. Minister, that would prove that you are wrong in all that you have been saying for this term that you have been in office. It would prove that you are wrong. But I know that you won't look for that information, because you don't want someone to prove you wrong. You just want to go on saying something that you can't prove, and you don't want to have out there in the public. As long as you can say it often enough, and use enough money through your public communications budget to convince the public that you are right, then you are satisfied with it. It doesn't matter if you are right or not.

Mr. Minister, going from there I have another question, and that is regarding some grants that the department usually gives out, or has given out in the past to different organizations. I don't know how many are still within the Department of Highways and Transportation. The Western Transportation Advisory Council and Transport 2000, Port of Churchill Development Board, Sask Transportation Company subsidy, Community Bus Service subsidy, -- how many of these are still within the department, and how much have you paid to each of these different organizations in the way of grants?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, we'll have that information for you here shortly, but since the member opposite wanted to talk about the royal commission, which the government did ask for in the Johnson report, 1965. I just happen to have a paragraph here that I think we should share with all members opposite, and it's comparison of costs . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, we could get the whole report and read it if you want, but I think it's under Highways Department:

It costs approximately 3.3 cents per yard more for government outfits to move earth than for contractors. In other words, it is 18 per cent most costly for the government to do its own road construction.

Now this was a royal commission done in 1965, Mr. Chairman. You know, just another, just another example, you know. We could give you more, but we have this other information; I'll share it with you right away.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, could you . . . back under the years of the Liberal Administration, if I might add, that report went back.

But getting to another item, Mr. Minister . . .

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, on grants, the member had asked about grants that we pay under the Department of Highways. Port Churchill Development Board, \$34,998; Hudson Bay Route Association, \$1,650; Transport 2000, \$3,330; Western Transportation Advisory Council, that being WESTAC, \$45,055. We also have RTAC (Roads and Transportation Association of Canada) and WACHO (Western Association of Canadian Highway Officials) membership dues of \$15,127, and Saskatchewan Safety Council which it pays out to them, \$77,760.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Could the minister also give me the names of the current Highway Traffic Board members, and what their per diem is; what they're paid per kilometre of travel, and whether their hotel or meals are covered?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- On the motor carrier committee – these are fairly extensive. Does the member just want me to send them over to you? Is that fine if I just provide them with these extra copies? Okay? The per diem is \$90 per day, and they get the normal civil service rates for hotels, meals, and travel.

MR. YEW: -- Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Minister you mentioned earlier to me that your department still maintains a local labour policy within your department. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you may be able to provide me with this policy – your local labour policy?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- We can get you a new copy – don't have a new copy here – but we'll get a new copy and provide that to you, but it's the same as the old one.

MR. YEW: -- But at the same time, Mr. Minister, if you're not able to provide me with this information, I would like to know how many Northerners are presently employed with your department, the Department of Highways and Transportation?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Once again, Mr. Chairman, we don't have that exact number. We'll find that out, and I'll supply you with that material.

MR. YEW: -- In your project array, Mr. Minister, there's no mention here of airports. I am somewhat confused in terms of that portion of the capital construction budgets for such. I wonder if you might have information leading to the maintenance, as well as the upgrading of northern airports.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Yes, we have that, and we'll provide that to you as well.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, just regarding the cost of printing road-maps. Now, apparently, it's cost little more in this past year. Could you give me the costs of printing the road-maps, the amount that you printed, number of maps you printed, and the cost of them?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, in clarification, you can just nod Norm. Do you want this year's costs, or last year's costs? For '82 or '83? It was 18 cents for '83 or that was '84's was it? We'll provide that. 17.5 cents per copy for last year, and 18 cents per copy this year. '84, we're going to have a quantity of 450,000. I believe it was the same number as we had printed last year. But 17.5 cents for last year, 18 cents for this year.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, your annual report for '82-83 states 500,000 maps, and it's 150,000 less than the year previous because of substantial increase in costs. Could you give me, then, the year . . . possibly the '81-82 year it would be, or . . . it'll have to be '81-82 year, 'cause your annual report for '82-83 says that the cost was a lot higher, and there was 150,000 less printed during that year. So what was the cost for '81-82 then, that would have been that much cheaper, and why was there such an increase?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Once again, Mr. Chairman, we don't go back that far here. We've got from '82-83 and '83-84. We haven't got it here. We'll find that, and I'll provide that to you.

MR. SHILLINGTON: -- Thank you very much. Mr. Minister, is it your department that prints the air facilities maps, or is that Energy and Mines?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- That's Supply and Services that does that.

MR. SHILLINGTON: -- I have a question, then, of urban surface transportation under capital expenditure, subvote 2. I'll deal with it now, if the minister doesn't mind . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's most gracious of the minister.

Since it's no problem, could you tell me what -- why the reduction? This year's expenditures are about 60 per cent of last year's expenditures.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Basically, Mr. Chairman, because most of the major urban projects have been completed, like the 42nd Street Bridge and the Lewvan Drive which will be finished up.

MR. SHILLINGTON: -- Could the minister give me a list, sort of a project array, a list of what is included within the \$10 million? It isn't essential it be done this evening. If you can, all well and good. If you can't, you might want to supply it in writing. I leave that to the minister's discretion.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- That's fine, Ned, I'll supply it to the member in writing.

