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of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

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The Honourable D. James Walding
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thirty-Second Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

Name	Constituency	Party
ADAM, Hon. A.R. (Pete)	Ste. Rose	NDP
ANSTETT, Andy	Springfield	NDP
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BANMAN, Robert (Bob)	La Verendrye	PC
BLAKE, David R. (Dave)	Minnedosa	PC
BROWN, Arnold	Rhineland	PC
BUCKLASCHUK, John M.	Gimli	NDP
CARROLL, Q.C., Henry N.	Brandon West	IND
CORRIN, Brian	Ellice	NDP
COWAN, Hon. Jay	Churchill	NDP
DESJARDINS, Hon. Laurent	St. Boniface	NDP
DODICK, Doreen	Riel	NDP
DOERN, Russell	Elmwood	NDP
DOLIN, Mary Beth	Kildonan	NDP
DOWNEY, James E.	Arthur	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert	Emerson	PC
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	PC
EVANS, Hon. Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
EYLER, Phil	River East	NDP
FILMON, Gary	Tuxedo	PC
FOX, Peter	Concordia	NDP
GOURLAY, D.M. (Doug)	Swan River	PC
GRAHAM, Harry	Virden	PC
HAMMOND, Gerrie	Kirkfield Park	PC
HARAPIAK, Harry M.	The Pas	NDP
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertslad	NDP
HEMPHILL, Hon. Maureen	Logan	NDP
HYDE, Lloyd	Portage la Prairie	PC
JOHNSTON, J. Frank	Sturgeon Creek	PC
KOSTYRA, Hon. Eugene	Seven Oaks	NDP
KOVNATS, Abe	Niakwa	PC
LECUYER, Gérard	Radisson	NDP
LYON, Q.C., Hon. Sterling	Charleswood	PC
MACKLING, Q.C., Hon. Al	St. James	NDP
MALINOWSKI, Donald M.	St. Johns	NDP
MANNESS, Clayton	Morris	PC
McKENZIE, J. Wally	Roblin-Russell	PC
MERCIER, Q.C., G.W.J. (Gerry)	St. Norbert	PC
NORDMAN, Rurik (Ric)	Assiniboia	PC
OLESON, Charlotte	Gladstone	PC
ORCHARD, Donald	Pembina	PC
PAWLEY, Q.C., Hon. Howard R.	Selkirk	NDP
PARASIUOK, Hon. Wilson	Transcona	NDP
PENNER, Q.C., Hon. Roland	Fort Rouge	NDP
PHILLIPS, Myrna A.	Wolseley	NDP
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
RANSOM, A. Brian	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Burrows	NDP
SCHROEDER, Hon. Vic	Rossmere	NDP
SCOTT, Don	Inkster	NDP
SHERMAN, L.R. (Bud)	Fort Garry	PC
SMITH, Hon. Muriel	Osborne	NDP
STEEN, Warren	River Heights	PC
STORIE, Jerry T.	Flin Flon	NDP
URUSKI, Hon. Bill	Interlake	NDP
USKIW, Hon. Samuel	Lac du Bonnet	NDP
WALDING, Hon. D. James	St. Vital	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, 28 April, 1983.

Time — 8:00 p.m.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY

SUPPLY - HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

MR. CHAIRMAN, C. Santos: The committee will please come to order. The Member for Thompson had the floor when we broke for the Private Members' Hour. The Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Prior to supper adjournment, I gave my preliminary remarks in regard to a number of concerns that I have and concerns actually that my constituents have about the air ambulance, or as the Minister called it, the patient transportation system.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Medical evacuation aircraft.

MR. S. ASHTON: The Member for Pembina says medical evacuation aircraft. I believe the Minister used a different term. The term is not of concern to me, Mr. Chairman. The system and how it works is the area of concern. I know that the Minister has received feedback from the nursing association at the provincial level, and I'm sure that much of that feedback about the present system came from nurses in the Thompson area because they deal perhaps most extensively with the Citation aircraft.

One comment they've always made to me is that it's very difficult in a lot of cases to put patients of the kind that they are on those aircraft. You know, often they are fairly seriously ill and obviously have to be fairly ill in the first place to have the aircraft called in, but in a lot of cases they are on stretchers and it's very difficult to load stretchers in that aircraft. Now, that aircraft, the Citation, is a very nice aircraft. I've had occasion to ride in it on a number of occasions myself, but as the Minister pointed out, I don't think it's really suited for purposes of an ambulance.

Now, given the fact that was purchased prior to his tenure in office, I can see that there isn't much that can be done in that area. One area, though, I think that could be looked at is the possibility of locating that Citation in Thompson. The Minister indicated that is being looked at and I'm very pleased to see that. I realize that it would require service capability, but I think it could greatly improve the potential of the system to serve northern Manitobans.

The Citation can land at a number of airstrips in the North; it's not restricted solely to Thompson, so it does not have to be limited to Winnipeg-Thompson runs. By locating it directly in Thompson, it could be used within the North and then could be used to send the patient requiring the transportation directly to Winnipeg, rather than requiring the use of two aircraft as is often the case at the present time. So I would certainly hope the

Minister would give complete consideration to locating the Citation in Thompson. While it isn't the perfect aircraft for the purpose that it was purchased for, it's certainly the quickest aircraft available in terms of moving patients to Winnipeg and by having it located in Thompson, I think there may very well be some possibility of improving the time in which patients can be served.

So, with those two comments, Mr. Chairman, I'm quite willing to allow the Estimates of this section to be passed.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think I should re-emphasize what I said earlier, and that is that we had looked at the question of locating the aircraft at Thompson and the recommendations were that there would be no advantage. I thought I dealt with that more fully earlier on this afternoon; the reason being that, by and large, most patients that are transported from Thompson to Winnipeg are brought in from other remote communities to Thompson. There's usually enough notice given to have the Citation fly up to meet them at Thompson. Diagnosis usually takes a fair amount of time, diagnosis of the patient. We don't believe and it is not our opinion that there is undue delay to transport patients to Winnipeg, although I'm not saying it couldn't occur.

There's a cost factor of relocation and many other things, but that doesn't mean that that is a firm position. The point that the member makes is valid, I suppose, to some degree.

One of the things that shouldn't be overlooked and that is that there are expectations that shouldn't be built up in Northern Manitoba that somehow they have a eligibility for service far in excess of what is available to southern Manitobans.

There are many distances, many miles that may be travelled in southern Manitoba from point A to point B, from one hospital to another in an emergency vehicle. Just because it is in the North doesn't mean that there's an automatic jet service. The jet service is indeed for what we would consider to be a true emergency, but not for convenience so to speak. Convenience can be awfully expensive and if we're going to promise convenience then we should do it for all Manitobans. That should not be lost sight of.

The points that were made by the nurses zeroed in on the question of not an adequate ambulance aircraft. They have not got the message that we never did have, nor was it ever intended that we have an ambulance aircraft. Now maybe we should have one. But they are complaining about the lack of facilities on our ambulatory air service. Their perception of what we're doing is totally wrong. That is not what that aircraft is intended for at the present time.

If the Health Services Commission wants to enrich their service, then it will be a major policy decision no doubt where we may provide such service, but we should not build up the expectations that this is indeed an ambulance service because it is not. It is air patient

transportation, but it's not an ambulance, there's a big difference. There's a big difference in cost, Mr. Chairman. Now that may be desirable to do, but that's going to be up to another department to make that decision.

MR. S. ASHTON: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

In response to the Minister, I can assure him that we in the North are not looking for merely added convenience. In fact, we're more used to inconvenience than we are convenience when it comes to transportation and services. — (Interjection) — Well, the member says not in Thompson. I'd like to compare the access we have to the rest of the province; the costs we face and some of the other difficulties we face with his area.

MR. D. ORCHARD: How about your northern living allowance. Do you want to give it up too?

MR. S. ASHTON: Well, Mr. Chairman, the Member for Pembina mouths off something about a northern living allowance. I wish he would point out how many people in Thompson are receiving northern living allowance at the present time. I'll tell him there's very few, if any, Mr. Chairman.

MR. D. ORCHARD: How many?

MR. S. ASHTON: Very few. But as I was saying, I understand the point that the Minister made about that aircraft. That aircraft is technically an executive jet and it is used for the dual purpose of transporting patients and also for executive jet purposes. I realize we're stuck with it. I realize that the investment has been and it is understandable that it is difficult to obtain a comparable aircraft which can be used for both purposes.

The basic point that I am making, Mr. Chairman, is that my constituents are a little concerned about some of the reports coming from the nurses. I accept the Minister's point that perhaps there is some misunderstanding about the role of the aircraft. I think, though, that the major concern would be in terms of placing of that aircraft in Thompson; I would hope it would be fully researched. If it can be shown to us in the North that we can be served just as equally from the aircraft being placed in Winnipeg, and if that can be done at a cheaper cost, we'll accept that. The major concern though is that we do receive that service regardless.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to get into a debate on the Air Ambulance Service, especially not with such a learned person as the MLA for Thompson, but I happen to have been involved with the department when the MU-2 crashed - well, heavy landing and was damaged and we spent so much time trying to decide what aircraft to buy that the MLA for Churchill was quite critical of us for delaying the replacement of the MU-2, the air evacuation plane. The MU-2 was put into patient transportation; it was not designed for that, but the MU-2 was bought because it was a high wing configuration and could land on gravel strips in Northern Manitoba.

Now we could have bought one other aircraft which had a wide cargo door, which could have made it

suitable with that optional cargo door to get stretchers in and out easier, but it was a low wing configuration plane. It couldn't land on gravel strips, period, and it required about a 3,800 foot strip, if I remember my figures correctly, and most of the gravel strips that we use in Northern Manitoba are 3,000 foot.

The Citation is capable of going into those strips as long as the strips aren't wet and soft in spring breakup time. It can land on a gravel strip of 3,000 feet and take off on one engine. It's rated for 3,000 foot strips, and when I went through a selection of planes that were dual-purpose planes, the one that shone out every single time with the capabilities of providing high speed, high altitude, patient transportation, that Citation came out. I think it has a top ceiling of 42,000 feet, I believe, which would get it over any thunderstorm that has ever developed in Manitoba, so that the patient transportation is direct and fast. It has the range from Churchill to Winnipeg, which most other aircraft did not have and it had the capability of landing on 3,000 foot gravel strips.

There was a lot of very serious thought went into the selection of that plane, a lot of work by the Air Division to come up with a number of selections from which we could chose a replacement aircraft for the MU-2. There was a concern about getting another MU-2 because, quite frankly, there was a reluctance to fly in the MU-2 because of some of the mechanical problems with the engine. That decision was not taken lightly to replace the MU-2 with the Citation. When we did it, we knew full well that we were not buying an air ambulance, because I looked at air ambulances.

You can buy a specific air ambulance that's got everything in it from resuscitation to, I think it's called fibrillators, for heart attack patients. You can go the whole ball of wax and you can have the most first-class air ambulance that you've ever seen, but there isn't a provincial jurisdiction in Canada that owns one. You know, when I took a look at the financing of such an operation in Manitoba, as the current Minister and the current Minister of Health will be taking a look at it, you have to come to some decisions, and the point that the Minister made is a very valid one.

The service that we offer out of Northern Manitoba with that aircraft now that can travel at 400 miles per hour puts a heart attack patient in Thompson closer to the intensive care centre in either St. Boniface or the Health Sciences Centre than what one of my constituents has living 85 miles or 100 miles away from Winnipeg. I would suggest that more people are going to die on the road to a Winnipeg intensive care unit from rural Manitoba than necessarily will die the same way from Northern Manitoba. We've had an unfortunate case like that from Flin Flon, but to my knowledge in the three years that I had anything to do with this, or three-and-a-half years, that's the only person who has died on his way to hospital out of Northern Manitoba. Such isn't the case from southern Manitoba.

Everybody in southern Manitoba would like to have a 3,000-foot airstrip and access to the aircraft we use for medical evacuation. The people in Melita would sure like it. The people in Roblin and Russell would sure like it. The people in Swan River would sure like it but, Mr. Chairman, they don't have it. That aircraft does not pick up people in southern Manitoba. It's not used. That's a northern air patient transportation aircraft.

You know, I faced the same kinds of decisions and concerns registered by the nurses in Northern Manitoba when we chose that aircraft. They have very specific intentions in terms of an aircraft. Naturally, because they have a professional desire, they want the best that's available. If I was in their position, I would want the best that was available, but from time to time when you have the role of government and the administration of the funding of the province, you have to make some decisions that are compromise decisions taking in consideration on the one hand, patient care, and on the other hand, the taxpayer's pocketbook. There are times when, quite frankly, life does have a price. Fortunately today, even with the MU-2, I only know of one patient that has died enroute to Winnipeg from Northern Manitoba.

So I believe the service that is being offered now is at least as good and is better than what was offered when the MU-2 was in the air because, No. 1, the aircraft is more reliable. It is not down in the hangar being repaired as often as the MU-2 was, and when it's in the air it's moving 120 miles an hour faster. It can get a patient to an emergency care quicker than any other aircraft we've ever had, and that was the one shining thing that made it stand out above the rest of them. You know, I know the Minister is going to wrestle with this location in Thompson, because we did too, and he is going to find that the costs, it would probably be the most ideal situation to have that aircraft up there, but when you consider moving - I think you have six pilots, or is it four? - four pilots that have to be on standby at all times for that aircraft because you have to fly with two pilots. You have to have two pilots in that plane so that means you've got to run that 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as you have to for emergency evacuation, you've got to have four pilots, possibly two more. You've got to have a maintenance staff that can look after that aircraft when it's sitting up there because what's the sense of having your maintenance in Winnipeg and your aircraft in Thompson. If you need to fix something, what are you going to do with the airplane? Are you going to fly it down to Winnipeg to fix it? So that means you move about eight of the service staff up to Thompson?

There are logistical problems that say you cannot do it and this Minister is going to be faced with the same kind of logic that the department presented to me because we looked at it. If we lived in Utopia, we would do those kind of things, but at times you have to make decisions. I made them and this Minister is going to make them.

Mr. Chairman, I have one question to ask of the Minister. Have you changed the charge-back rates of air division use to the departments? Have you increased the schedule?

HON. S. USKIW: I wonder if the member would clarify since what date? Since the last Session?

MR. D. ORCHARD: No, no. Did you change it since the change of the government?

HON. S. USKIW: Yes, I gather it has. Yes, I believe I signed some documents some months ago to that effect, yes.

MR. D. ORCHARD: So the user rates have gone up?

HON. S. USKIW: Yes.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Okay, that brings me to the question then, I notice your Recoverable from Other Appropriations is identical year to year. Now, does that mean you're going to be utilizing the aircraft less hours? Have you got some tighter guidelines on the departmental use of the aircraft, so you're recovering the same amount at higher rates? Or I'm assuming the rates went up, maybe you went and put the rates down. — (Interjection) — they went up. If the rates went up, then how are you accomplishing the same kind of Recoverable?

HON. S. USKIW: I'm not sure what the member is getting at. We charge a rate and bill other departments for the use. So the other departments should reflect the charges. We shouldn't have it reflected in our Estimates.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Absolutely, I fully appreciate that. But last year you had a Recoverable from Other Appropriations which is just charged back to other departments.

HON. S. USKIW: Yes, I see what you're saying.

MR. D. ORCHARD: And it's the same this year?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the member is correct as far as the printed Estimates go, but there were Supplementary Estimates last year that had an additional amount reflecting the new rates.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Okay. So then do I understand that in the Supplementary Estimates - does the \$2,375,000 in the left-hand column the same as printed last year or has it been added to? I don't believe it's been added to, Mr. Chairman, from last year's Estimates book.

HON. S. USKIW: The adjustment figure, as I understand it, was \$600,000 in the Supplementary Supply.

MR. D. ORCHARD: So that meant the Recoverable last year was \$1,775,000.00?

HON. S. USKIW: I would imagine so.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Okay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 5.(a)—pass; 5.(b)—pass; 5.(c)—pass.
Resolution 100: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,640,100 for Highways and Transportation for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1984—pass.

6.(a)(1), Motor Vehicle Branch.

MR. D. ORCHARD: What about 5?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm calling 6.(a)(1), Motor Vehicle Branch, Management Services: Salaries.

MR. D. ORCHARD: I wish you'd keep members across the table here in order because they are distracting me. You almost slipped that one by me here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm ignoring that one.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman. Now let me just find my staffing complements here. Is your staffing requirements in Motor Vehicle Branch the same or are you up? You mentioned a transfer of two from the Bridge Department.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the increase in this area represents a transfer of five staff years from driver licensing, and reflects the salary increase on the 27th pay period.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Management Services have received five SMYs from Driver Licensing?

HON. S. USKIW: I'm sorry, I wonder if the member would repeat that.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Did I understand the Minister to say that Management Services has received five SMYs from Driver Licensing, Item (b) under this appropriation?

HON. S. USKIW: Yes. In total though the branch is down two SMYs which is one vehicle inspection unit taken out of service.

MR. D. ORCHARD: That's on the, at random, call for inspection. You've got one less crew on the road doing that then?

HON. S. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. D. ORCHARD: What was the reason for pulling those people off that safety inspection?

HON. S. USKIW: Strictly a budget cut, Mr. Chairman. An expenditure cutback.

MR. D. ORCHARD: The Minister is bringing in safety measures in the seat belt legislation, helmet legislation, and the child restraint systems and he's saying according to - we haven't heard the Minister introduce the bill, and I look forward to when he does - but we've heard his leader the First Minister indicate that this seat belt legislation, the child restraint systems and helmet legislation was necessary as a safety measure which was designed to reduce costs in the medical system - this was one of his major thrusts in replying to questions in question period.

Now I find it rather odd, Mr. Chairman, that we are going to force Manitobans to wear seat belts, helmets and use child restraint systems at the same time that we're reducing a very effective method of keeping unsafe vehicles off the road.

Now, if this government is talking about safety measures as a method of saving taxpayer dollars in the health system, I find it to be quite a dichotomy they've got going for us here. I know that whoever on

the other side is tallying up this request for extra expenditures so they can present us with a bill at the end of the Session - I don't know who it is and I hope they're here tonight - because the reduction in vehicle inspections is not going to contribute to safety on Manitoba highways.

That program - and we'll get into some questions on some other ones that were brought in over the last several years - was designed to give some assurance that vehicles were on the road in a reasonably safe operating condition and certainly I'll admit it was only a random call-up of people, but to have that reduced - I think there was only three crews on that to start with - and to pull one crew off? You've reduced the service by a full one-third. You know, I'm a little bewildered as to whether this government is truly serious about their safety measures, when on the one hand they'll legislate seat belts, helmets; and on the other hand, they're pulling off a crew for a restraint measure to inspect fewer vehicles for safety defects of vehicles that are on the road and licenced. Now, I think even to my honourable friend, the MLA for Dauphin, that does not make sense. He's going to be standing up in the House and voting against the will of the majority of his constituents for seat belts and motorcycle helmets, and at the same time, he's supporting a reduction in the service of the Motor Vehicle Branch of inspecting safe vehicles; and I remind my honourable friend, the MLA for Dauphin, that if those vehicles did not pass the safety inspection, they had, I believe, seven days to correct the defect and if they didn't correct it, they could be pulled off the road. Now, that's a positive safety measure that this government is taking away and at the same time, they're now bringing in helmet and seat belt legislation.

Now, I know the Minister in his reasonable way will explain this so it all makes sense to us, and I'm going to give him the opportunity to explain to us how they can be bringing in seat belt legislation, helmet legislation; at the same time, they're reducing inspection of vehicles for safety defects that make vehicles on the highway safer to drive. When vehicles on the highways are safer to drive, there's fewer accidents, and when there's fewer accidents, there's fewer injuries and expense to the health care system. Those two measures do not meld together as a government that is serious about safety. I know the Minister is going to have an explanation for me and I would like to hear it.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the member makes a valid point. There's no doubt that there will be less inspection of motor vehicles because of the removal of one inspection unit from the system, so we're not going to deny that. It does not follow that that action in itself contradicts the safety legislation as the member alleges, because what we're doing on the one hand, while it will reduce the number of spot checks, if you like, and no doubt will contribute somewhat to less safe highway systems, the other has to be a much more major offset, because (a) it is a compulsory compliance system; (b) there's a penalty section that is attached to it, which means there's going to be more universal application of those safety measures and it costs no money to legislate - figuratively speaking. So it's an efficiency measure that will reduce in more safety on

the highway, notwithstanding that there will be some minor reduction in this area.

Now the member makes the point that we should not reduce; we should keep adding. That's a fair comment. I could make that argument too, but we don't have any money this year, Mr. Chairman. We have to find the money somewhere and it's as plain and simple as that. We have reduced this activity by one unit and we are sacrificing a bit, yes, in order to maintain our spending within our zero growth guidelines, which we have had to do. So that is the nuts and bolts of that decision, Mr. Chairman.

MR. D. ORCHARD: How many inspection units are on the road?

HON. S. USKIW: We had four and we will now have three, a one-quarter cut.

MR. D. ORCHARD: So you've got a 25 percent cut in safety inspections and your offset is compulsory seat belts and helmet legislation. You know, we got accused of acute protracted restraint during our term of government at the time when we, I believe we added a safety inspection unit during our term of acute protracted restraint, and here we have this government that is the end-all and the be-all of caring for people and they're proposing mandatory legislation that the majority of Manitobans do not want to see, and at the same time, they're pulling off a safety inspection unit. Now I really think - I don't know what makes these people across the floor of the House think. You know, I just cannot believe this, and when you tie this in - and I don't want to get into the construction budget just yet, the Construction and Maintenance Budget - but good heavens, we have got a government that is pulling 25 percent of the inspection capacity out of the department, which is going to put unsafe vehicles off the road. At the same time that they're making that 25 percent cutback, we've got them reducing funding on reconstruction of highways, and I believe that when we do a serious analysis of the cost under Maintenance, we're going to find that Maintenance is going to be down.

Now, potholes and improperly maintained and reconstructed roads are more dangerous to drive on than well-maintained reconstructed roads. So here we have two areas directly impinging on the safety of the driving public, forced upon Manitobans by the repriorization, I believe, is the buzz word that the NDP are using - repriorization of funding. They're pulling two safety measures, one of them major in terms of construction and maintenance; the other one not as evident, but pulling 25 percent of the vehicle inspection capacity to check for unsafe vehicles, and then they're solving all the problems by bringing in mandatory seat belts and helmets that the majority in the MLA for Dauphin's constituency do not want to see. If he was allowed to have a free vote in the House, the MLA for Dauphin, if he followed his constituents' wish, would vote against that legislation. So would the MLA for Ste. Rose vote against it if he followed the will of the majority of the people, which I might add that both the MLA for Ste. Rose and the MLA for Dauphin were calling for all during the Crow hearings. They said to every

farmer, how can the Federal Government change the Crow rate without consensus, and yet they're going to stand up and vote against the will of the majority in their constituencies on seat belts and helmets, and they're calling it a safety measure and they're bringing it in because this safety measure, as the Minister says, is a freebie. It doesn't cost anything. They stand up, all 32 or 33 strong, and they vote as a block with the whips on, to force Manitobans in seat belts and helmets, call it a safety measure, and then cut back 25 percent of the inspection staff of vehicles on the highway. It's incredible. It's incredible.

You know, normally you see a policy direction in the government, but here we see policy confusion in this government. There is no concerted attack on safety by this government. There's reductions; there's protracted restraint in the safety inspection that this government is offering. We, the government that cut back, according to the NDP during our four years, cut back everything, added one inspection crew and that's the one you're cutting back right now under repriorization.

I think that this whole direction of safety, this issue of safety that we are having the ND Party foist down the throats of Manitobans is a farce. It's a farce! On the one hand you say we're bringing in seat belts and helmets for safety measures, and on the other hand you're cutting back a real safety measure that takes unsafe vehicles off the road. I find that incredible. I find that really incredible and if I could see a concerted policy direction of this government, I might agree with some of the things they're doing. You people are in chaos; you're in absolute chaos over there. The problem is that Manitobans are the ones that are going to suffer. Manitobans are the ones that are suffering from this government in chaos.

MR. R. DOERN: And we're suffering from the speech right now.

MR. D. ORCHARD: The MLA for Elmwood makes his contribution, and I respect the MLA for Elmwood. After all, if he hadn't have been so successful in the leadership campaign, we might have had a different leader and maybe we would have had some direction in this New Democratic Party, and maybe we wouldn't have the chaotic, knee-jerk, stumbling policy development of this government. I can't believe it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The member will please stay on the topic.

MR. D. ORCHARD: What is the topic? Mr. Chairman, the topic that we are talking about right now is the Motor Vehicle Branch, which is Management Services, and within the Management Services of the Motor Vehicle Branch is the responsibility for the administration of safety on the roads and highways of Manitoba and, if what I have been saying isn't on the topic, Mr. Chairman, then you better find out - no, I can't say that - members of the committee better find out what the topic is, because here we are, cutting back on safety funding through the Motor Vehicles Branch in the drive to save money - and I might tell you, we're doing this at a time when the government's

overall spending budget has gone up by 19 percent, except this Minister with this department administering for the safety of the people, the driving public of Manitoba, has to bear the brunt of cutbacks.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: It shows your priority in rural areas.

MR. D. ORCHARD: These people are in chaos. That is the only word you can say, they are in policy chaos.

Mr. Chairman, I don't think I have anything more to add on that. I think it's incredible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to have a few comments in here, and I want to compliment my colleague who has illustrated some of the fallacy of this government's direction that they are taking. I would like to just touch on the safety aspect as well to some degree, where we are being faced with a legislation that is coming forward in terms of compulsory seat belt legislation and helmet legislation and in terms of protecting lives for the people of Manitoba, and I think everybody would agree to some degree.

I would just like to draw the Minister's attention to a few years ago when I brought in a Private Members' Bill raising the drinking age from 18 to 19. At that time, I had all the background information in terms of the lives it would save and the accidents that it would prevent, in terms of just taking the high school group, the young kids, raising the drinking age by one year. There was a lot of debate on that. It had taken place a few years - the bill was introduced once before, was defeated and it was very narrowly defeated. The majority of the NDP members opposed that legislation at that time.

That dealt with safety and saving lives, and here we have compulsory seat belt legislation. The mechanism for saving lives is there. Those that want to use a seat belt or helmets, they can do it; there is no law against that. Now we're making it compulsory, but at that time the NDP members voted against raising the drinking age. Statistics from across North America prove that it would save many lives, save many accidents. If this Minister was concerned about the safety aspect of it, why did he not then support that legislation at that time? It was lost by two votes the last time I proposed it. It was by two votes. It was safety at that time. Then a different aspect took place. Now this Minister is going to put it on the line and make it compulsory. I'm very concerned about that, about the hypocrisy to some degree in terms of how do we rate safety.

The other concerns I have I'll raise later with the hypocrisy of this government in terms of their priorities about road construction, etc. We'll get on to that a little later, but I just wanted to add this aspect of it in conjunction with what the Member for Pembina already raised, how this government views safety. They are going to impose on the people of Manitoba - and we'll have a chance to debate that in the House once the bill comes in, but these are some of the points that illustrate that they're not consistent in terms of what they claim are their priorities.

The other thing I would like to raise while we are on the subject of Motor Vehicle Branch is the aspect of

licensing, the driver licensing in the rural areas. I want to raise that concern to the Minister. We have the rural areas, places like St. Pierre, Steinbach, Vita, where in the rural areas people can go and apply, take their driver's test, motorcycle test and what have you. We're concerned about costs and what have you, but there are many people that go out there and want to take their driver's test.

