

## EVENING SITTING

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

## Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure

## Education

## Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 8

## Item 1 (continued)

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just a few questions this evening. I know that there was some discussion earlier about the education development fund. I just wanted to know, Madam Minister — and I made a note of it and I wondered whether I had made the correct note — you said you had 45 projects approved under the education development fund. Was that last year — I guess it would be — or is it this year? Give me the total number of projects approved.

And if you would, while you're consulting with your officials, can you undertake to give me a list of the projects that have been approved, so that I can have them. I don't need you to give them to me orally right now, but if you can hand them over some time, I would appreciate that.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — The number 45 that I had given you this afternoon had to do with projects that were geared to the drop-out factor. Out of the total EDF (educational development fund), it was 714 projects. And yes, I will send you a list of those projects. I don't have it here tonight, but we'll get it for you.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you. I wrote you a letter on February 18th, in which I essentially asked those questions. I asked how many proposals were approved in 1985. Was that the 714? 1985? Okay. And then I asked for a list of the projects approved and their location, and I was hoping you might have them here as a result of the letter. But then maybe your staff hasn't forwarded it to you. If you would check that, I would appreciate it.

Another question: what criteria, Madam Minister . . . I'll just wait.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — I'm not sure what letter you are referring to, that you sent. It is my understanding that we in fact did send some information to you, arising out of the '85 budget. The projects to date, totalling 714, is up until March 12th of 1986.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you. Well please check in your office because I do not have a reply. But if you undertake to give me that information, that would be just great.

Madam Minister, what criteria are applied in approving the projects? What kind of criteria do you apply? I know it's not meant to fund continuing or existing projects. That's been said by yourself and by some of your officials. Can I ask: what are the criteria that are applied?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, the fund is broken down into three categories, those being: learning resources; efficiency grants; and the education

improvement initiatives. It is under the last category that there is a set criteria — approximately six of them: implementing school effectiveness, development and further strengthening of basic skills, the preparation for life under such things as consumer education and career counselling, workplace readiness — those types of things would fall under that category; also the drop-out prevention and attendance improvement, gifted education programs, and community responsiveness are the six points of criteria under the EDF.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Would the payment of salaries of school librarians or librarian assistants qualify for funding under the education development fund?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — There is no reason why it couldn't. I am aware of a couple of divisions that in fact are paying a salary to a person to co-ordinate various aspects over the five years of the EDF. What we have done is ask boards to keep in mind and to work into their plan — if, in fact, they are hiring people on it — what you do at the end of the five years, because it is a five-year fund. And we haven't dealt with it any longer than the five years to this point in time.

So they could conceivably hire a library person. I'm aware of some that, for instance, have a program co-ordinator that they are doing through the education development fund. There are others that have hired a gifted education consultant. But all of those are on the understanding that at the end of the five years they must show how they are going to fit into their overall system, or delete the position.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — I assume, Madam Minister, you have assured yourself that no education development fund money is being used in some school divisions to make up for the shortage of funds because of lack of operating grants and lack of other revenues to pay for regular operating costs. Can you assure me that that is not happening? Have you taken steps to make sure that it's not happening?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all I have a fair amount of faith in the honesty of people. And being that the process we went through in setting up the EDF was one of in fact consulting with boards and directors before the finalization of the program took place, leads me to believe that that in fact is not happening.

I don't see a need for it. When I look at the grants over the last couple of years, they have in fact been meeting the needs of school boards. Granted, we are always going to have some where regardless of whether the operating grant is at 5 per cent or 10 per cent, due to things like reassessment or assessment, or declining enrolment, they will have less operating grant than what they might have had the year before. But no, I don't see school boards using this fund to pick up their ongoing operating costs.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Well, I hope that's the case, Madam Minister. Can you tell me: at what level are the decisions on grant applications or project applications made? Are they made at the regional superintendency level, or do they all come to the department centrally, or do they all come

to your office? Where are these decisions made?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — The decisions are made at the regional director's level, except for a few where there's been a question mark as to whether in fact it fits under the criteria or any of the three categories that are outlined. And in that particular case it comes to a central committee within the department. But by far the majority are made at the local level with the regional director.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — When you provide me with the list of projects — what I mean by list is the list and what the project was for, as you've undertaken to do — can you also break it down by some marking system or something, those projects which had to come to the central level because there was some uncertainty about them? Can you let me know at that time what they were as well? I don't need it now but I would appreciate having it.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — We don't keep, first of all, a list of those. We get approximately one to two every month, and the regional directors, all of them as a group, sit on the central committee and deal with the issue.

And then it is up to the individual regional director from that point to take it back and deal with it with the local director of education and/or the school board.

But we don't keep that central list.

It's been a question of clarification, sometimes, of the criteria. I will use the example of alcohol and drug education. Can that in fact fit under the criteria? And the question was yes, it could through guidance and counselling. But we do not keep a list.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — So you have no way of knowing which projects were referred to the department proper, then. Is that what you're telling me?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well we have a list of the total number of projects that have received approval, but we do not keep a specific list for those where there has been a question mark of not fitting into the criteria.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Well, Madam Minister, I find that rather peculiar. You stand up in the House and you tell me what the criteria are. And I think that's quite adequate.

You say that in that criteria all of them don't get processed at the regional level, but some are forwarded to a central committee. I asked you if you can give me a list of those that are forwarded to a central committee. You say no, you don't keep a list.

I really have to question the kind of record keeping you obviously must be keeping. I know that you have far, far more efficient officials in your department than you're indicating. I know that they're good people. I know that they know what's going on.

I'm surprised that you would not be able to provide me with the answer, which I think they obviously are giving you, because any department of government that has to be publicly responsible to the taxpayers' money who cannot provide information as simple as what kind of

applications are made for a program that's sponsored by that department, and channelled to a special committee — which is quite legitimate I would suspect — if you can't tell me what they are, then I say that your program is being mismanaged.

Now, Madam Minister, why can you not provide a list of those projects which at the regional level could not be approved, and therefore were directed to a central committee, which I didn't know existed, but which you have offered up in this House as something that does exist? Why is that record not kept?

(1915)

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, let's be clear what we're talking about. We are talking about issues as opposed to the individual projects. A question will be raised, for example, within the Saskatoon region, if in fact pre-kindergarten children would qualify under the EDF. And it is that issue that is then brought within discussion, within that particular group of the regional directors, within the central committee. I don't find it unusual at all not to have a list of those that have come forward when we're talking about a dozen to a dozen and a half. I don't find that unusual at all.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Well I don't think any end of questioning will get information out of Madam Minister, so I will move on. I find it unusual. You initially said projects were referred to the central committee; now you're saying it's kind of a check list, that some things are clarified. I don't know exactly whether you know what's going on, but obviously you're trying to avoid answering some of the questions.

So therefore let me get to some very specific questions and see if you can be of some assistance to us. I want to ask about the Directions program, the Directions report. How much did the whole directions project cost the government of Saskatchewan? I mean the committee that did the work, the printing that was done — how much has that cost the taxpayer up until now?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, as I recall the direction study was approximately \$350,000 from 1981 when it was put into place until . . . That includes the curriculum review that took place, and then the Directions in 1984.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you very much. Madam Minister, \$350,000 — that included public meetings; that's all related costs. Okay. We will have to cross-check that with the Public Accounts over time.

Earlier, one of the members from Saskatoon asked you some questions about the core curriculum project that's around. I simply want to put on the record a concern which has been expressed to me, and I know that it has been also expressed to you from various sectors.

It's fair to say that a consultation process is something that's necessary and I know that that's taking place. There are some people who, I might add, are questioning the process from a lot of points of view, including whether adequate information is provided beforehand so that

adequate consideration of the recommendations can be done. There are those who have raised that. There are those who have indicated that it's essential — I think most people have indicated — essential that there be a sufficient period of consultation.

I think I have heard you say, Madam Minister, that no decisions on any of these proposals have been made, and I will accept that. But I would like to know from you, what is your target date? How long are you proposing that these consultations take place before you begin to make some final decisions?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, there was a four-month public phase in process, which it still is. The phase is there until June 20th, at which time there will be a conference on core curriculum with invited participants that were at a symposium a year ago, plus the list will be expanded, of people to be there.

At the core conference we will be looking at the feedback that has come in, the written responses — letters, that type of thing — and we will be asking the group to see what is possible and what isn't. Over the summer months we will be compiling that and we would hope that we would have in place a final decision for November.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — It seems obvious from that, that therefore proposals would not be implemented in the '87-88 school year, if you're not making decisions until into the year.

Are there any staff that you have employed in the department, either on contract or any other way, that are geared to the implementation of the core curriculum? Do you have staff that has specifically been put into place to deal with the whole matter of the core curriculum? If so, how many and what's their function?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, we don't have anyone specifically working on what the member from Regina North East said, and that is the implementation of core curriculum. We haven't accepted, and that's still open for public consultation, so there is no one in terms of the implementation of it.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — So therefore are you saying you have taken people who in the past had been working in other parts of the department, doing other things, and you've put them into the unit that's dealing with the core curriculum, handling all the consultation, doing all this, or don't you have anybody doing that? You must have some people doing that. All I want to know is: how many people do you have in your department now doing the work that's necessary to do what you're doing with the core curriculum proposals?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, we have two people who have been devoting some time within the policy and planning branch. And those two people are also supported by two or three other staff persons who have responsibilities in other things other than the directions and the public consultation on core and that type of thing. So I could say two full time.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Two full time with three additional

so that's about five people. I heard you say. Is that right?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — There's two full time, Mr. Chairman, devoting all their time to the curriculum, the studies, and the public consultation. From time to time they are supported by other staff members who have other responsibilities that they do during the day. So there's two full time, and if you wish, two or three periodically.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Madam Minister, just a comment on the whole core curriculum. One of the concerns which I have had personally as a critic for the Department of Education, and I know many others have, is the proposal that the format or the amount of English language instruction would be reduced very dramatically. I hope that during this consultation — and I suspect it will because many people have become rather concerned — that during the consultation there will be some considerable discussion about that proposal and that your assurance that no decisions will be made until at least November are of some assistance both to me and I'm sure to others who may be interested in the answers that you're giving here today.

Of concern also has been the comment that somehow there's going to be a brand-new concept and that English will be something that teachers will consider in all other subjects as well as the subject of English. I object to that because I think teachers, by and large, have always considered the question of English, whether they are history or social studies teachers or science teachers and so on. Any teachers doing their job — and most teachers do — would be taking that into consideration.

So the idea that somehow you have to address the whole question of English in other subjects is not introducing any major new component to the curriculum. Maybe there can be the kind of aide and the resources made available that will make it possible to do that even better. And whenever we can improve, certainly we should be looking at improving.

But to insinuate, as I think the report has done, that English has not been taught in other subject areas because somehow teachers have ignored the whole question of how good the English is, I think is an unfair commentary that has been made through this process. And I hope that that will be addressed rather seriously, and I hope you will pay particular attention to the concerns that are being expressed about the teaching of English and the proposal that it should be cut back as a subject, as the core curriculum proposal indicates.

Unless you have a comment, I'll proceed to the next question.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, the member's concern is not unlike that of many others, parents included, and I think I have consistently stated my concern in a few areas.

I guess the interesting thing out of the entire process is that it has in fact been open for people's opinions. And if there's been anything good out of the whole process, it has been an increasing awareness of what our children are being taught in the school system and in fact what

parents ultimately expect out of the public school system.

I have given my assurances publicly, and I will give so again tonight to the member from Regina North East, and that is that we are serious about this public consultation. And very serious consideration will be given to what the people have to say and any changes to be made from there on in.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Is this June conference open to the public in some form? Are you having delegates? Will you send me an invitation? How are you arranging the conference, and who will take part in it?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, the conference is set up in the very usual manner, and the member may very well be familiar with it. The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation will be inviting members. The Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, the league of educational administrators, the home and school, has been asked to send lay people. There will also be representatives from business, labour, and industry, through various organizations, the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina. We also have some students coming that were chosen through their respective school systems, and the educational council, and of course the core curriculum advisory committee. Along with that is — the advisory group on secondary language also will have a representative in attendance, and of course some of the officials from Saskatchewan education. Along with that we have asked for parents that are interested in the core curriculum to give consideration to attendance, as we have through the home and school association.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Just turning to some more specific questions. Can you — I assume you have it with you because I think you probably anticipated that we would be asking — can you provide me with a list of your personal staff, their salaries for 1985, and their salaries for 1986?

(1930)

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Would you like it verbally or would you like it sent over?

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. We've had other ministers who've provided the salaries for 1985. Do your officials have that with them? What were these people's salaries in 1985? And if you don't have a specific salary, can you tell me what were the increases of their salary over the past year?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well the ones before you, you will see no increase. First of all, Mr. Ray Finlay is on a year's leave of absence from the school system, and I have had that every year, a teacher from my constituency that works with me. And Miss Bonnie Staples just started last September, I think it was last — in there somewhere.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Are you saying therefore that this was the salary for all of these people in 1985, throughout all of 1985? As you see there have been no increases. That was my question. Is this the salary that these people were paid in 1985 as well as 1986?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Bonnie has moved in classification — took over another position in my office, and so her salary was increased. Mr. Finlay's does not change and he started in August of '85. Does that answer your question?

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — That's two people.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — You want the secretaries? It is 4 per cent. That's right.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Madam Minister, was that 4 per cent for 1986 or 4 per cent for 1987?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, I don't believe my information is complete tonight. It was 4 per cent for two, Clark and Saunders, and I do not have the completed information for Doris Boyle. So I will have to get that.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — That's fair enough. Here's what I would like you to provide me. I have here a list of your staff as you have them employed at the present time, with their present salaries. I would like to know what their salaries were in 1985 — what their salaries were in 1985, the amount of any increase in salary during 1985, throughout that whole year, and if there has been any increase in salary during 1986, and if so, how much? And I'm quite prepared to have you provide that to me soon, at another date. But I would like to have that information. And if you can give me the undertaking to do that, I will proceed to the next item.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, I said I would give him that information.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Can I therefore now ask you the salaries of . . . to provide me; and you don't need to do it orally, but you can send them to me. I would appreciate having the salaries of — you can send them across — of your deputy, your associate deputies, and executive directors, and the increases that may have been provided in 1985 and again in 1986. And if you are prepared to send that over to me either now or tomorrow, that would be quite adequate.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I can certainly send over the deputy minister's office. I do not have a list of the executive directors within the department. Yes, I will.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Will you be sending over that information you do have now, with the page? And just a reminder that I'm not only asking for the salaries, I'm also asking for what they were in '85 and I'm asking for the increases for whatever reasons that may have taken place during that period of time. Thank you.