MR. SHILLINGTON: -- With respect to the city of Saskatoon, where are the plans, if any, with respect to an additional bridge across the river? I know the matter has been discussed, and I am not sure what degree of maturity the discussions obtained before the change in government, and I don't know what has happened after it, so perhaps you the minister could fill in.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Yes, another bridge in Saskatoon is quite a ways into the future because, after all, we did just complete the 42nd St. Bridge and that, so it would be quite a ways in the future. Right now we're moving on trying to complete the Borden Bridge and the Meridian Bridge up by Lloydminster. That's where our priorities are right now.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, in regard to highway maintenance crews, are you going to be going more into private sector maintenance crews or are you going to continue to keep whatever crews you have left as far as highways maintenance is concerned?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- No, as I've stated earlier, Mr. Chairman, the realignment in the Department of Highways and Transportation has taken place. There'll be no major realignments any more. We believe we now have the department doing what it should be doing. We have kept some of those employees in works branch to keep a window on the industry but no further major realignment projects for the Department of Highways and Transportation.

MR. LUSNEY: -- For this year or for other years? Are you just talking about the one year, or are you saying that there won't be in the foreseeable future, as far as you're concerned, any more realignments within the Department?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, as far as I'm concerned, Mr. Chairman, as a Minister of Highways and Transportation I believe we have that good balance has been established now in the department between the private sector and the public sector. And I'm the first to agree that we have some excellent employees out there. When I think of snow removal in the winter time, spot sealing, crack sealing in the summer time, you know, even the sign crews and that -- there's some very good, dedicated, hard-working employees in the Department of Highways and Transportation.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Well, Mr. Minister, I definitely have to agree with you that there are many good employees within the department. There were 237 of them earlier this year which aren't there anymore. We'd have to say that many of them do real good work, in snow clearly, and in many other areas of the

department. On the 237 that you have fired, you say you've set up a department in, or an office in Humfort House that's supposed to somehow find new jobs for them. Are you able to place many of those employees that were fired through that office that you have set up, and if you are able to place them – was it within the department, or are you trying to place them in the private sector?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, of the positions that have been abolished and that, we have an employment office, and an employment team of five personnel that work from eight to eight, assisting these employees and finding out what their bumping are, and we get a daily report received in my office as to what takes place in the employment office. And also, it's in communication with the road builders' office as well. Now the report, dated March the 30th, is the present one that I have: to date, 19 terminated, probationary; 6, no contact; 195 have indicated bumping; 13 resignations; 4 requested to be on the employment list, for the 237. We get a daily report in my office regarding this.

MR. LUSNEY: -- About those . . . it was 195, I believe you said, bumped?

AN HON. MEMBER: -- Bumping.

MR. LUSNEY: -- One hundred and ninety-five that have, that were, that have indicated that they are going to be bumping. What are you going to do with those people that they are going to bump? Are those going to have an opportunity to apply to your office to be placed in different jobs, or are those the ones, then, that are, that are actually going to wind up as the fired employees?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, these employees can bump up to four times, so at this stage it is too early yet to know where everything is going to lie. That's why the employment team is there and will be working until everything, hopefully, is cleared up. I would just like to add one further point, that there'll be 30 contracts will be coming up very shortly, to be advertised in the paper, and then later to be awarded, and this should create a great deal of employment on its own.

MR. LUSNEY: -- I did hear something like 30 contracts coming up very shortly. Are you saying that you are going to be letting out tenders for 30 new contracts in the near future, or what types of contracts are you talking about?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- There are 10 contracts closing in April, and 18 more closing the first part of May, so in the area of 28, 30 contracts, in there; and these will be for grading, and paving, and oiling, and that. And tenders will be accepted by the government from the private sector, and this is where the private sector will need this manpower to assist them in completing these contracts.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, that all sounds fairly nice to hear that there's going to be 30 contracts, or close to 30 contracts, being tendered out. However, I'm sure the private sector has a good number of employees that they have been using in the past, and they will not likely need additional employees. If they do hire any of the fired highway workers, that'll mean that they won't be rehiring some of the employees that they presently had on stand-by, that have been part-time employees or seasonable employees which will then be looking for a job because someone else replaced them.

And what we're actually saying is that, no matter how you look at it, there are going to be at least 400 people, and 450 people in this province that are going to be out of a job this summer because you aren't going to have additional contracts, or additional work out there to fill those, or to provide these people with employment. You're still going to have those people out there on unemployment, no matter whether they bump somebody else that means that somewhere down the line when that all ends, you're going to have 450 people out of work.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, just one other point just to show that these contracts, and that done by the private sector. I'll just read that one paragraph again:

A major shift of work to the private sector would require Saskatchewan road building contractors to engage an additional 100 to 150 workers. Wherever possible, road building contractors prefer to hire persons experienced in this type of work. This includes persons that have experience as equipment operators, drivers, mechanics, and general labourers.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, do you have a list of the people that you have fired, what their classification was -- were they engineers, were they just general labour from the public works department? Where did they come from, and what was their length of service, for all the ones that you let go, the 237, or whatever number it was?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Yes, just give us a minute here, and we'll have that list. Mr. Chairman, I'll share this list with the member opposite.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, you had mentioned earlier this evening, or this afternoon, that you are going to be spending a fair amount of money taking over some grid roads. Could you indicate at this time what grid roads you are going to be taking over, that the R.M.s have asked you to take over, and put into the highway system. Could you indicate just which roads they are, and what R.M.s they are in?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, once again, until the policy is announced by the Minister of Rural Development and myself on May 1st, which we did make a public commitment to the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. We will be, at that time then, taking a look at all roads in the province. There's none right now. We're not taking over any until the policy comes down, so that there is a direction for all of the roads, all of the R.M.s in the province of Saskatchewan.