I know that, in a place like St. Pierre, for example, kids that want to take their driver's test come there at 6:00 in the morning. By 8:00, there is already a lineup so long that anybody coming after 8:00 - and the inspectors basically arrive around 10:00 - there is such a fantastic line-up and it's taken some of the kids six and seven trips before they finally get on, unless they are one of those tenacious ones. I'm talking of 16-year old kids, they get very upset because, to them, it is the biggest thing in their life, getting a driver's licence. When they get to the age of 15, they're already starting to practise and they are looking very keenly to the time when they finally can get their driver's. They they have to spend months, literally months, trying to get a chance to have a test.

I want to raise that with the Minister, if there is some possible way to adjust this to some degree, because our youngsters start off with a negative attitude towards government and towards the system, because of the way they are being handled, to some degree, and the attitude of the inspectors - they're always under pressure and understandably so. They're a little snippy with our younger people and I think it is a matter of, you know, if there's some way to maybe change the system to some degree so we teach the kids educational process. They come into the system, very often, very negative already, because they have tried for two or three months to try and get on to get a test. Invariably, many of them flunk, and I don't disagree with that because many of them come in a little cocky at the time, but it is degrading to many of them by the time they get through with this system.

I am wondering if there is some way that - I have no suggestion to make, but I'm sure that the department can look at some way of making it a little easier for people to get on and have their test. Because you cannot make appointments unless you go through a driver education system and they sort of have priority. The average individual has a difficult time to get on there, and I just wanted to raise that with the Minister and ask whether he has any comment on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Does the Minister wish to make any comment?

HON. S. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The member raises a question with respect to the processing of vehicle testing, especially of the beginners. I don't know whether he can recall, but some years ago we had a different system. It was a system by appointment only, and the problem with that system was that 30 percent of our staff time was wasted because people failed to show up for their appointments. So we converted to the first come, first served system, which now means that, if you didn't show up first, then you have to wait in line. That is the most efficient way from the standpoint of dollars that the province must put out for these

programs so it's cost effective, but there is no doubt about it that there are lineups from time to time. The onus is indeed on the individual at this point in time to be there whenever the system is ready to give them their test. I wouldn't want us to go back to the other system. Whether or not we can enrich the program to put more people through is something for the future because we don't have the cash with which to do that at this point in time. So we have to live with that for the moment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Well, I can appreciate the problem of the appointment aspect of it, but under the first-come first-serve basis there are people out there lined up from 6 o'clock in the morning - and I can bring him examples if he wants and I'm sure he realizes that - where they want to get on so bad that they come there. Certainly, if that kind of pressure is on there then maybe it could be justified in terms of expanding that program in some of these rural points, because there are not that many available, for example, in the southeast area. I think we've got Steinbach basically, we have St. Pierre and we have Vita. That covers a gigantic area in terms of population. Then I would encourage the Minister to maybe expand that program to some degree because I've had many complaints and I'm sure the Minister's had many complaints and it creates a lot of frustration. I want to encourage the possibility of expanding that kind of a program in some of the southeast areas.

Maybe this isn't a problem that's general across the province, but it certainly is in my area there and it creates a lot of hard feelings. Well, the attitude of kids when they go time after time and they don't get on, they start getting very negative so I think that's not the right way to go and I would hope that the Minister will take that under consideration.

I realize the cost factor, but when there are that many people that want to come, certainly there must be some provisions that could be made for that.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, I want to again mention to the Member for Emerson that when we had the appointment system we had a six-week waiting period. We are putting many more students through now under this system than we were at that time, per day, per week, per month, although it may appear to be inconvenient from time to time, but we are putting much more through.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: The question that I have, in certain areas where there is tremendous pressure on there, would the Minister consider expanding the program to some degree so that we do not have that big backlog? Certainly, if there are that many people that are wanting to get on the program and to get their drivers, with that kind of pressure there must be some way to expand this without creating too much additional cost to the department.

HON. S. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The operation of the branch is such that they do transfer people from one section to another in order to respond to heavier demand factors from time to time, so we are flexible in that area.

In the end, I have to tell the member that we have fixed the dollars for this year and we must work within that framework. I have to admit that perhaps maybe we have been overly influenced by the rhetoric from the Conservative side of the House with respect to the overall size of the deficit. Maybe we have been overinfluenced by that, but we do have to live with the numbers that we have before us.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for La Verendrye.

MR. R. BANMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the Minister doesn't have to worry about the rhetoric of the deficit when it comes to his department because he hasn't fared so well. If you look at what's happened with his department, he's sort of been the scapegoat on the whole thing and I must say that, I for one, am not happy with that because I think this is one of the departments that should have been beefed up. I think it's a good area to create jobs and we've been through that before and I won't deal with it.

One of the few areas of safety that I want to touch on, and I just want to briefly suggest to the Minister, it may be a solution to the problem with the driver testing in rural areas. It's a problem, I believe, with every member that does not have a permanent crew stationed in his area. I know I have several driver testers that come out, I believe, twice a week to Steinbach. They do a good job and I'm not complaining about their work, but they do have the problem and they did have the problem when you talk about appointments, that people didn't show up. I would suggest to the Minister that you've got 30 percent of the people who don't show up and 70 percent do. What we're really doing is penalizing those 70 percent because of the minorities and I would suggest to the Minister - and I don't know if it'll work I haven't bounced it off anybody else - but I wonder if it might not be possible to take a \$10 or a \$15 deposit when a person does come for their driver's licence. This would mean that if that person doesn't show up, he or she then forfeits the money and that does then not inconvenience the 70 percent.

We have a problem here and in so many things in society, you have a few people who spoil it for everybody else and that's what we see happening here. I say to the Minister in all honesty and in all sincerity that the problem that was raised by the Member for Emerson is a real problem in my constituency too. You have a lot of young drivers who are going to school, are driven there by their parents, have to wait around two or three hours, blame the inspectors and blame this particular department for the problems. So I wonder if there isn't a possibility of maybe getting sort of a deposit on an appointment which means that person has to forfeit those \$15 if he or she doesn't happen to show up and I think that maybe that might be a way to solve the problem.

But I say to the Minister that it is a real problem in my area. I would say I would have an easy solution maybe for the particular problem. I would be very happy if the Minister would decide to station one or two people full time in the Steinbach and surrounding area which would deal with these particular driver training things, but he says he is constrained by certain monetary policies of this government, fine. But I wonder if he

would give some consideration to getting some kind of a system in place where people who don't show up for their appointment don't really put the other people, the 70 percent, into the same category and I would ask him to give that some consideration.

I have another problem which has been raised to me by many people in the automobile business, by consumers and the dealer body alike and that problem stems from the practice of Autopac selling Autopac write-offs to anybody who is the highest bidder. What is happening at present, Mr. Chairman, is that people are buying these cars. An average individual who has no body shop background, has very little mechanical background, can buy an Autopac write-off, take it home, put it in his garage and in the part time go ahead and fix that particular unit. He or she then can advertise that car in the local paper, sell it privately and that particular unit never has to have a safe motor vehicle inspection.

This means that a car, and I've seen a few because I'm in the business, and I guess members opposite could accuse me of having a vested interest in this, but, Mr. Chairman, I have to say to you, I have seen people that have bought cars privately at night and then in the light of day the next day found out what they bought with frames that were bent, bodies that were improperly repaired and they have never had to pass through an inspection process or through a safety certificate.

I wonder if the Minister or his department has done any research or have they been in contact with MPIC to ensure that these vehicles that are sold at the public auction by Autopac, in some way or another along the line before they get back on the road, receive a safety inspection. I would imagine that the Motor Vehicle Branch has an idea when those units are taken off the road in conjunction with MPIC, and it would be fairly easy just to have a simple inspection on those units to make sure when they get back on the road that they are in roadworthy condition.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, the member is quite right. There is a problem, has been a problem for some years and we are dealing with it. Hopefully within a very short period of time we will be able to elaborate more fully how we are going to deal with it but there is a program under way, or being developed, which will solve that problem but we're not ready to announce it at this stage.

MR. R. BANMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the Minister's remarks and maybe I can give him a few suggestions.

Autopac, because it is very often in their best interest to write off a unit even though it isn't damaged as severely as one would initially believe that a write off unit should be but because of the economics of repairing it will rather write it off than repair it. It is not my intention here tonight to say that those cars should be taken off the road and shouldn't be repaired because there are a lot of good people, a lot of good body shops that buy these units and do repair them.

However, I want to say to the Minister that it would be very simple in their computer over at 1300 Portage Avenue, or the Autopac computer to red-flag these

particular units, and make sure that before they get registered, or re-registered that there is some safety certificate done, or some safety certificate taken with regards to them and I would suggest to the Minister that it's a pretty simple process. I'm sure Autopac has that within their computer capabilities to highlight that and make sure that those units are certified safe before they are registered.

The other concern, of course, which the Manitoba Motor Dealers Association has been pressing not only this government but the previous administration before that, some seven, eight years ago there was an act passed in the Legislature dealing with the safety certificates which are issued by dealers for used automobiles that they sell on their lots. However, the Minister will appreciate that over half of the used cars sold in this province are sold privately and are never inspected.

We have heard tonight that the Minister is cutting down on the government inspection and one of the simplest ways to ensure that the majority of cars that are inspected, at least at the time of sale, is to ensure that an individual on a private sale before registering that unit, should have a safe motor vehicle sticker. In other words, that somebody with a mechanical background, or somebody in authority, has to make sure that this particular unit has been checked as far as the safety aspects are concerned.

We are going to be faced with a bill dealing with seat belt legislation, with helmet legislation, child restraint - it's before us right now - but one of the biggest areas that we're having trouble with is the car that comes onto the road without ever having a safety certificate. I say to the Minister, that becomes a real problem.

I would like to just illustrate one example which happened not too long ago to my car dealership. I had a young gentleman come in, buy a \$100 car. We issued an unsafe motor vehicle certificate which means that he cannot go and register it. They walked outside, wrote out a little piece of paper, he sold it to his brother, and he walked down the street and registered it. Which means that from private, when I sell it as a dealer I have to issue a certificate. I issued an unsafe certificate but they can turn around the same day because it's a private sale, sell it to their friend, or to their brother and go and register that particular car. I have to tell the Minister that a dealer is powerless in dealing with it and the government is right now powerless in dealing with it. So as a result you can have a lot of old clunkers on the road which never have to have a safety certificate.

We've just heard today, we're getting one of the safety units being pulled off the road. If you're really worried about safety, really worried about safety there is a simple system of regulating that. Ontario has done it, I believe Saskatchewan has done it now, and there is a system. Manitoba, I realize over the last number of years has had the legislation on their books, just haven't proclaimed it and I would urge the Minister if he's really concerned about safety that is one of the acts of the Legislature that should be proclaimed and moved ahead with.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to speak too long on this question of seat belts and motorcycle

helmets but I want to make a couple of references there.

I want to say also to the Minister that any funds that he needs for any program of safety or public education, he can get. All he has to do is go back. — (Interjection) — Well I'm telling you. I believe all he has to do is go back to Cabinet or caucus and he'll get all the backing that is necessary.

No, it's never too late. If there's a shortage of funds, and if there's been a program to keep expenditures down then I think that . . . — (Interjection) — Mr. Chairman, you can't talk out of both sides of your mouth. If you're concerned about safety, and I am, and there's a shortage of funds then I think that money should be allocated, and I think that money should be obtained through Supplementary Estimates and the Minister should be able to bring these programs about.

Mr. Chairman, this whole question of safety to me is a case of public education. We now have good legislation introduced and I think a lot of this is just a case of bringing forward the information to the public. That's what concerns me about the opposition. They are simply striking a position there for freedom and when it comes to the statistics and the studies and the facts, they're ignoring them and saying that this doesn't really matter because a person has a right to choose whether or not he should fly out of his car and into the windshield, or fly out of his car and roll around on the highway, or fly down the highway and land on his head. Mr. Chairman, I think that's a phony issue. I think the issue is a matter of life and death. It is not a case of the right to decide. It's a matter of life and death.

The other thing I would point out to the members opposite is, that as they well know there are four provinces that now have this legislation in, in terms of seat belts, Conservative Ontario, Conservative Saskatchewan, PQ Quebec, and Socred B.C. Now I admit that within a week that'll be another New Democratic province. But the fact is that those governments all have that kind of legislation so it's not a case of freedom. Neither is it on motorcycle helmets where all governments except ours have this type of compulsory legislation in place and seven of those governments, Mr. Chairman, are Conservative Governments.

So I'm simply saying to the Minister that if he has a requirement — (Interjection) — Sure, if he has a requirement, if he requires more funds for safety inspections, or public education, or driver education I think that he can demand this money and I think he will succeed. I think if he had any problems at any time, in any of those areas, that he will now no longer have that kind of a problem.

Now, the Member for Emerson and the Member for Pembina, I think, they made some big statements about how they know that people in certain ridings are opposed to safety legislation. Well, where is their proof?

I mean, what is this, a matter of conjecture? I mean, this is an NDP riding, NDP MLAs are excepting a position that is not held within the riding? You know, where's the evidence? Where is the proof? I mean, bald statement alone doesn't prove anything. I think all that's happening is, of course, that some members of the opposition are trying to whip up the public. I think that they're simply seizing this as a possible issue and — (Interjection) — Well, I would like the Member for

Emerson - it would be interesting, Mr. Chairman, it would be very interesting to know whether the Member for Emerson has poled his riding and whether he could give us some statistics about — (Interjection) — Well, the point is, Mr. Chairman, it would be very interesting indeed to know whether the member could produce any evidence about what percentages of people in his riding are for and against this type of legislation.

The other thing I simply say to the Member for Emerson. He's all excited about his bill, his drinking bill. He's going to raise the drinking age to 19 and reduce the number of accidents . . .

A MEMBER: And deaths.

MR. R. DOERN: . . . and deaths. Well, Mr. Chairman, if that were true, I would vote for that legislation. If it were true, I would support it on the grounds of safety, but the fact is, it isn't true. And the fact is, would the honourable member bring in a bill to raise the drinking age to 21 because there'd be even a further reduction in accidents, or a further reductions in deaths? And as it was said - it was said in this House by the former Member for Fort Rouge, who's now the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lloyd Axworthy. He made the point that on that logic, if you raised the drinking age to 65, then nobody would drink and there wouldn't be any accidents at all.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: The statistics prove that between 18 and 19 with the drinking age being what it is, that's where the accidents are happening and the deaths are happening. The facts are there.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I find that hard to believe. The member argues that between that age, when a person turns mature at 18 and the time he becomes 19, that that's where the greatest number of accidents occur and the greatest number of deaths occur. I wonder what happens to people in that particular year?

So the only thing I would say to the Minister, is that if he requires more funding, if he has been forced to make certain hard decisions, or have been forced to tighten his belt in general, than I think that he can go back with the support, not only of his colleagues, but also of the opposition. The opposition, I think, will back him to a man. There won't be one peep out of the opposition about a supplementary bill to bring in more funding to the Minister of Highways, to provide more highway inspections, to provide more safety education, to provide more signs on the highway to encourage people to buckle up and so on.

Mr. Chairman, the other thing I'd like to mention to the Minister and it's a point that I've raised several times with him, and here again, I think he needs more money for safety programs, and that's in regard to the person on the bicycle. There are thousands and thousands of people riding bikes in this province and they're riding them in very dangerous conditions, namely, they don't have lights. They don't have lights on their bikes and they ride them at night. We have several hundred accidents a year. I don't know how many deaths we have a year, Mr. Chairman, but I do know, as a person who drives a vehicle in the City of

Winnipeg, I see a lot of people at night who are risking their very lives and I simply say to the Minister, he needs money to expand his program. He has a program of safety for children in elementary schools and I say that he needs money, as well, for funding for adults and for juveniles.

Every summer I have the experience - and I'm sure other members around this table do - of almost wiping out a bicyclist during the summer months, where all of a sudden you realize that there's somebody on the street just in front of you, cutting or on the same side, that you can't see, no reflectors on their bikes, wearing dark clothing, no lights, and so on. And the point is this, Mr. Chairman, it's the law. I'm not talking about a new law. I'm talking about the enforcement of legislation which has been on the books for a long time.

So, Mr. Chairman, I say I'm glad that if, in fact, the opposition, if the Member for Pembina has raised the point that there's a shortage of funds in this area, then I say that he has done us a service. He has pointed out to an area where the government maybe through an oversight, has not allocated sufficient funding and I think that's to his credit. I simply say that if that in fact is a weakness of the safety program, than that has to be remedied at once.

But I say, in general, to the members opposite that they are closing their eyes and closing their minds to the issue of safety. You know there are none so blind as will not see, and I find it really quite amazing that the Conservative Party, to a man — (Interjection) — I'm talking about seat belt legislation and I'm talking about helmet legislation - that they can be unanimous in their opposition to good legislation, Mr. Chairman. I must say that I also find it a peculiar alliance of the thousand bikers that came to this Legislature and the Conservative Party. That is strange bedfellows.

A MEMBER: That's a new majority we're forging. We're reaching out to the people.

MR. R. DOERN: That's true. Mr. Chairman, it's an unholy alliance and a very strange combination of people. — (Interjection) — Well, if the Member for Lakeside thinks that's the new majority . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the recording system is to record the member, we'd better keep ourselves in shape.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, if, in fact that's the new alliance, then I think it's a good one, because it's two groups representing a particular segment of society and I think that augurs well for the future of the New Democratic Party. That leaves the entire centre of our society to support this particular government. — (Interjection) — I'm going to stay away from that remark because I remember Lloyd Henderson used that remark in his leadership campaign, Mr. Chairman. In fact, he is the one who said that. He, in fact, made that remark as you will recall. I say to the Member for Lakeside that he was going to take the Liberal Party down the centre of the road, the way a Hutterite drives a truck. But the CBC followed that one up. Ted Weatherhead came out . . . No, I'm quoting what Lloyd Henderson said and what the Member for Lakeside said. The CBC made a worse comment, I have to tell you; they fouled

that up. Ted Weatherhead got on there, in commenting on the Liberal Leadership said, "He's going to take the Liberal Party . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please stay on the topic. The Member for Elmwood.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to tell you what . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. L. HYDE: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. L. HYDE: Mr. Chairman, yes, I take exception on what the Member for Elmwood has just commented on, the past Mayor of Portage la Prairie. He served the area very well and today is not a well man, but he is strong in the community even today. I take exception to what the Member for Elmwood has just stated about my past Mayor of Portage la Prairie.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I didn't know you could criticize a person by quoting their words verbatim. I simply said what Lloyd Henderson said during the Leadership Campaign . . .

A MEMBER: No, no you were slandering him.

MR. R. DOERN: I see. Well . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. R. DOERN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I will try to compliment the former Mayor of Portage by quoting something he didn't say so I can compliment him. Anyway, Mr. Chairman, I'll let that one go because I was going to tell you what the CBC said, but it's a little too hot to repeat.

But, I will say, Mr. Chairman, that I will go back to the original point that if, in fact, there are funds required for the Minister to expand his Public Education Program in regard to cars, trucks, bicycles, etc., and if the Minister needs any money for any improvement or enrichment of safety in this program, he can certainly count on a new approach and backing from his colleagues and in some cases, at least, the opposition will back him as well, at least, on the one segment of driver vehicle testing and inspection.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, I'm amazed at what I hear tonight from the Honourable Member for Elmwood. It is not Wednesday - he writes his second book on Wednesday - Cabinet Days? - he's got away from his second edition and he comes here tonight and tells us that this Minister of Highways doesn't have sufficient funds to carry on with his program for the next year and inviting us and this committee to vote more money. It's the most unbelievable thing I've ever heard all the years I've been in the Legislature.

I know the Honourable Member for Elmwood has a problem. He waded into the private and parochial school thing the other night and got himself in Dutch with the Minister of Education and here, today, he's mucked into the Minister of Highways . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Under Rule 64(2), speeches in the Committee of the Whole House must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under discussion.

The Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, am I out of order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. It's just a friendly reminder. The Member for Roblin-Russell has the floor.

MR. W. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, I thank you kindly. I always abide by the rules of the Chairman and you guide me through this because it's going to be difficult.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Roblin-Russell has the floor.

MR. W. McKENZIE: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for Elmwood now tells us, due to the fact that they forgot about safety in this particular item that we're dealing with in the Highway Estimates tonight, advising us, the committee, to vote more funds to the Minister of Highways. We can't go to the Cabinet room and he can't either and that's the first problem we've got. Secondly, I've never in my life in this Legislature heard a member on the government benches asking the opposition to vote more funds for the Minister while we're dealing with Estimates of Supply. It's an unprecedented resolution that's coming from the Honourable Member for Elmwood which I've never heard of. To take the Estimates back to Cabinet and . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I cannot hear the member.

A MEMBER: You're lucky.

MR. W. McKENZIE: . . . take the Estimates back on the important item so that he can now get a better view of his seat belt legislation which he's been promoting in the Legislature all the years I've been here. Now, he recognizes the problem. Why would any government bring in seat belt legislation when they're cutting back the safety programs in the province? They'd be ludicrous to do it and that's why he's caught in the grinder, because what we've said for weeks here about the priorities of this government, their lack of understanding of what the people of this province want and how they want it.

Mr. Chairman, I'm just asking the Honourable Minister of Highways tonight, very quickly, if we just pave another 20 miles of the Yellowhead Road, we'll get enough money to more than pay for all the safety programs because of the traffic that's on that route. The traffic on that Yellowhead route and the taxes that you're taking off that route will more than pay for all the safety programs that we need for a whole year in this province. But the priorities of this government are such - no, we are going to what? - do eight miles of the Yellowhead,

so the rest of it is going to be bumps and potholes and this Minister has got a problem. I sympathize with the Minister, because he is one of the only Ministers of this government that has come out fair and square and told us before he laid his Estimates on the table, I got a problem, my priorities and what I think should be done to this province, it couldn't get through Cabinet. So we know now the priorities of this government. We understand that highways and the construction of highways is likely last.

I am surprised with the Minister of Government Services and the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who are rural members, would allow that to happen in this province. In our time, men whom we trusted and the people have trusted to see this go down the drain where they say, well, we're not going to build roads; we're going to have more potholes; we're not going to look after the safety but we're going to bring in seat belts.

I just ask again to the committee and the Member for Elmwood, move the Minister of Highways priorities up in your Cabinet room about six notches and let him finish the Yellowhead Highway and you'll get enough money to look after all your safety programs and there'll be enough money to fix all the potholes, not only in Roblin-Russell, but half across this province, because that is the second main highway across this country and it's got 8.7 miles of highway, the second Trans-Canada Highway in this province.

Mr. Chairman, we're going across this province talking about Crow rates and railway transportation, when this government can't get its blinkers off or its rose-coloured glasses off and understand what makes this province tick. Transportation is what makes this province tick. The right to move goods and services across this province and give them a half-decent route and they all come in our province. Lots of trucks today go through the States. They say, what the heck's the use, the prices we're charging for gas up here. If you go across the border, the gas is a buck cheaper. Why would you drive through Manitoba transporting goods from east to west? It's an absolute farce.

Of course, Mr. Chairman, I sympathize with the Honourable Member for Elmwood. I've known him for a long time. I think there are only five of us left from the old days. We call ourselves the "old five" and I certainly agonize for him and I understand the problems he's got. But the problem is, my friend, to give the honourable member more money, where are you going to get it? You've got to borrow it and on this side of the committee, we're not going to let this government borrow any more money as long as I sit here.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Gladstone.

MRS. C. OLESON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are we at the section where I could talk about drivers' licences?

MR. CHAIRMAN: If we pass (a) and (b), we'll go there.

MRS. C. OLESON: I'm wondering, to the Minister, I've had an enquiry from one of my constituents about the merit and demerit system on driving licences. I understand that the driver's licence shows merits, but does it show the demerit points?

HON. S. USKIW: Yes, that is correct.

MRS. C. OLESON: It does show them?

HON. S. USKIW: It only shows merits.

MRS. C. OLESON: Could the Minister explain why it would not show the demerit points?

HON. S. USKIW: The fear in the department apparently has been, and this goes back some years I presume, that that kind of information might prejudice the way in which an enforcement officer may deal with the person who is apprehended on the highway for whatever reason. So, it's to give neutrality to the enforcement system.

MRS. C. OLESON: Well, in that case, Mr. Minister, how does the driver know what demerit points he has at any given time and when his status has changed in that regard?

HON. S. USKIW: That information is always available at the Motor Vehicle Branch, Mr. Chairman. It's readily available for anyone who is interested in pursuing it.

MRS. C. OLESON: In that case you mean, each year when the person renews their licence they would have to make an enquiry as to exactly what status they had, for instance, if they'd had demerit points they'd have to enquire personally as to what status they were at at that given time?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the rule of thumb is that after four demerits there is usually a letter that is sent out to the individual, and then six and eight and so on. So, as they accumulate, there is more correspondence coming from our friendly Motor Vehicle Branch.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 6.(a)(1) - the Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: The Minister made an interesting point there where he indicated that demerits are not contained on the licence because it might prejudice an enforcement officer's issuing a traffic offence.

HON. S. USKIW: Attitude, attitude.

MR. D. ORCHARD: The attitude, yes. I find that if you've got the merit points out there and you're zipping along at five miles an hour over the speed limit, that if he sees some merit points, he's liable to say, well, this guy can afford a two-point ticket and issue a ticket for sure. Like if the reason you don't have demerits there, then you should not have the merits either because I think both are prejudicial, could change the attitude of the enforcement officer and if it's valid on one side, I think it's equally valid on the merit side.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I believe the member has a point. I think that if I were to read the licence of the Member for Pembina, which showed merit points . . .

MR. D. ORCHARD: Seven or eight of them.

HON. S. USKIW: . . . that would give me some impression of the Member for Pembina, or if it showed demerits. So I think that's a valid consideration. A peace officer may think that there is a lot of room and, therefore, maybe we won't give a warning this time; we will actually issue a ticket for an offence committed. That may happen. I don't know that it does.

On the other hand, you weigh that against the sort of support and psychology behind the merit principle to the one that actually enjoys to have the merit applied to him or her. There is a little bit of, I guess you could say, air about having a record like that, and you might want to protect it. So that enhances one's driving habits, I suppose. I would say that, on balance, it probably is worthwhile having it on.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Now, the Minister has brought up another area. If the value is there in encouraging the man or the woman to continue driving safely because he's got merit points; likewise the reminder of three or two demerits, I think, is going to have a similar effect, saying to the man or the woman, gee whiz, I've got to be careful in my driving habits because one more and my licence could be pulled. I know that's been done for a long while. I didn't realize why, because I had never gotten demerit points in the last few years. I'd better touch wood because I'll sure get one. So all I have seen is merit points. I didn't realize demerits weren't on the licence, but I think there could be a pretty strong case for pulling both of them off because there are, I think, as many minuses to each case as there are pluses. However, it's not a strong point; the Minister will take it under advisement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister wants to make a comment.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the people who have demerit points are advised on a regular basis if they are over four. Therefore, I think that's all the communication that is necessary. I think there is enough psychology in that alone; a letter advising them of a problem that seems to be brewing as a result of their driving habits.

After a period of six demerits, they of course are subject to show-cause hearings - I believe that's correct. Is it six? - Yes, interview at six points and show cause at eight. So there is a fair amount of psychological enforcement through that process. I wouldn't think I would want to change that.