Madam Minister, can you also provide me with, for the last fiscal year, an updating of the trips that you have taken as a minister of the Crown outside of the province, outside of the country, if any; who went with you on your trips, and the purpose of those trips, and the costs incurred with those trips.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, I would be more than happy to send the member the information. I can tell you that he will be sorely disappointed if he's looking for a

long list of out-of-province travel. There was maybe one, maybe two during the year, and it would be with the minister of education council and will probably show Ottawa or Toronto. But I will send it to you.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you. You will provide me . . . I assume your officials took notes on the list of requests that I made. I appreciate that. I really do know that you're not as widely a travelled minister as some of your colleagues, Madam Minister. But it is a question that I still think I need to ask because there are many trips that a number of ministers have taken which for obvious reason I think the public has to be somewhat concerned about.

But if you will provide me with that information, I am quite satisfied that I will be able to take a look at it, and add it to the list of all the other trips that other ministers have taken.

I'm quite ready, Mr. Chairman, to proceed on the subvote by subvote.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 and 3 agreed to.

#### Item 4

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Madam Minister, curriculum development with core curriculum proposals and other kinds of work — and there's always social studies project which I'm personally quite familiar with and did at one time do quite a bit of work in it as a class-room teacher — but I notice that there is here a reduction in staff and a reduction in total budget. Maybe it has been transferred to some other vote. But can you explain to the committee what the reduction is here?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, while it shows I believe it's about three person-years, there were no programs deleted, and I'm well aware of some of the emphasis on curriculum right now. However, I would remind the member once again that we are not yet into development or implementation of core curriculum. Reductions were brought about by reduced expenditures in contractual services and travel.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Madam Minister, you'd indicated earlier that you're going to make some substantive decisions on core curriculum in about November. Are you saying that you're not proposing to do anything after that in this fiscal year that we are now considering? You have cut back in some services, contractual services. I'm sorry, but I don't quite follow your argument here.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, what I'm saying is that first of all the decision has not been made on what we are going to accept. And when we get to that point, when the decision is made, if in fact there are major changes then the department could very well have to have a hard look at the expertise level and the staff component within the department. But I'm not about to jump in until we have finished that phase of consultation and a decision is taken as to what is going to be done.

Item 4 agreed to.

#### Item 5

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Education services. Can you tell what reductions here are all about?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — The reductions under that category are due to, first of all, personnel service reductions. It includes personnel changes such as casual. Telephone charge reduction amounted to about 10,000; contractual services, reduction of 12,950. And there will be a deletion of one person-year when a vacancy comes due.

Item 5 agreed to.

Item 6 agreed to.

#### Item 7

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Chairman, special education needs some particular attention, and during our consideration of your estimates, you have made reference to it several times. But I notice in spite of that there is a fairly substantial reduction. And I'm wondering how do you say that you're putting special emphasis on special education and at the same time providing less money in this budget than you had in last budget.

(1945)

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, the difference in dollars — most of it is due to the fact that we have one fewer blind student going to Ontario to the school down there. And of course there's portion of travel for a blind student to the Ontario residential school. The other thing that is not in here this year — last year we had budgeted for \$30,000 to do some in-service work on gifted education, and this year we are doing that through the education development fund.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Madam Minister, let me just point out that for special education, other expenses, you're spending one-third of what you decided to spend on the Reuben Mayes advertising. Now I say to you: what kind of priorities are those? If those are priorities that deal with the interests of our young children in mind, then I say those are the kind of priorities that our educational system does not need.

You've got \$300,000 to give to your favourite advertising agency so that the advertising agency does very well, thank you. You have one-third of that for special education for our children — children who have unique problems. One would think that that's where any sensitive government would be putting more money to meet the need.

I say to you that that is not the kind of priorities that our educational system needs. When you increase your budget overall by over \$2 billion . . . And you do it because at the snap of a hand and apolitical whim you can find \$300,000 — no questions asked — to run some television ads, put up some billboards, and to run some radio clips. But you don't have the kind of money you ought to have to deal with the special needs of the children in our schools, who attend our schools, and who

should have some of those special needs addressed.

One has to question those priorities, and I question them. And I do it on behalf of those people who are affected by your negligence.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, if the member from Regina North East, after a period of time as Education minister and minister of Finance, has not learned how to read a blue book, perhaps it's about time he did.

When he refers to the kinds of money that's being spent on special education, he either doesn't know or he has chosen to give another figure, and has totally neglected the fact that approximately 20-million-odd dollars go into operational grants for special education students. The subvote that we're dealing with has to do with the administration of the department, within the department, and those staff people that are assigned to special ed. It isn't the total amount. The member knows that.

Item 7 agreed to.

#### Item 8

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — How many students are enrolled in classes in the correspondence school?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — The figures that I have are for '85, the enrolment figures for the correspondence school. They're not completed until the end because you get people coming in mid year. There's 2,854 adult students and 4,226 school-aged students, for a total of 7,080.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — How many instructors do you have in the correspondence school to handle this enrolment of 7,080?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, the correspondence school employs 35 staff. One is the principal, one assistant principal, 23 permanent teachers, one temporary teacher, six permanent support staff, one temporary accounting clerk, one casual clerk, and one temporary research officer.

Item 8 agreed to.

Items 9 and 10 agreed to.

#### Item 11

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — I suspect this is the wrong place to ask the question, but you will refer me, I am sure, to where I should ask it. Madam Minister, in the official minority language office, do you also provide any financial help or consulting help for the teaching of other languages, whether it's Ukrainian or German or what not?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — No, Mr. Chairman, we do not through the OMLO (official minority language office).

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Where is this provided?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — The issue of other languages is dealt with in the curriculum development branch.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Can I just, with your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, ask the minister: how many consultants do you have dealing with other languages in the curriculum development branch or wherever you put them?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — I'm not sure if we're talking person-years or people. Two and one-half sounds rather odd if we're talking people, but they inform me it's 2.5.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — On the official minority languages, there is a rather substantial increase in funding. Is it because of . . . Well I'll ask you: what is the new thrust that is going to be happening here?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure if I would define it as a thrust, but what we've been trying to do is bring materials and curriculum — resource materials — up to date by offering a greater variety in the second language. And what you see before you is an accessing of federal funds that has always been there but just hasn't been taken advantage of. And there's \$539,000 that is totally federal reimbursable for development support on the learning resource materials.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Madam Minister, can you tell me, because I know that there has been a growth of French instruction throughout Saskatchewan, the French language instruction — is it the experience that there is a shortage of qualified teachers? School boards are looking for teachers, Saskatchewan trained teachers, and they are unable to find adequate numbers — is that what the experience is? And what do you foresee to be the situation in the next two or three years?

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Yes, I think it's fair to say that we have a shortage in that particular area due to the increase in interest on particularly French immersion. And what we did, in December of 1985, OMLO met with STF, LEADS (locally employed administrators, directors and superintendents), SSTA and the two universities, along with the Department of Education, to lay out some of the problems that boards were facing, and what STF saw in the universities as being reasonable and an action plan to address the problem.

And there was basically three areas that they saw as being able to address right away. One was increased bursary support. The other one is increased French teacher bursary support and a bilingual expansion at the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan. And hopefully that will address some of the difficulties we're having with it.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I hope it leads to some success because with the developments that have been taking place, and the enthusiasm that has finally come about, I think it would be regrettable if not enough teachers were able to be located and could not meet the demand that's out there. Any positive efforts that are instituted to try to make sure that there is an adequate supply, I know would be welcomed and I would be the first to encourage it.

Go ahead, Mr. Chairman.

Item 11 agreed to.

Items 12 to 15 inclusive agreed to.

#### Item 16

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Madam Minister, I would be quite satisfied if you would just simply provide it to me, through a page, or if you don't have it with you then tomorrow, a list of the educational agencies, organizations, associations, and institutions that you are funding this year, and the amount of the funding that you have budgeted for, for each.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Mr. Chairman, I'll send that tomorrow.

Item 16 agreed to.

Vote 8 agreed to.

#### Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Education Education Development Fund — Vote 64

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 64 agreed to.

(2000)

#### Supplementary Estimates Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Education Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 8

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 8 agreed to.

#### Supplementary Estimates Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Education Education Development Fund — Vote 64

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 64 agreed to.

**Hon. Mrs. Smith:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will keep my remarks brief and simply say a thank you to the member from Regina North East and to the officials with me tonight.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I extend, on behalf of myself and my colleagues also, our appreciation to the officials in the department who have been here to provide the minister with the answers so that we could look into these estimates. Certainly I will be looking forward to receiving as expeditiously as possible the information which I have sought, and I have the assurance from the minister that I will be getting quickly.

#### Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Highways and Transportation

#### Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 16

**Mr. Chairman:** — — The next item of business then is the estimates for the Department of Highways. Before we begin I would ask the minister to please introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'll begin first of course by introducing my officials, and then I do have several remarks concerning the budget for Highways and Transportation.

Seated to my immediate right is Mr. Jack Sutherland, deputy minister for Highways and Transportation. On my left is Bill McLaren, chairman of the Highway Traffic Board. To the right of Mr. Sutherland is Merv Clark, associate deputy minister of Highways and Transportation. Directly behind Mr. Sutherland is Myron Herasymiuk, executive director of operations. And behind Myron and to his immediate right, is Dennis Belliveau, director of operations services branch. Directly behind me is Al Schwartz, executive director of administration. And in addition, we do have a number of officials seated at the back of the Chamber who will be assisting us during the review of the estimates.

Before I get into a little preliminary talk on our budget, I would like to say that in my short tenure as Minister of Highways over the last, less than six months, I have been very privileged to work with these gentlemen and the other gentlemen and women in the Department of Highways and Transportation. And I do want to stand here this evening and publicly say how very, very impressed I have been with the professionalism of the staff in Highways and Transportation; with the dedication and the sincere efforts that they have put forward during my time as minister. And I do want to very much compliment these people on the fine work that they have done.

At the outset, Mr. Chairman, the estimates that we are considering for the department do represent a very substantial investment in one of our province's largest public assets. The total investment in our provincial highway system is now in excess of \$3 billion. And I would say that that is a sizeable investment and one that members sometimes lose sight of when considering the issues of the day.

This particular year's budget represents the government's continued emphasis on protecting and maintaining this investment. It also represents this government's continued efforts to expand and diversify the Saskatchewan economy by providing a safe and reliable highway system. This year's total budget is estimated at \$312.6 million, and nearly 88 per cent of this budget we are reviewing represents a direct investment into our highway system. And, Mr. Chairman, I believe that that is a noteworthy figure that really does deserve recognition.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my remarks and I do look forward to the review of these estimates.

#### Item 1

**Mr. Lusney:** — — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, Mr.

Chairman, listening to the minister's opening remarks, I certainly wouldn't question the professionalism of the officials that he has with him. But I think one would have to question the previous minister of Highways and the condition that he kept the highways in, and maybe the present Minister of Highways, because I haven't seen anything change on the highways. There's just as many pot-holes out there as there was before. You go out on the highway, and I don't know if this minister drives or flies, but I can tell you I drive down those highways and so do a lot of other people in this province, and they certainly have been having some problems trying to dodge the pot-holes on it.

The former minister used to be called the minister of golf, 18 holes to the mile. I don't know what we can call this minister. We're going to have to increase that golf course to a little more holes in it because it's even worse than it was before.

He says he's going to do a lot of good things in this year and I think it remains to be seen. We've heard this story for the last four years and now it's going to be going on the fifth, where all the good things that were going to happen. We're going to see the double laning of all our highways, or at least the major highways — the No. 1 and the Yellowhead. We haven't seen that happen yet. He was going to get so many highways — not first class, I wouldn't say — what this government seems to call world class. And God, I hope that world class doesn't mean full of pot-holes on it because that's exactly what we've had over four years.

(2015)

So, Mr. Minister, I hope you come up with a new phrase for highways, not world class. Let's just get those highways into good driving condition and I think the people will be happy about that. And forget the world class because that is certainly not what they're looking for, or at least what they got they weren't looking for.

Mr. Minister, there's a number of questions that I certainly would like to ask you. One of those would have to be, Mr. Minister, as I mentioned, the state of the highways and what it's really costing the taxpayers of this province, the public that uses those highways. And if you look at the TRIP (the road information program) report, and I'm sure you've looked at that one and so have your officials, it indicates just what it is costing each individual in this province to drive on the highways in the condition that they're in. And just about everybody in this province in the construction industry agrees that a little more money should be put into highways, and that somehow this government certainly is not doing the job that should be done concerning our roads.

Mr. Minister, they indicate that it's costing each individual about \$119 a year more to drive on the highways since you've been in government — \$119 a year. When you add that up with the total population that uses the roads, we're looking at something like \$74 million each year that it's costing the public of Saskatchewan to drive on your roads.

Now, Mr. Minister, this is something the public certainly

isn't used to, and something that the public won't accept. You've gotten rid of all the highway equipment. You said you were going to give it to the private sector and those roads were going to be in the best shape ever. Mr. Minister, I wouldn't have minded you getting rid of the highway equipment if you would have kept the roads in the condition that you said they would be in, regardless of who you use to keep them in that condition.

And the minister from Moosomin says, who cares? Well, Mr. Minister, let me tell you, that member from Moosomin says, who cares? Well I think the people on those highways, every one that it cost \$119 a year, or some \$74 million in total — Mr. Minister, those are the people that care. And that just proves the arrogance of this government. This is the way they have dealt for four years with the public, and this is the way they're going to deal for the next year or until the election is called. Nothing has changed, Mr. Chairman. Nothing has changed at all. Four years. We've got a government that's just as arrogant as they were the day they gained power.

And we certainly don't see anything improving in this province; in fact, we see a deficit that's the highest ever. It's a deficit that nobody even wants to talk about any more. They hate the thought of having to pay that money back one day. And I'll tell you, the population that's talking about it today is saying that they're not going to be paying it back, but their kids are going to have to be paying it back, and that's what hurts even more. That, Mr. Minister, is the problem, and that is the concern. That is the concern of the people in this province.

Mr. Minister, TRIP says that you should be building more roads. You've made a good number of announcements. You've made a number of announcements — or at least I shouldn't say you did, but the former minister did. He made a lot of announcements regarding what they were going to do on highways. He announced an additional \$10 million after the last budget was passed, \$10 million for highways, that he was going to be spending, and that was supposed to be additional money, Mr. Minister. Then he announced another something like \$55 million, and that was supposed to be spent for highways, and that was all new money that was going to create more jobs and improve our highways system.

Well, Mr. Minister, could you just give me, Mr. Minister, the details of how much money you spent on highways in 1985, total — what you budgeted for, what your actual spending was, including the extra 55 million, or I should say 65 million, that the minister announced after the last budget.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite referred to a number of different issues in his previous comments, and I will attempt to address a number of those comments.