MR. LUSNEY: -- So what you're saying then, for at least a year, '84-85, you don't anticipate taking over any grid roads at this point, you're just studying the whole grid road situation then.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well that's basically it. I couldn't quite say that, because depending when the final details, the mechanics of the policy are worked out, and how they will effect each R.M., that will more or less be a decision up to the Minister of Rural Development.

MR. ENGEL: -- On the general policy that you're working out to take over grid roads, are you going to be looking at highway or road traffic courts, and weights and stuff that they are going to haul, or are you looking at an access type road that provides access from point A to point B, that gives it continuity? Because I think that that's a key issue that's out in the country. Because I know in my constituency, one grid road that was taken over from Limerick south, it was important that that road went into Highways, not so much because of the highway count and the amount of traffic that's on that road, but the one R.M. in the north end might plough the snow on Tuesdays, and the other R.M. maybe goes out there on Thursday, and during the winter they couldn't get out no matter what happened, because there was no correlation. By the time these guys got around to plough their road, the other one wasn't done. So I'd like you to consider more than just highway count.

I think the linking of communities and the access to certain areas needs to be done. The grid road system is great. I think a super grid road is an improvement in that direction, but there is some areas that neither one will accommodate and it should be . . . Highway should be considered, because of the percentage of

money you're putting into super grid, it isn't that much more to take it over into the Highways, and it gives that much better access. So that's a comment I'd like you to consider very carefully.

The other comment I want to make, and this is this aspect of bumping, and I know you sent my colleague a list of the 195 or so people that were laid off, but the chain reaction, Mr. Minister, I think will get to you in about two years time, because there is a bumping thing in there, and there's about four times around. There isn't going to be very many of your 2,600 people that aren't going to be shook up a little. They might be shook up enough to know what to do if the Minister of Highways and his colleagues on that side of the way . . . And what I'm wondering is, why get yourself into the kind of situation where you force this kind of a bad morale on the people in your Department of Highways? I think the morale amongst highway workers is the lowest it's ever been.

Tonight my colleague and I were sitting and eating dinner, and somebody overheard us and said, "You guys politicians?" He says, "Boy, are you in trouble for what you've done to the highway workers." And we were even getting blamed for the mess you're creating amongst the morale. And I think, if you'd take a lesson, they are cutting back in Manitoba, for example, but if you allow it to happen by just the people that are retiring and quitting, and just put a hiring freeze on for a while, you can accomplish the same thing and be much more delicate, much more tactful. I think treating highway workers as second class citizens has been a mistake you've made, Mr. Minister, and by blatantly announcing . . . What are you really trying to accomplish by saying, "We're going to fire these 195?" And then you give them a chance to bump, and then somebody else . . . We really don't know who got fired. That list maybe isn't the case, because four turns down the road it will be somebody else. Why go with that kind of policy in dealing with human beings, and lies, and jobs that are out in the country?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all we'll talk about the grid road take-overs, and the member is right, we have to look at many areas. We have to look at traffic volume, types of traffic carried on those roads, if branch line abandonment has taken place as well, if it's a major, a connecting link between two major highways, all of these things have to be taken into consideration. And my colleague, the Minister of Rural Development, is studying this very closely and very carefully and putting up a very fair and equitable policy for all the R.M.s in the province of Saskatchewan.

Regarding the lay-offs, Mr. Chairman, it was not an easy decision to make. It really wasn't an easy decision to make, but I do have a responsibility to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. Now the members opposite will not agree with me and we have a basic difference in philosophy – that we believe that the roads can be built cheaper by the private sector, the members opposite don't; that's fair enough. It wasn't an easy decision to make, Mr. chairman, it really wasn't, but that's why I went to the Association of Consulting Engineers and the Saskatchewan Road Building Association, to make sure that there was going to be jobs there for these people, with this shift from public to private sector. And oh well, as I said, we will not agree on this, we will agree to disagree. It wasn't a decision taken lightly, it was done after a lot of thought, and a lot of consultation, Mr. Chairman, not a decision taken lightly, but it's a decision that was made by this government in, I guess, response to my responsibility to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

MR. ENGEL: -- Mr. Minister, I want to draw one more issue to your attention. By your very own statement tonight, you said that actually after the 195 were fired last year, there were only about 30 shortly after, that were directly looking for work. There were only about 30 that you affected, and yet you announced, and you raised a flag, and said there's 195 fired. I think you, as a minister, were trying to show yourself as a champion of the road builder, and a champion of the contractor, and because you cut back from about 1,300 miles worth of grading in '81-81, to 979 in '82-83, you had to raise a flag, and you had to get a sign out there to the public saying, "Look how many people we've fired. We're

giving the work to the contractors.” When, in fact, 30 per cent of their equipment was rusting because they were doing that much less work.

The same thing is happening this year. You’re still only grading 985 miles total, with grading, oiling, surfacing, the whole bit, only comes to 985 miles. You maybe can make the argument all you want to me about how many yards are involved. I won’t buy it. I won’t buy it. I know a little bit about moving dirt. You’re trying to tell the contractors, “Look boys, I’m your champion. I’m firing 260 people.” When, maybe when the bumping is all done and the movement around, maybe it was only 30 or 35 being affected, but you’ve affected the morale of your entire department. You don’t care about people, you only care about politics.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Now, Mr. Chairman, once again we will agree to disagree on this.