I would want to indicate, though, that we are looking at revising the whole merit-demerk system, reforming it, because there are anomalies within it. There has been a committee working on that for some time. I'm not sure what stage we're at. We are doing a bit of a pilot project on that very point. Hopefully, the results will show a direction that would be the most productive for us to take. But, just to give you an example, a person can receive two demerits, I believe it is, for a broken headlamp. That in itself I believe to be wrong, because that can happen without the driver's knowledge. I could see it, for example, after the driver has been warned and has ignored the warning. I have

a problem accepting it if it's before a warning has been issued, things of that nature. I think we have to look at the whole system and, hopefully, we will come up with what I would call a bit of fine tuning, which is necessary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question, and it's pertaining to the vehicles and trailers operated on our highways where their sand-gravel loads are not sufficiently covered. Motorists travelling along Route 59 north to many provincial and private recreational beaches and parks have had their vehicles damaged and some had large stones literally shot through their windshields. This is a situation that has been continual, dangerous, and it's been a costly problem for motorists over the past 10 years or more. It's been caused in the main by some irresponsible truckers who have not properly covered their loads of sand and gravel, although most of them are equipped with the tarps.

My question is to the Minister. Has he considered making an amendment as to have it like it is in Ontario where there would be designated roads; to change the Act, in other words, to help the motorists that are heading along these heavily traffic areas to the beaches mainly where the gravel trucks are running?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the law does not require that the loads be covered. It does require that the loads be contained within the box or the container and not above the upper sill, if you like. Now, if the law is violated, of course, they are subject to the penalties under The Highway Traffic Act. Even when a load shifts and causes a problem, they are subject to penalty. Now, it may be a matter of more enforcement. That may be the answer; I don't know.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Mr. Chairman, I have a constituent who had this happen to and with many of his neighbours that go down to the lake. He's finally really done a lot of research into this particular problem. Although it is not mandatory for the sand-gravel loads to be covered, nor are any highways designated, it's very difficult, if not impossible, to enforce without a mandatory requirement. Evidently, the police or inspectors have to identify the vehicle by the firm name and the vehicle licence number, as well as witness to the fact, and the load which caused the damage was not firmly bound and sufficiently covered, all of this usually while the vehicle is going in the opposite direction. So it's almost impossible to get a conviction under this particular Act the way it's stated. I guess the Autopac people have as much problem with it.

In any case, if I may, this particular constituent - and I will pass this page on to the Minister or send it over to his office - that he would suggest that the Act be changed; that the Lieutenant-in-Council may make regulations in:

(a) prescribing the manner of loading and of covering and securing loads on vehicles or class of vehicles operated on highways or classes of highways.

(b) Designating the vehicles or classes of vehicles and the highways or classes of highways to which loaded covering or securing provisions are to apply.

In other words, not every highway needs to be designated. There's probably many places where there's very little traffic, but on these particular - you know, in the summer the number of cars that are traveling to beaches with families - and it is a very dangerous situation. In many cases, it has put motorists and their families in jeopardy.

He went on with:

(c) Prescribing classes of vehicles, highways and loads for the purposes of (a) and (b) on this.

Also, it went further to say that there should be a summary conviction of a fine not less than 100 and not more than 200. But that is the type of thing, I think, that the motorists are looking for on the heavily trafficked areas where many of these trucks are, and I believe it is a danger. I think if the Minister did check with Autopac, they would find that this is a problem.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, I foresee a problem in that kind of a solution as well, Mr. Chairman. No. 59 Highway is one of the most traveled highways on the part of gravel trucks. It is also one of the most traveled highways by the tourist people and the cottage people. You have an obvious conflict of highway use there, and how would one designate that highway for one or the other. The practicality of doing that is somewhat horrendous, to say the least.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Yes, I believe that they have done this in Ontario, and I imagine that their highways are probably every bit as heavily traveled, if not a bit more, than ours. I think that when it comes to the safety of families traveling back and forth, as you say, and tourists, which should take precedence over someone whether they would put the tarp over their truck, which might take five or ten minutes to do, I don't think that probably with a little common sense really does. I can't see that that is a great problem myself, and I think when safety is involved, that probably should come first.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, this is not a new idea. I recall discussing this very item during the mid '70s. In fact, I believe that's when the legislation was amended to provide for tarping, but it doesn't work. A tarp does not completely seal a truck box, if you like. It often creates a problem of tunnel wind underneath the tarp which siphons the gravel out the back end and becomes more of a hazard. So one has to be completely airtight in order to avoid that problem. It could be quite an onerous obligation on the part of the industry to operate in that fashion.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Well, I thank the Minister and I will . . .

HON. S. USKIW: But we'll take a look at it, Mr. Chairman.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: If you would, I would appreciate it and I will send the information that I have to him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had a related concern in regard to trucking safety, and the

Minister is quite aware of it because I brought it up in the House a couple of months ago.

I'd just like to take this opportunity to pass on the concern that was expressed to me by a number of constituents about problems both with ore trucks and with logging trucks. The situation there has been that there have been a number of cases where logs have fallen off the back of trucks with vehicles only a short distance behind. Fortunately, there's been no accidents thus far, but the concern is that accidents could occur in the future.

Now, I understand that this has been a major problem in some other provinces, particularly in the Province of Ontario. They have been looking at ways of improving safety in this area. I realize in asking for some attention to this problem that regulations do exist and that the improper loading of logs is illegal. However, as I'm sure the Minister can appreciate, in the North where the population density is very low, we have very few policemen out on the highway and it does create some problems in terms of enforcement. In fact, I've spoken to the RCMP in Thompson and they're quite aware of the problem, but they have indicated there isn't that much that they can do to cover what amounts to several hundred miles of road. So I would like to again raise this matter. It's been a matter of concern to a number of my constituents and ask that he, through his department, look into possible ways of preventing this kind of problem in the future.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I'm aware of the problem area. There are a number of such areas in the province, as a matter of fact. That specific location we are attending to. There are meetings being held as between our people and the law enforcement people in that particular locality. Hopefully, there will be some results from that and we will come to grips with the problem in one way or another; but we are aware and we're trying to deal with it.

MR. S. ASHTON: I appreciate the Minister's attention to this problem and there's one final comment, Mr. Chairman, which I've held off from making until now. That was in regard to some of the previous discussion as to the cutback of a position in terms of safety. You know, I share the concerns of the Member for La Verendrye in terms of the problems with Autopac wrecks. I've heard of a number of cases of people in my constituency having problems with that, and I appreciate the general concern about the condition of cars of that nature. I would hope that - in fact, I'm sure the Minister would agree that with the introduction of any new programs, of the programs that he mentioned were under consideration at the point in time, that there would be the need to expand this department. So in effect, what is being said by this change in appropriation is not that there's a permanent cutback in one area, but eventually that there is going to be a different series of programs and a different orientation of the department in that area.

You know, I know the Member for Elmwood attempted to suggest that perhaps it was up to various people here to make suggestions in that regard. I know members of the opposition have objected; they are making suggestions in this regard. I don't think that

there's any problem in that and I would certainly, as a member of the Legislature, suggest that we do look at a number of these areas and that we move in those areas and provide the staffing for them. So I've got no hesitation in saying that perhaps at some point in time this year that we may have to expand this area.

So, as I said, I've saved this comment till now because I didn't want to provoke any further debate in that area but, you know, I for one can see some need for expansion in this particular area of the Minister's appropriations in the upcoming year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 6.(a)(1) - the Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, back about two years ago, the Canadian Conference of Motor Transport Administrators, I think, set up a National Review Committee on the requirements and regulations needed for load securing devices. Has that committee reported yet?

HON. S. USKIW: Apparently the report on that is not in.

MR. D. ORCHARD: But, Mr. Chairman, if I recall correctly, a lot of the issues that have been raised tonight on load fastening are to be resolved or at least addressed in that, and so reports should be coming forward for potential national regulation of that.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, I am hopeful that something will develop out of that, although I don't know at what stage of research and development that group is at the moment. All of these kinds of things do receive national attention through various interprovincial groups, departments of government, the conference and so on, the RTAC people and so on. So I'm certain that something productive should come out of it, but when I can't indicate.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, on this item, is there any change in the cost-sharing of Motor Vehicle Branch registration charges between Autopac and the Motor Vehicle Branch?

HON. S. USKIW: I am advised that there has been a change and that it is more equitable for the department, it is down for the department.

MR. D. ORCHARD: In other words, if I can derive from what the Minister is saying, is that MPIC is paying a larger share of the vehicle registration costs?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister has to make a correction.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the split now is 55, the department; and 45, MPIC, so our position has improved somewhat.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Now I forget what the cost-sharing was that was established about two or three years ago, but I thought that it was in the neighbourhood of 60-40, with Autopac paying the 60.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that this formula is what was established two years ago, November, 1978 agreement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 6.(a)(1) - the Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Under this item of Administration, there are grants to the Canada Safety Council, Manitoba Safety Council and the Traffic Injury Research Foundation of Canada; could the Minister indicate what the level of those grants are this year, and whether there is any change from last year's level of funding to those three organizations?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, they are almost identical. The Conference of Motor Transport Authorities is a few hundred dollars less. The others are actually identical, year-over-year. I'm sorry, no. There is 13,000 less to the Manitoba Safety Council in 1983-84 over 1982-83, 133.5 down to 120. That, too, Mr. Chairman, is based on a budgetary consideration.

MR. D. ORCHARD: And to the Canada Safety Council and the Traffic Injury Research Foundation of Canada?

HON. S. USKIW: The numbers for the Canada Safety Council are 2,400 for each of the two years; and the same for the Traffic Injury Research Foundation, 2,800 for 1982-83 and the same for 1983-84; Conference of Motor Transport Authorities was 11,520 in 1982-83, it's down to 11,138.00. The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators is up from 2,670 to 2,800.00.

MR. D. ORCHARD: You know, this is getting to become a regular speech, I guess we are going to be able to make, but here, again, is a de-emphasis of safety in the department due to, and I'll use the Premier's words, repriorization. We have got the Manitoba Safety Council suffering a 10 percent reduction in funding this year. Once again, I make the analogy for the Member for Dauphin, and the Member for Ste. Rose, and for other members of the government caucus that are going to have the whips on for seat belts and helmets, that here, once again, you have sat by and, while the government is increasing funding 19 percent overall, you've let the Manitoba Safety Council enjoy a 10 percent reduction in funding.

The Manitoba Safety Council spends most of their money developing highway safety programs for drivers, as well as, for motorcyclists, and here you are cutting back funding again that will directly lead to the safer operation of vehicles and motorcycles on the highways and streets of the Province of Manitoba. The Manitoba Safety Council has also provided a brand new service, as of about two years ago, a Farm Safety Course, and no doubt, that is going to fall under the axe of reduced programming.

On the one hand, you bring in compulsory legislation, which the Minister says is a low-cost safety item. You're right; it is low cost to the government, as a matter of fact, it is a revenue maker for the government because you're going to be collecting \$100 fines, \$20 to \$100 fines. It's going to be a money maker for the government; at the same time, you are cutting back, not only on vehicle safety inspection crews, but you're cutting back on the Safety Council funding. I find that, indeed, difficult to understand for a government that claims they're all in favour of safety, and I reiterate, once again, this reminds me more of a government

that has chaos for policy development and no idea of where they are going.

Mr. Chairman, I think that should do it on (a) and (b), unless the Minister has any remarks.

A MEMBER: You can hardly defend the indefensible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 6.(a)(1)—pass; 6.(a)(2)—pass; 6.(b)(1)—pass; 6.(b)(2).

The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Now there is almost a 30 percent reduction in Other Expenditures under Driver Licencing and Vehicle Registration. How is this accomplished while, theoretically, maintaining the level of service that that department will offer?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the decrease is due to the fact that the purchase of new licence plates was completed in 1982-83 fiscal year.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, okay, that's fine, that can pass now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 6.(b)(2)—pass; 6.(c)(1).

MR. D. ORCHARD: Just on 6.(c), in general.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, 6.(c).

MR. D. ORCHARD: Once again, I note that the Other Expenditures under the Safety group are down. They are not down as much as they have been in other areas, but they're down by some 2 percent year-over-year. I suggest, with all due respect, once again, that the government is de-emphasizing safety at a time that they're bringing in compulsory helmets and seat-belt legislation as a safety measure.

The Safety Division in the Motor Vehicle Branch have been responsible for providing safety courses, etc., etc., and I ask the Minister, are you able to maintain the Snowmobile and Bicycle Safety Courses, and advertising and literature that's available; are you able to maintain the same level of driver education program? You have already indicated that the Vehicle Inspection Program is down. Are you going to have to significantly reduce any program for safety education and safety training as a result of this reduction in Other Expenditures through the Safety Division?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, what the member is debating is what has already been discussed; it is the same item, it's the one inspection unit.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Minnedosa.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I'm not finished. The balance of the programs are not reduced, but the funding is zero growth.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Mr. Chairman, just a question under here - I don't know whether this is possibly the right

spot - but under the Driver Training Program, which I assume would come under Safety, at one time there was an offer by Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation to make a sizable funding grant to the Driver Training Program, providing the Department of Education would provide maybe a half a credit or something for it. What stage have those negotiations arrived at, or have they completely ceased?

HON. S. USKIW: I'm advised, Mr. Chairman, that the credit was for the instructors, not for the students.

MR. D. BLAKE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't really care who gets the money. I understand that they were prepared to provide upwards of \$1 million, providing the Department of Education would include the Driver Safety Training Program as part of the curriculum and allow some portion of a credit, an education credit, towards those completing the course completely. Those talks had bogged down to some degree because the Department of Education were reluctant to provide any credit merit for it.

HON. S. USKIW: There are no credits that are applicable to the student, Mr. Chairman, that I'm aware of.

MR. D. BLAKE: Yes, I might suggest that if that offer is still available, if the Public Insurance Corporation still feels so inclined to provide that type of funding, that maybe the Minister should continue those talks with the Minister of Education and try to maybe recover or to pick up those funds and include them in the Driver Safety Program in the high schools.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I think the member should be aware that we do subsidize that program, so the student doesn't pay the full shot. The province picks up - I don't know what percentage it is. We're paying about 75 percent of the cost of that from the public purse.

MR. D. BLAKE: Yes, I'm well aware of that, Mr. Chairman. My point is that if you can pick up about \$1 million from the Public Insurance Corporation, seeing as they're enjoying some fairly sizable profits under the four years of good management and good corporate guidance from the Board of Directors they received; it would seem advisable to take advantage of that generous offer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 6.(c)(1)—pass; 6.(c)(2)—pass; 6.(d)(1)—pass- the Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, I just have one item under 6.(c). Is the Minister anticipating that they will be able to maintain the level of critical item inspection of heavy trucks at the scales, or is that also going to be reduced, is the effort going to be reduced under the reduction in the safety spending?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, that was a pilot project and we are not continuing with it because we don't have the funds.

MR. H. ENNS: You're going to say that once too often, Mr. Minister.

HON. S. USKIW: There's no new program. That was not in the program, Mr. Chairman, that was a pilot project and we have not entered another new project into this package.

MR. H. ENNS: In other words, there was one innovative Progressive Conservative Programs that this government can't carry on.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Well, Mr. Chairman, my colleague, the MLA for Lakeside, has hit the nail on the head, because that was quite an innovative program. It didn't delay the trucking industry; it provided an inspection of brakes, steering of heavy trucks on the highways; it uncovered, in a lot of cases, as I understand, safety defects of heavy trucks that were on the road; it led to the repair of those and putting those vehicles in safer condition, and safety is the name of the game - according to this government - because they're bringing in helmets and seat belts - mandatory use - because of safety.

That was a program that we brought in, the Critical Item Inspection Service, and I think we had three people working on that during the summer months to do critical item inspection on heavy trucks. I think, from all reports I received, and I think possibly the registrar would confirm it, that was a very successful program. It was very effective in pointing out to the trucking industry, to some of the people in the trucking industry, potential problems that we're going to have. It didn't unduly delay the trucking industry and it was a very good safety effort.

That's another area of cutback by this government in an area of safety, an important area of safety, because if a steering arm fails on a heavy truck, they do a heck of a lot more damage than a lot of other vehicles on the road if they happen to cross the white line and plow into an oncoming vehicle or anything.

So, I regret, once again, to find out that the financial emphasis on safety is greatly reduced by this government. I regret that this Minister has been forced by his Cabinet colleagues to cut back on funding of safety programs in the Province of Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I want to correct the Member for Pembina. There was no program funding for that project. That was a pilot project that was undertaken by existing staff for a short period of time. The budgetary directions for this fiscal year was zero growth, therefore we could not introduce a new program, and we did not introduce that into the program.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hour being 10:00 p.m., what do the members of the Committee want to do?

MR. D. ORCHARD: Carry on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Carry on. The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Well, the Minister can indicate what happened, but the reality of it is that another safety program, pilot project or not, using existing staff or not, is no longer available. So, on (d), we're now passed

(c), let's deal with the (d). Could the Minister provide us with the names of the people who serve on the three boards: The Highway Traffic Board, the Motor Transport Board - well the four boards actually - the Taxicab Board and the Licence Suspension Appeal Board?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the member, of course, is aware that Mr. John Kinley is the Chairman of the Board. The Vice-chairman is Mr. Ramsay, the second vice-chairman is Mr. Burtniak; and then we have Alice Kachur, William Matthew, Howard Mitchell, Norman Scott, and Harry Gordon. That's the complete Motor Transport Board, yes. That's it for the Motor Transport Board, Mr. Chairman.

Do I understand that the member wants all the boards?

MR. D. ORCHARD: Yes.

HON. S. USKIW: On the Highway Traffic Board, we have Walter Zarecki as chairman, Marv Nordman, vice-chairman, J. Perchaluk, A. R. Paulley, and Isabelle Lawson. That's it.

On the Taxicab Board, I don't have that information, Mr. Chairman.

MR. D. ORCHARD: But you could provide that, Mr. Chairman?

HON. S. USKIW: Yes. With respect to the Licence Suspension Appeal Board, we have Mr. Bejyk as chairman, Anatole Shafransky as vice-chairman, Teresa Novak, Charles Carlson, Georges Boily, Mary Swidinsky, Toni Vosters, Walter Fontaine, Aurele Desaulniers, Audrey Willis.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: It's my understanding - well there was a backlog at the Highway Traffic Board or - pardon me - the Motor Transport Board and the Licence Suspension Appeal Board. There was always a bit of a backlog there. In terms of months, what would be the backlog in those two boards now?

HON. S. USKIW: About eight months in the Motor Transport Board, Mr. Chairman. It was 13 when Mr. Kinley began his appointments, so we've gained five months since that period of time. That's in two-and-a-half years.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Now I didn't realize that Mr. Mackling was doing such a terrible job over there when he was Chairman. Mr. Mackling, when he was the Chairman, kept on telling me that we were only six months behind, and we're still eight months behind after the tremendous administration of Mr. Kinley.

How about the Licence Suspension Appeal Board, Mr. Chairman?

HON. S. USKIW: That one is a matter of weeks, Mr. Chairman.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Now on the Licence Suspension Appeal Board, you have got Mr. Shafransky on as Vice-Chairman. I believe he lives in Gillam, is it?

HON. S. USKIW: Leaf Rapids.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Leaf Rapids? Now does Mr. Shafransky come in to attend as Vice-Chairman hearings in Winnipeg on a regular basis?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the Board is split into two parts, I believe, and each section deals with a part of the province.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Is it fair to assume that Mr. Shafransky deals with the Northern part of the province then?

HON. S. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Okay. Could the Minister, and I don't suspect he'll have that, but if he could provide information as to the number of appeal cases that have been heard before the Licence Suspension Appeal Board and the number of refusals to renew licences.

HON. S. USKIW: Licence suspension?

MR. D. ORCHARD: Licence Suspension Appeal Board, and the number of board decisions to refuse the appeal of a suspended driver to have his licence reinstated, if the Minister could provide that. I don't need that tonight, but if he could provide it to me at a later date.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I'm just trying to determine whether I have it here. No, I don't have that information, but I am willing to provide that for the member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 6.(d)(1)-pass; 6.(d)(2)-pass. Resolution 101, Resolve that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,880,400 for Highways and Transportation for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1984-pass.

Committee rise.

MR. D. ORCHARD: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The next item is 7.(a) - the Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, would it be all right if the Minister gave us a - we've got the Construction Program and, if we dealt with this item in general as we did with Motor Vehicle Branch, then we could pass it all at once. Would that be okay?

Then can I move down to the budget of - I'm trying to find it. Well okay, let's talk about Winter Roads. I note your budget is the same. You are projecting the same budget under Winter Roads. Now are you doing less mileage, or is the mileage the same on Winter Roads? If so, how are you going to come in on budget, because the past trend has been for the contracts to increase year by year?

HON. S. USKIW: I have to remind the member that I indicated on numerous occasions that we have a zero growth position and, therefore that means that there will be some very hard bargaining on the winter road

contracts this year. That's the basis of the figures remaining the same.

MR. D. ORCHARD: I just want to wish the Minister the best of luck.

Now on Other Projects, there is a sizable reduction on the Other Projects. Could the Minister indicate some of the major deletions in the Other Projects that are resulting in this repriorization?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, last year we spent \$800,000 on the Norway House Airport and to complete it only requires 360 this year, so that's a substantive reduction. Last year, we also purchased the CL-215 for over \$3 million and we are not purchasing one this year. With respect to resource roads, the Cross Lake cable ferry was \$400,000 and this year it's 50,000.00.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Now under the Northern Development Agreement, as it wound down, funding done on behalf of the Department of Northern Affairs of course is winding down. Under the new agreement, is the Minister expecting to undertake road construction? Is road construction one of the focal points in the new Northlands Agreement? I'm not familiar with it. Is there going to be much work in Northern Manitoba as a result of the new Northlands?

HON. S. USKIW: The projects, Mr. Chairman, are airport improvements, \$572,000; community roads, \$400,000 less the enabling vote of 20 percent which is 194, which leaves us a net of 777.

Airport improvements, we have an increase of 37,000 which is a total of 572,000 this year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. L. HYDE: It's just about a year ago now, Mr. Chairman, that I drew the attention to the Minister of a road that runs through his constituency and one of my constituents has to travel frequently to his cottage. That's on PR. 314. As I say, I drew it to the Minister's attention last year that this here Mr. Ashley has ruptured a gas tank up there and blew tires, and the Minister said a year ago that he was going to have the rocks picked up and improve that road condition. I wonder if the Minister can tell me tonight and Mr. Ashley if that road is improved to any extent this year.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the member is quite right. I recall discussing that section of road. I also travelled it last summer and it's not one that I would recommend for the unbeware driver, I can assure him. It is a park developed road. It was not originally built by this department, as I recall it, but we now have assumed responsibility for it, at least in the last number of years we have. It requires a great deal of upgrading to bring it up to any kind of a standard. It's a very hazardous section, a fairly lengthy one.

The reason that we did not proceed with the expenditure of dollars that were allocated last year was the fact that we could not get clearance from the environmental people. That's because it is in a park area. We have to have clearance from environmental interests and we have not received that clearance as of this date.

MR. L. HYDE: Another question I'd like to bring to the Minister, Mr. Chairman, I drew it to the Minister's attention last year about the condition of a portion of PR. 227, particularly the area from Oakland west to No. 16 Highway, and in discussion with him on this particular issue, I drew it to his attention how the heavy truck traffic that has been using that road and in regard to supplying of material for Highway 16, they've just pounded that section of that road to the point that it is impassable when it comes to any degree of wet weather at all. This last fall, I, personally, was caught on that road wanting to travel it with pulling a chemical spreader behind a half-ton truck and I virtually got stuck. Now, that area is a heavily traveled road if conditions are at all reasonable and I suggest to him that this road needs some immediate construction on it because it is almost impassable when the heavy trucks are using it to the extent that they are.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the member will note that that particular road is in the carry-over if he looks on Page 4.

MR. L. HYDE: I'm sorry, I missed that then.

HON. S. USKIW: Page 4 of the carry-over, he will notice 15.1 miles which is really a second resurfacing in four years and it's mainly due to the hauling of aggregates to the highway construction projects on Trans-Canada and the Yellowhead, and we are not intending to do anything on this road until that part of our program is complete sometime later on this summer, I presume. We still have tonnages of aggregates to haul in that area and there is no point in upgrading that road and then destroying it again. We've wasted some million-or-so dollars, maybe two, I don't know, by having it done in the first place before the massive tonnages of gravel and aggregates were hauled to the other roads.

MR. L. HYDE: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate what the Minister is saying because I can understand the position that he and his department are in and I can understand why they wish not to put a great large expense on that until that heavy truck usage is completed. But in the meantime, I'm wondering, sir, if you will endeavour to have better maintenance done on the road. I brought this to your attention last year that the farmers tell me that it's very seldom that they see a maintainer on that road and if you could assist them in the area with a little better maintenance, it would be an improvement.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, I have no argument with that. I presume the road is maintained, but if it isn't adequate and we are hauling excessive amounts of product from that area on that road, then I agree with what the member is suggesting.

MR. L. HYDE: There's one more point, I'd like to show my appreciation of the fact that the Minister is going to complete a section of the road leading to St. Ambroise Beach where they're going to be grading and graveling that - I think it's 15 miles if I remember right, something like that anyway - and that is certainly going to be an improvement. There are some very dangerous curves on that road and I understand they're going to

be straightened out and the people of the area are going to be very pleased with that.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, just getting back to the other issue. It may be that we might have to let that road go back to a gravelled surface in order to be able to maintain it during the heavy truck haul and then resurface it after that haul is completed. It's very difficult to maintain a sealed surface or an asphalt surface, that is, patching of asphalt. We may just let it go back to gravel for a period of time.

MR. L. HYDE: I just don't follow you, sir. What road are you speaking about?

HON. S. USKIW: 227.

MR. L. HYDE: 227, from Oakland west to 16? That's nothing but gravel. It has never been any different.

HON. S. USKIW: No, I guess I must mean 248, the other part of it.

MR. L. HYDE: Oh yes, okay.

HON. S. USKIW: Because the two are in the same project. There are 7.8 miles of 227 and 7.3 are both listed as a carry over and they're listed together. So, the 248 is the section that I'm talking about, which is 7.3 miles.

MR. L. HYDE: Yes, I see.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Rhineland.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The area that I represent, of course, is the area in which you have the most traffic in rural Manitoba of any constituency whatsoever. How's that? You also have the highest assessment of land. There is no other rural area in Manitoba in which you get as much revenue as what you do out of my particular area. Now, last year, under the Highways Program we received one bridge, Mr. Chairman, granted it was a fairly large bridge, but that's all that we received. This year, Mr. Chairman, we are receiving absolutely nothing. There is absolutely nothing in the Estimates in regard to the particular area that I represent.

Now, Mr. Chairman, when we formed the government in 1977, there were a number of highway projects in what we would, at that time, consider to be NDP territory because they had NDP representatives representing them. The Minister of Highways at that time said it is customary that whenever any project is started it is completed no matter who is representing, but you do complete that project.

Mr. Chairman, we have the 428, which has been started, there is absolutely nothing on it. The work that has been done on it is going to ruin, because the program has not been completed. We have the 201 which has not been completed; we need six miles of construction in order to complete this; absolutely nothing is done. We have the 243 in which we had started a survey on it; absolutely nothing is done. We have the 421; there is absolutely nothing done.

All these highways are provincial roads that do not require a large or a huge expenditure, but they do need work on them in order for us to keep the roads in the condition so that the local traffic can use these roads in order to get their produce into the required distribution point, which is mainly Winkler. We're talking about potatoes; we're talking about sugar beets; we're talking about all the special crops that are raised in that particular area.