Firstly, I would like to talk about the TRIP Canada report, which is a report that has been developed by the Canadian road builders' association, and I just certainly want at this time to compliment them on their efforts in reporting what their opinions are of the condition of the highways. In addition, the Saskatchewan road builders have played their part in helping with that TRIP Canada



report. I might add that they have received a great deal of co-operation from our department, which I think really shows that our government and our departmental officials are co-operating with the road building industry to make a better highway transportation system for this province.

Now the member opposite refers to some specifics regarding how many dollars it is costing each taxpayer to drive along our provincial highways. I would like to make one very, very significant point at the outset. And I think the members opposite should realize, and I think that the people of Saskatchewan should and I believe that they do realize, that as far as the operating costs of a vehicle go, they were reduced significantly, significantly by the removal of the gas tax that was in place under your administration — a 20 per cent tax on every single gallon of gasoline that they burned in their automobiles. So I think that that point should not be forgotten. It is a very, very significant point that one of the major, major tax breaks that the people of Saskatchewan have seen under this administration was the removal of the gas tax. I am very proud to stand here and say, that was a significant cut, and I don't think that there are many people who would deny that that has put more dollars in their pockets.

Now if we want to move on to the discussions regarding the added vehicle costs of having roads that are not absolutely smooth, yes indeed. I think any person would admit that if a road is not as smooth as it could be, that yes, there are additional costs associated with operating that vehicle.

The question becomes as how do you really quantify that. And it is very, very difficult. It is very, very subjective when you start saying it's costing a taxpayer \$70 or \$120 or whatever it is per year. So I think that that is a point that I would make to you, that we're dealing with something that is somewhat subjective. But given that these statements have come out, given that these statements have come out, I think it should be pointed out to the members opposite that in relative terms, the Saskatchewan highway transportation system is in very, very good shape.

I'd like to make a comparison. If you want to use those dollar figures, I could indicate to you that part of that report, part of that report indicated that Saskatchewan's paved highways were costing each motorist \$70 a year.

Now let's compare that with what your friends, your NDP friends in Manitoba, are paying. That report — and you failed to mention that, that the costs of Manitoba drivers is something in the neighbourhood of \$113 per year.

**Mr. Chairman:** — Order. I don't think . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The Minister's obviously answering the question. But I don't know if we should get into comparisons with other provinces.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — All right, Mr. Chairman. I'll certainly . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

**Mr. Chairman:** — Why is the member on his feet?

**Mr. Birkbeck:** — Well, because I want to differ with what you think.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, you know, that what you said was that you didn't think that he should get into comparisons. The only way, Mr. Chairman, that the Hon. Minister of Highways could draw any kind of comparison with this administration versus an NDP administration is by way of comparisons. And that's what the minister's doing.

And if it's necessary for you to make some ruling or check it in the book, I sure would be encouraged if you would do so and let the minister proceed to answer the questions.

**Mr. Chairman:** — Comparisons that anybody makes are allowed as long as the comparisons are relevant to the topic. If the minister's comparisons are relevant to the topic he is permitted to make the comparisons. Otherwise I will rule them out of order.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Perhaps I was not explaining as best I could the actual comparison. And what I was attempting to explain was the comparison between TRIP Canada's report, which is a report that encompasses all of the whole country of Canada, and it includes every province across the country. And what I was comparing — that within that report, with that report the general condition of the highways of Saskatchewan compare very, very favourably with all those across the whole country.

I'm not about to stand here and say we have the absolute best highways in North America. But in relative terms, and I think that this is what we have to look at, I think it'd only be fair and reasonable to say: how is Saskatchewan doing vis-a-vis other provinces in Canada? And I would say that in Saskatchewan, here, on a number of different topics, Saskatchewan is a leader. We are doing very, very well in many, many areas. And in highways I would have to make the statement that we are doing relatively well compared to other jurisdictions in our country; and I would say especially well, especially well when you compare us with the province of Manitoba which is a province that I'm sure is very, very near and dear to the NDP's heart.

I believe that that should sufficiently address most of your questions, the hon. member. You did also ask me the amount of dollars that were spent on highways in 1985. The figure there was \$216.5 million.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, could you just repeat those figures again for me please?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, I'd be happy to.

In TRIP Canada's 1984 report, the condition of Saskatchewan's paved highways were costing each motorist \$70 per year. This figure compares favourably with \$113 in Manitoba and \$97 in Ontario.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, I see that you prefer to make a comparison with other provinces rather than comparing what this province, what the roads in this province were like previous to '82 and what they're like now. And I think that's what we have to look at.

I don't care, Mr. Minister, if other governments are making the same mistake as you are. I think the travelling public of Saskatchewan has been used to good highways in this province, and I think they're entitled to them. What you should be doing is trying to keep those highways at least in the same condition that they were when you took office. But that hasn't happened. What we see now are highways that need rebuilding, highways that are nothing but pot-holes.

And this isn't just something that I'm saying. I've had a phone call this morning from a person that was on the highway over the weekend. And I see the members are all hollering now because they don't want to hear the truth; they don't want to hear what the public has to say.

Well, Mr. Minister, this one individual over the weekend, he happened to wind up wrecking his car on the highway —not wrecking it in total, but doing damage to it — where he asked me, who does he contact now to get it fixed; is it the Department of Highways, or who should he go after? Well, Mr. Minister, I advised him that he better get after SGI; let them sue Department of Highways for the repairs on that vehicle. That's what they should be doing.

I don't think that the travelling public, because of the negligence of this government and this minister, should be having to pay lawyers to try and sue a government. They've got an insurance policy for it; that's the direction they should be going. And I can tell you, Mr. Minister, if that individual doesn't get satisfaction, I am going to be on your back as well as the SGI minister's back too.

Because the public of Saskatchewan has been paying for four years now — and that, I think, is a very conservative figure that TRIP Canada has used, because there are many people that are using a lot more, Mr. Minister. That's what's really happening in this province, and you should be out there putting more money into highways, trying to get them repaired.

(2030)

You talk about the gasoline tax. You neglected to answer the question that I asked you, as to how much you did spend in 1985 on construction of highways; but, Mr. Minister, you talked about your gasoline tax. Every minister in this government talks about the gasoline tax. They've been doing it for four years. The Premier talks about nothing but the gasoline tax.

That saves an average individual, maybe 150, maybe \$200 for travelling — depends how much you travel. A lot of people wouldn't save \$100 for the amount of travelling that they do on the highways. Mr. Minister, those are the facts. That is what's really happening. You save somebody \$100, but then they wind up having to pay 119 for repairs on their vehicles. That's what your gasoline tax did. That sure saved them a lot of money, Mr.

Minister. And yet you continue to go out there trying to deceive the public and saying that somehow they saved so much money with that gasoline tax.

Well, Mr. Minister, they really didn't, because it's costing them a lot more to drive on our highways today than it has in the past. And that gasoline tax sure didn't save them any money. If you'd have kept the roads in good condition along with that gasoline tax reduction, then the public would have saved some money. But when you look at what happened out our highways, there is nothing that they are saving, and they know it. And I don't know why you're wasting your time talking about the gasoline tax all the time, because it certainly doesn't help the public.

You may get up in this House, Mr. Minister, and you can go out there and try to preach to the public, and try to make it appear as though they are buyers at your auction sale, and somehow you can lead them on. Well, Mr. Minister, you can't lead the people of this province on; they're not at an auction sale. They know what's happening because they're travelling on those roads, and you can talk all you like; it isn't going to change their minds because they experience it every day that they drive out of their yard and onto those highways.

Mr. Minister, how much did you spend in total on highway construction last year?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Chairman, if the members opposite, while I'm answering my question would care to listen to the answer, I'm sure they will get it. And I previously stated that in 1985 the total highway budget was \$216 million.

**An Hon. Member:** — How much was the actual spending on them?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I will repeat that again. The actual spending, for the third time, was \$216 million in 1985. I hope that sufficiently answers your question. If you would like me to repeat it again, I will.

But, Mr. Chairman, I think I should address some of the comments from the hon. member. And the hon. member is trying to make a case that the highway system is falling apart, that the sky is falling in; the typical doom and gloom scare tactics of the NDP. And I say that the only reason the members are doing that is to get the general public upset and try and gain some political points, only by a very, very gross exaggeration.

And I've already stated that I will not deny that we could use more money in the highway budget. I will not deny that there are some roads that are in desperate need of repair. But I would say that within the budget that we have in this fiscal year, that the vast majority of pressing issues will be addressed. I think we have come to a relatively good amount of money to spend on our highway system, and contrary to what the member is saying, our highways are not falling apart.

I will state again that there are some specific examples in specific areas that do need attention. I have directed my officials, and I believe they have done a very, very good

job of assessing all of the highway needs in our province. They have many, many professional engineers on staff who are very, very well acquainted with the highways we have in this province. They go out and spend a considerable amount of time and a considerable amount of effort in assessing where should the dollars be spent, how can they best be spent. And I would compliment the department on spending the funds available in a very, very judicious manner. And I believe that with this continued type of an emphasis we will continue to improve our highways.

And I want once again to state that the member opposite who is trying to indicate that the sky is falling in, that the highways are all just terrible, is simply exaggerating. A gross exaggeration.

I will not stand here and brag and say yes, we've got the greatest highways in the country, because that is not the truth. That is not the truth. There are areas that need repair, and I believe that we are doing an excellent job, an excellent job of addressing the highest priority needs within the context of our budget.

Now the member for Shaunavon wants to get into something that is off the subject and I'm not here to debate with him. If he'd care to stand on his feet I would be very, very happy — I would be very, very happy if you would like to enter into the debate on that particular matter.

Now once again, Mr. Chairman, I want to reiterate some of the comments made by the member opposite. He's talking about that they would put the gasoline tax back on, or they would take it off. I really don't know where they stand. I do know that in 1982 they stood against taking the tax off of gasoline. And I believe that the general public of Saskatchewan said, no, we are for taking the tax off of gasoline. That is what we have done, and I believe that the general public in this province have very, very well received that major tax concession. I would like from the member opposite at some time a clear and concise statement of where exactly do you people stand on that issue.

I believe that that would sufficiently address your remarks, sir.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, you quoted that you spent 216 million actual in your budget. Now I'll ask you for a breakdown of that later on.

Last year, you had in your budget estimated 206 million; you spent 216. but after that estimate, Mr. Minister — and I have here a news release that says, "Ten million dollars added, the minister of Highways, Jim Garner." This time he announced another announcement: 55 million in road building programs, including 35 million went to construction tenders and 20 million for industrial road development.

Now, Mr. Minister, this minister, the former minister announced an additional, something like \$65 million that I don't see anywhere. What happened to him? How much of that \$55 million actually got spent? You're talking about 206 million estimate, 216 actual, and about 270 or

so that the minister, the former minister, said he was going to be spending on highways. What is the actual figure? What happened to that 65 million that the minister announced? Is it just that he expected an election that he made that announcement, or what happened to it?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Chairman, I find it rather amusing the member's method in which he goes about using figures. And I'm certainly not about to stand here and say that I'm an expert on figures, but I have spent a fair bit of time in working with figures, and I would like to outline to the member opposite that your question was: how many dollars were spent in 1985 in the Highway budget?

Now I indicated to you that it was \$216 million. Now that would be broken down, sir, by a budgeted amount of \$206 million. In August of 1985, as I recall, there was what they call a special warrant or additional funding that was put in place to the amount of \$10 million. And I think it would be fairly easy to calculate that the 206 that was budgeted plus a \$10 million additional warrant in August of 1985 would add up to \$216 million. Now you may correct me if I'm wrong on that, sir, but that's the way I was taught mathematics in school.

The member opposite has also referred to the \$55 million that was announced by the previous minister, and yes, I will deal with that particular issue. The \$55 million represented what we call a winter tender schedule. And every year in the history of the department, as I understand it, or at least for a good many years, in the winter months a winter tender schedule is announced, and this past year it was \$55 million. Those funds indeed do come out of the following year's fiscal budget.

Now the member opposite, who is perhaps not as familiar with this department as some, is probably still wondering about how that works or why you would announce a winter tender schedule. Well, for the member's information, over the winter months there are some certain types of projects that the contractors can do and can get ready for, and that is simply the reason. So we give advance warning or advance information to our good friends in the road building industry.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Well, Mr. Minister, don't talk to me like you're talking to someone in the auction ring. Mr. Minister, I know perfectly well how the department tenders, the way they've always tendered. The only problem is with the ministers, not with the department. The problem is with the ministers and what they say.

And this minister goes . . . or the former minister, and I suppose this one won't be much different. But the former minister did say that the new road construction program, which Garner said is new money, not designed for road building in previous budget — new money he come up with — will create 3,000 new jobs. There'll be 575 jobs created with 20 million winter works project. Now this minister announces some new money, \$55 million, that's going to create these 3,000 new jobs.

**An Hon. Member:** — What 3,000 was that?

**Mr. Lusney:** — That's a good question. The member from

Moosomin says, what 3,000 jobs? Well I certainly question what 3,000 jobs, and even the member from Moosomin questions that. It just proves that the former minister was not telling the truth. He was making announcements, and saying that there's new money coming in, new jobs going to be created, the way this government always does. They do that in every department. In every department they continue to do that. Mid year they get up and they announce and they re-announce.

Here the minister announced \$55 million worth of work that was for '86-87. But he goes out in '85 and says, here's new money that we're putting in, new money that's going to create 3,000 new jobs. Well, Mr. Minister, that was a total falsehood because that was not new money; it was money that was going to be in the '86-87 budget. That's what he was announcing. But that's not the way he says it's going to happen; it was new money that was put into place that somehow he found in 1985 out of that budget.

Well, Mr. Minister, I know he wasn't telling the truth. You know he wasn't telling the truth. So don't go trying to smooth it over somehow, trying to make it look as though this has always happened in the department. What's always happened in the department is exactly that. But that's not always the way the ministers used to handle it — in announcing all these new jobs and new money that they found.

Mr. Minister, could you break down, out of that 216 million that you've been talking about, what amount was spent on capital projects in constructing highways. And I suppose we can go down the list of grading and surfacing. What was spent on all of the areas — the grading, the surfacing, the capital money, and whatever you spent that 216 million. How much was . . .

We could use the two, I suppose, to begin with; and that's in the grading, the surfacing. And I suppose you can . . . You don't even have it on this year's. There was some that were oiling; I believe you had oiling before. You don't have any oiling on this year, but could you just tell me what you spent? You had it in last year's budget, if I'm correct, or in last year's project array — oil treatment, surfacing, and grading. What were the expenditures on those?

(2045)

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Chairman, I'll try my best to answer in as much detail as I can. In general terms, for your information, the capital amount that was spent in the capital budget in 1985 was \$104.4 million; in maintenance was \$83.4 million; administration was \$28.2 million; for the total of \$216 million.

