

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, 17 June, 1986.

Time — 8:00 p.m.

## CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY

### SUPPLY - HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

**MR. CHAIRMAN, M. Dolin:** Order please. We are considering the Estimates. We are on Capital Expenditures, Item No. 8, Page 99.

The Member for Minnedosa.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister has a letter from Mr. Henry Martin at Rivers, requiring some attention on the water problem on the corner of 250 in the southwest corner of Fourth Avenue in the Town of Rivers. I'll wait till he gets the answer.

I think maybe the Minister has an answer for us, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Honourable Minister of Highways.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, we were asking about a number of specific projects before the supper-hour break. PR 206 as the Member for Springfield and the Member for Minnedosa were asking about, I believe. From PTH 1 to PR 207, the work is presently under way, contractors on site and working should be completed early this summer.

In the case of Roland Neault, who was a person mentioned as an individual who had the misfortune of having gotten stuck with a home 40 feet from the road. As was explained, his property was purchased by mutual consent, without a dispute, and the Neault home, I'm advised, is approximately 95 feet from the new right-of-way limit, as opposed to the road. So the 40 feet I guess looks a lot closer when you're driving along than it actually is.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** He might have been measuring in metric.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Yes, this is feet yet though. He might have measured it in centimetres.

The Newdale Access, purchase of necessary right-of-way not complete, despite the fact that it's in carry-over for construction. In this particular case, the land wasn't acquired as quickly or easily as thought, because there's an estate involved there, so that's holding it up when expropriation is taking place.

With regard to 67 and PTH 7, the understanding we have is that there's no work, or nothing happening there, and probably the member might have been referring to 67 and PTH 8. There the junction is closed because of concrete work at the intersection, and it should be opened shortly — next week or possibly by the weekend.

I have no comment from the staff as to whether the people are working hard or not. I would assume that

they are; but if they're not, that private sector won't be making any money on it, apparently, because it's a private contractor that's doing the job.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** The complainant had checked with the department in Selkirk and was told they'd be finished last Monday and then he was told it would be Tuesday and then Friday, and it's still closed this week. There must a problem of some type, I imagine.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Okay, so those are the questions. Was there another one?

**MR. D. BLAKE:** I imagine it'll be a good job when they get it finished.

You have a letter, Mr. Minister, from Mr. Martin, in Rivers. He was complaining about a water problem at the junction of 250 and Fourth Avenue in the Town of Rivers. I just wondered what had been done about that seeing as I had his letter come up to the top of my notes on my desk there.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** It just rose to the top all on its own, eh?

Mr. Chairman, we get letters quite often from people and with copies to the Opposition MLAs on many occasions, so they should be aware of a lot of things that are taking place. I don't recall that specific letter, nor . . . Well, it's here, but I don't recall what exactly we asked, I guess, a draft response. So the department will look into it and see whether there's any responsibility and draft a letter, whatever the date was. What was the date on that letter?

**MR. D. BLAKE:** No date, but it's a couple of months ago.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Well, we should have something out to him very shortly anyway.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** After the spring runoff anyway. That's what created the problem.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Turtle Mountain.

**MR. D. ROCAN:** Mr. Chairman, the people of St. Alphonse, on 532, there are mailboxes there. The 532 passes right through town and the mailboxes are put on the west side on the sidewalk. They have inquired already if there's any chance of them getting any pavement between, say the road and the sidewalk. As it stands now, they come out of church and whatever, they go get their mail and they walk right through the muck and everything.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that there is no record of concerns about that particular problem that anyone can recall at the present time. So what they should do is write me a letter or write to the district — write to myself, and we'll forward it

on and make sure that we get a report on what the problem is and see whether there's something that can be done by the province.

**MR. D. ROCAN:** Mr. Chairman, just to clarify, these people have been down to Boissevain to see the district man down there. He is the guy who rejected it, and now they're just wondering if it's possible that they may go right up to the Minister. He doesn't want to set a precedent, he says. If we started paving that little bit, every gas station's going to want to get a little bit paved. They just wondered, could they approach the Minister on this.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** It sounds like it may be an oddball situation or something unusual that isn't normally done. We would have to look at it to see whether there is justification that would warrant the work in that case. I can't really comment until I get a letter from them. Yes, they can send me a letter on it, and we'll ask for information on it.