I cannot help but think back many years ago when one Wally Miller was the MLA for the Constituency of Rhineland and when the Estimates of Highways came up and he said there are millions for everybody but there is not a penny for Rhineland and I must say, at this particular time, there is not a penny for Rhineland. I am most upset about the way the Minister is ignoring the constituency that has the most traffic, that creates the most revenue for this particular province and we're not getting one mile of construction. Mr. Chairman, I would like the Minister to justify the position that he is taking. We are getting zilch.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, I can understand the member's frustration. I believe he's close to being accurate. I think there's only about \$200-and-some thousand allocated for that part of that particular district.

I again want to emphasize, for whatever it's worth, that the total construction program is cut by about a fifth from last year. Now within that is a huge carryover section of some pretty big projects.

We need about \$8 million just to complete No. 12 and the Trans-Canada Intersection with a few miles of hard surface. That kind of expenditure in one location eats up an awful lot of options in many other locations.

That doesn't happen to be in NDP country, which the member was alluding to, that happens to be in very strong Tory land, but it's the completion of a major project that was undertaken four or five years ago, the twinning of the highway to Steinbach. We don't argue with that. It has to be completed but it is a massive drain on a very short budget situation this year.

Highway 75 is another example of fairly substantial commitment. It's not in NDP country either, it's in good Tory land. So I reject the notion that we have provided dollars for highway construction based on political boundaries. I don't know what percentage of the highway work goes where, but I'm certain that a good chunk of it is not represented by New Democrats, Mr. Chairman.

What is the major factor, and I want to re-emphasize that, is that we are working with a program four-fifths of what it was last year, and with a lot of carryover within that, so our options for a new highway construction were very minimal this year.

MR. A. BROWN: Mr. Chairman, I recognize the work, and I recognize the problem that the Minister is facing where his expenditures have been cut back by, he says, one-fifth. I recognize all those things.

The problem in the area that I represent is not four-lane highways, all we're asking for is roads so that we can get our produce to market. We're not interested in four-lane roads, we're just interested in roads, and we're interested in provincial roads which do not cost a heck of a lot of money.

We're not interested in huge expenditures, but some work needs to be done in some of these provincial roads in order for the people to get their produce to market. Some attention has to be paid towards that particular situation.

I'm asking, the Minister, said he didn't do anything with them last year, and again this year there is absolutely nothing. Now we saw one bridge last year; this year absolutely nothing is happening. The people are getting very very upset, because we're running into very serious difficulties in getting the produce to market.

I hope that the Minister is going to take some of these situations into consideration and that he is going to make sure that at least, if he can't do it this year, that at least for next year, some of these roads are going to receive some attention. Because if he's not going to do this, then the work that has been done in previous years is all going to be for naught, because these roads are going to be driven right down below the prairie level, and we'll have the same situation that we've had for a number of years on many of these roads where the deepest ditch is the road, where the ditches are higher than what the road is. That is the type of situation, Mr. Chairman, that we've had out there on many of these provincial roads for many years. It is impossible to get your produce to market. Now, if we're going to receive revenue out of that particular area of the province, then we also have to look after it so that we can get the produce to market.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, surely the Member for Rhineland - is it Rhineland? - isn't telling me that during the four years of a government that he was part of that he didn't get his road work managed. Surely he is not suggesting that. There must have been some work done in Rhineland during the term of his government.

I don't think that he should expect that in a matter of the second year that his primary roads are going to get the greatest amount of attention from this government in a year of cutbacks. I mean that is a bit much to expect.

I would have thought that he would have had a bit of a catch-up situation during the four years of the term of the previous administration.

MR. A. BROWN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. We did have a bit of a catch-up because we had an impossible situation. The provincial trunk highways, which are the expensive roads, they have been done in the last four years.

I would just like to remind the Minister that prior to my coming into politics, for 14 years we had a Social Credit member representing my area and there was absolutely no expenditure in roads at that particular time. For 14 years we had not seen any roads in there since the Wally Miller regime really, which is a long, long time ago as the Minister well appreciates.

We did have an update on the provincial trunk highways, which we were very, very happy about and which really helped us along. So, Mr. Chairman, the expensive work really has been done, because the provincial trunk highways that was the expensive work. All we're asking for now is for some money being spent on the provincial roads, which are in a deplorable condition and which are almost impassable.

Many times of the year, as I already was saying, that they're below the prairie level in many instances, and that the deepest ditch is the one that you're driving in. We have to pay attention to some of that construction. We're not asking for huge expenditures of money. We're asking for six miles of road on the 201, which needs to be constructed. We're asking for another lift on the 428. We're asking for five miles of construction on the 421. Again the right-of-way has been purchased, everything is ready to go. We're asking for the 243. Again the survey has been done and we realize that it's going to take a number of years to complete that road.

So what in the Sam Hill, do two, three, or five miles, or six miles a year, but do something. That is really what we're asking, because it's most frustrating, Mr. Chairman, if there is absolutely no activity whatsoever.

Another thing that is needed in that particular area is, in time of flooding along the Red River we need another route into Winnipeg. I'm sure that the Minister has received a number of presentations on behalf of a route such as that. The way the situation is now, if the Red River is flooding, the closest route that these people have going into the city is that they have to take a detour, which would be approximately 75 miles which they would have to drive, extra miles, getting into the City of Winnipeg, which presents a big problem for some of the industries out there, and in particular for the CSP Foods who are in the oil business, in the edible oil business.

I know that the Minister has received many petitions on this. It's another area that we have to take a real close look at, that we have to start making plans, in order when situations such as that occur that we can cope with these. But, Mr. Chairman, we're not asking for huge expenditures. We're asking for some attention to some of the problems that we have at the present time.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, I know what the member is talking about and I don't know whether he was here when I introduced the department's Estimates last week, when I indicated that the government, all governments over the years, have not kept up with the inflation factor on the Road Building Program and their Maintenance Programs; that we have been slipping behind for decades, and I even indicated the mileage each year that is being added to the backlog of work that must be done. Perhaps he wasn't here, so he doesn't have to convince me that there is a problem out there. I'm well aware of it.

I also hope that he recognizes that there's a limit of government spending and it has to do with the size of this year's deficit. I'm sure he's aware that there are very few departments that can be trimmed, because we are locked into Health, Education, Welfare. Those departments are growth departments in a depressed economy so therefore without giving us an option, we have to spend more money in those areas and that detracts from departments that are more discretionary in their spending. I know the member would like to argue that it's not discretionary because we're so far behind, but it's very easy for any government to look at Drainage Programs, or Highway Construction Programs as a means of holding the line in a period

of shortfall in revenue. And that's precisely where we're at with this department this year, and I presume, with Natural Resources as well, which is the other construction department, so to speak - programs that could wait, perhaps desirable, but could be put off.

I want to tell the Member for Rhineland, in case he missed my comments the other day, that it was a fairly regular joke with me on the Highways District in Selkirk for a good number of years during your regime, wherein I had often enquired as to when they were going to be vacating their offices because they had nothing to do in the area. The standard reply was that, well, there's just a few of us around; all the other ones are around Killarney and Boissevain and Brandon and southern Manitoba. All of the staff virtually was pulled out of that area and moved into southern Manitoba. So I know what the member speaks of, Mr. Chairman, I recognize it for what it is. Unfortunately, we're in a financial straightjacket which doesn't allow us to satisfy all of the aspirations of all of our members this year.

MR. A. BROWN: Mr. Chairman, I realize and I recognize the difficulties that the Minister of Highways is faced with. We all know that this government is not placing highways as one of their priorities, but at the same time, some of the work that has been done is going to . . . because these roads are being driven into shambles because they're not being completed. It's going to be much, much more expensive and much more monies will have to be spent, in order to get these roads back in shape, unless we're going to be paying attention to them now.

So I'm just telling the Minister that again we're not looking for huge expenditures, but that we're looking for some attention so that at least the roads that have been built could be completed - the programs that have been started, that they could be completed. That is really all we're asking for; we're not really asking for any new projects to be started. But for heaven's sake, let's complete the projects that have been started because if we don't, then the Minister, or the government, or whoever is going to be the Government of the Day, will have to spend much, much more monies again, getting these programs into shape. That's all, Mr. Chairman, that I'm asking for.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to make one or two comments also, along similar lines to what my colleague, the Member for Rhineland, has spoken on. It's surprising to note from the Minister's remarks that the government is operating under a program of acute protracted restraint these days. We heard an awful lot about that a few years previously. There's no question, Mr. Minister, that your colleagues have to encourage or cajole, or whatever is necessary, to provide you with some more funds for your Highway Program.

My particular area, as the Minister is well aware, has suffered, I suppose, as much, if not more, than many other areas in the province through rail line abandonment. Our pet project, of course, if Highway 250; we've had some work ongoing for quite a number of years and I'm pleased that there's one section going

to be surfaced this year from Highway 24 to 355. But the people there, I think, have been somewhat disappointed. The Minister is familiar with the area. He has been out and had a good tour of the area and was certainly well-received by the municipal people and they were very encouraged by his understanding of the area. Maybe their expectations were raised a little when they felt they may be getting a little more work this year and not knowing, of course, that he was going to be subject to severe cuts by the other members of Cabinet, who have priorities that are not rural and not certainly roadway-oriented.

But the section of highway from 25 to 24, the section north of Rivers, it's a surface road that is being rebuilt and has not been resurfaced. There's about six miles there and I'm getting a great number of complaints. The people in Rivers, the Chamber of Commerce have sent the Minister resolutions. The people trucking their grain in tell me that the road is very, very difficult to navigate now with a truckload of grain and they're using other gravel roads leading into the Town of Rivers and, of course, they're banging them up fairly badly and that prevents another maintenance problem.

Also Highway 262 in the Mountain Road area, there was a construction program started there. I'm disappointed that that's not going to be completed because that does provide an alternate route from Highway 10 across to No. 5 and in time, I think, will provide an alternate truck route around the park. There's a bad section of road in there that certainly has to be gotten to, but as I say, we realize the restraint that the Minister is operating under.

But Highway 250, if the people there could have some assurance that that road was going to receive ongoing attention and in the next two or three years be completed from Sandy Lake through to No. 1, I think they're willing to wait. They have formed a committee and they have put some priorities on what section of the road they feel should be completed, and as I say, they're pleased that the one section is going to be resurfaced. The Minister is well aware that the section from Newdale south that they were fortunate enough to find an asphalt paving machine en route to another job and they got a exceptionally good paving job done there. I think it's one of the best paving jobs that has been done in rural Manitoba for a long time. Their expectations may have been raised there a little bit, hoping that the new section of road was going to be just as good.

Getting back to rail line abandonment and as I say, I wanted to put these comments on the record, and I for one, will certainly do everything I can to urge the other members of Cabinet and the Premier to provide additional funding for the Highways Branch, because there's no question about it, our rural roads are not being maintained properly. There's a lot of washboard; there's a lack of gravel and we do have to have more money into the highway system because the trucks are getting bigger and the roads are becoming badly abused with the heavy traffic.

But, getting back to rail line abandonment, Mr. Chairman, I would like the Minister to bring us up-to-date on just where we are with the federal funds that were supposed to be forthcoming. When the rails were taken out, we were promised that there would be money pouring into the highways system to put them up into

the condition that would carry the heavier grain trucks that necessarily have to travel down the extra miles to get the produce to the elevator system. Up-to-date, I understand there has been no money coming forth and there is millions being poured into the city core area and God knows what other airy-fairy programs the Federal Government has thought out, and I just wonder if the Minister might bring us up-to-date on when we're going to get some federal funds that the government can earmark into our road system?

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, that's a good question. The Government of Canada has stayed far away from financing the building of Western Canadian provincial roads. They have a program in the Maritimes, and I believe in Quebec, but in Western Canada I don't believe we have had anything, other than the road-strengthening package of a decade ago, but certainly nothing ongoing. As you will recall, the Government of Canada invited the provinces, about four months ago that is, to submit a list of projects that the provinces would be prepared to cost-share with the Government of Canada, which included road works and buildings and so on. We submitted some \$40-odd million of road work, in response. We have heard nothing from them since. We've had the Federal Budget, a week ago, and there was an indication of regional Ministers that were going to be announcing regional capital projects, and we have heard nothing from that source either from the regional Minister in this part of the country. So, I have no way of knowing whether there will be any money for road construction projects from the Government of Canada, notwithstanding all of the rhetoric and all of the expectations that were built up.

MR. D. BLAKE: Yes, well, just a final word, Mr. Chairman. I felt that that was the case, that there were no federal funds coming. We can certainly put whatever pressure we may bring to bear on those authorities to live up to their commitment when the people were forced to give up some of the rail lines, but to repeat some of the speeches that we heard in 1977-78-79, that whenever this government ceases this acute protracted restraint program that they're operating under, and stop dragging the province down and get the province moving again, we will certainly be pleased.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Spring is the time of year when we in the North look anxiously at the amount of work to be done on highways in our area, and our major concern in Thompson, of course, is Highway 391. Going through the construction list of projects I notice that the Minister has included a number of projects related to Highway 391; there's approximately 77 miles of bituminous leveling; there are some major drainage improvements scheduled for a section of Highway 6, which is a concern to people in my constituency; there are 24 miles of grading; also I believe about 127 miles of grading on the route from 391 north to Lynn Lake, and that's certainly good news to people in my constituency.

The one area that is a major concern, I think, Mr. Chairman, which is included for some bituminous

leveling in this set of Estimates, is the stretch from Wabowden to the junction of Highway 6. Now I understand, from talking to Highway's personnel in Thompson, that one of the problems in terms of upgrading that particular stretch of highway, is the fact that there has been major problems with stability of the base, and I understand there have been settlement studies in recent years that have shown that base is becoming more stable and that it may be possible to do a more complete upgrading on that stretch of highway, at some point in time.

I was wondering if the Minister could confirm that this is, indeed, the case and whether he has any general words of encouragement about that stretch, because I know it's certainly my top priority, as far as highways in the North is concerned, and while the bituminous paving of that section at this particular point in time will certainly bring it up to par on a short-term basis, I think in the long term we really need some major upgrading in that area.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I got a great note of encouragement from my Deputy Minister. He thinks within 100 years it might stabilize; hopefully, it's going to be much sooner, but we are continuing to have problems of instability in that area so it really isn't prudent to spend a lot of money for a new surface. We will have to continue to patch and fill in the dips that are created from time-to-time and hopefully some day put on a surface that will last for a period of time.

MR. S. ASHTON: Well the Highway's personnel I spoke to were a bit more optimistic than the Deputy Minister, however, we certainly know in Thompson how unstable the ground is in that area.

I would like to say, Mr. Chairman, that I'm quite pleased to see the priority given to roads in the North in this set of construction Estimates. We've had to fight for many years and, you know, I'd say it's basically become a non-partisan issue in Thompson. We've had to fight for good road conditions. You know, I'd note the fight that Joe Borowski put up and the good work that he did when he was Highways Minister; I also give credit to my predecessor, Mr. Ken MacMaster, I think he was concerned about this issue and he did what he could to get a considerable amount of highway construction in the North. I must say, Mr. Chairman, I certainly have been fighting this regard over the last year-and-a-half and certainly I've been fighting that much harder for construction in my area, given the fact that funding is down. I recognize that it is down overall in terms of the Department of Highways, and I must say that I am pleased to say that some priority has been given to the North. You know, Mr. Chairman, we're not overly fussy in the North; we don't want fancy four-lane highways like some people down south want.

MR. D. BLAKE: Why not?

MR. S. ASHTON: We would like a reasonably safe paved surface, if possible, and if it's going to be a gravel surface, a reasonably level surface so that we can travel, and as someone who travels Highway 391, Mr. Chairman, quite regularly, I know how important that is. Your talking, not just of comfort, you're talking

of safety when it comes to road conditions in the North, and I know how quickly, too, the road conditions can change, particularly at this time of year. The potholes are already beginning to form on the highway and I'm glad to see that a considerable amount of attention is being placed in these Estimates toward fixing those up. So, perhaps I may be out of tune with some of the previous speakers from some of the southern areas which perhaps aren't getting some of the four-lane highways or some of the other things that they would like, but, you know, I'm pleased to see that some attention is going to be given to the concerns of the North in this particular set of Estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. B. RANSOM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question for the Minister, in his program he has an item on Highway 23, from the junction of PR 431 to Deerwood, to complete the acquisition of right-of-way. I believe the Minister has had correspondence from the St. Leon Co-op, and I've been contacted by them a number of times, because they are contemplating building a fairly large fertilizer and chemical distribution centre at the junction of 244 and 23 and, at the moment, they do not have 350 pound access from Deerwood to 244. The construction of this new plant there really hinges on that stretch of work being done and of having 350 pound access to it, though it would be important to the St. Leon Co-op to know when that might be completed in order that they would time their construction accordingly. Perhaps the Minister could give me some information on that.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't know that I can be that definitive. The access is not shown; that would be a 603 number if it were shown, but I don't see it in here. So I can't really tell the member just when that will be under way.

MR. B. RANSOM: I'm sure the Minister can give some indication, Mr. Chairman, whether he's talking about something that might be two years, or three years, or five years because there's a fairly significant investment on the part of the St. Leon Co-op that is going to hinge upon when they have access for that relatively short distance in on Highway 23 from Deerwood to the junction of 244.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, again, I wouldn't want to be put on the spot in that way, Mr. Chairman, because once you make a statement, then you have to try to live up to it. I think there are many things here that are beyond my personal control that will determine the timing of that project.

As the member is aware, we are merely in the acquisition of right-of-way stage which means after the right-of-way is bought up it'll be another year before there's an opportunity for a new project that is construction and so on. So that all depends on the wisdom of the government a year from now, I suppose.

MR. B. RANSOM: So at least the Minister could say that it definitely will not be done within the next two years?

HON. S. USKIW: Oh, I wouldn't want to say that, Mr. Chairman. I wouldn't want to say that. The acquisition of right-of-way should be completed in the current fiscal year so that it's possible to have construction in the next fiscal year. But I am in no position to say that it will as the member knows; I have no authority to say that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 7.(a).

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, before we get past that item, I want to tell the members who have been quite exercised about the lack of road programming in their constituencies, that if they - with the exception of the Member for Thompson, yes - want to look at the program they will find that in the constituency of the Minister of Highways we have only one project this year. So you're not alone.

MR. D. BLAKE: Just out passed the farm, Sam?

HON. S. USKIW: No, no, that's not even in my constituency, so you're not alone feeling the need for more work. We just managed to squeeze one in, in my own area, Mr. Chairman. So I just wanted members to appreciate that we're treating each other alike, so to speak.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Well, Mr. Chairman. That just goes to show the wisdom over the four years that we were government; the Minister's constituency had all the highways built out there and there was no need. He hasn't even found a need in his own term of office to put roads in there, and I think that is the most credible statement that I've heard from the Minister for some time. I'm glad to see that he concurs with our priorities in our four years now.

Mr. Chairman, I've got a number of questions and the Minister might not be able to provide all the answers tonight and it's on the Construction and Maintenance Program.

First of all, can the Minister provide us the estimate of construction scheduling by district? You gave a couple tonight about District 5, you had 280,000, I think, or District 3, if you could provide that.

HON. S. USKIW: I don't have that information, Mr. Chairman.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Well, okay, I won't belabour the point because we want to finish these tonight. But I just want to point out that, you know, well, my colleague, the MLA for Rhineland was pleading with the Minister for just even five miles of construction. He received accolades from one of his northern colleagues who was getting some 200 miles of highway improvements. Hence, I think you can readily see the kind of concern that the MLA for Rhineland and myself and others in southern Manitoba have for the way the construction dollars are spent, something that we don't think is necessarily an equitable sharing of the construction dollars.

Mr. Chairman, there are several items that I would like to get in terms of information. First of all, can the Minister indicate, of the \$100 million Construction

budget last year, what is the estimate of spending now that we've approached year end?

HON. S. USKIW: We have spent it all, Mr. Chairman. The money has been used up.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Okay. Then could the Minister indicate whether all of the money in the Maintenance budget was spent or whether it was overspent and required extra money?

HON. S. USKIW: The answer is yes to that. We have used the maintenance dollars.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Was the Maintenance budget overspent?

HON. S. USKIW: I'm advised not, Mr. Chairman. We still don't have a final accounting.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Well, I can appreciate that but when I have your Financial Administrator there nodding his head, he usually has a pretty tight rein on those numbers. So if it's not overspent I think that's probably pretty well bang on.

Now, in terms of Aids to Cities, Towns and Villages, was that budget spent in its entirety last year?

HON. S. USKIW: No, that was underspent by about \$400,000.00.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Can the Minister indicate the value of the pre-advertising program this year, in rough figures?

HON. S. USKIW: In the last September program? Approximately \$18 million.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Can the Minister indicate what the value of carry-over work that is listed on the Construction budget, in rough figures, I don't want an exact million or . . . ?

HON. S. USKIW: It's about \$35 million roughly, Mr. Chairman.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Then would that leave one to conclude that with the about 50 percent over program allocation that the value of the new program would be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$65 million.

HON. S. USKIW: I presume the member is talking about the program which is 160 percent of spending authority. So you have a total of 144 million of authority of which 53 is carry-over and pre-add.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Can the Minister indicate of the \$89 million that he's got or round it off, 90 million that he's got, what his approximate miles of grading, miles of concrete, miles of asphalt, bituminous paving that he hopes to undertake this year given the weather?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, must know that whatever is in the program may or may not go depending on logistics, land acquisition, design work,

engineering problems, weather conditions. There are a whole host of things, so I really can't give him that kind of projection.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, I absolutely appreciate that there are a number of variables in there, but in order to strike \$90 million worth of construction expenditures there are approximate goals in each of those that you're trying to shoot for. I just like to get a feel for - I'm not looking for this information so that next year I come back and ask you, did you accomplish the 240 miles of grading and if you didn't, I'm not going to have it. I just wanted to get an idea of how many you might hope to accomplish this year with your \$90 million.

HON. S. USKIW: Roughly - it has to be a rough statement or assessment.

MR. D. ORCHARD: I appreciate that.

HON. S. USKIW: About 35 percent, 36 percent is supposed to be allocated to trunk highway improvements, about the same amount for provincial roads. Then, of course, you have all your other costs.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Can the Minister indicate what the department is projecting in terms of price increases for fuel, for concrete, asphalt, calcium, salt and gravel this year?

HON. S. USKIW: The department estimates an average of 13 percent increase year over year in costs of these items. We are estimating asphalt at 10 percent; emulsion at 11; calcium at 15; sodium at 10; traffic gravel at 15; and chips at 18, but on average about 13 percent year over year.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Now, has the Minister got a projection for lane miles of seal coating that you are hoping to undertake this year?

HON. S. USKIW: I really can't give the member that information, I don't believe. We haven't figured that out. We might indicate to the member that last year we did almost 800 miles. I don't know what it will be this year.

MR. D. ORCHARD: I know the Minister has heard this story many many times before, but in looking at the Maintenance budget I note that they are projecting a 7 percent increase in funds that they've got approved. Last year's budget was totally expended.

HON. S. USKIW: Yes.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Their costs of their materials are going up by 13 percent. Their costs of labour are up 12 percent, roughly. So, you know, you're going to have in effect about a 6 percent, a 5 to 6 percent - I'll be generous - reduction in the level of maintenance activity on the highways this year over last year. That does not bode well for the durability of our highway system. Unless the Maintenance Program at least is maintained on a comparable dollar basis, you're going to fall back on even the maintenance, let alone the reconstruction.

HON. S. USKIW: The notation that I have here is that the \$3.294 million should cover the increase in the material and labour component, although I have to appreciate that's a guesstimate.

MR. D. ORCHARD: That will of course remain to be seen, but the numbers just don't quite work when you have got 13 percent increases in material costs and reasonably large increases in salary scales as well, faced with only a 7 percent increase globally on the Maintenance budget increase. It appears to me that there is no other way for the Maintenance Program to go but to be of a lesser emphasis.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I think the member makes a valid point. It remains to be seen how close we come to that target. It could be that there will be some reduction of service if we find that we are unable to meet that. That's quite possible, if indeed we are going to stick within our Estimates, within our budget, in order to again stick within the estimated deficit position that the province has decided upon.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 7.(a)—pass; 7.(b)—pass; 7.(c)(1)—pass; 7.(c)(2)—pass; 7.(c)(3)—pass; 7.(c)(3)(a)—pass; 7.(c)(3)(b)—pass; 701—pass; 7.(d)(1)—pass; 7.(d)(2)—pass; 7.(d)(3)—pass; 7.(d)(4)—pass.

Resolution 102: Resolve that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$153,328,400 for Highways and Transportation for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1984—pass.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Item No. 1.(a) Minister's Salary.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Harry, have you got that motion?

HON. S. USKIW: Too late. You blew it, Don.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. B. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of questions for the Minister. I'm sorry that I missed this item when it was being discussed earlier, but I gather that it wasn't discussed in complete detail. It has to do with the moving of the 16-foot wide house trailers. It is my understanding that in Manitoba the movers are required to use a 16-wheel bogey system that is not required in Saskatchewan, for instance, and that the Minister is now reviewing this in Manitoba as to what might be done. But movers are now faced with the question of whether they go ahead and purchase such a system which I gather would cost them perhaps \$20,000 to do that.

Perhaps the Minister, while he is considering what will be done in the long term to synchronize with Saskatchewan and Alberta, would be wise to allow the moving of these house trailers on the 12-wheel system in the interim and clear up the uncertainty that's in the mind of the movers that they might have to get one of these 16-wheel systems in place beforehand at great cost to them. So would the Minister consider allowing the use of the 12-wheel one, at least until he's made the final decision?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, we did deal with that question, and I recognize that the member wasn't here.

We have decided that, because the Alberta experiment has been completed, it's a matter of waiting for their report in order to determine whether we go along with their findings. I presume the Province of Saskatchewan will be adjusting their policy based on whether or not they go along with the Alberta study. But I think it's so close to that stage that we don't want to make interim decisions at this point.

The other aspect of it is that we wouldn't want to have them out on the highways during the restriction period, in any event, because the shoulders have to be travelled on because of the width of the trailers, and passing vehicles have to take the shoulders to pass these trailers. There's a fair amount of hazard, when you have a semitrailer, especially a loaded semitrailer, having to take a shoulder in order to pass a mobile home, when the shoulders are as soft as they are at the present time. It could cause upset, jackknifing, it could create very serious problems and injury and it's inevitable that kind of situation would occur if the mobile homes were to travel a fair distance on any highway and they would be meeting oncoming tractor-trailers, or tractor-trailers would be wanting to pass them because they are a slow-moving vehicle or object.

So there are many problems associated with restrictions at the present time and we would certainly not want to condone the moving of those units until after the restrictions are lifted. We may consider the point that the member is making after the restriction period is over.

MR. B. RANSOM: Certainly I recognize the restriction situation that the Minister faces at the moment, but there's some uncertainty on the part of the movers. Could the Minister at least indicate when he thinks that a final decision will be made on this, so that they can be informed. Look, don't do anything because the Minister plans to make a decision within two months, or three months; and secondly, I understand there's also a concern at the requirement for having two pilot vehicles to move with these trailers as well. Is that really a necessity that the Minister is personally convinced about?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I really am not in a position to say when we will be able to announce our policy, but I can give the member this commitment. Once we know the results of the Alberta study, it won't be long after that we will make a decision here. I just don't know how soon that is going to be available to us.