For a further breakdown, and I'm not able to give it to you precisely as you asked, but I hope this will suffice. Under the rural surface transportation, the breakdown is: construction, 63.5 million; rehabilitation, 18.76 million; for a subtotal of \$82.2 million. Associated works, which would include bridges and landscaping, miscellaneous items — that adds up to \$16,470,000; for a total rural surface transportation budget of \$99 million. The remainder of the budget would go to things such as urban

surface transportation, air transportation, etc.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, could you tell me, are you going to be announcing \$55 million come fall, just before the election, same as the previous minister did, in some new money? Or do you expect in this year's budget that you'll be dealing only with what you have in the budget and that any winter works contracts will be let as winter works contracts for the following year? Or I guess the simple question would be: are you going to be dealing with the budget as it's put forward, or are you going to be making 50 and \$60 million announcements, as the former minister did, over and above what's in this budget?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate a few comments that I made. And it has very, very much been a tradition that in approximately October of any given year that a winter tender schedule is announced.

And I would like to go into that a little bit further with you. The reason why a winter tender schedule would be announced in October of a given year is to give the construction industry some idea of the amount of work that is going to be available early in the year. Now if you know a little bit about the construction industry, you would understand that these business people do have to make business decisions as to whether buy additional equipment, as to whether hire additional men, keep them on over the winter. And I don't think that it would be fair not to announce a winter tender schedule.

I would reinforce my former comments by once again saying that this is a very, very standard practice. It happened for years under your administration; it is not any political gimmickry as you would attempt to try and make the public believe. But rather it is a very, very business-like practice that gives to the construction industry an idea of the initial amount of work that is going to be available to them.

Now naturally when you announce a winter tender schedule, the contractors are not going to be able to go out and start paving or grading in the month of February or March, but there are some associated works that they can begin with. So once again the idea of announcing a winter tender schedule is one that has followed a long precedent in the Department of Highways, and we will continue to maintain that precedent. And I do not believe that that is an unreasonable method or procedure.

I think, if you are indicating that one should not let a tender schedule out in the winter months, if that is what you are indicating, I would respectfully suggest to you that you bring that up with the road building industry, and I do not think that they would concur with your suggestions that a winter tender schedule is not a reasonable procedure or a reasonable practice to follow.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I see you've had some good training from the other ministers. You tend to avoid the question and get onto something that you would like the public to believe other than what's really true. I certainly was not suggesting that there shouldn't be any winter tendering. As I said, this was the practice of the department in the past. They've always done winter

tendering. The only thing I did object to is the way the minister announced those winter tenders and all this new money and new jobs that were going to be coming up.

Well, Mr. Minister, none of that was really true. You don't want to answer that question directly and I understand why. And I guess I can't hold you responsible for what the former minister said, so I'm not going to pursue it because it can't say that you said that. And it's pointless for me to get you to answer for him.

What I'm saying, Mr. Minister, is, and all I did say is I hope that you're not going to be using the same kind of media tactics that the former minister did in trying to announce something that's just regular, that happens every year, and trying to make it sound just as though this was a lot of new money that he found somewhere and he was going to create so many more new jobs with it. And that's all that the former minister did. He didn't really do the work. Hopefully you will be doing a better job at it this summer. Do a little more work and less advertising in the paper, and put some of that money on the highways, and we'll get some better roads, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, I'd like to get onto possibly another . . . We should stay on the same area. Tell me how many cubic metres of dirt was moved by the contractors in '85?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — That would be, as I'm informed, just over nine million cubic metres of dirt was moved by contractors in the year 1985.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Well, Mr. Minister, if I'm correct, that's been a steady decline from '82, and previous to '82 where, I think, there's been a lot more moved, running in the 10, 12 million cubic metres. You've seen a decrease in the last few years, Mr. Minister.

Has the cost of the roads increased . . . How miles . . . or how many kilometres . . . I think I've got to get off the miles and the yards and get into the kilometres and the cubic metres. How many kilometres of roads have been constructed for the dirt . . . that has the nine million cubic metres of dirt that has been moved?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Respecting your former question of the number of cubic metres that was moved by earth excavation contractors, the precise figure would be 9,846,000 cubic metres. That did represent 347 kilometres.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, how many kilometres of roads were resurfaced? And maybe go through the other one, the oil surfacing — how many were resurfaced; how many were oiled? Do you have a list that you can send me down that would indicate all the work that was done: how many cubic metres of earth has been moved, how many kilometres were oiled, how many miles were oil treatment, how many were surfaced? Give me the whole list.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, we'd be happy to provide that information. I'll just direct my officials to go out and take a quick photocopy of it and send it across to you.

**Mr. Lusney:** — While your officials are doing that, Mr.

Minister, we'll just carry on then. Could you indicate to me how many of the contracts were tendered? Were they all tendered? Where there any contracts given by proposals rather than tenders? Could you tell me how the contracts were handled?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Chairman, in general terms, the vast majority of the work done by the private sector is contracted out on a low bid tender system, and that is where a very, very significant amount of our dollars are spent.

Regarding your question of work that had gone untendered, if you like, yes, the department has had a policy for some time that on very, very small jobs they are handed out, and we do try to spread that work around as much as we can to give as many contractors in the province a chance at doing some relatively small dollar work. In round figures, I believe that the policy states that any work that is in excess of \$50,000, invitations for proposals, or tenders if you like, are submitted. But work that is under \$50,000, we call that day labour work. It's worked on a set hourly basis for whatever type of machine, or whatever type of work that is done. And those are only for small jobs that are under \$50,000.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, seems to me in the estimates, it used to be work under 10,000 that would sort of be grouped together, and nobody really questioned what was being done. The 50,000 isn't a large figure; there's no doubt about it.

Could you give me a list of the contracts that went out under the \$50,000 and who got some of those contracts? The major ones, the large contracts, could you give me the successful contractor that got the job, and what job it was on? The name of the contractor and the job that he was successful on in his tender? And group together the others in a separate one that were under the 50,000.

(2100)

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, it would take some time to prepare that list. If you'll kindly have the patience, I'll direct my officials to get to you a list of the contracts that were let, the successful . . . well, all bidders and the successful bidders. Of course, the member might realize that that is certainly public information. These tenders are open to the public in certainly a very traditional and above-board manner, and we have absolutely no problem in providing you with that information.

As it respects the list of day labour work, if you like, the work that has been under \$50,000, that was conducted by a large number of contractors throughout the province. That is a list that is very, very long; very, very detailed. It would take some time to prepare such a list on all the individual day labour works that were done in the past year.

**Mr. Lusney:** — You will, however, send over eventually — it may not be tonight — but later on send over the list of all the successful contractors — the large ones. The small ones, I understand you have some problems with that because there'd be a long list, so we'll dispense with that. But give me the large contractors and their names and the

contracts that they were successful in.

**Mr. Minister,** I noticed on the list you sent over here, pavement C and oil treatment not available. What's the reason for not having the number of kilometres in those? The kilometres are there, sorry.

**Mr. Chairman . . .** could you give me the cost per kilometre of the roads that you have here. And we'd go on the cost of excavation, the cost of the sub-base, and the pavement and oil treatment — what it costs per kilometre.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm informed that per kilometre, as you had asked, to oil-treat a single kilometre of highway is in the neighbourhood of \$40,000 on average; to conduct the grading or the earth-moving for a kilometre of highway is \$105,000; and to apply a pavement on that is about \$75,000 on average. If you'd like the information on the costs to grade and pave a four-lane highway, you're looking at a very, very high cost today of \$270,000 per kilometre of four-laning, and that would include both the grading and the paving.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to start off by asking you, regarding the stretch of road between Big River and Green Lake, I wonder if you can indicate if a contract has been given out for the clearing of the right of way, and if so, to who that contract was awarded to, and the number of miles or kilometres that are involved in that clearing.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Chairman, I'm informed that on that road from Big River to Green Lake you were looking at approximately 15 kilometres. That contract has been tendered, the work has been completed, and that was done last winter. You had also asked about the specific contractor's name. I'm sorry we do not have that name handy with us. You may be informed, though, that it was a local contractor who was awarded the contract. It was a contractor from the town of Big River, as I understand it.

**Mr. Thompson:** — I'm assuming the contract would be for less than \$50,000, is that right?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — No, I'm informed that it was a public tender, so it in all likelihood was in excess of \$50,000. It was indeed a public tender.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Minister, is that just for the clearing of the bush on that right of way that you're speaking of — 15 kilometres of bush — and it would be in excess of \$50,000 for that contract?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — No, the contract was indeed tendered, and I do understand that it was done at a very reasonable figure. And I'm sorry; I was mistaken; it was significantly lower than 50,000. It was in fact somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$20,000.

**Mr. Thompson:** — And you're quite certain of the kilometres, that the contract was for to clear the bush out of only 15 kilometres?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, we're quite confident of that.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Is that 15 kilometres . . . Or is that spot kilometres, or is that all in one spot?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — The contract encompassed the entire 15 kilometres, and I guess it would be just whatever clearing was deemed necessary. I couldn't tell you the exact number of kilometres that needed clearing, but the contract did encompass the full 15 kilometres.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Okay, I'll leave that. I think you maybe should check that out. I'm sure there's a lot more than 15 kilometres from one end to the other that bush was cleared out of. Could you tell me if there's going to be a contract given for any dirt-moving on Highway 55 between Big River and Green Lake this summer? And if so, could you tell me when that is going to be tendered?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes. I'm informed that that particular project is being done by the government crew up in that area. It is 15 kilometres or thereabouts, and the work started there, I understand, last week.

**Mr. Thompson:** — That is work on dirt-moving, is that right?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, earth-moving.

**Mr. Lusney:** — So there's 15 kilometres of road that will be constructed between Big River and Green Lake this summer. On the first 11 miles that was built north of Big River on Highway 55, could you indicate if you're going to pave that 10, 11 miles this summer or not?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I'm informed that on that particular stretch of highway it is under an oil treatment right now. And no, I'm sorry, it will not be paved this year. It's certainly one that I'll take notice of, and when the traffic requires, we'll certainly look at giving it a full pavement.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I just want to say that most certainly the traffic warrants that stretch of Highway 55 between Green Lake and Big River being constructed. When we left government in 1982, we had that 10 miles already oil-treated. I want to indicate to you, Mr. Minister, that that 10 miles of road north of Big River was already oil-treated. Now we're five years later, we have about six to seven miles oil-treated. You've actually gone backwards and have taken the oil treatment off of it, and you've got about four or five miles of gravel in there now.

And I just say that that's a very important piece of road between Green Lake and Big River, and I just think that you should rearrange your priorities and there should be a paving job done in that first 10 miles that have been put in there and have been under oil treatment since 1982 — since 1981, I might add, Mr. Minister.

And the 15 kilometres of construction that you're putting in there this summer — moving dirt for 15 kilometres — I think that the folks in Big River and in that area most certainly expected a lot more of that done. And I'm surprised that the member for Turtleford hasn't been in touch with you and trying to get that piece of road done, because it is a very important link between Green Lake and Big River and Prince Albert.

And I would just ask you, Mr. Minister, to reconsider that and get some pavement put on that first 10 miles because the longer it's left the less oil treatment we have and the more gravel we have on that piece of road.

I want to now turn to Highway 965, the formerly highway 101 which you have renumbered 965, and a petition that has come in from citizens in the Jans Bay, Canoe Lake, Cole Bay area, signed by a number of individuals, a large number of individuals in that area asking that some improvements be done on that road this summer, as that is a very important piece of road. And I might add, Mr. Minister, it's a road that's in good shape, but it's an old road. It's narrow and it's very crooked and with a lot of hills in there, and there's been a lot of fatal accidents over the last few years.

(2115)

The last fatal accident was on December 14 of 1985, in which there was two lives that were lost and another individual who was seriously injured in that. That's the latest fatalities on that piece of road. And, Mr. Minister, I wonder if you have acted on that petition in any way to start some construction or redoing a part or a portion of that road from 155 into Cole Bay.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I do recall receiving the petition that you're speaking about. And we did indicate that there is no planned construction in our program this year.

I'm always saddened to hear of any traffic fatalities and I will ask for a full report from my officials on any fatalities that happened along that road.

I could give you a good deal of assurance that we will make a special effort to increase our maintenance on that road this year, and do whatever we can for this year, but it is not in the project array for any major construction. But I'll certainly take your comments as being very genuine and I can assure you that it will be viewed in the context of all highway construction in the fiscal year 1987-88.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Could you indicate if there is going to be any money spent on engineering work on that piece of road from Highway 155 into Cole Bay in this fiscal year that we're debating.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — We do not have our complete array, if you like, of engineering works that will be done for the following year's program. I am informed that we are at present working on that and in the next month to two months we should have many of our design work projects finalized. And I can simply say that we'll certainly give your request any consideration that we can. But right tonight all of our design works for the ensuing year are not complete, so no, I couldn't give you any indication right tonight.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. You indicate that the engineering work and designs for the fiscal year are not complete yet. I would ask you, Mr. Minister, to take that petition that you got from the citizens in that area, Canoe Lake, Jans Bay, Cole Bay area under

consideration and I would ask you to instruct your department to do some engineering work on that piece of road. The road was built many years ago, and I might add that the maintenance on that road is good. It's a good road and it was a good road for the time when it was built, but it's outlived its purpose now. It's a very narrow road and winding and hilly. And I would ask that you put some money into the engineering for that piece of road as I think it's very important, and I know the folks up there think it's important that that road does, is completely rebuilt. It's a road that is used not only by local people, by the tourist operators. There's tourist facilities in there, and school buses, a number of school buses, go from all the three settlements into Beauval on a daily basis, back and forth, and there has been some near mishaps with school buses. And it's not a long piece of road, but I would appreciate if some engineering work was started on that this summer. Did you want to respond to that, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I'll simply do whatever I can to see if we can possibly get some engineering work done.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Could you indicate if in this summer, if you are going to finish the last 10 miles of road on 155 just south of La Loche. Could you indicate if that's going to be oil-based?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, it will be completed.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Could you indicate when the crews will be starting to work on that?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — We're hopeful that that work crew will be in there within the next month or so, and I'm sure that you can appreciate that that will of course depend on the weather. But we would estimate it to be in the next month.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I now want to ask you, Mr. Minister, if there are any plans for any engineering work or construction on Highway 909 and 914 — 909 being to Turnor Lake and 914 being the road from Beauval to Patuanak.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — No, right now within our plans, we do not have anything finalized on those roads, so there is no design work that is in the works right at present.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, there has been a number of times during the last couple of years that correspondence has come in from the citizens of Fond-du-Lac and Stony Rapids in the Black Lake area for an all-weather road from Carswell Lake; that's where the road ends right now, from Carswell Lake to Fond-du-Lac and down the south shore to Stony Rapids and hooks up with the Black Lake road.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, if there are any plans to carry out any engineering work or any construction planned to put that piece of road in. I think that more so now that the power line is going to be built on the north shore, that that road becomes more feasible because there's going to be a lot of material that's going to have to be hauled in for that power line and, of course, there's the new schools that are being built in Fond-du-Lac. Could you indicate if there's

any work going to be done on that?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes. In that whole area of the Lake Athabasca region, we have very, very recently finished a study, and that study was done in conjunction with our department and as well Indian and native . . . IANAC — I'm sorry, I'm not familiar with the term; you probably are — but we have done a study together with that group representing the people of that area. It is a comprehensive study of the transportation needs in that area. We are at present reviewing it, but no final decisions as of right now has been made.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Would you release that study once you've gone over it? Is there any chance of me getting a look at that study, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — We don't actually have the detailed final report. The report that we have right now is, I guess, what you would call a preliminary report. We are still working on getting a final draft or the final recommendations from that report. Once we do, we would naturally consult with IANAC, and providing they have no problems with releasing that, I don't think that would be a problem though, and I'm confident that we could release it to you.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I now want to turn to a request that has come to your department. And I know you'll be meeting with the mayor and his councillors from La Loche shortly, on the road that would link up Fort McMurray, Alberta, and La Loche, Saskatchewan — a link-up that I think is very important. And my colleague from Meadow Lake yesterday indicated that he fully supported that road now from La Loche to McMurray.