**MR. D. ROCAN:** Mr. Chairman, the 253 just west of Glenora, I believe he was approached with a petition on this, straight south of Baldur.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** South of Baldur. Oh yes, there's a section there that they want surfaced, I think. We had met with that group and they provided us with the information. It was very seriously considered in this budget year; as a matter of fact, one of the last projects taken out of the program because of the limited funds available. So it was given very serious consideration and will be considered again for next year.

**MR. D. ROCAN:** Mr. Chairman, the 346 straight north of Margaret with the hairpin curves, I'm led to believe this has all been surveyed, the rights-of-way, the acquisitions, whatever, they've all been taken up. Is there going to be any work done on the 346?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** It's down south of Boissevain, is that right?

**MR. D. ROCAN:** No, just north of Boissevain, just north of Margaret.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Mr. Chairman, the member may be talking about the section between Ninga and Margaret . . .

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Mr. Chairman, the member may be talking about the section between Ninga and Margaret; or he is talking about 346 or is he talking about the section between Margaret and Nesbitt, between 23 and No. 2?

**MR. D. ROCAN:** Right.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Okay, in there, what is programmed in the projected three-year program is a new river crossing and approaches on the Souris River — (Interjection) — to replace the bridge there on 346. That's what's programmed. I understand the property has been acquired already and that is in the program

or projected and will we brought forward in, I believe, '88 or '87 construction year.

**MR. D. ROCAN:** Mr. Chairman, I'd like to bring to the Minister's attention — during restriction time most of the fertilizer which comes out of Brandon already — and No. 13 which is never restricted, 13, 3, No. 10, and the whole area south of Trans-Canada between those two highways; they have no way of getting up to Trans-Canada with a full load. Is any consideration being given to giving them some kind of an opening, say to 34, 5, or any kind of a road?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Mr. Chairman, the member raises the points again about spring restrictions. We had quite a lengthy discussion on that earlier, and we've indicated that what we are attempting to do is provide a way of alleviating the worst effects of spring restrictions on AST surfaces, asphalt surface treatment, very thin layers of pavement that have to be protected during the springtime of the year because of moisture conditions and frost conditions.

So the roads are quite often very severely restricted and by placing an overlay over the AST, instead of going to a more expensive upgrading of the highway itself, we hope that the restrictions can be limited to higher limit than the 250 restriction which makes it impossible to really haul anything by truck. It's 350 instead of 250 and that would then alleviate the worst effects of the restrictions. That program is being put in place in the Rossburn area on No. 45 and also on 245 near Carman. We may, as a result of this discussion and other pieces of information we have with regard to restrictions and the use in truck traffic and so on on those roads mentioned by the member look at one of those particular roads being a target for that kind of surface the next year to eliminate the severe restrictions. Also, I should point out that there is one project south of Carberry on No. 5 and we'll begin to assist in that particular area in strengthening the road. We'll look at this other situation with the same treatment that we're applying on 45 and 245.

**MR. D. ROCAN:** The little town of Meleb, a little hamlet just off No. 7 Highway straight north of Teulon, I believe, can the Minister tell us if there's supposed to be an Order-in-Council or whatever to make a market road into the town, turn into a market road?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Could you repeat that please?

**MR. D. ROCAN:** The town of Meleb just off No. 7 Highway just straight north of Teulon.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Yes.

**MR. D. ROCAN:** I'm led to believe there's supposed to be an Order-in-Council going to be passed, or something of that nature, to turn the stretch of road from the highway to the town into a market road?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** And that is just north of Teulon?

**MR. D. ROCAN:** Straight north of Teulon on 7.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** What's the name of it?

**MR. D. ROCAN:** Meleb.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Pardon?

**MR. D. ROCAN:** Meleb.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Meleb. It's quite a ways up, north of Fraserwood.