With respect to the latter point, that has to do with pilot vehicles. This whole area of pilot vehicles, permits, wide loads, is going to be under seminar workshop review sometime in the course of this year, among other reviews. We're going to do a complete policy review of every policy area in the department, so probably by next January, we might have a very clear idea of what we want to do with respect to any changes.

MR. B. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, I think that the Minister is a practical man, who's had quite a lot of experience and I hope that he'll look at this from a practical person's point of view and not get caught up by the bureaucracy that would like to recommend the

nth detail on control. That surely, if you're moving something like a house trailer and it's outfitted with flashing lights, that there's very little to be gained by having two pilot vehicles - front and back - adding to the cost of moving. The first thing you know, they're going to be requiring that you have two people travelling in each pilot vehicle. So, Mr. Chairman, really the Minister should, I think, have a very careful look at that.

Just one question. Has the Minister had complaints from truckers about having to switch over to the wide "D" signs, which are placing an additional cost on truckers at the moment and most people don't know even what the signs mean. Most of us know what a Wide Load sign meant, but we don't recognize the wide "D".

HON. S. USKIW: Wide dimension. Mr. Chairman, I know that this is relatively new, but as I recall it, it emanates from our Interprovincial Conference, where I think there was an agreement on standard usage of these kinds of symbols or signs, in order that there be no confusion, as between one province and another and in recognition of the fact that our motoring public travel interprovincially. So uniformity is the key to that and I'm not certain just where Manitoba was on that issue at the time, but we are concerned that there be uniformity for the interests and safety of the public. Confusion is the last thing we want out on the highway system.

MR. B. RANSOM: Well, I realize that the desirability from the point of view of people who like to see things neat and tidy of having consistency and uniformity. But I've encountered very few people who didn't know what a sign that said Wide Load meant, but if you see a truck coming at you now with some perpendicular blaze orange marks on it, you're not quite sure whether it's an NDP campaign vehicle, with the N and the P missing, or just what it is. It's just another example, in my view, of adding a fairly significant cost to truckers at a time when they don't need additional costs to be loaded upon them.

HON. S. USKIW: Yes, I can assure the member that I've had only one call on that issue, so I have to assume that it's been accepted by the industry. I believe that we had one call into the office on that question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, I just want to add a few comments to the Estimate process of Highways and Transportation in winding up the Minister's Salary. The Highways Estimates this year have been a rather interesting exercise, as you can well appreciate. I've appreciated the co-operation and the frankness the Minister has given us in this committee. He has not pulled any punches or tried to hide the fact that his department is in need of funding for very worthwhile maintenance of the road system.

I guess I close these Estimates with the remarks that it's very, very unfortunate that there weren't 32 other members in the New Democratic Party Government and caucus that had the common-sense realization of

the importance of Highways and Transportation to the Province of Manitoba that the Minister's had. I regret very much that the Minister fought a losing battle against an urban-oriented Cabinet and very much an urban-oriented backbench. He didn't enjoy the support of such notable colleagues of his, as the MLA for Ste. Rose, the MLA for Dauphin around the Cabinet table. He obviously didn't enjoy the support of the MLA for The Pas, or the MLA for Springfield, and others in rural Manitoba, to help him get the kind of funding he needed, to at least maintain a level of programming in the Highways Department that's necessary.

You know, the unfortunate part about this is that this really flies in the face of three major promises that the Premier of this province has made to the people of Manitoba. The Premier, in trying to fend off criticism of the deficit, has said on a consistent basis, that what we are trying to do is maintain the basic strengths of the economy, so that we can catch the winds of recovery when they start and we will move along with them. The second promise that the Premier has made in justifying the deficit is that this is a government that wants to maintain jobs. The third defence of the deficit, particularly this year, is in this government's purported effort at job creation. They have their \$200 million fraud fund for job creation.

Now those three thrusts are what the Premier constantly uses and members of the Cabinet constantly use to justify a massive deficit for the Province of Manitoba. This is one department that was very critical to achieving all three of those aims, the Department of Highways and Transportation.

First of all there is probably no more singularly important piece of infrastructure for the Manitoba economy than the road system. I don't think there is another one that's any more important than the road system. You need a road system that is all-weather; that allows communities in Manitoba to participate in the kind of thing my colleague, the MLA for Turtle Mountain, brought up tonight.

Construction of probably a half million dollar fertilizer plant is being held up because it happens to be located in an area where there are not unrestricted roads in the spring. As a matter of fact, those roads even go down to 250 pounds per square inch restrictions in the spring. The members opposite in the New Democratic Party backbench, I want to tell you that you can't move an empty semi down a road restricted by 250 pound load restrictions, let alone one that's loaded with fertilizer or chemical or fuel. You cannot move in the spring. The lack of that kind of road development is preventing that kind of an investment in rural Manitoba. That's an important investment to create jobs in the construction industry and jobs permanently through employment in that plant.

So that the infrastructure provided by the road system of Manitoba is tremendously important to maintaining the level of economic activity throughout the Province of Manitoba. By reducing the funding in this department, you are failing, the Premier is failing one of his major commitments of maintaining the infrastructure that is necessary to catch the winds of recovery when they blow on Manitoba. So that's the first area that the Premier has not been totally honest with the people of Manitoba in his justification of the massive deficit.

In terms of job maintenance which his second criterion in justifying the deficit, this department alone

has lost 86 staff positions. That isn't maintaining jobs in Manitoba. That is losing jobs. As I pointed out when we introduced the Estimates by the fact that you are reducing by 20 percent in effect the road construction program, you are creating unemployment in the Manitoba heavy construction industry. People that rely on those jobs in the summertime for most of their year-round livelihood are not going to be hired on. You are creating unemployment in the private sector by reducing the road construction budget. That's the second failure of this Premier's promise and commitment to the people of Manitoba.

Thirdly, under the Jobs Fund, you have got the phony \$200 million Jobs Fund which is supposed to employ unemployed Manitobans and give them jobs. You have one of the best vehicles for job creation in the Department of Highways and the construction program that the government has access to. What did you do? You knocked \$18 million off it to maintain an even pace with last year, a direct effort at not creating the jobs that your Premier has told the people of Manitoba they can expect from his government.

Three criteria that the Premier laid out to justify the deficit and, in this department, three complete and utter failures. If you think that isn't recognized in Manitoba, go talk to some of the people that used to work in the construction industry in Manitoba and find out if they are going to have a job this summer. I'll tell you right now what the answer is, and the Minister will tell you what the answer is. The answer is, no. Many of them will not have a job.

We hear this government sit across from us and wring their hands about the unemployed, and that's all it has turned out to be is hollow words and hand wringing, because you are causing unemployment in Manitoba by reducing the funding.

Now we stressed roads in the Progressive Conservative Party. We always have. There are reasons for that. There are the pure, economic reasons that I have tried to outline to you, pure economic reasons. You need to have a road system to maintain the private sector economy. If you don't maintain the roads, you're going to have another notch in a growing number of notches to make Manitoba a less attractive place to locate a new industry or to expand your existing industry. Roads are tremendously important to the rural industrial base and, if they are important to the rural industrial base, they're very important to the industrial in the City of Winnipeg that supplies materials, know-how and other services to that growing industrial base in rural Manitoba.

Now, you know, what this government appears to be undertaking in cutting back the construction budget in the Highways Department funding is short-term gain for long-term pain, because we are going to have to pick up the costs that you are inflicting on the road system three years from now when we're government because you didn't maintain the system in even a status quo position. The little bit of gain you're making this year is going to cause long-term pain in the highway system. We saw that in the eight years of the Schreyer administration. We are going to see it again.

Our roads are needed by the businessmen, by the farmers in rural Manitoba. The farm economy has to have a decent road system. They're moving product to market for greater distances. I know that doesn't

mean anything to an urban Cabinet and to urban backbenchers in the New Democratic Government. I know it doesn't mean anything to you but, once again, get beyond the concrete perimeter of Winnipeg. Get beyond the Perimeter Highway and go out and talk to some real people in rural Manitoba and find out what they think. They're going to tell you that the road system is probably the most important single thing that a government does for rural Manitoba.

Education is important, health is important. You talk about roads to rural Manitobans and they're going to tell you that you've got to keep the spending at a level to at least maintain the program and cutbacks in road spending are objected to throughout rural Manitoba. Your industrial base suffers, your farming community suffers and all I ask you is just go out and talk to some real people in rural Manitoba and you will get the message. I don't have to tell the Minister that because the Minister is fully aware of that. He comes from one of those rural constituencies that relies on roads.

I pointed out when we introduced the Minister's Estimates that southwest Manitoba where the oil industry is booming now, it needed some attention and I haven't had time to peruse the road construction program but I hoped there would be some attention paid out there and there wasn't and that is a failing that is going to have to be corrected because you can't expect that oil industry to keep on growing and using the roads out there without putting some road investment back in. You've got to do it and if you don't do it this year you've got to do it next year, it's got to be done because you can't have roads taking 20 and 30 semis a day, 24 hours a day, pounding those roads into disrepair without spending money on maintenance, more money on maintenance and you're going to have to spend money on reconstruction because a lot of those roads are provincial roads that were taken over in 1966-67 and haven't been touched since then. They can't stand that level of traffic on them that's caused by the oil activity out there. You're going to have to address that problem, you're going to have to address within the next budget or two budgets.

Now the social benefits to roads, even though my honourable friends in the New Democratic Party like to think they're the ones that know all of the social benefits that there are and provide them, roads provide the social benefits to rural Manitoba. Roads get people to do their shopping, to conduct their business, roads get people to hospitals and to the doctor's office and to visit relatives and friends in those hospitals; to visit relatives and friends in the personal care homes. They have to have a reasonably good road system and those aren't for business concerns, those are for social concerns. Roads are needed to take school children to school, that's a social concern and roads are very important to them. It's not purely the business economics of roads. People use roads to travel to church and to take on other community activities. We need a reasonably good road system in rural Manitoba; you can't survive without it. Talk to the real people in rural Manitoba and they'll tell you that.

The tourism industry in the Province of Manitoba will have to have a road system that is in reasonably good repair, because you are not going to have the United States tourists come back to Manitoba, to visit friendly Manitoba, if he's got to drive over roads that are full

of potholes and in disrepair. He will go elsewhere; he will take his family to Ontario, or to Saskatchewan; he won't come back to Manitoba, and tourism is a big dollar earner in this province. If you don't spend money on the roads you de-emphasize all of the advertising you do in the States to try to attract those tourists into Manitoba.

So you know roads are important for business, for social reasons, and for tourism. Now these cutbacks are objectionable to our side of the House and they're objectionable from two standpoints. Overall government spending is up 19 percent this year, and the Department of Highways is down about 4 percent, year over year - 3.4 to be exact. And, most importantly, the construction, the Capital Construction Program, is down 10 percent, which taking inflationary costs into perspective, that's about a 20 percent decrease in the road construction budget - one-fifth less.

The effective Maintenance Program is going to be down 5 percent or 6 percent when you factor in inflation. That means, not only are you not going to be renewing the roads through new construction, but you're going to be falling further behind in terms of maintaining the roads that are there. If you forego maintenance you increase your long-run costs. Any person who has driven a car, has operated a machine on a farm, operated a machine in his factory, or where he works, he knows very well that you've got to spend money on maintenance or that machine will not serve its useful purpose, it will breakdown and you will lose time. Do you think roads are any different? No business, no automobile owner, no housewife, can allow the machines that they use in their day-to-day tasks to go without maintenance and repairs. You cannot let your house, for instance, sit without maintenance, or else it falls down around you, but yet, here we have the New Democratic Government, this city-oriented government letting the road system not receive proper maintenance, and that's a failing. That's a failing and it's going to cost the people of Manitoba in the long run. Short-term gain for long-term pain; that's what it is.

We're not asking this New Democratic Government to spend huge amounts of money more; we're simply asking them to spend the money you collect. I point out, a week ago, that you're collecting \$171 million from the users of those highways, and you're spending only \$89 million on reconstruction, and \$46 million on maintenance, and if you factor in some of the other aids to towns and villages and what not, you can squeeze the total you're spending, on construction and maintenance both, up to \$153 million. You've knocked \$18 million of user fees, and redirected them elsewhere in the government, and that is wrong; that is absolutely wrong, it should not happen. The least this Minister should have received support from, from his backbench colleagues and from his Cabinet colleagues, is at least to spend the user fees on maintenance and reconstruction, but that isn't happening. There's an \$18 million value of user fees that are going elsewhere in this government while the road system goes to pot and that is not acceptable.

Those are the economic reasons why we object to the Road Construction Program being cut and the departmental spending being cut in Highways and Transportation, but tonight we've had pointed out to us the safety aspect of what this means. These cutbacks

in the Highways Department have not only extended to construction and maintenance, but they've extended to safety programs. We've heard tonight from the Minister where three programs of safety are being reduced by this government in their effort to pare dollars out of the budget while they're spending 19 percent more. The Vehicle Inspection is going to be reduced by 25 percent; Manitoba Safety Council funding is down 10 percent, and the Critical Item Inspection Program is no longer existing for heavy trucks.

Now any reduction in safety spending has to cost; it eventually has to show up in the accident statistics of the Province of Manitoba. When maintenance is down, you've got roads that are not in as good a repair as they should be; potholes can cause accidents. You try to avoid a pothole and you may find yourself in an accident situation. You may have a blowout when you hit one of those potholes. Now, you know, that is unacceptable. You have sharp shoulders that are going to be developed if your maintenance program is reduced, so that you can't pull over and avoid an accident situation in safety, as you should be able to do. A lesser maintenance budget will lead to potentially dangerous driving conditions on the highways and that's unacceptable. It's particularly unacceptable, as I've pointed out earlier on tonight, because you're bringing in seat belts and helmets on motorcycle riders as a compulsory safety measure; you're bringing in safety measures at the time that you're cutting back on spending in the department on safety.

I noted with a great deal of pride, when the Minister introduced his Estimates, that last year the safety record was improving in the Province of Manitoba; we had fewer fatalities and fewer injuries due to accidents on our highways and streets in the Province of Manitoba. Now that is admirable; that's something we're all looking for; that's something that we've been working for. Every government works toward that; that's the name of the game in the Highways and Transportation Departments, to try to provide Manitobans and the driving public with safe highways and streets.

I just can't bring my mind around to the policy development of a government, having recognized the advances made in safety, and the saving of lives and injuries because of safety programs instituted by a number of governments - Conservative, New Democratic - over the past number of years, that are obviously having a great deal of success because the statistics are proving they are. The very least I think that we could expect, and in this area I do fault the Minister a little bit because maybe he was a little too harsh on the reprimondization there, I know his global budget was overall down, but the funding of safety programs, I think, is just absolutely essential and we've even had some of the backbenchers recognize that tonight and say that maybe we could . . .

HON. S. USKIW: Perhaps I could correct the member. The budget process did not allow for transfers or allocations between programs so that, in essence, when you operated on zero growth you had to do that by component. I think that should give the member the answer that he's looking for on that point.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Okay. I don't argue with the Minister, I've been through the Estimate process myself, but still

we've got a imposition of funding requirements on this department that has led the Minister to make some very unsavory decisions in terms of funding, and they relate to safety programs.

Our government was painted by the New Democratic Opposition of the Day as being one of acute protracted restraint and that we cut funding in all areas, etc., etc. I have to give you credit. You painted us into a very interesting public position out there which no doubt helped you to win the last election. But you did it while we were increasing vehicle inspections, heavy truck inspections, and funding to the Manitoba Safety Council.

Now, after you've won the government, having painted us into the acute protracted restraint corner, you're turning around and cutting back on the funding that we increased. I guess maybe I'm a sore loser; I really object to that. Because, you know, my predecessor in the Highways Department, the MLA for Lakeside, and myself, we had to fight around that Cabinet table to try to justify through the Budget process the increased funding that we were asking for, that extra crew of vehicle inspectors. I had to fight to bring the program into that inspection on heavy trucks. I had to fight with my colleagues to increase funding to the Manitoba Safety Council. Those weren't easy things to win around the Cabinet table because we're faced with budget constraints all four years as every government is.

Now after having being painted as acute protracted restraint, we find this government re-prioritizing and de-emphasizing safety by reducing the funding to programs that have been established and built up over several years.

So I just have to close on the note that I'm quite disappointed in the New Democratic Government. I'm quite disappointed in the Premier and his Cabinet who have made the decision that this is the way the Department of Highways has to operate this year. I think it is wrong-headed re-prioritization. It's short-sighted and it's going to cost all Manitoba taxpayers over the long run more money.

I suppose I shouldn't be complaining because politically it's going to cost the New Democratic Party; it's going to cost them in the next election. So I suppose if I was a purely selfish politician I would say nothing and let this government self-destruct by continuing to cut back the Department of Highways and Transportation. But I hope I have a broader political perspective than to simply wish you the worst of luck in developing your programs, because Manitobans at least deserve to have a maintained program in the Department of Highways and Transportation because the users of that system are paying for it. We're not receiving that from this government. I find that indeed disappointing, when it is compared with the background of the Premier's stated goals of maintaining the infrastructure of the province, of maintaining the existing level of jobs in the province, and of creating new jobs. As I've said already this evening and I said a week or so ago, the Premier and his Cabinet and his government have failed in all three of those in this department.

I just have to register the concern, the dismay, and in some cases the anger of the Progressive Conservative opposition in having been faced with that and in conveying those feelings to the Minister and to the New Democratic Government we convey it on behalf of our

constituents that we represent in the constituencies that we are elected in, and we are conveying it to the government on behalf of the citizens in constituencies held by members of the New Democratic Party. Because all Manitobans, no matter whether they live in The Pas, in Selkirk, in Arborg, in Dauphin, are going to be penalized by this reduction in funding.

With those words, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your diligent chairing and I thank the Minister for his Estimate presentation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(a)—pass.

Resolution 96: Resolve that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,160,400 for Highways and Transportation for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1984—pass.

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Highways and Transportation.
Committee rise.

SUPPLY - EDUCATION

MR. CHAIRMAN, P. Eyler: Order please. Committee, to come to order. We are considering the Estimates of the Department of Education, Item 3.(a) School Grants and Other Assistance - the Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, as we left, I had left a question on the table for the Minister and I am wondering if she has a reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Education.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I think you left two questions on the table, Mr. Chairman. One was the number of Indian Bands, I am trying to remember exactly what the question was there. Was it the surplus question you were looking for?

Yes, Mr. Chairman, there are 12 school divisions in the province and two districts that are using surpluses this year.

MR. G. FILMON: My next question, and depending on the Minister's answer, possibly my final question on this item, when can we expect the final report of Dr Nicholls' committee on Education and Finance?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I think I suggested the other night, when we were talking about this review, that I hope to have the report - and I am sure that he's listening, taking this in, he's nodding - from Dr. Nicholls about the end of June and expect that we will be studying it. I imagine it's going to be very lengthy and complex, we'll be studying it over the summer, and it's my hope that we will certainly be looking at making at least some initial changes prior to the next budget year for school divisions.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would hope that the Minister will have an opportunity over the summer months to come up with some firm proposals and, therefore, I propose that we pass this item in Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 3.(a)—pass; 3.(b) Miscellaneous Grants - the Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: Could the Minister indicate what changes there are in the Miscellaneous Grants for this year?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No changes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 3.(b)—pass; 3(c) Assistance to Schools in Remote Settlements - the Member for Niakwa.

MR. A. KOVNATS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had spoken to the Honourable Minister privately concerning this item - that's 3.(c), Assistance to Schools in Remote Settlements. I'm asking in regard to the Sir Hugh John Macdonald Hostel, and I know the Minister had made a commitment to me to get me some information, but this is where the item comes up, or is this not where the item comes up?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Just give us one minute.

MR. A. KOVNATS: If I could just bring it all into perspective and then I'll let the Honourable Minister answer. This is concerning the Wilderness Camp that's in an unorganized area that I'm referring to. They're in an unorganized area and they've received no funds from any of the school districts to help them with the teaching of these, I guess it's problem children, that are out in this wilderness area, through the Hugh John Macdonald Hostel. Can the Honourable Minister advise whether there are any funds available for teachers for these children, or these potential students, out in this unorganized area? It's out in the Agassiz area somewhere, just out of the Agassiz area.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I've just been advised by staff that we do have a request in. It has not reached my desk, yet, but we do have a request and it is in the Agassiz area. They were giving it consideration, and I'm advised that we hope to have an answer for them within the next few weeks, and we are able to give consideration to a program like that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 3.(c)—pass; 3.(d) Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund - the Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My recollection is, Mr. Chairman, that the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund is in this particular place because many of the staff of the Department of Education, in particular, but other departments were formerly teachers, principals, administrators in the public school sector and then ultimately came into the Department of Education or other departments of the government as administrators, and therefore maintained their pensions in the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund, because it was more beneficial to them as opposed to changing to the Civil Service pension system. Because they were able to maintain their contributions and therefore contribute toward their ultimate pension under the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund, everybody felt that it was a better system.

I wonder therefore if the province which has this year created the window in the Civil Service pension system

for early retirement, enabling people to get a beneficial pension allowance by taking early retirement if they fall within the window that has been created, if that same window will be created for the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund giving a parallel system and a parallel opportunity to those people who fall within this group.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the Member for Tuxedo is quite right. People in the Department of Education were given the option that they could either stay in TRAF, in the teachers' pension, or move into the Civil Service. I believe we have about 27 teachers who have opted to stay in this program. They are not covered under the existing decision that was just made by Cabinet about the early retirement with the three-month window. I can say that at this time we're looking at that; it's under consideration.

MR. G. FILMON: It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that since those who came under the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund were given the opportunity, in effect, to have the same treatment, and through the parallel system of pension fund that it appears to be discriminatory not to allow them to have the same sort of three-month window that is being given to other civil servants. Why would the government encourage them to continue on their same pension fund and their same plan if they were not prepared to give them parallel and equal treatment? I just question the Minister and I wonder if she has obtained an answer from her Cabinet if she has raised that matter.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Those are exactly the reasons for it being under consideration, Mr. Chairman.

MR. G. FILMON: I wonder if the Minister can indicate when a decision can be expected on this matter and when we can expect some word from her on it.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Without having a specific date in mind, Mr. Chairman, I can say that it's a matter that I think should be dealt with very soon and resolved fairly quickly and hopefully within a few weeks.

MR. G. FILMON: Does the Minister agree that in view of the similarity in the pension fund situations that these people ought to be given the same treatment?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I suppose if I wasn't sympathetic or supportive I likely would not be preparing or willing to take the matter before my colleagues.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 3.(d)—pass.

Resolution No. 55: Resolve that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$369,976,200 for Education, Financial Support - Public Schools for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1984—pass.

Item 4, Program Development and Support Services, (a) Division Administration, (1) Salaries - the Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: I wonder if the Minister has any opening remarks on this area and, furthermore, if she can indicate what are the areas of specific concern to

the Program Development and Support Services area of her department; any new programs or new thrusts that they propose to undertake?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I might make a few opening comments about this very important area, Mr. Chairman. In general, I think that the services that we've been providing to school divisions have been maintained at about the same level as they have been last year, although we are beginning to shift some emphasis in the activities and the support and resources that the department is now providing to the field, and I might just touch on a few of those areas.

We're continuing in the continual process, I suppose, of Curriculum Development through the curriculum committees that has begun a number of years ago. I believe that a lot of the curriculum development work that has been done has been very good work and have clear communication, I think, coming from people in the field that they need a little more time and a little more help to implement the curriculum. I think there are times when we put a little too much out into the field a little too quickly and the individual teacher in the classroom is not able to cope with all of the changes. So we are going to be focusing our attention for awhile on the curriculum implementation so that what which has been developed is actually being used. We're going to be, I think, taking a more active stance in the field of Native education; we've given the branch of the department, I guess, branch status; we're going to be concentrating on some Native language development looking, I guess, at providing support to communities, we're going through a very major transition in many of these communities where they are moving to local control and a lot of support and help is needed.

We're going to be looking at the Special Needs area, we're expanding it, I guess, to include those children that we put in the "at risk" area; we're looking at early intervention, early identification, more diagnosis and increasing our capability in the diagnostic areas. We're looking also at institutional programs and, while I think we're doing a very good job in those areas, I think we're really taking a good look again at the numbers of children who can receive programs or can receive some education even though they are in institutions and previously may have been categorized as children beyond our capacity to provide some support. I think we're changing some of our thinking with some of those children, now that are in institutional care and will be expanding some of the programs there.

The Hearing Impaired - we're hoping to appoint a co-ordinator of the Hearing Impaired before next fall. The Manitoba School for the Deaf, I think, is going to move out from being sort of an institution that services just children that are in its care as a residential centre. It's going to be moving more into acting as a resource for the province where the highly skilled professional people that have been trained in, or are teaching in this area are going to be made more available to the province and to schools that are incorporating these children into their school systems.

I think, with the Regional Services Branch, we're going to be I hope improving our resources to the field and support to the field by identifying the major areas where they need support. We have identified the one already

that I have mentioned previously and we'll be moving in the very near future, I think, in this area and its computer education. School boards are not only asking, they're almost crying at this point for both leadership, direction and support on where to go and what to do with the sort of explosion that they are dealing with in computer education.

The way we're going to handle determining the needs though for that branch is not to sit in the Department of Education and sort of make decisions about what help is needed, but we are circulating the school divisions and asking them for information about what resources and help they need from the department that they cannot provide themselves. It is quite possible that we could be providing some services on a regional basis, if we have a number of divisions who are struggling or dealing with the same thing, or they could be identifying provincial needs that we will find that we must provide to the entire province. I think it's important that we keep in close contact with them because those needs change all the time, and we don't want to start delivering a service today that is still going to be being delivered 10 years down the road when the need is no longer there.

The elementary review has been, I think, conducted and we will be conducting a high school review. We are certainly going to be looking at the status and the accessibility of vocational education across the province because this is an area that people are getting increasingly interested in, and where we are becoming more and more aware of the inequity in access for children in Northern, remote and rural areas; to those who are in the urban centres and have access to the existing large, sophisticated and well-equipped schools like the one that has just been approved and will be designed and developed for the three co-operating school divisions.

I think we're going to be, as we are in post-secondary, looking at different ways of delivering some of those programs. We're starting programs using distance education and Telidon. We have an interesting program where we have a correspondence course tied into a computer program where they can actually teach one of our basic programs through the combination of correspondence and computer technology. We're going to have to be looking at those kinds of things.

We last year came out with, at the senior high level, guides in two major core curriculum areas, Language Arts and Social Studies; we completed Health Education K-9 for introduction in September '83; and Curriculum Development in other subject areas is in the final senior high stages.

We have produced and distributed upwards of 60 guides in course supplements. As I mentioned, we're committed to the development for Computer Education, Native language.

We're developing program guides and materials for Native language instruction in K-6 in Cree and Dakota and Saulteaux. The piloting in five Frontier School Divisions of Cree or Saulteaux bilingual programs, with planned extensions to Grades 4-6 for the fall of '83. We've put on workshops and in-services with 14 Native organizations; 21 Band operated schools; 15 federal schools; 11 Frontier School divisions; 21 provincial schools; 40 Winnipeg schools, and 14 others, for a total of 136.

I think that we mentioned before that we've added an additional \$5 million in funding to the Special Needs Program and that's an indication of our recognition of the importance of continuing to provide adequate programs in that area. I think I mentioned before that we're going to increase the Diagnostic Support Centre Resources. I think there's an additional one person that will help increase the numbers of early diagnosis that we know are helping us in catching the children at an earlier age, diagnosing them early and putting them into the appropriate programs. It's an overview.