And when one takes a look at the map and you take a look at the last Alberta crossing, Alberta-Saskatchewan crossing, and it's down at Grand Centre, and there is many, many miles of Alberta-Saskatchewan border with no access and no crossing. And I think that when you take a look at the tourism possibilities and the economic possibilities that a link-up between Fort McMurray and La Loche is going to mean to communities such as Meadow Lake, North Battleford, and Big River, and Prince Albert — down the two lines, and of course not to mention the importance that it will mean to La Loche and the west side. And especially since this government has now announced a new wilderness park which is right beside La Loche and we have 35,000 population in Fort McMurray and it would tap all that northern Alberta from Edmonton, and bring it into Saskatchewan, and down to Meadow Lake and Big River and Prince Albert and North Battleford, and I think give a great lift to communities such as La Loche and Buffalo Narrows and Ile-a-la-Crosse and right down the line.

And I'm very pleased to find that the hon. member from Meadow Lake indicates from his seat that he fully supports this link road. And I know the two members from Prince Albert, for sure, both support that; and the member from Prince Albert, himself, indicates his full support for that. Mr. Minister, it looks like you've got unanimous consent over there to announce that piece of road tonight,

Mr. Minister, if you so desire.

But I think it's an important link between Alberta and Saskatchewan. It's the only part of the province that we don't have a link-up in the North. As you know we have a link-up with Flin Flon and Creighton on the north-east side. But when you take a look at the west side, we have that void there where there is just no crossing.

(2130)

Mr. Minister, I would urge you to give a favourable response to the mayor of La Loche and his council when you do meet them. I know that there'll have to be commitments on both sides — the Alberta government and the Saskatchewan government — and I know that there's going to have to be engineering work carried out to determine the best possible route up in that area that will bring the best results to everyone concerned.

I did attend a meeting in Fort McMurray with the west side mayors and their councils, along with the mayor of Fort McMurray, and they had the support of the member of the legislature in McMurray and the member of parliament. They were not at the meeting but they indicated their support. And of course, the mayor and the council of Fort McMurray, they were in full agreement.

I think now it just takes a commitment by both the Alberta government and the Saskatchewan government, and in particular the Department of Highways from the both governments, to make a commitment to start the engineering work on what I would consider an economic boon for both Saskatchewan and Alberta and a real asset for north-west Saskatchewan by going ahead with that link-up between La Loche and Fort McMurray.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly share with the member opposite the concern for the many benefits that would accrue to that particular connecting link between Saskatchewan and Alberta. I would like to comment that the northern advisory council, for instance, has met with a number of different groups in Buffalo Narrows and a few other places. Respecting the meeting that you attended with politicians and other government officials in Alberta, we are still awaiting further discussions with them. I do look forward to meeting with the representatives from La Loche. I believe it's next week.

Without question, there are a number of benefits that would accrue for such a link. I do want to commend the member opposite for his endorsement of it, and I believe that you did give a very good exposé on the many benefits that would accrue. So yes, indeed, it's a piece of road that we'll be giving serious consideration to and we'll just have to wait for further discussions.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I just want to get one thing straight. Did you indicate that you wanted to meet further with the northern advisory council before you made any decisions or did I hear wrong there?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — No. We already have. We've asked for their input and the minister in charge of the northern advisory council has informed me he has met with them. I



don't know that he'll require other meetings, but it is certainly input from such groups as that that really will be taken into consideration.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I thank you for that response and I know that the community of La Loche and the west side there are going to be quite pleased to hear the type of support that they're going to get on that piece of road. And as I indicated before, I know it's going to take co-operation between not just one government, but two governments, because it's an important piece of road to both provinces. And I thank you very much for that co-operation.

**Mr. Engel:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I just have a couple of comments about highways. My first one would be that I was wondering if you knew that Assiniboia-Gravelbourg has some highways down there — if you're aware of that fact? And is there another constituency, is there one constituency besides mine in Saskatchewan that didn't get one mile of grading or paving or resurfacing, or anything? You know, you look at your highways array, and Assiniboia-Gravelbourg is not on the list — not on the list.

And I'd like you to take a look at last year and see how much we got last year; and I'd like you to look at the year before, see what we got the year before. And with the fourth year with that kind of work, you'd think that you would take a Highways' budget of say, 105 million, you divide it by 35 constituencies, and that makes \$3 million a riding, times four ridings — you owe me 12 million bucks in our area. You know you're getting behind, sir. And it's not that the roads are good.

I'd like to ask you another question and have your officials show you a map, and show me another town in Saskatchewan the size of Coronach — say 1,200 — that has the kind of access roads that Coronach has, either from the east or the west or the north.

I went down to a board of trade meeting, and I gave this story to your predecessor, the member for Wilkie. I said, I sat at that meeting with the people down there and they moved a motion that the highways coming into Coronach from either way — they moved this motion saying that it wasn't fit. And they sent a letter to Mr. Garner, the former minister of Highways and member for Wilkie. They sent a resolution to him saying that those roads that are just oiled grid roads really, they took the grid roads, pulled them into highways and oiled them, and that's all Coronach has. And they said they weren't fit for heavy truck traffic. And then somebody moved an amendment to that resolution and took the word "heavy truck" out of the amendment. And then it read that that road wasn't fit for traffic. You know, to pave it and then have short little hills on a narrow road like that, and the kind of traffic that's on when construction takes place . . .

I'm wondering what your five-year plan is. Let's per chance say that you guys would get elected again. You know, I dread to think that that could happen, but let's say it would. What is your plan for rebuilding the highways leading to Coronach either from the east or the west or north? The south doesn't matter because it's just a short little piece down there. That's one concern I have.

Now there's a new little piece of road at Coronach when they built the causeway over between the water when Cookson Reservoir was put in. And while you're looking at Coronach and the area, I've had it drawn to my attention a number of times that that is a pretty serious crossing in the winter-time when the snow's blowing and all. It's just graded up and the ice isn't very thick on the one side especially, because of the warm water that is injected into there. It's not only fog going up over the road, but because of a lake on the side and the snow blowing there, the suggestion is that some kind of protection would be put at least on one side. And I wonder if you'd consider that.

Those are the two major concerns they have down there: number one, that you just haven't decided to grade or build any roads. Not that we don't need roads there; I think the concern there is as great as anywhere in Saskatchewan. But to spend 105 million and for the second year in a row to get a goose egg — and the third and fourth years were just about as bad — it doesn't pay to talk about 1.3 or 2.3 miles of grading, or a little patch-up work that you've done since you're in office.

No. 2 was upgraded close to Assiniboia and the No. 13 Highway had a little bit of recapping right close to the junction of No. 2. But that's all the roads I can brag about since your friends took office. And I think it's a pretty serious, pretty serious omen on an area of Saskatchewan that's in a heart of the south country, that has a lot of things going for it and a lot of potential for development down there. And one of the big ones should be that more of the roads should be graded up and resurfaced.

So the first question basically is, what's your plan for the future? It's not on the highway array this year, but have you considered doing some grading there, just a little bit at least?

You know, it would make the constituents feel a lot better and would give your candidate down there at least a Chinaman's chance. You know, the time the Tory candidate runs really bad, I lose an election. I have lost down there when the Tories just about lost their deposit. And so I'm kind of worried that your government not doing anything could cost me an election this time around. You know, you should do a little bit. Would you consider at least a little bit so that that constituency be recognized as being part of the program?

But according to my numbers I think there's about 35 ridings that have rural highways in them — might be a little more. But if there's 35, 3 million a road is . . . 3 times 35 is 105, and that's about what your highway construction is. So I think I'm not being unreasonable — not being unreasonable by saying that over the last four years \$12 million would have been about right for my riding.

And where are we at? You know, look up four years for me if you want to, and tell the House what you've done in that area in four years. And I'm sure there's not another riding, there's not another riding that can boast that kind of a record, saying that their highways were forgotten. I don't know if you divided by constituencies. I wish you

would, because that would paint a pretty good picture for us in saying how much catch-up you're going to have to do down there.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Okay. yes, Mr. Chairman, I have a schedule before me that has a number of figures on it here. I can appreciate the member's concern about having some specific work done in his constituency. And we'll certainly be assessing all of our needs very, very shortly, of course, for the next fiscal year.

Respecting the amount of money that has been spent in your constituency, I can say over the last four years, in total, between capital and maintenance, we have spent in the neighbourhood of \$11,851,000. Now that's partly capital and partly maintenance. That would be broken down by, I think, four for capital and around eight for maintenance. So I wouldn't agree that you have been totally left out at all.

I think we've done a reasonably good job of assessing the needs in the entire province and making our priorities and doing the work that is the most pressing. I'll certainly consider your requests on the specific roads that you talked about within the context of our next budget in '87-88, but I think you have been reasonably well treated.

**Mr. Engel:** — I don't . . . like my colleagues say, there's not a big problem for the long term. In this short term, as far as this year, it's not an expensive item to do some kind of a cable or some kind of a marking device on one side of the causeway that's going across by Cookson Reservoir, just going east of Coronach. Would you take a look at the need there? People that use that road to drive back and forth to work on a regular basis have drawn it to my attention, plus a nurse that crosses that road on a regular basis going to work. And she said it's impossible . . . if the snow's blowing just close to the road, it's impossible to see where the grade is. And with no kind of a marker on either side it's pretty scary, especially when you know that the ice isn't very thick there.

If it were a normal lake that freezes over like normal lakes would, it wouldn't be so serious, but because of the ejection of hot water in the cooling water into the lake there, that section right there where the current goes through isn't very thick ice. In fact I've seen it open. And besides that, when the warm water . . . When it is open, you've got fog across that area there. So I seriously recommend, or wish you'd consider putting some poles in with a cable or something like that, along one side of it at least, so that then, with a little reflector on those poles, people would have a pretty good idea as to where the edge of the road is.

So that's one aspect of it that I think a specific thing that won't need to wait for a budget, surely, out of the 12 million that we should have gotten. If it's 4 million construction, then you're counting what was paid for on a road that was let and tendered to resurface No. 2 likely, or surface the original surface on the new No. 2 going down south. Or was there a new contract that was let? If it was, my memory isn't that good. There might be a little bit — \$4 million sounds like too much over four years. I don't think there was a penny spent on grading.

My dad used to talk about a pair like that — when your construction and your maintenance is a real pair, as a horse and a rabbit. Because the construction portion was very small and your maintenance isn't overdone either, you know. That's a big riding. It's close to 100 miles across at the south end, and between 40 and 60 miles deep. It covers a lot of area. In that area we've got a potential clay processing for Kaolin going in down there in the Fir Mountain area that was going to put more stress and strain on the roads that are there.

(2145)

And I think that the idea to put an oil surface down on the roads that are there wasn't bad to get us by for a while. But as the traffic increased and as the towns grew, there aren't too many towns around that have gone from 350 to 1,200 people in such a short time. And particularly Coronach is my worst road.

There are other small roads I could get into, but I think that the numbers speak for themselves. And if you would multiply those numbers out by the average and how many constituencies that are in the province, you wouldn't have a \$105 million budget. You know, you take 105 times 4 is 400 million. And you take 4 times 30 is 120; so you spend a quarter of what you've done in the other constituencies in that area down there. And it's not an area like generally around Saskatchewan.

When I travelled through your area for example, Mr. Minister, with all due respect to your constituency, but the roads by far are in better shape and in better grades and wider shoulders, and better ditch slopes and all. The general condition of the roads in the northern third of the province — you know what we'd say north is from the No. 1 going north — are an awful lot better than they are from No. 1 going south.

And I don't want to speak for all my colleagues, or even get into debate with our highways critic here; but I think the numbers should be switched around where you're spending twice as much in some of the areas that need roads worse than others, to do some catch-up and get the roads in shape.

I went to a meeting. I went to a meeting when I was first elected and it was a rodeo and I was down to open up the rodeo in Wood Mountain, and I told the people down there, in my first term in office, you won't be able to get to Wood Mountain on a gravel road. And at that time there was no paved roads going anywhere near Wood Mountain. And you know in four years the roads have been oiled and been paved. But those roads were just taken into the highway system that were grid roads. We're to the place now where those roads need to be regraded and some money spent on them and brought up to a highway standard. So I think it's . . . Get your officials to take a good look at the map and just see how badly it was coloured when they marked the highway array up for you the last time around. I think you neglected the centre key of the province.

If you look at Saskatchewan and you think of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg down at the bottom there, that's the foundation of the province. When the foundation

crumbles, the whole province will fall down. And I think this is maybe why your party's in trouble.

When they had all the jokes and stories about the condition of the roads — there's nothing to be proud of, Mr. Minister. There's jokes about the roads being so many holes per mile and that you could play golf on them or whatever, so many pot-holes per miles and all. And that hasn't improved very much. I think the whole theory to privatize maintenance and let a lot of that maintenance work out to the private sector isn't really working for you, you know, isn't really working that good for you. I think you made a big mistake selling off some of that equipment, and it's costing you more and you're getting less for the buck.

I think you should have re-evaluated that and take another look at it because it's going to cost an administration an awful lot of money to replace some of that equipment that you've given away. It's pretty serious. It's a pretty serious millstone you've got hanging around your neck as far as Minister of Highways.

I think if you can give me a commitment that you'll look at that causeway and if you can get it into the Highway array it'll be pretty hard for our next minister of Highways to say we're not going to do that because of those plans. So do me a favour and get it in there so I have less of an argument with my colleague from Pelly.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Well I'd certainly give you a commitment to look at that causeway that you speak about and any other particular projects that you'd like to see in your constituency. I would ask you, just so I don't forget, if you wouldn't mind dropping me a short note just outlining your main concerns and perhaps a letter or two from a constituent if you indeed have them. I'd certainly be happy to look at that.