I do believe that I have a responsibility to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan to make sure that we can get the best mile – a longer mile of road built – for their tax dollar. You will not agree with me. It’s a fact.

We will agree to disagree in here tonight. When we say about a cut in a program, I look at the ‘83-84 levels, the ‘84-85 in rural transportation.

Last year we spent \$91,275,000 in rural roads. You come from a rural riding. This year, we’re going to spend \$99,050,000 on the rural transportation system of our province, partially because, and I think you will agree with me, the federal government doesn’t care about the roads in western Canada. I think we can agree on that, too. They will not accept their responsibility. The responsibility has been passed on to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

MR. ENGEL: -- You fail to comment on the basic philosophy that you told us, in your own words tonight, that only 30 people were directly affected by the lay-offs last year. Because of the bumping procedure and all, there was directly only 30 people affected.

Why couldn’t your department announce a program that’s humane, that cares about people, that cares about the kind of employment you’re going to have for those that are left, and say that we’re going to cut back by 30, and be reasonable about it? But then you wouldn’t have got that cloud out in the country, having the road builders thinking they’re going to get some work.

If one of the reasons why the galleries were full of contractors waiting for you to make your announcement was that they thought well, maybe this year, there will be some acceleration in activity in road building; maybe this year we’ll get something – “Now, if we can get something that we can get our contracts into and bid on and get some work, we can pick up 150 or more people,” they said. And I believe that. But they didn’t.

They are 30 per cent behind the ‘80-81 level. There’s still 30 per cent less work going. If you’re calling 30 tenders, that’s not bad. But what I’m saying is you missed the mark as far as dealing with people. You missed the mark as far as providing some alternative of contract for the contractors, and you’re not doing your job, besides.

The money just isn’t there. Your figures just don’t indicate it. And I think the way you handled the people in your entire staff of 265 people – it’s a disgrace to them. Every one of those people are going to be worried: am I going to be bumped? Is somebody going to move into my job? Where am I going to go? Who else’s job am I going to challenge? And I think the only job that’s really going to be challenged down the line is going to be your very own.

It's going to land up in the heads of the 25 of you that are in cabinet, and I think you're the ones that aren't going to be back to answer for the unrest you've caused all across Saskatchewan, not only in the guys that are working for your department, but the road builders are just as unhappy, and I know they are. I've been talking to them.

MR. THOMPSON: -- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, could you indicate why you still have the whole engineering department under the Department of Highways?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, the member will have to clarify that for me, because, I mean, where else would we have engineers but in Department of Highways? You'll have to clarify that for me, please.

MR. THOMPSON: -- Okay. The Department of Highways does the engineering work on all the highways and roads under their jurisdiction in the province. Do you still maintain that function, or have you got rid of some of the engineers and have you . . . Has the private sector taken that over at all?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- An additional 20 per cent has been turned over to the private sector, and those people are included in the 257; the 237 what I call real positions and the 20 vacancies. And that's why . . . It's been around, the letter from the association of consulting engineers, that they do need this many employees as well.

MR. THOMPSON: -- So what you indicated then, Mr. Minister, is that 20 per cent of the engineers who will be doing the work on the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon? 20 per cent of the engineers will be consulting? My question to you, Mr. Minister, is: will the Department of Highways still be doing the engineering work on the roads that are in construction? Will they be going out and taking the compaction tests, and checking out the yardage that is put into that piece of road to see that this has been done properly?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- 70 per cent of the design and construction will still be done in-house.

MR. THOMPSON: -- You still didn't answer my question. I'm asking you: who is going to be out checking the highways to see that the yardage that is supposed to go into that certain contract is put in? And who is checking the compaction on that road, and the proper slopes, or whatever you use on your highways? Is that still going to be done by Department of Highways staff?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Okay. On the 70 per cent there is still in-house, nothing has changed. On the consultant's part of the work, the 30 per cent (that's in total; it was 10 per cent before, another 20 now, makes it 30 per cent) of this work has been turned over to the consulting engineers. They will do their own checking on these roads.

MR. THOMPSON: -- And so the Department of Highways engineers will not totally be checking for the compaction of the road that's being built, for the amount of yardage that goes in? It will be . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, that don't matter. You're still going to have contracted engineers, or is it going to be the job of the individual who is awarded the contract? Is he going to be using his own engineers to check the compaction of that road?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- There's a group out there, Mr. Chairman, of qualified consulting engineers. Nothing to do with the contractors. You have the contractor that builds the road; you have the consulting engineer that does the design, checks the specs on it, the borrow pits, everything else. That's separate.

That's separate from the contractor that is building that section of road. He designs it, he does the check and balance of it, of the contract. Nothing to do with the contract at all. Separate identity.

MR. THOMPSON: -- Then who makes the line of inspection of that highway? Is it Department of Highways staff, or is it engineers from the private sector?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- The consulting engineers on the projects that they are doing. They do the final specs.

MR. THOMPSON: -- Could you indicate if there has been any engineering work done and any planning done on Highway 155 into Turnor Lake, from the junction of 155 into Turnor Lake? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Has there been any engineering work and planning done on Highway 155 from the junction of Turnor Lake to Turnor Lake, from the junction of 155 into Canoe Narrows?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- No, not yet.