MR. G. FILMON: I thank the Minister for that introduction. We are particularly interested in speaking about early diagnosis and early identification of special needs. I wonder which of these sub-items you would prefer us to bring that up under?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: 16(d) and (e) for the diagnosis.

MR. G. FILMON: 4.(d)?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, (d) is School for the Deaf. (e) Child Care and Development and Manitoba School for the Deaf, under those two. Those are the two places we provide.

MR. G. FILMON: Those are the two places where the additional \$5 million is?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No. Those are the two places that it would be appropriate to discuss the diagnostic and services which you were mentioning, which are not necessarily where the \$5 million goes. The \$5 million increase is money that goes to school divisions through the Special Needs funding. What we did there was to increase all of the categories where they were allowed clinicians or specialists we increased the level of funding for salaries. We had the two levels of high incidence and low incidence, we increased in both of those levels.

So that Special Needs money actually goes out to the school divisions through the criteria that existed and was increased for support for the programs that they offer in schools.

MR. G. FILMON: Under the overall item of Program Development and Support Services the increase appears to be about 1.35 million, so I'm wondering where this \$5 million ends up being in the whole overall Estimates?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry I probably am not doing a very good job of explaining. The \$5 million is not, in fact, it probably was a mistake for me to refer to it in my opening comments. I was talking about Special Needs, generally, and got off track a little.

The \$5 million increase in the Special Needs Program is in the Educational Support Program. It was a \$31 million budget in the ESP last year and we increased it by \$5 million, so it's up to about \$36 million. It is not found in that 1.3. It was my mistake, I think, in terms of my general comments about support in certain areas of my department, the Child Care and Development Support Services does provide support

into the field in the Special Needs area. I just got carried away a little bit and got into the money that's in the program.

MR. G. FILMON: I thought that might be the case, Mr. Chairman, because we had asked earlier about a specific area in which the Special Needs programming areas could be discussed. We do want to discuss the overall commitment to Special Needs; to early identification, diagnostic and all of that sort of thing, as well as, the perceived addition of funds that the Minister keeps talking about. I would like to know where it best to discuss that?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I think I'll repeat again 4.(d) and (e). The only reason is that we would have another staff person in attendance. I don't even mind going to (d) and (e) now if you'd like to get into that now providing we have a moment to bring our staff in.

MR. G. FILMON: Let's pass (a) then, (1) and (2).

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a)(1)—pass.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, may I just ask if there are any additional staff years in that appropriation?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4(a)(2)—pass; 4.(b)(1) - the Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: Other than the item of Computer Education, what other major areas of Curriculum Development and Implementation are being carried out by the department?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I think I indicated that Curriculum Development is an ongoing activity. We've completed Mathematics 100, 101, 104, 200, 201, 204, 300, 301 and 304; we've completed Science 100, 101, 200, 300; Chemistry 200, 300; Physics 200, 201, 300, 301; Biology 201, 301; English Language Arts K-8 and 9, 9-10, 11 and 12. We're in the process of completing Social Studies K-6, 7-9; Music 10-12 is in preparation; K-9 Art is completed; Physical Education is completed K-12; and Health K-9 is still in preparation. We're also in preparation in Home Economics 10, 11 and 12; Computer Awareness 105 K-9 is in preparation; Computer Science 205 and 305 is in preparation; Lifestyle Studies is in preparation; Industrial Arts Home Ec 7-9 is complete; Business Education, revision of most subjects complete; Occupational Entrance 7-9 and 10-12 is in preparation; Vocational Education Curriculum Guides are being reviewed on a cyclical basis.

MR. G. FILMON: In other words, Mr. Chairman, this is an ongoing process whereby curriculum outlines are being viewed, updated, new topics added, old topics deleted and that sort of thing, new texts perhaps being selected, but nothing really major or new in any of these. These are all parts of the curriculum that are on the approved curriculum for schools throughout the province.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. G. FILMON: Any new staff positions in these areas?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Mr. Chairman, the Minister in her statement in this area indicated that they would be improving support to the field in computer education that school boards were crying for support.

I was looking at an article that was done in the Manitoba Co-operator on December 2nd and it was the Small Schools Program upgrades Opportunities, and many of the small schools, certainly in the rural areas, seem to have gone into computers in a fairly major way with the money that was directed to small schools. Just to read two or three, one of the school divisions said we have recently implemented a community service to run Accounting and Word Processing for small businessmen in Treherne and Glenboro. It was made possible because we could buy sophisticated computer hardware and software through the Small Schools Program. Just through word-of-mouth advertising alone, we have had a dozen or more businesses who are eager to get into it.

Somehow, Mr. Chairman, I hadn't realized that was the spot or the place that the money for Small Schools was headed. I didn't realize that it was going into schools to help the business community, and while I don't mind that's a by-product of it, I find it strange that we would have extra funds which seem to be so desperately needed going into an area like this where we don't even have people who are experienced in the particular field. I know this has to be so because there hasn't been that much experience in computer education yet, and I just wonder at the direction. It then went on to say the Small Schools Program, while not specifically intended to bring computers to rural schools, has had that effect through the individual choices made by teachers on how to spend their grant money. Almost 28 percent of the funds available under the programs were used to buy microcomputers.

I just can't help but question when there is a crying need supposedly for the small schools to be able to stay open. I was under the impression that the program was really to help the schools probably more with people and maybe with libraries and things that they needed. Although I know computers are going to play a major role in the future, I'm finding that this type of expenditure, when I hear the Minister say that the divisions are crying for expertise and for leadership in this program, I'm just wondering if it's not a bit of the tail wagging the dog in this situation.

They go on to say the tiny elementary school at Elgin and Souris Valley used a portion of its \$4,500 grant to purchase a micro-computer for 31 students in Grade 1-6, which it serves. Then at Rathwell School in the Tiger Hills Division there are five microcomputers, one of which was bought under the Small Schools Program. The teachers went on to say we're small but mighty, and she agrees that the computer is a useful tool in a multi-grade classroom for providing remedial work for children who are having problems, and I don't doubt that this will be so.

I just have a problem at this stage of the game of possibly the expertise that's going into this, the money that's going into computer equipment at this stage of the game when in probably two, three or four years computers are going to come in at a much much lower rate, as far as costs are concerned. They're improving them everyday. The software isn't available to interchange with computers and I don't know, I don't profess to be an expert in the field at all. I know very little about it except what I do hear from people who are using them, who are involved in them, even in businesses that they are having a problem with the software on many occasions.

I just question and wonder about the funds that are going out and the allowances of money being spent in this area when I'm just not sure that there are people out there that are sufficiently experienced to do an adequate job of training in this area, and I don't doubt that this is going to be the future. I certainly feel that everyone is going to want a computer - I'd love to have one in my own home - I understand that perfectly. I just look at the time, and what we're dealing with right now, as far as funds which seem to be in short supply, and then I question what is the real need out in the areas. This to me, at this stage, and I don't like to use the word "toy," but I tend to feel that it's something that everyone is so anxious to get into that they're rushing in before their time, and I'd like some comments from the Minister in this area.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I think the Member for Kirkfield Park has touched on an issue that is one of the most difficult for a system like the education system to grapple with, and that is, when you're going into new fields and sort of major areas of change, do you totally prepare yourself and have everything in place and everything dotted before you bring it in, in which case you may be delaying programs that are needed that you should be moving into, for a very long period and I think we have to do a balance.

One of the examples we can use is the Special Needs, where people knew for some time there was a large need there for special needs students for whom there were no programs. A very large amount of money was put into the program in one year, a very big shot in the arm, \$31 million, and I can tell you, when that money went in that we did not have all our programs in place in the schools, nor were the teachers completely prepared and ready to teach it, but what happened is, that we began the process of preparing both teachers and schools on programs and that it's a transition process.

If we had waited for the Special Needs to have all the programs and all the teachers completely trained, we would be waiting today and there would not be one program in the schools, because we wouldn't have fully completed all of the curriculum, all of the program and all of the teacher preparation. So I just use that as an example to say that we have to start to move in some of these areas, recognizing that we're not totally prepared, that we still have a lot of work to do in developing program and in preparing and working with teachers.

There is quite a bit of work going on, in terms of professional development, at both the universities and

the Department of Education and school divisions, to help prepare teachers. That's one of the major areas that we must move on, and that's teacher training and teacher preparation and we're doing quite a bit of work there.

In terms of the point that she made about the amount of money going into computers, it was not set up for that purpose, and there are many other uses to which the grant has been put. That was the decision by, not just teachers but by schools, about what the need was, and I think it's interesting that there are a number of very creative pilot projects going on where what they're doing is using the grant to try new ways and to learn and to develop programs from which we are all going to learn and be able to share, and I'm going to give you one of the examples.

Some of them put them into libraries; some of them put them into people. Now one of the things we did last year that we have changed this year, because we can always learn from experience and from putting programs in and finding out that you could change them and there's a better way to do them, last year we had a certain amount of money that could go for resources, and I think it was one-half of the grant - they were only allowed to use one-half of the grant for people, for personnel last year. We've changed that this year and allowed them the options of deciding whether to put the money totally into people, if they want, and of course we increased the minimum. Last year the minimum for a very small school was \$1,500; well, you can't do much for people buying, or support staff with \$1,500; we've increased that to \$4,000 as the minimum and they are, this year, going to be able to decide to put their entire grant into people, into staff, support staff or part-time teachers or other resources, if they wish, so there may be a change. They may beef-up their libraries one year, and they may get computers one year, and another year they may put the money into personnel and resources.

I'll just give you a couple of examples of some of the other activities. We've got a training program for teacher-aides in Ninette School in Turtle Mountain School Division; one is developing a material resource centre in a small school in Dauphin-Ochre; academic programming for multi-handicapped students in Pembina Valley; inter-school visitation as a form of teacher in-service in Turtle Mountain - actually I must say Turtle Mountain was very active, actually I think they had five or six submissions for Small Schools Project and received funding for three or four of them; Community School Support Program, Enriching Art Programs in small elementary schools; a Pre-school Readiness Program in Norway House; delivering Career Education in small rural colleges, something we mentioned the other day as being so important; another Resource centre; so that those are other examples of projects that are under way in small schools, where they're looking at a variety of resource materials to Handicapped Programs to training for teachers and using them, I think, quite effectively.

One of the other reasons this program is effective is that teachers, and the people that are delivering the programs, have a little bit to say about it and have a chance to get excited and to get involved in developing program and in curriculum, and in sharing their information. I just have some information, there was

a progress report on the joint project for small French Immersion schools between Norwood, Seine, between six participating divisions and schools, and the only part I want to read you - it's in computers - at the bottom of the report, they said, "Interesting Spinoffs - Principals are learning with their teachers. Teachers from one school, with teachers from other schools, are exchanging many ideas, materials and expertise. Elementary and Secondary teachers are working together on this project."

I can remember when I was on the Articulation Council, six or seven years ago, that one of the big concerns or big problems identified was the lack of contact, communication and co-ordination between elementary and high schools where we seemed to have two separate programs, nobody spoke to anybody else about what we were producing here and what they were expecting there, so anything that improves that is good. "Materials produced will be available to all schools within the province." When we're going into new programming like this we don't have all the curriculum and all the materials and all the resources, but if some of it can be developed in the field, through pilot projects, in that way, then we can develop both at the provincial level and the field and expand what we have.

The Department of Education is working in the field, along with teachers, rather than in isolation at 1181 Portage, and they believe that some of the materials produced could even be reproduced and sold by the Manitoba Textbook Bureau to other provinces.

I will just give you one other piece of communication. That's from the professionals in the school division talking about their project and the benefits that they're getting which go far beyond the computer program and the computer courses that they're developing. This one is from some children who have said, "Thank you for the grant, we appreciated the grant of \$1,500 last year too. We may be the smallest school in Manitoba, but your grant made us feel important." They said the grant is going to help them get electronic tutors for the younger students so that they can master the basic skills of Reading, Spelling and Writing and Arithmetic because they're all working at different levels.

It is interesting to see some of the letters to see the different resources, not just computers, but the wide variety of resources that have been where they've applied the grant. I think we also are recognizing that when you've got multi-grade classrooms and you're moving into the technologies that we have to try new ways of teaching and new teaching methods. Computer programs and education are not just areas for big urban centres, they actually are going to be able to use them as tools for teaching in the smaller and the remote schools where they can't ever hope to have the same numbers of professionals and teachers that the larger centres have.

I will give you one example and it's in the high schools. We're in the process of developing a correspondence course in conjunction with a computer program in - and I am trying to think of the course - it's in one of the major courses in the high schools. By combining correspondence and the computer program, they are going to be able to teach one of the major courses in high school that those little high schools couldn't teach perhaps. It's Physics 200. We are developing a Physics

200 Program through the Correspondence Branch with the use of computers, where small schools who can't afford a physics teacher, are going to be able to provide that option in their schools. So it certainly has uses.

It is going to become, not just a frill, it's not something that is extra, that they should only be getting if they don't need anything else. It is going to become a major teaching tool apart from the fact that it is going to become one of the major technological elements of the society that our children are taking over. It's going to become a major teaching tool.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: I think the Minister, Mr. Chairman, just hit the nail right on the head when she said it's going to become a major teaching tool. That's exactly what I am getting at. You mentioned 31 million into Special Needs, that not every program was in place and there was some experimentation done and I don't doubt that for a minute and you could do it. But when you're buying a piece of machinery, when you're buying a computer and then you find out that it isn't what you need, you just can't say, oh well we'll just tear out this page and we'll start again tomorrow. You've got a piece of equipment there that is going to be totally useless. This is where I feel that the direction should be coming in this area, down, not coming up. It shouldn't be coming from the schools necessarily unless somebody has got a particular expertise in this area. This is why I am suggesting that in this area, certainly you want to have people who have had training. You want to have something in place. I think pilot projects are a wonderful idea. I don't throw that sort of project out at all. I think a pilot project is a good idea because this is where you get a chance to look at it in all areas.

I am not suggesting it's just for urban areas because it's going to be something for everyone. But at this stage, why spend the money on it? Why even allow the divisions to go into this sort of thing when they may find that it's folly; they've got machinery that they can't use; that really will not serve them for any time at all. This is the question that I have.

It's just that we have money that is in short supply and to see it being spent just because it's something that they might like to develop, I understand those things and I know that with teachers they love to try new things and they're good at trying new things. But, in this case, when they spend the money, it's spent. They've got something that maybe they're stuck with, that's not going to stand them in good stead. Yet the grant may not come up again for them to say, well gee, we made a mistake.

I don't want to see that sort of thing happen and I think that I would rather see the department give more leadership in this particular area. Don't let the divisions go off and say well, we'd like to try this and then have them find that they've made a costly mistake when pilot projects are in place. Can't we have them just slow down and say, look, we know this is going to be good and I know it is going to be good. There is not going to be a child coming out of high school or into university that's not going to need some sort of computer education because that's the kind of life they're going to lead. But don't waste the money now. Better to put

it into human resources at this stage of the game and go a little slower on it and let's save some of this money because I think that when money is in short supply we just can't look at these things and say, well we'll try this. We haven't got the luxury of that today. People can't do it in their own homes and I don't think that the school divisions should be allowed to do it either.

I think someone has to take the responsibility. It's fine for the Minister to say well we want everybody to try it and isn't this lovely. But, there's got to be more responsibility than that. I think this must come from the department. Where divisions have good ideas, let them feed it into the department, let them try it out in different ways, not the other way around.

I just feel today that someone has got to stand up and say hold it. We need money for so many things, we just cannot afford to be running off in all different directions. I really feel very strongly about this and I think that you're just going to find that in divisions they're going to have all sorts of software, hardware, mini, micro, you're going to have everything all across the board and we won't have anything that's consistent and may in the long haul be doing a disservice to the very people that we're trying to help and that's our children.

I just say this to the Minister in all sincerity that it's a big concern, we just can't have the money going off and being spent in all different directions. I think the direction in this case should come from the department.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the comments made by the Member for Kirkfield Park and that they were made with strong feelings and genuine concern about this issue. I know that because of the way she communicated it, No. 1, and because I have the same feelings that I recognize what she is saying and I have some of the same concerns.

I have - and I did because I had those concerns - set up an Advisory Committee on Computer Education, and I now have a report that I am almost prepared to come out very soon with a policy statement that should be ready for release in the very near future. We will be striking committees, I think, to look at hardware, software and professional development. I quite agree that we have got to start saying that you don't go off and buy anything that you feel like buying because somebody knocks on your door. It's not unlike, and I admit it's not unlike the drug salesmen who go knocking on the doors of doctors and they have a great pitch and a great sort of P.R., and compared to what? You have a salesman on your door and their equipment sounds very, very good. It is absolutely critical that the department start gathering information and making some decisions, not in isolation, but in conjunction with school divisions where there is a lot of expertise about computer education. I was just reminded by my staff that some of the teachers that we have in some divisions, including, interestingly, St. James and River East, are recognized experts in computer education in North America. So that we must acknowledge that, and recognize that, and work with them and bring them in to help us make the decisions about things like computer hardware, computer software and programs.

We have no intention of, for instance, providing the software for any kind of hardware that anybody wants

to buy and the department will be looking very closely. We're not going to tell them they can't, I suppose, because deciding on expenditures and equipment and supplies is the school board decision, but we will tell them what we will provide, at the Department of Education level; that we will be taking a good look at the hardware and the software that is available.

When we talk about the Small Schools Grant and recognizing that a certain amount of it went to buy computers, and that maybe we shouldn't have let them do that, let's not think for a minute that there isn't a lot of computer programs and computers out in the schools, they just weren't in the small schools, that was the only difference. The larger schools with larger budgets, and the urban centres, have had computers and computer programs for years and it's divisions like that, like St. James, as a matter of fact, that were one of the first divisions to really begin to move on computer programs and computer education, that the other 214 small schools were often left out of having any opportunity at all because they never got enough money, through their equipment grant because of their numbers, to qualify for equipment like that.

So, I think, the only thing this grant has done has helped to put some small schools in the province, who are interested and prepared and able, as many of them are, to move into this field, onto the same level as the larger schools, as the other 500 schools in the Province of Manitoba, just to put them on the same level.

I think that where there has been movement there is usually capability. In other words, I do not think that school divisions are going into computer education without having people that know anything about what they're doing. Some divisions are far ahead of others, that's true, and what we have to do is try and get something in, provincially, that provides provincial resources and support and help so that there aren't those who have and can do, and those who have not and can't do, but where they have made moves they have usually had people that are very, very capable and able and have developed the programs that I think we now must take and learn from and make that information and support available to the other school divisions.

I agree with her point about leadership and stuff coming from the top; I think this is one of the areas where you actually work in concert, and I don't mean that we let them go and do whatever they want to do, but I also don't see us sitting from on top and mandating and dictating a major new program without any involvement or activity from the field or from the people who have to implement it, related to their knowledge and information and feelings about how a program should be put in. I see it as something that goes where you're working on it and you're developing it together. We're providing some leadership and some direction; they're providing knowledge and experience and reaction from the field.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for those comments. She mentioned that she's not going to tell them what they can't do. I feel that in some cases that's exactly what the Minister should be doing is, when you see someone heading for folly you tell them that they can't do it, and I wouldn't expect

that the department would be going ahead with any program, but certainly they weren't getting the expertise from the field, from any direction they can get it and very often that is in the divisions because this is where the people are, in the main.

So, of course, it's in co-operation with them but, at the same time, I think that direction must come from the department in this area because it is just too vast, too far-ranging, and too expensive to let divisions go off willy-nilly on their own without having any kind of direction, any kind of clear planning, and exactly where are we headed in this direction.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, following up on that same topic, since it seems to have evolved into a discussion of the grants that were given to small schools, the Minister has indicated that by giving these Small Schools grants and allowing them to purchase computer-related equipment that this will put them on the same level as the big schools, and I think that that indicates a lack of understanding on the part of the Minister, and one of the major problems with this particular program. Indeed, I agree with her that it's very easy to get a great deal of favourable response out of those who receive the money, who make statements like, we couldn't have bought this microcomputer without this grant, and we couldn't have been able to supply this kind of equipment to the schools without it. If you spread around, as we were talking about the system of dealing with grants today, if you spread around as much money as possible in small amounts, division by division, then you will undoubtedly get a good deal of public relations and positive response to people because it's the old system of bearing gifts and doling them out. You're bound to get good responses out of the people who get the money, they're not going to turn around and say, no, we didn't want it, take your grants and get out of my way. You're bound to get people say, Oh, wonderful, thank you for this grant, I think it's a great thing, I wouldn't have been able to buy this trinket without it.

That's the problem, that this particular Small Schools Grant, as it exists or existed last year, did nothing but allow people to buy all sorts of trinkets and toys, and we had them buying equipment and other sorts of gimmicks and gizmos that they would not otherwise have been able to, and the Minister was very proud of the great response that she got. I said last year that the difficulty was that the small schools didn't need trinkets and toys. Their problem was that they didn't have enough human resources, that because of their small enrolment they only justified a certain number of instructors and human resources. The Minister at that time apparently didn't understand or believe it, but now she's changed the program so that she's eliminated the constraint that she had on the amount of money that was able to go to human resources. I commend the Minister on that, but the difficulty is that it saw a great many divisions or small units buy equipment for which they do not have the expertise or the available human resources to put it to good use.

Just as she said about the pharmaceutical salesman or the drug salesman who is able to sell a good line, I can tell her because I've dealt with some very slick computer salesmen and the best salesmen in the world

today work for computer companies. I'm a firm believer in that. They'll go out and sell you anything regardless of whether or not you need it, and some of my best friends are computer salesmen, so I have to very quickly clarify that position. — (Interjection) —

On the other hand, Mr. Chairman — (Interjection) — Some of my friends are what? — (Interjection) — might be doing worse than that. Yes some of my friends might be on the other side of the House. — (Interjection) — Yes, the Member for Turtle Mountain has given me the bottom-line position, some of my friends were not out burning flags, okay.

In any case there are some very very convincing salesmen these days in the field of computers. I hope you won't send Hansard out to some of my friends. On the other hand — (Interjection) — that is the problem, that you have given money indiscriminately I believe, based on a kind of feeling that you're going to get good response from it and you did get good response from it, but that doesn't justify the program.

The fact of the matter is that those constraints were not appropriate to the programs. Small schools need more people; need more human resources to do a better job. That's what they lack because the big schools have greater and greater human resources. They have one person who is a guidance counsellor; they have one person who is a specialist in this area; and one person was a specialist in that area. The small schools don't. I've been out in the rural areas; I've talked to them; I've been with them. The principal is the guidance counsellor and he's the math teacher and he's this and that and the other thing. That's where you have a lacking. You don't have a lacking in bringing a computer into the school or a microprocessor or whatever else you do. That's what you did by your program. I don't think it was right. Now you've improved it this year because you've taken off that constraint and now you can use the money to put it all to human resources. I think you may get better value for the dollars.

But this is one of the problems as I see it. I don't think that the program did what it was supposed to do. I think it did in terms of the public relations position of the Minister, but I don't think that in terms of value for dollar spent that it has been a good program.

On the other hand the Minister says now that this branch of her department are coming up with a statement that tells people what they should buy and what things they should look out for. It gives them suggestions and guidelines. I think that's a little too late after they've spent hundreds of thousands of dollars buying equipment and hardware and software and all of those things to put into computers. I think it's a little too late. That ought to have been considered and countenanced before the program was entered into. I say that the Minister has by her own words admitted that what she has done was not in the best interests of the taxpayers, and was a waste of a great deal of public funds in arriving at what was done under the Small Schools Grants this past year.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Just a couple of points, Mr. Chairman. I think that the first thing I would want to say is that the fact of the matter is that the 214 schools in the Province of Manitoba who received funding based just on bodies, on numbers of children, have clearly

been in an disadvantaged position for years. We're not talking about - my goodness talking about trinkets - if you talk to the people that are working in teaching kids out in those small schools and have been doing it successfully for a decade, and have been doing it without things that the other 500 in the Province of Manitoba consider to be basic in terms of equipment and resources and materials and have felt always sort of disadvantaged in terms of what they got to do the job and the recognition that they got for the importance of the job that they did.

I can tell you that I think every single individual that works in a small school or oversees a small school would be, I'm trying to think of the appropriate word, insulted. I think they would feel insulted by the word "trinket" because when you say that, you're not doing a disservice to me and my program, although that's what you're trying to do, you're doing a disservice to the people in the schools, to the teachers, to the principals and to the superintendent. The feedback has not just come from children and teachers who were delighted to go out and buy trinkets - I can't remember what your other words were to describe them, but that the principals and superintendents of small schools have clearly indicated and communicated to our department that the program has been a success in terms of providing equipment and personnel and improving their resources and the capability of small schools to do their job.

When we had the program for the first year, it's true that we've improved it. I don't even mind saying we made a mistake or it might have been better if we had allowed them the option of having it all on people last year. I mean we recognize that and I don't mind admitting it, but the feedback from the educational community was, for heaven's sake, don't drop that Small Schools, not just because they thought it was a Christmas present and it was a great P.R. program, but because it really did meet a major deficiency, disparity and inequity in our school system. Because they believed, all of them very strongly, that whatever use the money was put to, and it ranges widely in its use, that it has added immeasurably to their ability, their feelings and the attitudes.

It's hard to explain, and I wish I could describe some of it, because it isn't just things that you can see. It isn't just a piece of equipment; it isn't just tangible, visible things that you can touch that the Small Schools Grant has accomplished. So that you can say there's a piece of equipment and there's a book, that Small Schools Grant has been like a shot of adrenalin to the teachers and the people working in small schools, where they feel important. They feel they're recognized as being there and doing a job. They feel that for the first time they're given a chance to have some of the things to do the job that everybody else has had for a long time.

MR. G. FILMON: The Minister is starting to make me feel soft all over; it's her way with words. You're absolutely right, she certainly has a way of defusing all of my anxieties, but at the same time I have to say that I am not out to insult those who work in small schools. Heaven knows, they do an excellent job and they are well regarded and highly commended by people

on our side as well as your side of the House, Madam Minister.

On the other hand, last year I said those grants would be used as mad money and I think that the evidence of what those grants were used for confirms the statement that I made. I'm starting to feel like the person who said I like to quote myself, it helps to spice up the conversation. I don't really want to quote myself from last year, but that's the case, and I think the summary that the Minister has provided us with is evidence of the fact that people were using it for things, anything that they could think of. They had to justify getting the money. After all, it's there, why not get it, let's get our share.

I know from talking to people in various divisions throughout the province that they got together in think-tank sessions to try and put together projects that would qualify for the Minister's grants. Nothing is, as far as I'm concerned, more evident of the fact that anybody will try and put that money to use. If you say it's available and give them the criteria, they'll devise a program and a project that qualifies, and they did it. So the fact that they did it doesn't justify the decision to put that money forward. At the same time, if you say to anybody, here's something that you didn't have before and we're going to give it to you, they're not going to turn it down. Let's not be foolish with each other, don't look a gift horse in the mouth. Obviously, those people who received money last year, those divisions who received money last year, are going to say to the Minister let's carry on with this program because we'll find some new uses for it this year. That doesn't mean that the program is a good program, or is the best way, the most appropriate way, the most cost effective way of spending the taxpayers' money in Manitoba, surely.

MR. CHAIRMAN, P. Eyler: The Member for Niakwa.