Regarding some of your other comments about your dissatisfaction with the privatization of a part of our department, well, that is certainly a contentious issue between your government and our government. And I think that that has happened, of course, a number of years ago, and it was a decision that we made. We did not make that decision lightly or without a great deal of thought.

And it is our contention that, indeed, it was a positive move in many, many respects, and we will stand firmly by that decision. I can appreciate that the members opposite, with particularly their philosophy, would not agree with any work going out to the private sector. So I can understand why you are in disagreement with it.

I would hope that you would respect the philosophy of our government, which is a philosophy that we do like the word "free enterprise." We do like to see as much free, competitive enterprise go on in our province. And I think the public of Saskatchewan have accepted the fact that in many, many instances the private sector is able to do things more efficiently.

And I believe that that was part of the mandate that we had, when we were elected as Progressive Conservative government, to review all expenditures by governments and to make decisions, where we could farm out work to

the private sector, to go ahead and do so where reasonable. And I believe the decision made in the past was a reasonable common sense decision that has worked for the betterment of all the people of Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, you just finished telling my colleague, the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, how reasonable you intend to be. Seems to me I heard something similar from the former minister. When they get into that chair it seems that they're always willing to be reasonable. And they're going to try to provide the highways that are necessary, and the public with good roads, and they're going to be fair and honest with everyone. And they're even going to try and deal with some of the problems in the opposition constituencies.

The member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg said that his constituency has been one of those left out, and he wasn't sure if others were. Well, Mr. Minister, it seems that there are others, especially from the opposition side. And if you look at the constituency of Pelly, I've been trying to get some roads into that area since '82, or since this government got elected, and every year, they ignore it. Now, Mr. Minister, when I ask for a road, I don't ask for a road for myself. I ask for a road that the taxpayers of this province are entitled to because they're paying their taxes. They are entitled to it as much as anyone else.

There has been a road in that constituency — and that's not the only one but I'll mention the one, No. 8 Highway — that was not on the project array. It was on the long-term planning, the five-year planning of the department to be rebuilt about three years ago. There has been nothing happen on there. In fact, that road is getting to the point now where the crews can't even keep up patching it any more. It just got to where there's nothing but holes and soft spots in it. They patch it up today; it's knocked apart tomorrow. They've got a stretch of road to look after there, and there's no way they can possibly maintain that road properly.

Last year, there were sections of it that were gravel. The public complains about the number of windshields they've been getting broken there. That's costing not only the taxpayer money but it's costing SGI money. It's costing the government. So in turn it winds up costing the taxpayer in two ways: through what they have to pay in their deductible, plus what SGI has to pay which eventually comes out of the taxpayer anyway.

Mr. Minister, why do you tend to ignore some constituencies to the point where you won't put anything up? And then you'll get a candidate in that constituency that'll get up there and say, if I get elected in here all the roads are going to get built, we'll give you anything you want. Well, Mr. Minister, those stories the people heard in 1982, that if you got elected, everything was going to be fine, people wouldn't even have to work any more. They would get everything they want. That seems to be what's going on. I find that happening in Pelly constituency right now, where that candidate is saying that if he gets elected, I tell you things are going to be so good there that the people are just going to have everything they like and they won't have to worry about

finances or anything else.

Well, Mr. Minister, anybody that would go to that length, that's just absolutely absurd. I don't see anyone that would believe that. I don't even understand anyone making statements like that. I know there are some areas in that constituency particularly that have been ignored by this government for four years, like they have been in Assiniboia-Gravelbourg and some other constituencies.

But, Mr. Minister, why don't you put some of those constituencies on your project array, look at some of those roads, and look at the serious condition that they're in, and what the public has to put up with driving over them. Get some of those constructed.

I see it's not on the project array again this year. So, Mr. Minister, could you tell me why that one road at least is not on the project array?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the member's comments regarding that specific road, and you're quite correct, in this fiscal year the road is not on the project array. But the member opposite suggests that I should get out and look at some of the highways. I do want to inform the member opposite that this coming summer I do intend on having a good tour of a number of the parts of Saskatchewan. I have been fortunate that in the past while I have done a great amount of driving and have covered various parts of the province. I can give you a very, very firm assurance that I will be out to the Pelly constituency and I will personally inspect that particular stretch of road which you refer to. And within the context of our budgetary process and our project array for the coming fiscal year, your specific request will certainly be given good consideration.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm pleased that you're going to be coming into Pelly constituency during an election year and possibly making some promises that you're going to be building some of those roads again. Nothing more than promises, because I can say, Mr. Minister, you're not likely to get into another budget. Your term . . . you're into the fifth year now; you have no mandate really, to govern. You should be calling an election, but you're not. You're talking about a sixth-year budget. Well, Mr. Minister, what are you going to build in your sixth-year budget? Why don't you tell us what you're going to do in this budget for this year, what you're going to do with some of those roads. Don't come into my constituency and promise something for '86-87, and tell your candidate, yes, promise all you like. Why don't you do it in this year? You're into your fifth year now. Why don't you build some of those roads?

But that's not in there. You're saying you're going to do it in future budgets. Well, Mr. Minister, that's nothing more than election promises, election promises that people aren't going to believe any more, because I can tell you, after the next election, those people of Pelly can be sure that we're going to build a road for them, those roads are going to get constructed, and it won't be by a Conservative government either.

Mr. Minister, you can do all the promising you like when you come down there. I don't think the people are going

to believe you any more after the four years or the fifth year that you're into your term and still nothing constructive being done in that area.

Mr. Minister, could you tell me what the cost of sand-sealing is per kilometre?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I believe the term you referred to was sand-seal, or seal coat, as we call it, is synonymous. The average cost per kilometre would be in the neighbourhood of \$3,000 per kilometre.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Three thousand per kilometre. Mr. Minister, have you let any contracts for '86-87 for some of the sand-sealing, or seal-coating?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Approximately eight contracts have been tendered.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Could you tell me — you've let those tenders and they've been awarded. Could you let me know what contracts for the seal-coating have been awarded, who got it, and what the amount per kilometre was?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — We do not have that information right handy with us, but I'd be very happy to have it sent to you very, very soon.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, if you've awarded the contracts, why wouldn't you have those figures with you? We're into this year's estimates, and I find it a little difficult to understand why you wouldn't have those figures here. I'd like to have some of those figures; I'd like to know what you've let those contracts for; who received them and for how much. You're saying it's 3,000 a kilometre. I'd like to know what the contracts were.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, we simply do not have that information right with us. I think we've tendered something in excess of 100 contracts already this year. We don't have that information with us, but I'll have it for you first thing in the morning.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would have hoped you would have had it here, but if you'll have it here in the morning. I guess that will have to do then.

Mr. Minister, could you tell me how much the opening of the Borden bridge cost? I know it wasn't you that opened it, but could you give me the cost of the opening of the Borden bridge?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — The cost of that opening was \$21,260.99. So for round figures — \$21,000.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Well, Mr. Minister, it seems to be quite a costly opening. What did you have — dancing girls and all at that opening, or what? To open up something like a bridge that seems to be a rather expensive opening. Could you tell me what really was involved in that cost? What did you have there that cost the money? Was it food; was it entertainment; what was it?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Chairman, the member opposite has asked what precisely was at the opening.

And I think it would be very, very interesting information and valuable information for the public of Saskatchewan to know that at that opening I understand there were in excess of 10,000 people. I was absolutely aghast at the number of people who showed up for that opening. And I believe that it would be very, very much of a testament to the fate that those people had waited many, many years for that particular bridge to be opened. And it really showed the support of the people in that area who showed up en masse, in excess of 10,000 people, and it was a very, very successful event. I'm sorry that I myself was not able to attend it, but people were very, very happy at that event. It was one of the oldest bridges; it has a great deal of historical significance, as you may well know. And it certainly highlights the importance of the Yellowhead Route as one of our major highways in this province. So the event was very, very well attended.

And yes, indeed, we spent a considerably number of dollars there to advertise and to promote the opening. I can give you a breakdown, that there were a number of advertisements placed in various newspapers, the advertisements. And there was a special commemorative issue of a newspaper in the *Star-Phoenix*, and that was in the neighbourhood of \$14,000.

They did rent a number of large tents that were at the opening. They had balloons, and buttons, and ribbons, and banners, and photographers, and there were a few dignitaries there who were paid an honorarium to come to the opening. So I have nothing but praise for the opening. It was very, very positive. There were some minor distractions there that day, but notwithstanding that fact, it was a very, very successful opening — an opening of a major bridge with which this government is very, very proud.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lusney:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I see you got a hardy round of applause from your colleagues on the expenditures of an opening. Mr. Minister, I think that is the kind of waste that has been prevalent within this government, waste that I think one could say, costs a lot of money.

Your advertising through every department has increased substantially. It's been excessive in most cases. Advertising that could be used rather to build roads, to build more of those bridges, and spend less on the advertising and the opening. Mr. Minister, I think the public would appreciate that a lot more if you would put more money into our highways, that we could see some benefits out of it, rather than just wasting it on big hoorays like you usually do in this government.

Mr. Minister, in your airport assistance program, could you tell me what was spent in last year? Well I should maybe go back to Public Accounts, and that is the only thing that I have any reference to, and that's a year old. It's in '84-85 yet. So it's almost not relevant when we do get to go through it. But it indicates there some spending in certain constituencies for airports. Could you tell me what you did spend in '84-85 and in '85-86 on airport assistance?

I notice in your estimates this year you've got a little more money put in for air transportation. You've actually doubled it to \$800,000. Could you tell me what was spent in the previous two years and for which airports they were? What the expenditure was for, and at what airports in '84-85 and '85-86.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — The amount that was spent on airport assistance was \$307,923 — that's in the year 1984-85; in the year 1985-86 is 218,000.

You may be aware that the detailed list of where those moneys were spent will be available to you in the Public Accounts for 1984-85. For the year 1985-86, we're just in the process of compiling that list for the Public Accounts documents, and I would ask that if you could possibly just wait and review that in Public Accounts.

**Mr. Lusney:** — For '84-85, I can see the minister doesn't want to give me the details of it. It's not an awful lot that he spent in '85-86 — 218,000.

Mr. Minister, in '84-85 you have about 104,000 that was spent at the Carlyle airport — that's in the Deputy Premier's riding. And you've also spent something like 91,000 in the former minister of Finance's riding in Kindersley.

And, Mr. Minister, it seems that you've spent the money in non-directional beacons. Could you just tell me what that expenditure was for in those two ridings, Kindersley and Carlyle? — in the Carlyle airport, and the other one's in the riding of Kindersley.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, in answer to your question, at the Carlyle airport I understand the moneys were expended on pavement; and in addition an NDB. And not to be confused with the NDP; that is a non-directional beacon, a navigational aid for pilots. In Kindersley it was pavement.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, could you tell me what your policy is regarding the non-directional beacons, and what is the cost of those beacons?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — The cost for a non-directional beacon, and of course it may change slightly from year to year, but in round figures to install a non-directional beacon is in the neighbourhood of \$25,000. And that expenditure is certainly shareable by different classes of airports. And that policy has been a policy with the department for a good many years.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Are you going more into installing these beacons, Mr. Minister, now?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, we judge each case on its own merits and where warranted. And given sufficient funding, we'll certainly be installing them wherever we can.

(2215)

I think that we have to look at the province overall and see how many of these non-directional beacons are necessary. We do take a look at different geographic

areas, and we do try and have a certain number of them within all geographic areas. And I think the north-east of the province is well served. I know we have one in Melfort. The north-west of the province is well served. Different areas — we're talking about the south-west down here has received one. So we do try and have as many of those as we can and spread them out geographically so people who are flying throughout Saskatchewan can home in to that navigational aid.

**Mr. Engel:** Navigational directional aids are necessary when you have nothing to aim at. Even if you'd have one beyond, you can get there. Like to get to Maple Creek you aim at Medicine Hat and you'll find it. You know what I mean, because you have a good one at the Hat and at Swift Current. But when I'm talking about south-west, I was thinking in Gravelbourg or Shaunavon or somewhere when you get off the beaten path, you have no navigational aids like that, and so with no help. Because when you get south of there there's a wilderness before you get into, far enough down to Montana, to the point where you could aim at to get to a certain location. So I think it's important that you take a good look at Assiniboia or Shaunavon, particularly those two I'm thinking of. Gravelbourg has a radio station there which helps immensely, and so does Weyburn.

But I think if you take a good look at some of the areas like that . . . And talking about airports, I'd like a group from Assiniboia would love to talk to you about a problem they're facing with upgrading their facility because it is on an old airport base. That's another question. But on the directional aids one, when you said south-west, I thought when did they build one, because I haven't aimed at one for a long time, and it's still not there.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, I can appreciate your concern, and I can assure you that I'll look at all of the non-directional beacons we have in all areas of the province, and certainly down in your area there may be a real need for one there. I can appreciate it. You, I understand, are a pilot yourself, and certainly it would be a considerable help to yourself personally. So we'll look at all of them in the whole province and try and be as fair and reasonable as we can.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, I would like to get into the cost of signing. We've seen some of these nice blue . . . I shouldn't have said nice. We've seen some of these blue signs out on the highways that were probably more than a necessity — just more of, I suppose one could say, a quirk of the former minister or the government to get these blue signs up when we had signs that were totally adequate before. They may have been green and white or whatever colour they were — or black and yellow. But all of a sudden this government decided they wanted some blue signs up. Now, Mr. Minister, could you tell me what the cost of those signs were?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, in answer to your question, I would inform you that there is a group, and they are called the standard of Canadian Council of Uniform Traffic Control devices. And we took it under advisement from that group. They did indicate to us that, within their standards, they would like to see either blue or green signs go up.

We did want to reserve the green signs for the Trans-Canada. We have reserved them, the green signs, for that and indeed have embarked on a program of replacing some of the signs that have been worn out, that needed replacing, with the new blue markers, which are fairly standard across the whole country. I can appreciate the member's concern that the colour blue may not be as aesthetically pleasing to him as it is to other groups, but that is the colour we have gone with. I don't think it's unreasonable to go with a colour that had been deemed one of the choices by the Canadian Council of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, certainly a very, very good group that is involved on a daily basis with signing type of issues.

You did also ask the cost. And the cost on the primary highway system is approximately \$110,000. I should point out that, had we decided to keep the old signs, it would have been necessary to upgrade those signs, and the cost there would have been about \$25,000. I think it was a rather prudent move, rather than refitting or revitalizing the old signs, to install these new signs at a cost of about 110,000.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I suppose it's a matter of opinion whether one would consider 25,000 versus 110,000 to be a prudent move. I don't know. I suppose the public again would have accepted the \$25,000 spent on redoing the old signs, making them look good, and spending the remainder on fixing up some of the roads which certainly haven't been done. Now again it's, I suppose, an opinion of yours that it's better to spend money on signs and on advertising and on everything else rather than put it into construction.