MR. THOMPSON: -- You've had a request from the community of Beauval to put lights on their road and signs. Is this going to be carried out this summer by your department?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Do you mean the lights in town?

MR. THOMPSON: -- No. Highway 155 – ones between the community of Beauval. I've written you a letter on this and the arena and their ball parks. What they have been asking for is speed signs and lighting for that crossing.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- We'll have to check that and get the information for you. Keep going.

MR. THOMPSON: -- You indicate in your array that you expect to have 88.81 kilometres of carry-over. Could you indicate how you arrive at this figure?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- It depends on many factors here when we, when we look at estimated carry-over. I mean, depending on when the contracts are tendered, when the contractors start on site, weather problems in there. It's an estimated carry-over by the department officials.

MR. THOMPSON: -- Mr. Chairman, my next question is: when you award a tender, and you have indicated on July 1 you'll have approximately 65 per cent of your contracts tendered, a little over half of their contracts tendered, is it not so that when you construct a highway in one summer, you leave it till the next summer for paving and putting on of your oil treatment base?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Not necessarily. It depends on the type of structure that we're putting on. A very important factor in road building, that as soon as that grade is completed that you get a seal coat on it right away to kind of waterproof it so you don't get moisture into the subgrade. But depending on the types of soil you're working in and depending when the contract was let as to how much paving, when you look at say, pavement B going on a road, and that, depending if you were in the southwest country where there is some sandy areas. That's very good material to work with, and you can move along very fast on those, where right around Regina here, with the water – there is some problems in the heavier land.

MR. THOMPSON: -- Mr. Minister, I would suggest that your figure of carry-over is a way low in both your surfacing and your construction projects. You have approximately 200 kilometres of your contracts

for construction out of the 414 kilometres. There's approximately 200 kilometres, just about half of them kilometres be constructed, brand new construction, before you can get in and award the surfacing contracts and the oiling contracts.

I suggest, Mr. Minister, that there is absolutely no way, when you have about 50 per cent of your contracts awarded by July 1, taking into consideration the type of weather that we have. We could have rainy weather, we could have an early freeze-up. I suggest that this is a misleading document, and that your carry-over is going to be far greater than what you have – the 88 kilometres. You are going to be lucky to get that 200 kilometres built, let alone paved and oiled. Would you agree with that, or would you not agree with that?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- No, Mr. Chairman, I would not agree with that because depending on, as I said, types of soil, depending on what type of pavement you're going to put on the top of it, depending on weather so much; last year the boys were moving dirt right into November. You can have an early snowfall and shut them down the first part of October. You're dealing with the weatherman on a lot of these projects, but the deputy assures me that is a very close figure to what our estimated carry-over will be.

MR. THOMPSON: -- While just taking a look at your contracts, and I see that what you have done – you have awarded a lot of small contracts. I don't see any of the big contracts that used to be awarded, the 15 mile contracts. Most of these are in the neighbourhood of 13 kilometres and they are quite small. But I would suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that you're going to have a pretty tough time in constructing these roads, moving the dirt, putting it in place, and preparing it for oil treatment and paving.

I just think that this array is misleading, and I just say that when we are going through your estimates next spring, which I doubt if we will, I think this is the last highways estimates that we will be going through for this administration. I predict that you'll bring that budget down and call an election next spring. I'll just mark my word. I suggest that this array is misleading. There is no way that you're going to construct this amount of highway and pave the same amount that you're constructing.

So I say that you've got a lot of carry-over, and next year . . . Just mark my word. I'm sorry to say that we probably won't be able to go through this next year. You can laugh, Paul, but I think this will be the last time that we go through highway budgets with this administration for at least another 50 years.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- No, Mr. Chairman, I can't agree with the member opposite in that. I'm dealing with what I believe are experts, whether it be the district engineers, whether it be the professional road builders. I've got a great deal of confidence in the department maintenance staff, in the road builders that are going to construct these roads. I can't control the weather. I can't control the weather.

But I can tell you, but I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, that I will be around this Assembly a long, long time after the members opposite have gone off to other employment.

MR. ENGEL: -- There's one issue. I don't have a air facilities map. I haven't been able to get one in the last two years. What I'm asking, Mr. Minister, you said the printing is at Government Services. You still have within your department, though, the people that will correlate the information that goes into it and decide who makes the map and that kind of thing. That's still Department of Highways, is it?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Yes, Mr. Chairman, that's correct.

MR. ENGEL: -- How far along are they with sending the material over to the printer's as to when they're going to print their new air facilities map? What kind of a time frame have you got in mind, or when will that be done? Because I understood that was going to be done two years ago.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Before, Mr. Chairman, it was only upgraded every four years. The deputy informs me that this fall we're looking at upgrading another one.

MR. ENGEL: -- How long ago is it since the last one was done? What is the date on that?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- It's been two years since the last one is done, so we'll be a little . . . We'll be a year earlier if we come in with one this fall.

MR. ENGEL: -- How many were printed at that time, and how come they're not available?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- I stand corrected, Mr. Chairman. It was printed in '81. We don't have an idea from '81 as to how many were printed. We'll find that information out and provide it to you.

MR. ENGEL: -- Would you also find out if there are maps around some place that are hiding in the wings? Or can we photocopy a master copy or something, that some of these maps could be made available?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- We'll find you a map, and I'll present it to you later on in the Assembly some time during session.