MR. A. KOVNATS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, I would just like to add to what my honourable colleague has mentioned. As a matter of fact, I had an opportunity of speaking with somebody from a very small school yesterday morning prior to coming down to the Legislature. I would just like to tell the Honourable Minister that this person who is very very involved in a small school spoke very very highly of the project that the Honourable Minister had of giving special grants to private schools. But when I finally got to her - but - and I finally said to her, do you realize the consequences of accepting these grants? She said, well, yes, we've got money, we can buy things that we couldn't normally have. I said, but if there has to be a decision made to economize later, you are contributing to the demise of your school. If a decision has to be made whether that school is going to be left open or not left open, there is going to be some decisions made as to the spending of these extra monies. She said, I never thought of that. I said, but that has to be considered, you are contributing to the demise of your small school. She said, well, I'm not going to ask for any more money. I didn't try to talk her out of it, but that was her decision of what I had said to her.

I felt that I was speaking of a just cause when I said there is going to be - and I'm not going to tell the Honourable Minister the exact location - a new school

being planned and will be built close to this area very soon of this small school that I'm talking about. I predict right now that after that new school is built that this small school that is accepting these grants will be closed within two years. The school board has to make the announcement in plenty of time, but I think the announcement will be coming very very soon, and we'll be losing this small school which is really servicing the community, and I'd hate to see it lost. I think for everything good about the grants to small schools, there are just as many bad things about it. I just wanted to bring that to the Minister's attention.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Well, I'd like to respond to that, Mr. Chairman, although I'm having just a little bit of trouble understanding the logic of the member opposite. I want to make one thing very clear and that is that the Small Schools Grant I don't believe will either keep a small school open or stop a small school from closing should the decision be made to close it. What it does say is that as long as a school is operating as a school, as long as it is open, as long as it is teaching children, for whatever that period of time will be, it is entitled to a fair share of resources and materials in order to do the job.

A lot of the schools, there are some that come into the Small Schools category and some that go out. I think out of the 214 small schools we have now, 177 of them were teaching kids a decade ago, so that the bulk of the small schools in the Province of Manitoba have continued to have taught kids for a decade and are going to continue to teach kids for a long time.

Our major concern, when we brought the Small Schools Grant in, was to say that as long as they continue to do their job they were entitled to some help to do it. I see absolutely no connection between that small school getting a grant to do a job for each year that it is open and the question of whether or not it closes because of a larger school being built near its vicinity. I see no relationship between those two points at all, and if I've missed something in his argument, so that I will understand the relationship, I wish he would explain it to me a little further.

MR. A. KOVNATS: The only thing that I could say to the Honourable Minister is that I'm not trying to build a relationship; I'm just saying that if a decision has to be made and you're looking to economize, you think of the \$3,000 or the \$5,000, anywhere that you can cut back, because I see where the Honourable Minister has done a real good job in some of the Other Expenditures and I don't want to go to these others, but I see where you have economized and cut back and everything at this point is a matter of trying to save dollars and I wouldn't like to see the small school close. The Honourable Minister states that she can't see the association that I've tried to make, but I make a prediction that within the next two or three years, the small school that I'm talking about will be gone and I'll bring that to the Minister's attention.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, your prediction may be true and I suppose we'll find out. At least it won't be sooner than 20 months but we'll find out in the next year or two. But if it is true, if it does come

to be, it will have absolutely nothing to do with the \$4,000 or \$5,000 grant that that small school got through the life of the program; absolutely nothing to do with that at all.

It will have to do with quality of program; it will have to do with the financial costs of keeping the school open; it will have to do with, I would hope, attitudes of the community and feelings and values of the community about a neighbourhood school because those are the things that should always be measured when they're making a decision to close the school. They have to consider costs, they have to consider quality of education and I hope that the guidelines will ensure that they will also consider the attitudes and the values of the community, but those are the three considerations. Nobody will pay any attention to what money went into the small schools to help it do a good job while it stayed open, I don't think.

MR. A. KOVNATS: I don't want to get into any argument or long discussion at this point, but when you refer to the attitude of the community, we had two schools closed in my area, in the area of the Honourable Member for Radisson, just in the last short time. Now if you're talking about attitude of the community, the attitude of the community was very, very strong in keeping these schools open regardless of the cost or the benefits. The attitude of the community was very strong in keeping them open but the schools were closed regardless.

I don't think that I want to get - I think that we've each made our point and I'm ready to accept that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: The Minister made reference to quality of academic programming and I'm wondering, because the topic indirectly came up Tuesday evening when we talked about the numbers of students who are completing their high school training as compared to the numbers who start, and she gave the percentages of those today who are completing high school versus what it was when she was in school and I was in school and others in the Chamber were in school. Does the Minister anticipate that there is a need for tougher academic standards in schools in the near future today?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: That's a very big question and a difficult question. The Member for Tuxedo will probably remember that one of the changes - and I'm talking about post-secondary now which is a little bit off the subject - but one of the changes made for the student-aid criteria, and we'll get into this later on down the road, did deal with the question of standards and what we were saying there is that we expect the students to complete a certain amount of their program successfully in a certain period of time and I think that there would be a general feeling by the public that that's sort of fair and reasonable. One of the worries I think has been that, with a freeing up of regulations and laws and sort of rules in our general society, which also has an effect on systems like the education system, that we became so loose that there weren't any standards and any levels of excellence or the expectations were reduced so that we just said, "You do whatever you feel like doing and we'll accept that."

I don't think we ever went as far as some of the perception was, in loosening up the standards. There was some loosening; there was some expansion of things like optional courses where the academic subjects that would be required were listed and there would be other options that people could take, but we never went as far, in this case, as some of the other jurisdictions or countries did. I don't know if you saw the program on television the other night where they're bringing in this major report on the state of education in the States, where they are really saying that they went too far, that the standards are badly reduced, the expectations aren't there, the students are not being given the courses and the programs that they should have. I don't think we ever went that far. It's one of the areas in Manitoba where I think we didn't go to the extreme. I think we moved more slowly, I don't think we eased up the regulations and the requirements as much as did other provinces, and in terms of how our children are doing, I think they're doing better than some of the public expectation is perhaps suggesting.

When we do our evaluations . . . I've got the list of program requirements and the core requirements for high school graduation. We continue to require English, Science, Mathematics, Canadian History, Geography of North America or Canadian Geography, Physical Education. They have to have a minimum of 20 credits for graduation from high school. They do have elective courses that are approved for credit and those include school-initiated courses, languages, work education and there is a private music option.

But I don't think we went as far in easing up on the core requirements and allowing a wide number of options that other jurisdictions did and I think we still require certain allotments and amounts of time that school divisions must provide in the core subjects, and while they can organize them in the timetable that sort of suits them, they must follow the time allotments, they must follow the curriculum guides. There is a lot of reasonable flexibility for teachers in teaching courses, which I think there should be because they shouldn't all have to be on Page 39 on the 30th day of school; we have certainly learned that. They are not free to do whatever they want, wherever they want, and they must meet and follow the curriculum guide.

When we do our testing, and I think when we look at testing there is a purpose to provincial testing and a purpose to school division and classroom testing, and we have to remember what the purposes of each are so that we're not sort of misusing the results. When we do the provincial testing, and the purpose there is to see and make sure that, on a provincial level that we are teaching, and the levels of achievement, are at an acceptable level. The other thing it does is tell us if there are any deficiencies in the curriculum, any problems in the curriculum, particularly when we're bringing in new curriculum. They have made some considerable changes and some of them may not be as evident until a little way down the road, until they've been implemented for some time.

When we do that we find that, contrary to what people think about individual students, or the complaints that you get about kids not being able to do this and that, that we could do better when we were their age, they are doing as well, they are able to function at a reasonable level in those subjects. I think our students

are going on to post-secondary institutions in greater numbers, larger numbers of them are graduating, many more going on to post-secondary institutions. I think that the testing that we're doing, we're using a variety of testing, and our kids are actually, I think, functioning at a reasonable level. I do think that some of the affairs and concerns of parents have to be recognized. In some cases, there is a feeling that students are passed on from one grade to another regardless of their achievement and that the expectations have been reduced. I do think that it is very important that we address that wherever parents - and I am talking about individual parents now - feel that way, because we do have to make sure that our kids rise to the level of their ability. We do have to make sure that they're challenged and that they achieve their full potential, and that we don't sort of allow them to slip through if it is going to cost them in the long run, and they're not going to learn and grow as much as they should.

I think where the individual parents have that concern they should work very closely with the teachers. In general, I think that our standards are reasonable and the achievement level of the students is higher than it's ever been before.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just following on with what the Minister has said, how does she propose that the provincial system deals with the problem of kids being slipped through from one level to another, regardless of their competence, without having achieved what they should ordinarily at their levels? What, within the provincial system, ensures that the level of literacy of our students completing high school meets a certain level; that in the traditional three R's, and I am not suggesting that to be the be all and the end all, that within the traditional three R's that we are achieving those standards that we ought to in public school education.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I had a little bit of trouble with who achieved what they should ordinarily at their levels? What, within the provincial system, ensures that the level of literacy of our students completing high school meets a certain level; that in the traditional three R's, and I am not suggesting that to be the be all and the end all, that within the traditional three R's that we are achieving those standards that we ought to in public school education.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I had a little bit of trouble with words coming from both my front and my back, and being able to hear the question. I heard the first part of the preamble, would you mind just repeating the question?

MR. G. FILMON: Perhaps it would improve the Minister's position if I invited the Member for Elmwood to participate, again, in the discussion.

MR. R. DOERN: How's your black eye coming?

MR. G. FILMON: What types of provincial testing are available to ensure that we are meeting the standards that the Minister and her department feel that we ought to; to what extent is this being done on a province-

wide basis; and what assurances are we able to glean from the information the Minister has given us is relevant and across-the-board for the entire province, that all children are being educated to a higher level and a better level than they were, say, 5 years ago or 10 years ago, or when we were in school.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, we undertake to evaluate curriculum about the same way as we develop curriculum which is on a continuing basis. We evaluate, I think, it's two courses per year; yes, two a year. Two different courses will be selected and have major, sort of, testing and examinations of those courses in that year. We have, very recently, done Writing, Reading, Science, Mathematics, Chemistry, Health, Art and Music. Yes, and Social Studies, I think I mentioned Writing, Social studies and Writing in 1983-84, two subjects for 1983 and 1984.

MR. G. FILMON: Sorry, Mr. Chairman, did the Minister say that this was testing of the curriculum, or of the end product with students?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: These are tests that are standardized tests done on a provincial basis of children across the province, that give us two pieces of information; that is, the ability of the students in the Province of Manitoba to achieve a certain level of standard in each of those courses and, at the same time, it helps us to see if there are any weaknesses in the curriculum by the ability to identify any major or extraordinary levels of deficiency in the result of the tests.

MR. G. FILMON: At what grade levels are these tests performed, and are they only to the top students, or are all of them tested, and in what subjects and what areas?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, Mr. Chairman, we certainly do not just test the top students. They are random sample tests and we test 10 percent of the student population and the grades vary that are tested in the different programs and that depends upon the grades in which the courses that are being taught are which grades the courses are being taught. Since they don't always carry right through to K-12 so that writing was tested in 3, 6, 9 and 12; Reading in 3, 6, 9 and 12; Science 5, 8 and 11; Math in 3, 6, 9 and 12; Chemistry 200 and 300; Health in Grades 5-10; Writing 3, 6, 9 and 12; Social Studies 3, 6, 9 and 12.

MR. G. FILMON: In all schools throughout the province?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. G. FILMON: The Minister and I are obviously on a similar wavelength. She referred to the major report that was just released in the United States last week and commented about the responses that were made. One of the commission members who was quoted commented that the present curriculum in the nation's high schools has been homogenized, diluted and diffused to the point that it has become a cafeteria in which the appetizers and desserts can easily be

mistaken for the main courses. Does the Minister feel that those concerns ought to be similarly addressed in Manitoba?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I do believe that I tried to address that in my earlier comments.

While I do believe we expanded and went into some options, I don't believe that we have the proliferation of courses or optional courses or the variety, the numbers or the range that was described in the program, or that is available in other jurisdictions. I think we have maintained what we can call a core program of these sort of solid traditional curriculum programs and courses, and that we have allowed some expansion for some options and have a combination of the two with the emphasis and the priority being given to the required mandatory programs with some leeway given for options.

But I don't think that we went as far, I don't think we have the number or the range, the elective courses which are school-initiated courses; that doesn't mean a child goes out and does anything they want to do, it means that a course is developed in conjunction with the student; with the teacher; with the administration. My guess is that they would require approval by the administration and the curriculum people in the division before they could proceed with a school-initiated course. Special credit for languages; work education; the private music option; those are not a large number of options that were described, and the kind of options that were described in the program the other night.

I've got a list here of the Department of Education-developed high school courses. This is a listing of available, compulsory and optional. It's Accounting 200, 302; American History 100, 101; Art 101, 201; Biology; Business Math; Business Principles; Canadian History; Chemistry; Computer Science; Data Processing; Dramatic Arts; Ecology; Economics; English 100, 300; Francois Program; General Business; Geography; German and Hebrew; History; History; History; Home Economics; Industrial Arts; Italian; Journalism; Latin; Law; Marketing; Mathematics; Music; Office Practice; Chemistry; Organic Chemistry; Physical Education; Political Studies; Probability and Statistics; Science; Social Studies; Spanish; Topics in Mathematics; Typewriting; Ukrainian and Vocational Courses.

I think that when you hear the list that there isn't a lot there that would be considered frivolous or non-serious or in the category or the descriptions that I think he's thinking of.

MR. G. FILMON: Are there other self-initiated options that could be considered?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes in two areas; school-initiated projects and student-initiated projects. In both of those areas, as I just suggested, it would require first of all a teacher being in agreement. The program has to be developed; it has to be approved by the teacher; it would have to have the support of the principal, and I know that it would require divisional curriculum approval by the curriculum development people in the division, including the principal. So it gets a fairly good run-through before it's approved.

MR. G. FILMON: In view of the fact that nationally and internationally we have a need to compete in certain

areas on a world-wide basis and just as the United States has determined that they would need to compete on an area of higher technology to make all of their efforts more competitive on a world-wide basis in manufacturing and the development and furtherance of their technologies, microelectronics and computers and all those areas, does the Minister feel as the study concluded that there ought to be a greater emphasis on Math and Science in order to marry the goals of our education situation with the goals of our economy at large?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I think that we need to continue our emphasis on the importance of Math and Science. Once again I don't think we got as far away in requiring Math and Science in curriculum through high schools as did the States. I agree with the point he's making that there are basic courses that are going to become and that are very important to have to provide the principles and the understanding for us to go on to be able to master and understand the technologies.

I don't know if in Manitoba we need to improve our requirements. I think we need to continue the requirements that we have had.

MR. G. FILMON: So the Minister is saying that our requirements in Science and Technology are up to the standards that they ought to be and better than the American standards?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: That's a pretty hard judgment to make without a lot of information. We're both reacting to information that was given in a television documentary. You've got it in the paper too. I didn't mean that there was anything the matter with your memory, it's just that even then they are summarizing and giving information on a very deep, very complex subject probably summarizing a very huge report with a lot of information and taking out bits and pieces of it. It's hard to know if you understand or really have the full picture. What I did think they were saying is they had cut down on the number and the amount of Maths and Science that they were teaching in the high schools, that they had dropped a number of courses, and they do not believe we have dropped them to the level they have. I don't know if we are totally up-to-date with our maths and science to keep pace with the technological change that's coming because I think that's evolutionary but we've maintained a good standard and I think we are evaluating those all the time. and I'm sure the Maths and Science evaluations that are coming down the pike are going to be looking at the tie-in in the relationship and the need to the technologies.

I'm sure there are improvements we could be making all the time.

MR. G. FILMON: I just remind the Minister that the Americans are putting people into outer space and on the moon, and so on, so surely she's not telling me that their level of training in maths and science is not as good as the standard that we have in Manitoba. I'll believe many things, but surely she's not telling me that.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I was commenting on their report saying that they had dropped their requirements in those two areas and my perception of what I picked up is that they may have dropped them from a previous period when they were doing a lot of those things and they did have higher requirements, and they had dropped their standards and dropped their requirements from previous years, and I don't think we did that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(b)(1)—pass; 4.(b)(2) - the Member for Niakwa.

MR. A. KOVNATS: I would just like to ask one question in this regard, when we are on Other Expenditures I notice that in every one of the items where it comes to Other Expenditures the cost this year is reduced from the cost of last year by a small percentage, not a large percentage, whereas the Salaries in almost every item - and I just thought I'd bring it up at this time - that the Salaries in every item are increased anywhere from 17 percent to 25 percent whereas the Other Expenditures are reduced. Can the Honourable Minister explain?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, I can, Mr. Chairman. I'll try to do it from memory while I look at the information that I gave previously. The Member for Niakwa is quite correct when he identifies a major difference in the percentage increase for Operating and not for Salaries. I explained that early on in the Estimates - and perhaps he probably was not in the House at the time - but our Salary increases across the board are the same for everybody. In fact, they are at the level of the collective agreement. But there were a number of areas, I might say, out of our control that has influenced those percentages and made them appear much larger and they are four items that I've presented as the explanation for all of any that would appear in the 22-23 percent.

First of all there is a general salary increase shortfall from '82 — (Interjection)- Pardon? No, he asked why so high in salaries? Why were salaries 22-23?

MR. G. FILMON: He only asked you about Other Expenditures.

MR. A. KOVNATS: I just used it as a comparison really, just the Other Expenditures.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: You want to know why the Other Expenditures are low. Because in most cases, I think we made a real effort when we were going through our budgeting process to really look at our expenditures and to reduce where we could and to reduce in terms of what it was costing us to operate the different departments.

We cut travel - I don't know how far we cut travel - but we cut travel significantly. We cut back on some equipment and renovations on some supplies. We tried to bring in a budget that gave us enough to do the job but really took a good look at any additional operating cost increases and I must say that one of the reasons we took such a tough line in the department, which we did - and the Member for Tuxedo has

commented on the fact that we only have a 7 percent increase in the department, I'm glad he noticed it - because that took a lot of work, a lot of sweating and a lot of examination on our part and on every department and on every — (Interjection) — I did. I did lose a lot of weight over that one and a bit of sleep. But I'll tell you that we did that because our college budget and our Department of Education budget are two that we're responsible for and it was our intention to try to get as much money into the hands of the colleges and the schools where they were teaching the kids and teaching the program and to say if there was going to be some cutbacks and somebody was going to have a little bit less, that we would do it in the department so that they'd have as much as they could for the teachers and the courses.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(b)(2)—pass; 4.(b)(3)—pass; 4.(c)(1) Native Education: Salaries - the Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: Can the Minister indicate if there's any additional staff in this particular branch?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. G. FILMON: In other words, Mr. Chairman, the elevation of this particular section of the department to a branch status is more a symbolic sort of move because you have no more staff, and if you're saying that it's going to take a more active stance, as you said before, then you're certainly not doing it by providing more assistance or more staff to do it.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, the description that was given by the Member for Tuxedo is probably accurate. I understand why he is saying that because we said the branch was going to do more and it was going to have more resources, so when I now tell him that there's just 12 staff he's saying, you haven't put your money and your people where your mouth was, I suppose. That is a little bit more clearly stated.

MR. G. FILMON: I'd never be so coarse.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, you'd never be quite so direct. This department is a priority and it is going to be, not just in name, given additional status by name because we really do intend to provide more services and more support to the field and to Indian-controlled Band Schools.

The reason that we haven't moved is because the directors were just appointed and they need a little bit of time to look at what's in the department and to identify the major needs. Now, I'm expecting a report from them within the next few weeks. It's one thing to know you need more people, and it's another thing to know what kind of people and what they should be doing, where the greatest needs are, and I think a little bit of thought needs to be given in that area. So what we've been doing is consulting with the field, consulting with the Native organizations, and reviewing the resources and the personnel in the department so we could make the decisions on where the additional people should go. My guess is, from what I've heard to date, that it is going to be in the area of language,

that that is going to be the first area that's going to be identified as a higher priority to move on. And if that's the case, then we intend to give additional resources and support in that area.

I might also say that one of the other ways we're doing it is that we're not putting all of the responsibility on the Native Branch. While we've raised it to branch status, and we say it's going to get more resources, the fact is, that if we're talking about curriculum, they should be getting help from the Curriculum Branch; if we're talking about - I'm trying to think of some other areas - but the resources of the Department of Education are going to start being integrated more. Instead of saying, "Well, you're the Native Education Branch so you do everything." If there are people with experience, knowledge and expertise that can give help in certain areas to Native Education, they will be called on to do so.

MR. G. FILMON: The problem, Mr. Chairman, is that the Curriculum Branch doesn't have any more people either, so I guess we can assume that the move of elevation of Native education to branch status is largely symbolic and we can wait for greater things next year.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I'm sure the Member for Tuxedo doesn't want us to move and fill positions quickly or without giving due thought to the decision-making process. I mean, he certainly doesn't want us to just go out and fill positions and get bodies in just sitting there doing nothing; we want them to know what they're going to do. I think he will see, in a very short period of time, that this is more than - What did he call it? What did you call it?

MR. G. FILMON: Symbolic.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Symbolic, yes. I think that it will be clear. I'm expecting the report very soon from the Native Education Branch, and when I have that report and that information on what the greatest needs are, I expect to move on it quickly.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I'll just remind the Minister that she created two positions for which she has no job description and no people in the area of communications, but she didn't do that in Native Education so I assume that her efforts and her pronouncements about her commitment to Native Education are largely symbolic, and I'm not arguing with that; I took them as that when she made them.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, the proof will be in the pudding.

MR. G. FILMON: I will soon be hungry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(c)(1)—pass; 4.(c)(2)—pass; 4.(d)(1), The Manitoba School for the Deaf: Salaries - the Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: Are there any new staff positions or new functions involved in this particular item?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, no, we are down one staff year. I think that the major change for the

Manitoba School for the Deaf will be that which I described before, and that is, that they'll be acting more as a resource centre for the entire population of hearing-impaired children in the province, so that they'll be sharing their resources with hearing-impaired programs outside of Manitoba School for the Deaf, and that will be equipment, facilities and personnel. That's probably the major change.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Niakwa.

MR. A. KOVNATS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under this particular item, (d) Manitoba School for the Deaf, does it include only children?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, ages 4 to 20.

MR. A. KOVNATS: Is there any charge or cost to the children attending the Manitoba School for the Deaf?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. A. KOVNATS: Is there anybody in the staff here this evening that is able to understand sign language that I would be able to communicate with them, that I also would with anybody who was from the Manitoba School for the Deaf?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, Mr. Chairman. The Principal isn't here; he would be able to. Is the Member for Niakwa telling us that he has taken a course in signing and that he can sign and, if so, would he say something to me?

MR. A. KOVNATS: Yes, the Member for Niakwa is also stating that he has taken a course in many other things, in French and in sign language and I'm still a little bit slow at it but I'm able to do it. For me to go through the gestures at this point would be really irrelevant because there wouldn't be anybody here that would be able to understand whether I am swearing or making some remarks that are not really acceptable in the House, and the Honourable Chairman would probably rule me out of order because I'm not really that good at it, but I am able to communicate. I was just wondering whether — (Interjection) — Yes, with my hands; I talk with my hands anyway.

My intention, in asking some questions about this, and we are told that, just to the age of 20, when I did take the course, I had to pay for that course myself and I took it because I thought it would be acceptable, that people who are deaf, also, would have the right to come into the Legislature and speak with their hands, rather than with their voices, and I wanted to give them a fair hearing because, when I took the course, I was the Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees; but I had to pay for the course on my own. Is there anything through the Department of Education that would allow people over the age of 20 to be able to take courses in signing?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, we do give classes to parents and adults using the Manitoba School for the Deaf staff, and there is also a program available at Red River Community College.

MR. A. KOVNATS: The course that I'm referring to, I took across from the Rehab Centre. I've forgotten the name of the building there, but just across from the Rehab. Is it the Kinsmen Centre? I took my course there and I had to pay for the joy of signing and also for the course. It's a very very good course and I think that more people should take it and be more aware of communicating with deaf people. We do have some people right here, on staff in the Legislature, who are deaf and mute and, as a matter of fact, I get great enjoyment in communicating with them, and I think that any of the other members, if they had any kind of a knowledge of signing, would also get great enjoyment in being able to communicate with these people. They're very very intelligent and possibly even more so than some of the members in the Legislature.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I suppose, at this point, Mr. Chairman, what should be said to the Member for Niakwa is that I both appreciate and congratulate him for his initiative and for his creative approach to the use of his time. I would like to do that myself and maybe if I get around to taking the course, which I would like to do some day, he and I can sit and talk in the Chamber and nobody will know what we're saying.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(d)(1)—pass; 4.(d)(2)—pass; 4.(e)(1) Child Care and Development, Salaries - the Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the Minister has spoken at great length on the Special Needs support. I want to bring up the special needs children in independent schools. I am looking particularly at the brief that was presented to Dr. Nicholls at the finance review. They are asking that the legislation be amended so that independent school children may be included in the grantable numbers through the public school divisions so that specialized personnel, through the respect of public school divisions can continue to assist the special needs children of the independent schools.

Mr. Chairman, I really believe that to leave children in need anywhere, no matter what type of school they go to, is something that this province can't afford the luxury of. I think that the shared services should certainly include independent schools in this area. I would like to have the Minister make some comments in this area if she would.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I recognize the concerns raised by the Member for Kirkfield Park. I am not sure what I am in a position to say about this issue since it can't be separated from all of the other programs or high needs that are being looked at with Dr. Nicholls' review. He has heard briefs and proposals made by many people across the province dealing with special needs, with private schools and many other factors. We will be awaiting his report and the government will be taking a very careful and serious look at its recommendations, all of them. Until that time, we simply have to wait for the report to be completed.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Mr. Chairman, I find the Minister's response a cop-out to say the least. I think that when

the Minister has been talking about children with special needs and the amount of funds and how greatly concerned she is about them that it's pretty well lip service when you leave a block of children out, like the children that go to independent schools, to simply say, you're going to wait and see. I think there must be more to it than that, that this has to be a matter of need and of conscience.

I don't see how the Minister can wait to see what someone is going to recommend. These children are there, they're in need and they should be a part of the Special Needs Program. I don't see what there is for the Minister to think about or look at or decide about. These are children in need and it doesn't matter what school they go to. I think that this is an area that the province should be ashamed not to be helping these children because they can have shared services in home ec, they can have shared services in vocational areas, in many ways, but the one area that is of particular need is the special needs children.

I think for this province to turn their back on them just because they go to independent schools or to any school for that matter, is a disgrace. I think that the Minister just can't talk about it, but I think that she should come up with some action. To say that you're waiting for a review, you know these children are there. The Minister knows that they're there. This won't help them.

These children are going to come into the mainstream sooner or later. If they don't get the help while they're in school, they're going to be in special special need by the time they get out of school.

I think it's indefensible of this government to leave a segment of our children, any of our children, sitting there who need help and just because they're not in the public schools system, they can't get it. I really feel that this government should be taken to task for this. I can't imagine any real reason that you can give that's going to say to the people of Manitoba, look, they're in a different system, so we'll just think about them and see what someone comes up with for a review. There has to be more than that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. B. RANSOM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To follow on what my colleague said in this area, surely the Minister has some views on this herself. Surely she doesn't have to wait for a report to come in from an outside person. Surely she can tell us whether she favours money being made available to the private schools to deal with this one particular group of individuals. Let the Minister give us her opinion at least. We're not asking her for a final commitment or an answer.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I think it's probably important that while they have identified an area of concern to parents and to people in the community, it is not quite accurate to suggest that there is a group of children for whom there is no help and no access to Special Needs.