Mr. Minister, when you gave me the \$110,000; was that the total cost or was that just for the year of '85?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — The figure that I quoted — the \$110,000 — was the amount that was expended on the primary highway system, in the amount, once again, of \$110,000.

The member opposite has raised a point that it would have been better to spend that money in fixing up the old signs at a cost of \$25,000 vis-a-vis the decision to purchase new signs at a cost of 110,000, and that is certainly something that we looked at in our decision-making process. But I think a very, very key point is that these old signs were nearing the end of their useful life, and had we spent 25,000 to upgrade them this year, we'd have to spend another \$25,000 on other signs in future years. And the cost benefit analysis showed that without question it was a more prudent to purchase the new signs.

It should be pointed out that these new signs have a useful life of somewhere between six and eight years, which is far better than simply repainting signs year after years.

So I think if you were to sit down and really analyze it the way we did, it was indeed a prudent move that would really save the taxpayers money in the final analysis.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, 110,000 on primary

highways, you said. Was that over the four years? I had asked you whether that was in one year or was it over the four, going on the five years on the primaries. And were there some on secondary highways, too? Do you have an additional cost on secondary highways?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — No. The figure that I gave you was moneys that were expended not in a single year, but over the year 1984 and 1985, and that did include the primary highway system only . . . (inaudible) . . . on secondary highways.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, you are saying then that you didn't spend any . . . You didn't put up any of the new signs on secondary highways then. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — No, we didn't do it in 1984 or 1985. We will be embarking on a program to continue replacing those signs as it is deemed necessary. There will be some more signs replaced this coming year. I couldn't give you a figure on how many, or where, but the moneys that have been expended were over the last two years, and it will be an ongoing program to upgrade and replace.

**Mr. Lusney:** — You indicated that there is going to be some signs replaced for '86 — in the '86-87 year. But however, you say that you don't have a budget for that at this point; you don't know how many are going to be changing, or what your budget is going to be for signs?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, the amount budgeted in 1986 is in the neighbourhood of 100-110,000.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, the first signs . . . again we're getting to the 110,000 versus the 25,000, but we got through that argument. The first set of 110,000 that you spent in '84-85, I believe you said it was — when did you first order those signs? Do you order them ahead of time, a year prior, or when did you first put in an order for the new signs?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, we first ordered those signs in 1984. And the order was placed for a number of signs that would be adequate for the primary highway system, and they were erected over the two-year period. So the signs we ordered in 1984 were placed on the primary highway system only over the years 1984 and 1985.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, could you give me the cost of advertising? Your advertising budget, I notice in '84-85 was something like - or communications budget was \$850,000. However, it seems in Public Accounts that you spent quite a bit more. Could you give me the actual cost of total communications within the department for '85-86?

(2230)

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — The total amount spent on advertising in 1984-85 was \$537,400.

**Mr. Lusney:** — That was total amount spent in communications?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — No, advertising per se.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Could you give me the figure, total amount spent for communications in '85-86?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — The total amount that was allocated to the public communications branch, the total amount spent was \$1,346,068.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, again you budgeted 850 and you say you spent \$1.3 million, a little in excess of that. And you've done the same in '84-85, where you budgeted, I think it was, a figure very similar, and you spent a lot more than that.

Now, Mr. Minister, could you tell me why there is such an excessive amount being spent in communications when you budget about three-quarters of a million and then you go into \$1.3 or \$1.5 million. Why the over-expenditure in advertising?

And while you're at it, Mr. Minister, could you also give me the breakdown on the 537 — I believe we're talking about '85-86, are we? You're talking about '84-85. Okay. We can deal with that one, and we'll do the same thing with '85-86. Then you may as well give me the same figures, the same numbers for '85-86.

In '84-85, when you're looking at \$1.3 million, that's quite in excess of what you had budgeted for — 537 for advertising alone. Could you tell me what advertising companies that went to — the names and the amounts?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'll certainly concede that the hon. member's comments are correct. There was in that fiscal year, certainly, an over-expenditure, some items that were not budgeted, or were not contemplated at budgeting time.

I would like to review with you a number of the mostly safety programs that were initiated by this government and, indeed, some of them were rather costly — I would say that we believe the money was well spent — and to outline some of those programs. There of course was the school bus stop arm campaign. You and all people in most rural communities will be very, very familiar with that campaign of stop arms on school buses — I think a very, very well received program.

In addition, there was a program called the winter driving campaign. We have found from our experience in keeping track of the accidents that take place in the province, there are goodly number of them take place in the winter-time, and we thought it would be a judicious use of funds to start with a winter driving campaign.

In addition, we did initiate a program of the 60-kilometre highway worker safety campaign — here again, I think, something that is fair and reasonable. We do have a large number of highway workers out there. I know the people, when they're travelling throughout areas of Saskatchewan, do not want to in any way endanger the lives of these people who work for our department. So there was an advertising campaign there.

We also had a hot-line campaign where we would advertise to the travelling public that there is a hot-line

number where they can get information on the general conditions of the roads. Especially in the winter-time, that becomes very important. Those services amounted to in the neighbourhood of 280-some-thousand.

There are some other programs here, of course — the annual report, the traffic accident information systems annual report. A major cost to us, I should add, would be the Professional Driver's Handbook. And we're very, very proud of that handbook. I had a copy of it here with me. But there's a handbook, and I'm sure the hon. member will agree that it is a very, very good piece of literature — something that has been copied by many, many jurisdictions in Saskatchewan. It is a comprehensive guide to safe driving, and it is one that we are rightfully proud of as a government. And we have noticed that other jurisdictions have been very, very interested in this book. I couldn't give you a list of what all other provinces have inquired about it, but there has been a number of them.

In addition, we've received numerous compliments from many of the people involved in school driver training. And it's just a real good advertising piece that I think can — I know, will — turn out better, safer drivers. That was — as you can see, it's a fairly thick document; it was fairly costly. We didn't budget for it, but I would say that it was money that was very, very well spent.

In addition to that, there's a motor cycle driver's handbook — here again a safety issue that, I think, will enhance the safety of many, many motor cycle drivers; a seat-belt survivor manual; and numerous other types of programs, virtually all of them — virtually all of them, I can assure you — related to safety.

And safety as a general topic is something that I am very, very proud to stand here and say that this government has been committed to safety. And I don't think there has been a government in the history of our province that has expended the type of dollars on safety and awareness campaigns. And we're very, very proud of it, and I'm sure you share some of that same pride when you look at some of these advertising pieces that have been disseminated through the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lusney:** — That sounded like a nice election speech, Mr. Minister. I wish you would have answered the question instead, because that would have done a little more good and would have saved us some time here. We could have got through with our estimates maybe tonight some time. This way we may have to go till midnight or later.

Mr. Minister, you can go make all the political speeches you like. I know it's an election year. If you like, I can make a speech that'll be just the opposite to yours, and one could. You seem to think that you can do a lot more good by spending money on advertising, on promotions, on everything else. Spend a little money on building highways, Mr. Minister. I'll tell you that could save a lot of accidents.

Some of the roads and some of the potholes and some of the gravel sections on them create more accidents than

your publications say. That's all you'd have to do, Mr. Minister. Spend some of that money in building roads and repairing them, keeping them in good condition. That would help a lot more, if you want to get into speeches.

But, Mr. Minister, I asked you to give me a breakdown of who the advertising — the \$537,000 for '84-85 went to, and what firms, and the amounts. And could you tell me who did the majority — or who did the printing on all those pamphlets that you talked about?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I apologize to the member opposite. I was rather wrapped up in the discussion on those safety programs because I do feel very, very proud of them.

Your question relating the specifics of what advertising agencies were used - I think you're well aware of Dome Media Buying Services. Their amount of expenditures through them — and I should add that a good portion of that, of course, goes to the actual printers in our province — to Dome Media Buying was \$283,236.71. The other part that went to Dome Advertising per se, which is a subsidiary of it, the total cost of that service was \$174,599.14.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, this would include all the pamphlets and all the advertising that was done? The handbook and everything else, that was all done by Dome? The driver's handbook — all the other advertising — lights on, or whatever. Lights On For Life, whoever spent money on that one — that was SGI, I believe. But any of the programs that you spent money on, Mr. Minister, those are the figures that you gave me? They would include all of that?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — We'll supply you with a little bit more detail just as soon as we can get it prepared. But for your information I'll cite a couple of examples of probably some of the larger expenditures that were made in communication. One of them was the official highway map. You'll note that it is a very, very colourful highway map this year. I'd like to commend the officials in the department, the design artists who are perhaps listening tonight, and I'm really proud of that map. That was printed by Modern Press in Saskatoon, who certainly are a very, very well-known and reputable firm within the province.

(2245)

The handbooks themselves, that was the one here, the fancy handbook; it was printed by Midwest printing in Saskatoon, another very, very reputable and well-known firm in Saskatchewan. It should be noted that both of these large expenditures were publicly tendered, and I can assure the people of Saskatchewan — I'm sure the taxpayers are always interested in having a judicious use of their funds, their tax dollars — and both of these were publicly tendered. The printing business, like any other business, is competitive these days, and I think we got very, very good value for our money.

In response to your questions of any other expenditures, we'll attempt to compile a list of other expenditures that were made and to whom those moneys were allocated.



**Mr. Lusney:** — While you're at that, Mr. Minister, could you give me the breakdown of the total 1.3 million for '84-85, and you haven't given me the '85-86 figures. You've been going back and forth. The 1.3 is an '84-85; the map I think, that you were talking about, was probably one that's got your picture on would be an '85-86 or an '86-87. I'm not sure which figures you're quoting me. Could you just give me a breakdown of which year you're talking about when you're giving me your political speech on all the good things that you're doing there.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — You had asked about the 1986, '86-87 expenditures, or '85-86 I'm sorry. For the 1985-86 expenditures the budgeted amount was 850,970. There was an over-expenditure there of 330,000, and the total is \$1.18 million.

**Mr. Lusney:** — To save time tonight, Mr. Minister, could you get your staff, the department, to give me a breakdown of the advertising and all the other areas that they spent that money on. Just give me a breakdown of each one and send it over to me tomorrow or whenever.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — We'd be pleased to provide that information.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, could you give me a little information on some of the departments, or some of the boards that you have under your department. The Highway Traffic Board: could you give me the names of the people on the Highway Traffic Board and their remuneration for the year '85-86?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes. We'll send it over to you shortly.

**Mr. Lusney:** — While they're looking for that, Mr. Minister, possibly you could get them to look at the members that you have on the motor carriers committee, what their salaries or per diem was. Get for the others also how many meetings they had during the year for the amount that they received — if it was 10 meetings, or 10, or 15, or 20, or whatever it was — and also of the motor carriers committee also.

And could you tell me — while they're looking up some of this information, could you tell me: on a traffic safety committee, members, did you have . . . is there some kind of per diem for them or not? Could you give me a little information on the traffic safety committee?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, we'll provide that information to you tomorrow. Regarding your specific questions about the traffic safety committee, they are just regular members of the Highway Traffic Board, and I understand that there is no additional moneys allocated to them for that service.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Are you saying, Mr. Minister, that the Highway Traffic Board or the motor carriers committee — you don't have that information here with you this evening? You can't send that over to me?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, we have it and we'll send it

right over.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Okay, Mr. Minister. Could you give me a list of the staff in your office, some of the personal staff you have — executive assistants, or special assistants, whatever you may want to call them?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I'll send it over as well.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, were there any increases for, in '86 . . . I see you've got June 1 of '86. Have there been any increases for your staff since June 1 of '86?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — No, no. That was just yesterday, and I met with the staff this morning, but I didn't announce any raises this morning.

**Mr. Lusney:** — You're not anticipating any increases then for the remainder of the year as far as your personal staff is concerned and your office staff?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Well, not as far as I know. I think we have to view each case separately, and from time to time we reclassify. If some of the assistants take on special duties, there may be some reclassification. But as far as any large jumps in salary, no, I don't think that we'll see that in my office. I can say that the staff in my office works very, very hard, but as far as any large increases in salaries, no, I do not anticipate that.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, could you tell me . . . I see on the staff, the list that you gave me, the one person that's not there, and that was a Vera Nicholas. Could you tell me a little bit about that individual? How much was paid to her in the past year, in '85? And was she employed by you at all for any length of time or not?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — For the member's information, Miss Nicholas is not working in my office at present. And you may be aware that she is away on educational leave.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, is the department still paying her educational leave at this point?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, the pay for educational assistance runs from August 15th of '85 to August 15th of '86, as you request, and that figure is 20,951.26.

**Mr. Lusney:** — That's the total amount that she gets in that year — 20,000; that includes any salary she may get, anything else that may be paid for. Is that the total cost to either your office or the department's office regarding one Vera Nicholas?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, the total amount — and that's in total for 1985-86 — is the figure that I've quoted you, 20,951.26.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, after August of '86 is she going to be coming back to work in your office?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — She may well be coming back to some specific department; whether or not she'll be coming back to my office or not, I really don't know. I think we'll have to, as I say, cross that bridge when we come to it, but I would give you no assurance whether or

not she would be in my office or not.

**Mr. Lusney:** — How could you explain to the public an expenditure of \$20,000 in educational leave for an employee from the Minister of Highways' office, supposedly in the States taking a foreign service course, and then you saying that you don't even know if she's going to be working in your department . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Well some of your members opposite, a while ago, were complaining, asking me if I'm complaining about educational leave or if I'm against it or not. The member from Weyburn was one of them, whether I'm against educational leave. Well certainly I'm not, Mr. Minister, but one would think if you sent someone from your office for educational purposes, and you're paying their expenses, that you would be wanting that person back. You sent them there to get a specific kind of education, one that would help you, or help them, in your office. I don't know just what the advantage of having a public service course would be to the Minister of Highways . . . or foreign service course.

What would a foreign service course benefit an individual, an executive assistant working in your office, Mr. Minister? I think that is the question the public would have. There's \$20,000 gone for someone to take a foreign service course, and then you don't even have a job for that individual in that office. You may place her somewhere else. I think that is a total waste of money; it's an abuse of the program that was set up. It was set up to get someone from whatever office, or whatever department he may or she may be in, to upgrade themselves to do a better job within that department, on the job that they are doing. That is what that course was set up for.

This is absolutely something that the Minister of Highways has no use for, and I can see why you don't, even know if you'll be hiring that person back, because you really have no use for someone in your office with a foreign service course degree.