MR. ENGEL: -- There's one more area, there's one more area that concerns me a little bit, and my colleague from Athabasca raised that, and you told him that about 30 per cent of the engineering's going to be farmed out to private firms. The private firm will contract with you, or you will assign to them a certain road to be built. What process do you intend to use there? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . What process will you intend to use to determine which engineering firm will do the work, and how will they get their jobs as far as determining which roads they engineer?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- We're going to leave, Mr. Chairman, this with the transportation engineers, the people that do have the expertise. There's a committee within the department. There's also a committee within the Association of Consulting Engineers. We're leaving this up to the specialists, the transportation engineers, to make these decisions.

MR. ENGEL: -- Now, is this going to be similar -- I served on municipal council for years, and we had private consultants design and do road . . . (inaudible) . . . Is this going to be on a similar basis as to what's happening in for rural affairs now? You see, down there, let's say the R.M. 74 wants to build a road. They will go the department; the department engineer will say these are the engineers that are available, and they can determine who their engineer is, and that engineer will design that piece of road.

Have you that type of system in place, or how do you determine? Will your districts farm that work out within the district, or how are you going to determine who gets which piece of road to build?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- The list of qualified engineers will be designed in head office. The transportation engineers, they will make the decision. They have the professional ability in this area, along with the Association of Consulting Engineers. They will be making the decisions on this level.

MR. ENGEL: -- It seems to me that there should be -- if you want to privatize the engineering end of it -- it seems to me there should be some way that there would be a tender process to determine which engineering firm does which piece of road. You'd think there'd be some way that you could get off the political hook and saying that this engineering firm give you X number of dollars, or this one give you that many, and then your staff of six, that now doesn't include people like you counted, the former minister of highways staff. I could get into that one.

And I feel that when you were talking that he has six people, and now you've only, or he had seven, and you've only got six, or he had six and you've got five. I didn't write those names down.

But there are some people in your staff that are not doing the work that was done if you'd count Hanson, for example. You have another staff person as doing that, so you have more people to follow up and see just how politically involved these engineers are, and you can then determine which one gets a job.

But after the engineering firm has a job, Mr. Minister, now we have engineer A, we have engineer A . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and that's what's happening. That's the point I'm getting to, to the minister from Maple Creek. We have engineer A deciding that they are going to -- you decide somehow, through a process, that that engineer is going to design and build the 18 Highway into Coronach. Okay.

So you farm that out to an engineering firm. This engineering firm draws the designs. You, as the department, still call the contracts, do you not?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Yes, we still call the contracts.

MR. ENGEL: -- So the contract is let, and you decide who gets the job; that same engineering firm A will then go out in the field, stake, and supervise, and do all the work related to building that road similar to what a highways engineer did in the past.

When the road is all done, and inspection certificate is signed . . . When I was on a municipal council in the Swift Current area, a public servant by the name of Larry Johnson, who was the municipal road engineer that a lot of you people maybe know, came out and looked at that road with the councillors and decided if this road was up to snuff. Even if a private engineering firm did the engineering and decided whether that road would pass, or wouldn't pass.

What kind of a form have we got in place? What kind of a check have you got in place to determine that we're going to get value for our money? How are you, as a minister, going to determine, according to what you told my colleague from Athabasca, that this private engineering firm is going to have entire responsibility, and fork out the taxpayers' money? Who decides, and who does the hold-back, and who worries about that job is done, and the completion compaction is done, that enough yards of sealant are used or gravel or whatever?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, the deputy tells me that the construction engineer in the area will make a final inspection of the project, to make sure that the taxpayers of Saskatchewan do not get ripped off, in conjunction with the consulting engineer on the location.

MR. ENGEL: -- This is a local department engineer, the field man; good. You didn't tell my colleague that, and I was just wondering what kind of check and balance is in place to determine, because the person that pays the money is the one that should sign the final release on it. And if we don't have that in place, something could go amiss. Particularly in the fact that you are letting out the engineering jobs that are not on a tender basis, Mr. Minister. We are going to be watching that very closely.

MR. YEW: -- Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Minister, I want to take issue with your 1983 provincial map. The issue has been raised, as well, by a good number of the communities in northern Saskatchewan. There is a committee known as the provincial roads and highways map committee. In your blind haste to sell off our resources in northern Saskatchewan, you have some propaganda here that states: "Saskatchewan – We're Open for Business." That's all fine and dandy, and the priority that you've placed with tourism.

You go on to say that:

Saskatchewan is a province on the move, not just in agriculture and industry as more and more people discover us as a tourist centre.

For the visitor, we have it all.

Where would you start? High on the pine-clad slopes of Cypress Hills, around a campfire, counting the stars? In the fascinating Big Muddy Badlands, hot on the outlaw trail of Butch Cassidy and Sam Kelly?

Funny you didn't mention other late heroes in here like the Mad Trapper, or Louis Riel. You go on to say, "Or somewhere in the North, in a little log cabin, on the edge of a lake."

The last paragraph is the one I take exception to. You go on to state that the northern half is rugged, wild, beautiful, populated with lakes – not people. Well, Mr. Minister, I want to tell you that there are 36 communities in northern Saskatchewan, and there are 12 bands in northern Saskatchewan, and there are a total, an approximate total population of 28,000 people in northern Saskatchewan. In your blind haste to sell off our resources, you are misleading . . . I don't know if it was a deliberate attempt on your part, on your government's part, to mislead the people of this province and the outside tourist trade. Or is it simply out of ignorance on your part, or disrespect for the people in the northern areas?