First of all they are quite able to have special needs agreements or as you said they can get shared service agreements on transportation and shared service

agreements in a number of other areas. They can also have shared service agreements in Special Needs. Any area that an independent school and a school division agree to have a contract, I sign, and they can develop them in any area that they want including Special Needs. There is nothing there that inhibits or stops them from doing that.

We also know that these children have been serviced over the years through the Child Guidance Clinic, that they have been receiving some help in services there and I think that the Child Guidance Clinic and the Winnipeg School Division and the schools are presently looking at the services that they've been providing for sometime and that they were considering altering as of this September, so that they were looking at a possible change. It has not come about yet and there is a place where support and help has been given to these children and its through the Child Guidance Clinic.

MR. B. RANSOM: Does the Minister think that present situation is adequate? She has outlined what can be done, but I'd like to know whether she thinks that's sufficient.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I think that this is not the only sensitive, difficult high-need area that we are looking at or faced with making a decision on. I did spell out that the inadequacies are not as inadequate as the members opposite were suggesting, and that it's an area that is going to have to be looked at and it's going to have to be looked at in concert with all of the other needs, programs, deficiencies, inequities, problems and programs that are going to be provided. It can't be looked at in isolation; it's one of numerous issues that are going to have to be dealt with and they will be dealt with at the same time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Mr. Chairman, the Special Needs Support Funding is based on the number of students needing special assistance. Independent schools aren't included in that number, so some of the divisions are considering withdrawing the service so they are going to be left in a position of not having the funding for this need. I think that in that context that the legislation should be amended so that the independent schools are in the count and they do get the funding. Because we're not talking about one specific group, we're talking about a group of children who have special needs in all areas, so it's not like we're taking out one specific small group that we're looking at and saying, well, this is another area that we must fund. This is an area that will cover all the Special Needs children and anything that's covered in the areas of, say, Winnipeg School Division, St. James-Assiniboia Division, which has an exceptionally good program, always had for Special Needs. This is the area that the children that go to independent schools is where they need the help and I think that in this context I don't see that there is a need for the Minister to study any further or to look any further. It's a need that's there; it's a need that should be addressed. These are our children and certainly if they move into the public school system I

know they get that support. Is this certainly the intent that all the children with special needs then will not be accepted by independent schools and will be put into the public school system?

Neither the parents nor anyone wants anyone to have to make the choice on that basis. It splits up families and this is an area where they are choosing to send their children to a certain type of school. I think when it comes to something like special needs that this amendment should really be put forward, and I think without any reservation, because I think these children, especially these particular children and their families, need that help. They're having enough problems today keeping their children in schools of their choice and they don't need this extra burden. In most cases it's a burden on a family having this kind of a child with special needs, and it's one that they gladly take and they gladly look after. But I don't think they need the extra burden of being left out of the funding and I hope the Minister will look at that area very carefully.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(e)(1) - the Member for Kirkfield Park.

MR. G. HAMMOND: Yes, I would like to ask the Minister about the pilot project that was implemented in September, 1981, in the Special Needs area, the Early Identification and Intervention Project for kindergarten students. I have a press release here that I'll just read briefly from, it's April 24, 1981. The Progressive Conservative Government at that time and the Minister of Education, Mr. Cosen, announced another pilot project to start in September, 1981, with the co-operation of five school divisions will be designed to provide field base experience and research data for the early identification of children with potential learning problems and the intervention process that must follow identification. To this end, Mr. Cosen, indicated that kindergarten children and their teachers in the five divisions - and when I checked in the Annual Report, it indicated that there were rural school divisions, there was an urban school division, and Northern school divisions involved in that, and St. James-Assiniboia happened to be one.

The News Service went on to say that a carefully designed program consisting of screening, diagnostic assessment, intervention programming and evaluation, and that the data from the first year of this Early Identification and Intervention Project would be made available to all school divisions. I would ask the Minister if that report was made available to the school divisions and where the pilot project stands at this time?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the project that was under way in five divisions is ending its second year. It's Rhineland, Souris Valley, Mystery Lake, Swan Valley and St. James. The data is all collected and it's being analyzed. The co-ordinator for the project is expected to complete the report in June.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Is the pilot project to continue?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I think that's one of the things that we'll have to wait for the report to see. Certainly, the purpose of the pilot project was not

just for those school divisions, but it was to have a program for a period of time that would give us information that would help us develop our provincial program for early identification, so that we will be looking at the results of the pilot project to help us make decisions about what we're going to provide at the provincial level.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: When The Public Schools Act was amended there was a Section 41(1)(q) that said "every school board shall" - and I will go down to q - "screen every pupil who has not previously been screened entering the school system in that division or district for physical, mental, emotional or learning disability."

It was understood that the pilot project was to produce an assessment guidelines which would have been issued to schools divisions to proclaim the section either during 1983 or possibly 1984. Is the Minister planning to proclaim that section of the Act?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I think that is one of a number of questions that we're going to have to both ask ourselves and get answers for when we look at the information that's coming in from the pilot project. It's not the only area where something was not proclaimed in the Special Needs in the original Bill 58, I think, brought in by the members opposite, it was not proclaimed either. One of the reasons for that is the recognition that if you proclaimed that we would not have the resources, the information, the knowledge and the programs to implement across the province anyway, and that somehow we have to put down what we want to do and begin to develop our programs and our resources so that we can implement them on a province-wide basis.

I think we'll get a lot of good information out of this pilot project. We will be taking a look at where and how and to what degree to move in this area across the province and how quickly, and the timing, how quickly we will be able to do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I'm a little surprised at the Minister's response. Does she not believe that in the overall program of dealing with Special Needs students in our education system, the fundamental cornerstone, is really identification?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes I do, Mr. Chairman. I think we all recognize that the earlier the identification is and the more prevention there is, the more it's going to save us in the long run. I think we are talking about responsibility, some of which takes place in the health care system, and some of which takes place in the education system. That is one of the topics that has a high priority for discussions between health community services and myself, so we can make some decisions about where their work is going to take place and what level of activity they will be undertaking in this area, and what we will be doing in the Department of Education.

I think that we are planning to improve our resources in this area in the Child Care Branch, and that we are

moving both in terms of recognition of the importance and providing additional resources to school divisions in this area.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, that's one of the concerns that we have and should have, that it costs a great deal more to provide resources to deal with Special Needs students the longer that they are allowed to exist in the public school system without having been identified as Special Needs students. So why would the Minister be reluctant to make a commitment to implement the requirement of The Public Schools Act of screening for early identification? I can't understand it. Throwing money at those who already have the problem and have existed in the public school system, the problem has been exacerbated, they now become a very expensive cause for us to deal with is not the right way to go, early identification is. Why would the Minister be avoiding that decision?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I did not say that I was avoiding that decision. I said that we were moving in that direction. I said that we agreed with its importance, that the services and resources of the Department of Education are to improve our capability in this area, and to provide additional resources and support to the field through the funding levels that we are giving them, so that they too can provide services in this area.

We expect to get a lot of information out of the early identification pilot project that will help us make decisions on what staff to go, what kind of program and how to implement it. So we're not just flying by the seat of our pants. We must also do planning and we must have the resources that are necessary to bring in the program.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, knowing that the second phase, the second year of this pilot project will end this June, and that there is no money in the current Estimates for implementing a program as of this September, how many years of study and review does the Minister intend to commit this government to before they're in a position to make a decision and do something about this problem?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't like to point fingers, but I must say that there's been a number of areas where we've been hit during the discussion of the Estimates in terms of what have we done and what haven't we done, and why didn't we do this, and why haven't done more in the 16 months we've been in office, when in fact in many of the cases there was no movement or nothing done in the previous four years. So it's an area that is very complex, that requires a lot of skills and knowledge, that requires resources and it requires information about what to do and how to do it.

We have and we are increasing the diagnostic services in the Department of Education. We will be giving a high priority to moving in this area as soon as we have the information that we need that tells us what we're going to do and how we're going to do it.

MR. G. FILMON: Well, Mr. Chairman, I not only think that the Minister wouldn't like to point fingers, but I'm

sure that she wouldn't dare to point fingers, because she has not done anything herself in terms of real action. The Minister has thrown some money at a few problems and tried to deal with some difficulties with a little extra special funding to try and make people happy, but in terms of real accomplishments and real moves, the Minister has done nothing.

In this particular area the first step that was required was a legislative change. That legislative change required a good deal of research, discussion, consultation with all the relevant groups. I know, as one who sat and listened to a group of parents who were very much involved, right through on the National Board level, of Children with Special Needs and Learning Disabilities who urged, implored and worked with the Minister of Education to get this change put in the legislation, that it required a great deal of work.

The second thing was to implement and design a pilot program. We now have that. We now have a Minister who has all those things ready for her and all she has to do is decide to do something about it and it seems to me as though that is the very least she could do, given all the work that's been done before this. If the Minister wants to point fingers then I would like her to go on record as telling me what great accomplishments her government has achieved in education to this point in time, because I see none.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee rise.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I may well accept the motion for the committee to rise and I know that's within your jurisdiction. I'm suggesting and I understand that the other committee is going to be sitting for about another three-quarters-of-an-hour to finish the Estimates of Highways. I suggest that within that three-quarters-of-an-hour we are prepared to go through to the end of Item 4(h), Regional Services. It may be a little later than we normally would like to sit but I know we're not likely to get into Estimates tomorrow and I'm quite prepared to stay if the Minister is.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I'm prepared to stay, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(e)(1) - the Member for Kirkfield Park.

MRS. G. HAMMOND: Mr. Chairman, on the pilot project for the early diagnosis, the St. James-Assiniboia were very pleased with the pilot. They have increased it to rather than six schools, half the elementary schools are now a part of the program, although they will not get the benefits of funding. They said there was some good news and there was some bad news.

Some of the data was not hard that was coming out of the program and the bad news was, that they were not going to continue the program. I find this hard to believe because it seems that when you have a pilot project that is showing to be good I would think that either you continue or you do something with it, you just don't put it on the back burner, so to speak. They found that there were many spin-off benefits in the program and they were very pleased with this program.

Now, they are not left in limbo because certainly they will continue, but without support coming in the way

of program from the department it means that they are doing much of the planning themselves. I certainly would urge the Minister to take a good look at this situation because it really doesn't look as though anything further is going to be done on this and it's a worry, because this is definitely the place to start, with the children in kindergarten, to diagnose them at that stage.

So I really do find that the Minister doesn't like it when we hit her about what we didn't do and what she should be doing, but this is an area that time and time again - and you just have to look in Hansard - that the Minister is constantly bringing up everything that they're going to do for Special Needs, all the money, everything seems to be heading into that area. But when you bring up something that's specific, hold it, not just yet and what we'd like to know is, when?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I think the members opposite can probably understand that there are presently a number of deficiencies in the Education Support Program or in the level of funding for one program or another and that we can't deal with these in an ad hoc basis, that we have a major review under way that is looking at all levels of funding and that includes Special Needs.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to say in one of the areas where we have sort of the least information about what is being done with the money and whatever deficiencies still might be there, is the Special Needs area where we have put large amounts of money in and haven't had any information that would tell us how well it's doing the job or what the deficiencies and the problems are. This has been identified as one of five or six major areas that are being studied separately and in a special way by the Nicholls Review and we expect to have some good information that will tell us what the adequacies or inadequacies of the present Support Program are.

My personal feeling is, is that it may be too inflexible that - well, there's part of it. The school divisions actually do get a lot of flexibility in one way and non-flexibility in the other. They can only use some of the money to hire certain kinds of people and they only get the money if they hire those kinds of people and I do believe they could often use some support staff, or other kinds of people, that would be very useful, too.

But their high incidence, low incidence money, \$3,000 a child for low incidence and what was the increase - \$6,600 - we increased \$600 a child for high incidence, is money that they get, that they can decide what to do with it and what programs to put it on. It's total block funding and they can make decisions about what the needs are. So they get a large amount of money at the school division level that is totally block funding and they can have any staff, any programs and any supports that they want and I think that some of the work in the early identification area certainly can, will and should be done by the school divisions.

I don't think we can suggest that just because there isn't a categorical grant right now that there isn't money going to school divisions to do that job. In fact, I suppose I could have said the \$600 increase will be for that purpose and you will spend it in that way because there was a significant increase in money in the Special Needs

area going to school divisions. However, the school divisions themselves, and I've heard many times from the members opposite, that the school divisions are in the best position to know how to spend their money and they're responsible for programs and responsible for delivery of programs and staffing. So they are getting a fair amount of money. They got a fair increase this year and they are certainly capable and able and are being funded to provide some of those services.

We still will be funding Professional Development, the aspects of the program with the five divisions, so we will be still carrying on the Professional Development component of it, and one of the things that has come through as we're getting bits of information about the pilot project, as you said some good and some bad, which is one of the real justifications for our not moving too quickly is, that some of the information is going to suggest that we move ahead, and others that there is caution because they have learned from the two years of experience and we want to have that information before we make our decisions.

We also have Professional Development money in the branch, in the Department of Education, apart from the funding for those five school divisions, and we make it available for teachers across the province; this is one of the areas where support and help will be given. So that I think to suggest, when you've brought in a major change in a program, and you brought in Special Needs funding, and you identified, created and developed a criteria through which school divisions would receive funding, and when we have undertaken, in our first year of office, a major and total review of the education financing, that I think you would recognize that major areas of need, and complex areas, need some solid information before we implement the program so that we know what we're doing.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, this is getting to be a little ludicrous. The Minister's standard fallback position on any criticism of what she is doing, or isn't doing, is to criticize the Education Support Program, and yet she has indicated to us that she is quite willing and able to give special grants for any particular purposes outside the program, and she has come up with a number of different purposes for which she gives special grants - small schools, the supplements for low assessments and the supplements for low-spending divisions and so on and so forth. There's any numbers of different criteria for which she's giving special grants, mad money for toys and other things, but here we are, and we're not arguing about whether or not she's giving money. We know she's giving money, but she's told us that she has no assurance that the money is being spent in the special needs area, or whether or not it's being spent wisely, and at the same time she refers to the good and bad news that the Member for Kirkfield Park gave her.

The good news was that they're getting some usable information and results; the bad news was that there may not be an intention to carry on the pilot program. We want to know about that; we want to know whether or not this program is going to be carried on; we want to know when the commitment is, on behalf of this Minister, to proclaim this section of the Act so that people across the province can know that early

identification is a priority of this Minister and this government; so that, based on early identification, they can know that there is some effort and some consistent support for dealing with special needs people, not just giving them some money through the Education Support Program, but saying that early identification is absolutely essential. We recognize it as the cornerstone of dealing with special needs people in our school system. That's what we're after and she doesn't have to fall back on criticizing the Education Support Program; she doesn't have to go to us and say, "You passed it and left it with us and this is a big item and we want to take our time." We know, everything that's a crucial decision is a big item and we refer to the Nicholls Committee and we leave it on ice for another couple of years. That's not what the people of Manitoba want.

This is an area that has been dealt with by other provinces; this is an area that has been dealt with by other jurisdictions, and they know that it has to be an essential part of your dealing with special needs people, and we want to know what you're going to do about it, not tell us that the Education Support Program isn't adequate.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: First of all, Mr. Chairman, when I made my point about the Educational Support Program, I wasn't intending to criticize it in those terms. I've always given recognition for the fact that one of the best things that happened in the Educational Support Program was the amount of money that you designated for Special Needs. It was a large amount of money; it was \$31 million, I think, in the first year, and that in bringing in that program you made decisions about the criteria for funding, and you did it based on teachers, professional qualified people support, and you did it based on the degree of handicap that the children had. That goes down to the kindergarten level, too, where they get half the amount of the two areas, so that a child in the high incidence level would be given an allocation of an additional \$3,300.00.

What I'm saying is that a lot of money has gone out into the field and to school divisions in the Special Needs area, and that it is non-categorical and that they can do what they want with it, and that they have a reasonable amount of money to develop and to have resources available for them to do some of the diagnostic work that they want to do at the kindergarten level, through the resources that are made available in the field. I was just suggesting that the criteria was developed by you, it made money available to help those kids, to give programs for them, and to provide diagnosis for them at the early level.

I recognize, also, that the province has a responsibility in this area; I'm expecting the report very shortly, in June; I am expecting the information in the report is going to help us make decisions on both policies, programs and levels of funding; and I'm looking forward to receiving it and I expect to be making some statements about this area in the near future.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, if you proclaimed this section of the Act you wouldn't have to be concerned with whether or not they were properly using the money; they'd have to use it in order to carry out this part of

the program, and that is an essential cornerstone to the whole program of dealing with special needs people; that's what we're after.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(e)(1) - the Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: I just would like to ask the Minister whether or not there's any change in staff complement under 4.(e)(1).

HON. M. HEMPHILL: A reduction of one, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(e)(1)—pass; 4.(e)(2)—pass. 4.(f)(1), Instructional Media Services: Salaries - the Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: Any change in staff complement under that item, Mr. Chairman?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Down three, Mr. Chairman.

MR. G. FILMON: What changes in functions then has that section had so that they can live with the reduction of three staff?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, we haven't reduced the activities, the capability, we've reduced the level of functioning in some areas. We have a reduction in one media specialist; a media technician; a library technician and .38 term time of a library clerk.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(f)(1)—pass; 4.(f)(2)—pass; 4.(g)(1) Correspondence Branch, Salaries - the Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, there are many years, in fact, I would suppose about the last half-dozen years the activity of the Correspondence Branch increased as we had these self-initiated options, and, more to the point, the ability of students in high schools throughout the province to take a wide range of options and courses. In the smaller schools in particular, the only option that they had was to get some of these courses by correspondence because they didn't have the resources or the demand for offering a wide variety of options in their local high schools. So the Correspondence Branch grew year by year by year in enrolment as well as activity. I wonder if my perception of it is correct that we've sort of reached the peak and we're now levelling off with respect to correspondence training.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, we are levelling off but there is still a slight increase in numbers.

MR. G. FILMON: Can the Minister indicate the numbers?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Student enrolment for '81-82 are 8,025 students. We've got 5,303 students attending schools, taking correspondence; 2,722 adults and 671 adults registered in adult basic education. We have 8,000 students but taking 10,146 subjects, so a number of those students are taking more than one course.

We also provide the GED tests and just about 2,000 of those tests were written and 1,388 achieved Grade 12 equivalency; 101 achieved Grade 11 equivalency; 55 Grade 10 and 209 failed to achieve a standing. Those are two of the major activities of the Correspondence Branch.

I'm looking for the figures here and I don't have them, but staff might be able to provide them for me. One of the things that we should remember I think is that there's a fairly large number of teachers using correspondence courses. I'm trying to remember the figures from last year, but it surprised me at the time. I thought they were about 1,000 teachers where you actually have correspondence courses that are being overseen by teachers in schools where the children are taking correspondence courses because there aren't enough children to provide the course, so they take it through correspondence, but with the overseeing and the support of the teachers. So it's not quite as sort of high as people just taking courses. That's one of the major uses is teachers using correspondence courses in schools to provide courses for students.

MR. G. FILMON: My understanding is that they all have to be overseen by a teacher in the local school.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. G. FILMON: The Minister gave the statistics of 8,025 students; 10,145 subjects, what was last year's comparative figures?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Actually I have percentages, perhaps while we're looking to see if we have the numbers.

We have the number of student registrations. We have a 2.1 percent decrease over last year; number of subject registrations 0.4 increase. The number of school students, we have a 7.1 percent decrease. The number of home study students we have a 9.2 percent increase. Residents, we have a 2.9 percent decrease; non-residents, a 78.7 percent increase; Male, we have a 1.1 percent decrease; female, a 2.9 percent decrease.

In terms of the grades; the adult courses, there's an 18 percent increase; Grades 1 to 3 are the same, there was 27 students; Grades 4-6, we have a 36 percent increase; Grades 7-8, 117 percent; Grade 9, 9 percent increase; 11, 4 percent increase; 12, 4 percent increase. Really seems to be heavy use in the junior high.

MR. G. FILMON: Irrelevant information, Mr. Chairman. What I was looking for was that there is a decrease of 2.5 percent in the students taking correspondence courses and an increase of .4 percent and the number of subjects. It's really very much a levelling off situation as I had anticipated.

The Minister's reference to GED tests brings the point to my mind that I'm curious as to why the GED Grade 12 level is not accepted for entrance to a number of programs at Red River Community College or the community college system in Manitoba, whereas throughout the United States where the GED system of testing was developed, that had been the purpose and is the objective in most junior colleges and community colleges, and indeed it is in most provinces.

I'm very curious because of my other incarnation and my other vocational endeavour, I know that we felt that the introduction of GED testing was a way of allowing adults to prove their level of understanding and education to go into post-secondary training. I know that it is acceptable in other institutions, but it isn't at the community college.

I hear constant complaints from those who feel that they've been very badly treated by being encouraged. I encourage everybody who speaks to me who is an adult and doesn't want to have to go through two and three years of high school training because they have taken a great deal of additional training; they've read a lot; they've really increased their awareness and their total knowledge to the point that I know that they are better than the Grade 9 or 10 or 10.5 standing that they show on paper. I say to them look why don't you go and take the GED? It was only within the last year that I found out that the community college system won't accept them. That's why the GED is running into disrepute and difficulty and I think it's wrong.

I think that the GED system either ought to be upgraded, or abolished. If we're holding it out to be an equivalency testing that says that those who have it are equivalent to a complete high school standing, then we'd better be prepared to accept it for entrance into post-secondary institutions. If not, change it. I'm saying that and I feel very strongly about it.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I quite agree with the points made from the Member for Tuxedo. I, too have received as many communications and indications of concern and degree of anger and upset as he has received. It has been coming to my attention, increasingly, I suppose.

I think I probably first became aware of it - because you can't get a handle on everything in such a large department in a short period of time. I probably became aware of it four or five months ago, but have been becoming increasingly aware of it ever since it first hit my consciousness. I think we have a situation here - I want to tell you that I agree with the points you've made - I'm not sure the problem is the GED Test. I think perhaps it is the very high standards for admissions at the colleges. I want you to know that we are looking at that, I have asked for a report, that I expect it to be on my desk within the month and that it is something that is a very serious problem.

We have a situation where it seems to be easier to get into university than it does into colleges. We have a situation where people can get into university without the GED tests and they can't get into the colleges with them. So, I don't think there is any question but that we have a problem and that the original intention and purposes of the testing which I support and agree with completely is being destroyed, I think to a degree, by that kind of contradiction and disparity between the ability to get into - I have had kids come to me and say, you know I got into the university without any trouble, I can't get into the colleges. They won't even look at me, they won't even consider me. It is serious and we have to do something about it. I hope that it is something that I'll be able to report to this House on in the very near future because I do expect the report to be on my desk within about a month.

MR. G. FILMON: I thank the Minister for those comments. She obviously understands the point that I am trying to make. I await her response on it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(g)(1)—pass; 4.(g)(2)—pass; 4.(h)(1) Regional Services, Salaries - the Member for Tuxedo.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, in this area we have part of the former staff complement and budget allotment of the field services unit. As I understand it from the Minister previously, there are 10 staff years and \$375,000 which have been transferred here. A number of questions. Where did the remainder of the staff complement in Salaries come from as shown on the left-hand side? What is the total staff complement involved there?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, we have 14 staff years in the Regional Services Branch and they're from the Field Services.

MR. G. FILMON: Okay, then I will correct the information that I had thought that I had obtained previously. I thought that previously it had been only 10 that had been transferred from Field Services. The Minister is telling me that it's 14 that have been transferred?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, this was the area in which there was some difference in treatment in the Annual Report. The Annual Report, as it exists, we have a write-up on Regional Services and Regional Services didn't exist in last year's budget, so I am just wondering, does that Regional Services section in the report really tell us - I am sorry maybe it doesn't, maybe it was the Research Branch. Again I don't have an index to go through.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, we clearly have identified a need for an index in the Annual Report during the Estimates process this year. I can assure you we'll have one for next year.

MR. G. FILMON: Do any of the staff have this memorized so well that they can tell me whether or not Regional Services is written up here? I had some idea that it was, but maybe I'm wrong.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, we don't think it is.

MR. G. FILMON: That's good, Mr. Chairman, that saved me some questioning. Then maybe the Minister can indicate for me, what are the functions of the Regional Services unit as set up in the current system?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I think the Member for Tuxedo will recognize that and understand this is a department that is in transition and that process doesn't happen overnight. We have not planned it to happen overnight. The existing Field Services Branch was in place until March 18th in their full complement of people. What is going to happen in Regional Services will be a slow move from the existing service and personnel into what is going to continue to be the place where support and resources will go to the field.

I think I mentioned before that we already have a number of areas that are being covered. The two to

the North are a high priority and a high need and those two northern liaison officers are still in place. We are in the process of appointing the director. That should be done in the very near future. Three of the retirees, the people that I had mentioned that had opted for retirement, are going to be taking on 75 days of work for a period of two to three years where they will be working on major activities that could vary from the Public Schools Finance Board three year policy to computer education, any number of things where we need special attention.

There will be a couple of secretarial positions. The small schools position is there and we have identified the computer education as the first area that we have agreed to move on, and have suggested in our letter to superintendents and all school divisions, school trustees and superintendents that we were providing these services to date. We were asking them for the information about other areas of need and the new director will be considering that information and making some recommendations to us on the other areas.

I might say, though, that I've said all along that I do not think this is a branch that should have a large amount of permanent staff in permanent positions because I think the needs are going to change and that we should be flexible. The other thing I want to do, that was mentioned by the Member for Kirkfield Park, is use the resources and the expertise from the field. I think there is a tremendous amount of experience and knowledge out there, and a very good example is some of the knowledge in computer education programs and developing them in St. James-Assiniboia.

I think, what I would hope we can do there is that we can have some movement from the field and the department because I think that's one of the things that will keep us, on our toes and stop us from falling into delivering services over a long period of time without, sort of, examining them, or without having new people and new ideas being brought into the department to add to the experience and the knowledge that's already there.

What I would like to do is identify the areas of support that is needed and then look to the field and perhaps second people for short periods of time, might be six months or a year, that have that knowledge and send

them out into other school divisions where they're just beginning their programs, so that we're sharing, not only resources from the department, but also knowledge and resources from the field.

MR. G. FILMON: I thank the Minister for that response. It's terrible to have a recall of all the things that have gone by your view in preparation for these Estimates, but I have turned to Page 32 and found the heading, Regional Services, which is what confused me, and I have to tell you that, having had the time to review it as we talked, I find that it is the Regional Services section of the Child Care Development Branch so that, in fact, it stuck in my mind and I knew it was here and it's the wrong Regional Services, so it's there but it's not there, and so we'll go on and talk about what is here.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: We give you five points for actually remembering that you did see Regional Services in the report.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, the number of staff is 14, which is a straight transfer. The Other Expenditures are down and the Minister has indicated what the functions are, and we've belaboured that point as to whether or not the kind of thing that has been done, in removing Field Services and replacing it with Regional Services and other functions, such as, Communications and so on, was a good thing or a bad thing, and I'm sure that as time progresses we'll have a much better base on which we can argue our respective points of view. We'll leave it at that and say Item 4.(h)(1)—pass; and Item 4.(h)(2)—pass.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(h)(1)—pass; 4(h)(2)—pass.

Resolution No. 57. Resolve that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,659,900 for Education, Program Development and Support Services for the fiscal year ending 31st day of March, 1984—pass.

MR. G. FILMON: Committee rise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee rise.