Now, Mr. Minister, why do you insist, and I'm sure there are others within this government that probably did the same . . . I shouldn't say you, Mr. Minister. It's the former minister of Highways who allowed that expenditure, and I guess put together the whole . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, my colleague mentioned it something other than what I would certainly say.

But, Mr. Minister, why would you, at this point, agree to something like that, or would you even agree yourself. I would hope that you would say that you certainly wouldn't, because I can't see why any minister of this government would ever agree to spending \$20,000 for something like a foreign service course for an individual which has no need for it within their office.

I could see it if it was from a minister that was dealing with a government outside of Canada or outside of North America. I could see that minister wanting some of his staff maybe a little more knowledgeable in what's happening elsewhere. But the minister of Highways, not only did he fly around, but he also wasted money in areas

like education, using a program that was really a good program, not . . . I shouldn't say using it. He abused the program that was there to provide an upgrading for people that worked within the government.

And, Mr. Minister, are you going to be allowing something like this to happen as long as you are minister, or are you saying that maybe this was an error on the part of the previous minister before he resigned, and that you will not be one that would be doing anything similar?

(2300)

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Well, respecting this particular situation, I think it very, very important to point out that the contract that was signed for this particular individual was not really with the Department of Highways per se, but it was more a contract signed with the Government of Saskatchewan. It really was administered in the past, and still today, through what we call the Public Service Commission. For a good many years they have they have had a program as it relates to financially assisting people who want to better their education, and in this particular instance there is assistance available to this individual. She is not required to come back to the Department of Highways specifically, but rather has a contract with the Government of Saskatchewan. The exact courses that she is enrolled in, I would presume, would be very, very wide-ranging, would be very divergent, and would provide for a very, very broad scope of knowledge.

And with that, we're not saying that this individual will go to any one specific department but is committed to coming back to work for the province of Saskatchewan, a woman who will have a good deal more education and will be better able to serve the public in whatever area that we decide where she would like to work.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, that individual was employed with the Minister of Highways previously as an executive assistant, I believe, or a ministerial assistant, and was there in '84, and was there in '85 until the given point in '85 when she decided to take this foreign service course in the States. You say that she has some type of contract with the government and not with the Department of Highways. Since she was employed by Highways, and paid for by Highways — what contract is it you're talking about? Could you provide me with a copy of the contract that's with the government, not necessarily with the Department of Highways?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — My understanding of that is that it's a very, very standard form type of contract, a contract that I don't believe our government has changed one bit. The contract remains the very same contract that was used by the former administration, administered by the very same department, the Public Service Commission. My department, I'm sorry, does not have a contract, a sample of the contract here, but I'm sure if you would ask the minister in charge of the Public Service Commission for a copy of one of those contracts, he'd be happy to provide it for you.

**Mr. Lusney:** — If that was a contract with the government — and I guess some of your members were saying through the Public Service Commission — why, Mr.

Minister, are you paying the cost out of the Department of Highways?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Well, quite frankly, I don't have a real good answer for that one. I mean, that's simply the way the program was set up, and it happened under your administration, under many administrations. I suppose what happens is when a minister recognizes some talent in a person and decides that that person would enhance the image of government and enhance her education — fine, he recognizes that talent and educational leave is given. And it's not specifically for our department. But I think we have to view it within the context of what is good for the general will of the people of Saskatchewan. Will this enhance our general civil service? And, indeed, better education for women will certainly go a long ways, no matter what department they are in.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, I noticed you didn't have, as you said yourself, you didn't have a good answer for it. Why does being paid out of Department of Highways — you just felt that the former minister must have recognized abilities and the talents of this individual and decided to send her to California, I believe it was, or somewhere in the States for a foreign service course, and then she would somehow come back to work for the government in whatever department. That is sounding a little far-fetched, but I guess we'll have to accept your answer since that's all you're going to give.

But if you felt that this individual was so exceptionally good in a given field, why would the Minister of Highways not say then, if the government thought that there was some talent there, say okay, there is a department in government where we could use this individual and we are going to send her to get a little bit of upgrading, additional education in that given field. Somehow it seems that I'm sure the government wasn't even aware of what was happening; the minister, the former minister decided to take it upon himself to send this individual to the States, and now you don't have an answer for it, and I'm sure no other department of government made any such commitment to send her there. At least, they certainly don't have anything in writing; it's got left with the Department of Highways. I know you're stuck with it. You're paying the bill, and I guess we'll have to leave it there and see what happens a year from now.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I think I would concur with the hon. member that we'll just leave it at that, and I think I advanced my arguments, and I'll accept your arguments as well.

**Mr. Lusney:** — You will be providing me with the motor carriers and some of the other questions I had asked for, for tomorrow?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, I certainly will be.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, just glancing briefly at the per diems for Highway Traffic Board, could you give me also the number of meetings they attended for the amount that they received in remuneration?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — We'll just provide that to you very

shortly.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

#### Item 7

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, I see your communications budget is down this year. Do you propose this year that you will be staying closer to the budgeted figure, or are we going to see something doubling like we did in the last couple of years?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Well, no. And it certainly didn't double. I think that's a bit of an exaggeration, but this year I think we'll be sticking very, very close to that budgeted amount.

And once again, I want to re-emphasize that the over-budgets in the past two years were extraordinary items, and they were items of a substantive nature that will last for a number of years. So I can give the member my fullest assurance that we will be running a very, very tight ship, and we will be sticking very, very close to the budgeted amount.

Item 7 agreed to.

Item 8 agreed to.

#### Item 9

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, I see you've got a decrease of people in the engineering division. Is there a reason for it? Are you going to be requiring less engineers, building less roads this year, or are you going to be hiring engineers from the private sector? What is it that you're going to do if you're cutting down in the amount of people that you have in that department?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — The majority of those difference in positions were made up of early retirement situations, or vacant positions that we're not filling. And I guess what we're going to have to do is just simply require a little bit more productivity out of the people that we do have. And we'll just have to run with the people that we have. And simply, I would say, they're just going to work just a little bit harder for us.

Item 9 agreed to.

Items 10 to 18 inclusive agreed to.

#### Item 19

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Chairman, maintenance of highways and transportation facilities — you've got some 30 people less in that subvote. Why do you think at this time, Mr. Minister, that you need less people in maintenance when our roads are in such poor condition. And as I said before, people are driving over them. They're wrecking their vehicles, and yet you're cutting down on the amount of people in maintenance. Why would you be cutting down at a time like this? You either have to start building roads, or you have to keep those maintenance crews out there.

Why the cut-back?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I think the member opposite should really be aware of the dollar figures that we are expending in maintenance. In 1985 it was roughly 83 million; in 1986 we're looking at 87 million, so I think the key significant point here is that there has been an increase in the maintenance budget. We're looking at about 4.3 per cent of an increase, so the dollars that are being spent on maintenance have actually increased.

Now, your question as it relates to the numbers of people. Here again there is certainly a decrease in the number of people, and I simply have to reiterate again that in all areas of government we are looking at ways to become more efficient, and I think that's certainly part of our mandate. So what I'm saying here is that we are going to be doing actually more work with less numbers of people. I don't think many people in Saskatchewan would really find any argument with that, so it's an efficiency move. We're trying our best to spend the taxpayers' dollars as judiciously as we possibly can.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Well, Mr. Minister, you're talking about spending more money, and it's true item 19 shows more dollars being spent in maintenance. But, Mr. Minister, you lay off 30 people; you're spending more money. It certainly isn't evident on the highways that that extra expenditure has been doing any good, or that cutting back in the numbers of people over the last four years has done any good. Our highways are in worse shape, our maintenance is a lot poorer than it was, yet you are spending more money on it. Could you tell me, since you've cut back on the people, how you're going to be spending more money on it? Are you going to be getting some of the people from the private sector contracting our maintenance in highways, or are you going to be doing all the maintenance yourself? Could you just indicate to me what portion is going to be done by who.

(2315)

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Well, quite simply we're providing roughly the same level of service through government as we have last year. And I think a good portion of what we're looking at here is really efficiencies. And there have been, I understand — and you'll appreciate that I'm not really familiar with all the technical aspects that are being done in the department— but I do understand there has been some technological advancements, some technological improvements that are adding to our efficiencies, and for those reason we're providing the same level of service, roughly, as we did last year, and with less people.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, you said, roughly. I suppose maybe you should have said you're providing some rough service out there on our highways when it comes to maintenance. You're saying that somehow you've improved the department through some new technology that may be available to the department. How is that going to help those people that are out there filling those holes on the highway? Are you going to bring a computer out in the back of the truck and it's going to fill that hole up with the required amount of asphalt and tamp it down too, or how are you proposing that somehow the new

technology has improved the efficiency of the department, and these holes are going to get filled without the people there to fill them. Is this what you're trying to get people to believe?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I don't think I could get into a great dissertation on the real technical aspects of it, but we have noticed some improvements in technology as it relates to the application of seal coating, as it relates to the application of crack filling and, in fact, our line stripe markers. There's new technological advancements there. Simply, technically, more efficient type procedures that we're using and new equipment to do so.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, when you talk about crack filling, I'm having some real difficulty here, Mr. Minister, trying to figure out how you can say that some of your new technology is going to assist you in filling those cracks. Anything I've seen out on the highway, or any crew I've seen out there, they still go out there with that oil truck, and they still run that bit of oil in a crack, and somebody puts some sand on it, and that's the only way it seems that they can fill it, unless now you've got something mounted on a vehicle that they can drive down there, and it's going to find that crack, it's going to put the oil and the sand in it, where you won't require the manpower to do it. I'm just wanting you to try and explain that to me, how you can fill those holes or those cracks without requiring the manpower.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I'm glad the member asked that question; I'm sure there'll be a number of people who'll be interested in a fairly technical procedure. And as it relates to the filling of cracks on our highways, there is a new procedure if you like, a new compound. And rather than using other types of materials we've used in the past, this new compound is a rubberized type of compound that expands and contracts with different weather temperatures. And the useful life of it — and this is the key point — the useful life of this new rubberized compound is probably somewhere in the neighbourhood of five to six years, whereas with the old procedure you were looking at doing that every single year, or every second year.

It's a relatively new technology. My departmental officials have discussed this matter in depth with other departmental officials in other provinces. We're very, very proud that Saskatchewan has gone to the forefront again and come with a new technology that we are using, that in the end — and this is the key point — in the end will save tax dollars. And we're proud of this new procedure, and it's one that is really very, very cost-efficient.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I hope that in the end we're going to be able to believe some of what you're saying. You are spending more money; you say that somehow you're going to be saving money.

We'll see what the roads are like, how much you spend on it, and I suppose we'll be able to . . . Well, we'll never have the opportunity. I guess, to debate that point with you again next year. But we may have an opportunity to have you somewhere around the area that we can bring the question up to you and see just what really happened

in 1986-87.

Item 19 agreed to.

Item 20 agreed to.

## Item 21

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, you've removed some 52 people out of that department. Now apparently they're going to the Saskatchewan auto fund during '86-87. What part of your department is really being removed to the auto fund? I note that driver and vehicle safety division— you're still going to have some there, 17 people. What is being moved to the . . .

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — The people who were being transferred, or the part of the department, would be the entire vehicle safety services branch. The amount that is allocated in the budget is only the portion from, I believe, July — or to July, as I understand it.

Item 21 agreed to.

Items 22 to 24 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 16 agreed to.

### Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Highways and Transportation Capital Expenditure — Vote 17

## Item 1

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Minister, I see you've got a bit of an increase in it, in your rural surface transportation budget. I hope that you do spend all of it this year. You've spent a little more than what you budgeted last year, I believe, in capital projects. You've underspent in '84-85. I hope that you do spend all of what you've got budgeted this year, Mr. Minister. And I wish that when you put together your project array, you would have found at least a small portion of that money and, I suppose, an equivalent portion of the money, considering how many rural constituencies there are, and brought some of that into Pelly so we could at least have some roads to drive on, rather than the kind of mess that you've created over the last four years.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, I can assure you we'll spend all the money, and I'll certainly give the member's opposite, his constituency, a good deal of consideration.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 and 3 agreed to.

Vote 17 agreed to.

**Mr. Lusney:** — Mr. Chairman, before we close it off, I'd just like to say that I notice there's about 100 people less within the Department of Highways this year than what there was the previous year, and we've seen that happen under the former minister where it kept cutting back; you've had 200 and 300 and 400, and now there's another 100. There's a lot of people, Mr. Minister, out of

work, that could have been doing something, could have been providing a service, could have been paying taxes to this province.

I think in the long run it's maybe more beneficial to employ people than to keep them on unemployment or on welfare. I wish your government would look at what's happening when you look at the welfare rolls and the unemployment rolls, and rather than keep cutting back the amount of people that you have working for you, try to provide some jobs and make them useful citizens of this province, taxpayers of this province, that would improve the economy rather than see it going down the way it was been.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Just one point for the member's information. Part of the reduction in numbers of people were simply a transfer from one department to another, so the numbers were not quite as large as you may indicate. So, yes, 50 of them were a transfer.

### Supplementary Estimates Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Highways and Transportation Ordinary Expenditure - Vote 16

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 16 agreed to.

### Supplementary Estimates Consolidated Fund Budgetary Expenditure Highways and Transportation Capital Expenditure — Vote 17

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 17 agreed to.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Yes, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to indeed thank, firstly, the officials that have been with me here tonight. As I said at the outset, I really wanted to pay a great deal of tribute to them for the hard work they have done since I became minister. And I was very, very pleased with the dedication, the professionalism, and the long hours that they have worked to assist me. Naturally, when you have a new minister, he needs some guidance for the first few months, and I can certainly say that I did get a great deal of guidance from the officials.

In addition to that, there was someone else who I do want to publicly acknowledge tonight, someone who was a great help to me, especially the first few months of becoming minister, and that is my Legislative Secretary, the member for Rosthern. And that member was a great help to me in numerous areas, and one can naturally appreciate the difficulty a young, new minister has in coming in. And it was with a great deal of assistance from the member from Rosthern that I was able to make it through those first few months, if you like. And I certainly want to thank him for all his guidance and assistance, and especially in certain matters of very, very sensitive matters where my Legislative Secretary has gone out and dealt with a number of issues throughout Saskatchewan,

and I want to publicly say here tonight that I am sincerely very, very grateful for his help. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(2330)

**Mr. Lusney:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, it appears the minister couldn't get up and say anything. He couldn't even thank his officials without making a political speech after he thanks them. I can see that the minister is a little different than the former minister was. he's not quite as arrogant — maybe not quite as arrogant. But he's certainly learning fast, and he's getting much like the rest of the government has been.

I'd also, Mr. Chairman, like to take this opportunity to thank the officials for the information that they have been giving the minister. I'm not sure that he passed on all of that information, but I know that the officials certainly gave it to him. But I hope that the minister will see to getting some of that information tome that I'd ask for in the next day or two.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 11:31 p.m.