But I want to advise the minister that there are people in northern Saskatchewan. I want to dispute the fact that your provincial map states that there are no people. I want to ask the minister now: do you or don't you agree that there are people up there, and that those people need some recognition, some respect, and some priority preference from your government in terms of our transportation system?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't have a copy of the '83 map here. I didn't know it was such a great hit with the people, but it's obvious that it is, and I have some comments on it, and to say that there is no people from northern Saskatchewan, we've got two members in here that are living proof we've got people in northern Saskatchewan, we've got two members in here that are living proof we've got people in northern Saskatchewan. I don't say that it's a great representation of those people from northern Saskatchewan, because I've met many of those people. I've had delegations in from Sandy Bay, from Beauval, very nice people. I've been up to Ile-a-la-Crosse. Their hospitality is second to none. I believe some of the finest people in Saskatchewan live in northern Saskatchewan. Their representation here in this Chamber maybe leaves a bit to be desired.

And in those comments in there, and I'll have a copy of that map here shortly, what I was quite simply trying to point out in there was that it's a pretty beautiful place up there. I holiday up there with my family myself in the summer-time. Lovely place. I'll tell you, it's a lot nicer to holiday up in northern Saskatchewan than it is out beside Albert Street. I guess what I was trying to point out, what I was trying to point out, that for tourists I think it is the greatest place in the world, and some of the greatest people

live up in northern Saskatchewan. So don't try and twist things around. You've got some warped sense of humour or something – I don't know. But don't get warped with me.

I am going to read the paragraph to you. I think you have trouble reading. "The northern half is rugged, wild, and beautiful." It is, yes it is. "Populated with lakes, not people." There's a lot of lakes up there. I don't really get off and get excited about going out here to camp beside the little slough we have out in the front here. And I don't know too many tourists that do. Thousands have sat by our waters with fish that line up to bite.

There's nothing I enjoy more than going fishing in northern Saskatchewan with my two sons. Don't try and twist things around. We're trying to promote tourism, promote the people from this area of the province to go to northern Saskatchewan – a great place to holiday with your family. Don't 'you try and twist it around. Towering forests of spruce and pine, historic waterways –one of the last great escapes in North America; and you want to condemn me for trying to promote tourism in northern Saskatchewan. Shame on you, I say, shame. You go and tell the people at Ile-a-la-Crosse, Beauval, Sandy Bay. You tell them that. They don't believe it.

MR. YEW: -- Now, Mr. Minister, I want to tell you that that finger ought to be turned around at your administration, at your government when you mention the word shame. In your blind haste to sell off our resources, in your blind haste of give-aways to the multinational corporations, to the banks, the bond dealers, those far-out companies from the east. You forgot to mention that there are 28,000 people living in the northern administration district who need help.

The unemployment up there is what I'm referring to. There are 90 to 95 per cent unemployment. Welfare reliance is up 60 per cent. But where is your government's priority in terms of economic development, in terms of economic development for Northerners? But are you . . . what is your government doing about that?

I took exception of this 1983 provincial map which came out of your administration, because it was misleading. It stated that there is no people in northern Saskatchewan, and I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, that there exists people in northern Saskatchewan – some 36 communities and about 12 reserves in northern Saskatchewan – and the fact is, they exist. They are a people, and they are a part of this province. And in terms of your budget you have alienated, in terms of your last three budgets, you have alienated the top half of this province. And with your literature that's coming out of your branch, it still further alienates; in fact, you stated that there's no people in northern Saskatchewan. Well, I dispute that. The fact is there are people in northern Saskatchewan. I hope to heck you don't classify us as little brown animals because we're just as human as you are.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. YEW: -- Getting back to that meeting that we had last Wednesday, Mr. Minister, we had a discussion with a delegation from Sandy Bay as well as Pelican Narrows. I want to ask the Minister: do you or do you not . . . as I understood from our discussion you said that you, yourself, or some senior official, would set up a schedule to meet the people in Sandy Bay some time after this session – the spring and summer session of this Legislative Assembly sitting. Have you completed a schedule for that visit into Pelican Narrows and Sandy Bay?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, I'll answer the last question first. What I'm simply stated to that group, (and you were in with that group) that myself, or my Legislative Secretary, when session was over, would come up there for a personal inspection on this road. The delegation seemed

very pleased with that. I haven't set the calendar on it yet. I believe, did we not meet last Friday? I think it was last Friday we met with them. Maybe it was last Thursday. Well, it was last Wednesday. No, because I don't know when session is going to be over. And let me just tell you, Mr. Chairman, with these type of rinkydink questions we're getting, session may never be over. I can't believe the types of questions coming from members opposite. On one hand, he's complaining about the map. He's saying there's high unemployment and the next hand he's saying, "Don't promote tourism. Don't give them a job." You know, that's the NDP philosophy. You've got unemployment but don't try and solve the problem. Well, I believe this government is answering that problem. We're trying to solve those problems — problems, Mr. Chairman, that we didn't create. Problems that we once again inherited from the previous administration.

MR. YEW: -- I want to state to the minister, that I didn't say that you should put thumbs down on tourism, the tourism industry . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . We'll check *Hansard's* later, and I specifically want to say that I'm not throwing tourism out of the economic options that we have in this province. I dispute that, Mr. Minister. But one thing that ought to be looked into as well, while you're promoting tourism, (which is fine) you shouldn't do it at the expense of the existing traditional industries that we have in northern Saskatchewan, and that is the commercial fishing industry and the trapping industry. Those are traditional industries that many of our people have relied on for years and years and years. That is the only bit of income that they have to supplement their meagre allowances that you have in terms of other provincial programs.

Mr. Minister, I want to ask you what is your current policy with respect to the highway from Lynn Lake, Manitoba, into Kinoosao. What is your current program or policy with respect to Highway 324, I believe; 394, Highway 394 from Lynn Lake, Manitoba, into Kinoosao?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, we have a maintenance agreement with the Government of Manitoba to maintain that section of highway for us.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, a couple of questions. One has to do with the advertising firms that you mentioned before. You had some three firms, Dome, and Roberts & Poole. Could you indicate if the work that they did was contracted, or did you choose them as firms to do the work for you? Pardon me, not contracted – tendered, Mr. Minister. Was that work tendered, or did you just choose them to do the work that you had within the department?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, we selected Dome Advertising to be the main player in our advertising for the department.

MR. LUSNEY: -- So there was no tendering process on the advertising firm at all, then. It was just a selection. Regarding signs, highway signs, then, Mr. Minister. You've put up a good number of them in the past couple of years. How were the signs . . . Who manufactured the signs, and were they tendered out or not?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, it was Signal Industries that made the highways signs for us, and they're the same company that did the signs for the previous government.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, do you have the number of contractors in this province, the contractors that have been in here for a number of years, the established contractors? Do you have a number of how many there are in this province?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- If you'll give us a few minutes, we'll have that information for you. If you've got another question, let's proceed.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Well, my next question would be very similar, then, Mr. Minister. And that would be if you have the number of contractors that are established in here with . . . That, then would depend on my next question, so I would like to know just how many contractors you have here.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, there's about 41 in grading and paving, and about a dozen gravel crushers. So 54, somewhere in that area.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, could you indicate how many of those contractors, both in the grading and paving, and the crushers, were in existence here prior to '82 and how many of those may have been established since 1982, that were Manitoba or Alberta contractors that set up subsidiary offices here in Saskatchewan and are bidding on the contracts now?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, we don't have that figure here, but to my knowledge there has been none go broke in the province of Saskatchewan since we've become government.

So it would pretty well be the same number of contractors.

MR. LUSNEY: -- The question I asked, Mr. Minister, is: how many of these are you aware of that have established since 1982, and may have been Alberta or Manitoba contractors and set up a subsidiary in Saskatchewan? And I could name one, like Ace Asphalt, or any of those. How many of those are you aware of in the past couple of years, that have come into Saskatchewan, set up offices here, and are now building roads or bidding on contracts from Saskatchewan, and not necessarily being a company that exists here, but just has an office set up here?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Well, Mr. Chairman, we don't have that information here. The department officials will have to go back and bring that information back. Mr. Chairman, it's not that I don't want to give it; we don't have the information with us here tonight. Quite prepared to provide it to the members of the Assembly.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Mr. Minister, could you indicate how many contracts in the past two years have been given out to outside contractors, from out of the province?

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, maybe while we're finding that information -- if the member has some other questions, we could move ahead to those.

MR. KOSKIE: -- Mr. Chairman, the member from Pelly has requested to know how many contracts, were, in fact, let or give to out-of-the-province . . . That's right. And I want to know, also, the amount of those individual contracts, if any, that were awarded to outside contractors.

And secondly -- I have other questions, but I need that particular information as soon as possible, because there's other questions that follow from that information. And I think it's very, very important, Mr. Minister, very, very important to the people of Saskatchewan to know exactly what, in fact, is going on -- whether or not the contractors of this province, who have made a very substantial investment, are indeed getting the contracts. Or whether you're giving it to some of your friends in other provinces, good Tory contractors who are coming in here and taking up the work of the Saskatchewan people because of the depressed conditions in Alberta and British Columbia. Those two provinces, Alberta and

British Columbia. And they're coming east from the west. As the premier so often alludes, they're coming in here by the thousands.

What we want to know is the number of contracts that you have awarded to outside contractors, the total amount, and we'll be willing to wait for that answer because I think it should be pertinent to the concern that the public has today of so many contracts and so many yellow licences of the employees that are working on those highway crews, working on doing telephone work, power work, and in particular, highway work.

And I want to say, Mr. Minister, that that is part of the reason why so many of the people in the Department of Highways were fired – because of the fact that you have turned it over to outside contractors. You have turned it over to outside contractors from Alberta, and they have brought in their own employees, and as a consequence, you have denied Saskatchewan residents who have lived here all their life an opportunity, work, so let's get that information Mr. Minister. It's very important.

HON. MR. GARNER: -- Mr. Chairman, we don't have that information here tonight, but I will be more than pleased to provide that to the members the next time when we're into estimates. If they've got some other questions, we can move on to that, but believe you me, Mr. Chairman, I can't wait to tell the members of the Assembly and provide them with that answer.

MR. LUSNEY: -- Well, Mr. Minister, some of the questions, further questions, would depend on the answers that you give us. Seeing that you have to look up some of these answers, possibly then we could suggest to the minister that, since we're just about at 10 o'clock, you could call it 10 o'clock, and that'll give you time to get out some of these answers, get some of the answers together, and we could continue again first thing tomorrow.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10 p.m.