Mr. Chairman, it's possible that they have put in a resolution asking for some special consideration. I'd ask the member if he's aware that is the case and that there has been a request to the department, if he's aware of the specific request and if he could give us some more information on it. I don't have it with me at the present time and I'm not readily aware of what has been requested there by the LGD to have an access road taken over by the province to that community.

**MR. D. ROCAN:** I can just enlighten the Minister by telling him that the district area there they've been allotted \$2,000 to look after that little stretch of road for patching of the holes and whatever. Apparently, they're kind of waiting until this Order-in-Council, or whatever, passes. Apparently, the potholes are unreal; you miss one and you hit two, type of thing. The people in the town are quite upset.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** We'll look into that and get some information on what the situation is there.

I just wanted to point out that on 346, south of No. 2, the member was asking about that section of road. The average daily traffic on that road, incidentally, where that bridge is projected for the future, is 40 vehicles per day, which is very low. Either it's because the bridge, they're scared to drive over it, or it just doesn't generate very much traffic. That is one of the reasons why it wouldn't be a high priority.

**MR. D. ROCAN:** Maybe so. Maybe it's the bridge. But I do know, I've travelled this road, and there's a hairpin curve on there like I've driven on in Vancouver Island, and it's the only one that I know of in Manitoba.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Minnedosa.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** To do with an update of the Plessis Road and No. 1 highway east interchange — the Deputy Minister is aware of this situation; I mentioned I was going to bring it up. It's to do with a piece of property there that this particular individual feels he's been getting a runaround — (Interjection) — the Minister of Health says a shafting by the department.

He's wondering when approved plans are going to be completed and what's going on with the interchange and the ramps that are there. I think probably he's looking for an access to a piece of industrial property there and apparently has had no action or no satisfaction from the department. He's becoming quite impatient. He wants to get into retirement and develop his property.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Mr. Chairman, I recently asked for a status report on this. I know that it's a long-standing outstanding issue. It is one that I would like to see certainly cleared up and the department is

working on it, because there was original approval given to this prairie climbing cranes, I guess it is, and they did not act on it. It wasn't satisfactory, I guess, or it was what they asked for at the time but in any event they did not follow up on it. It involves access to the service roads or to the loops, ramps there and, of course, that's a dangerous situation to have access immediately on these ramps coming off the major roads.

With the service road in the area, it's possible that the service road can be extended to facilitate the needs that he has. However, he doesn't like that alternative. He wants direct access on to the ramp and the department is looking at whether it's possible to provide an intersection in a relatively safe place on the ramp. That has not been finalized, although they have gone out and talked to the owners there to find out exactly what their needs are and they're trying to develop some modifications to the original service roads insofar as where they were planned to be, and see whether we can work something out.

But I got a report from the department on that now and the status, and I've asked for it, I've been concerned about. I've been hearing a lot about this from the individual concerned, letters and so on. I'd like to get it expedited but it is a very difficult situation and that's why it's taken this long.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** I don't think we're going to solve it here, Mr. Chairman. I wonder maybe if the Minister, with the member and some people from his department, if they could arrange a meeting and sit down and maybe thrash it out so that some conclusion, whether it be satisfactory or not, could be reached.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** The Deputy Minister feels that the department is very close to arriving at a solution now. The plan was developed. They went out and talked to the land owners, the people affected, and they weren't completely happy with it. They requested changes and the department is looking at whether they can accommodate those changes, and feel that there should be a resolution of this within the next couple of weeks. So it's certainly something that will be welcomed.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** That will be helpful, I'm sure, to the individual. As I say, I don't fully understand the situation. I suppose you have to be out there to have a look at it before you really fully appreciate it. It's something I promised him that I would bring up. He's the old commanding officer of my regiment so I thought it was the least I could do for past favours.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Just when you're making a copy of the Hansard to send to him, just take that part off, white that out.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** Well I think maybe there are some other members that have some questions, Mr. Chairman, I'll let them.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Morris.

**MR. C. MANNES:** Mr. Chairman, I posed a question to the Minister the other day with respect to a portion of PR 330 from LaSalle to Domain, and the Minister

indicated at that time that it had come close to being included in this year's Capital Program, but that it had a large price tag associated with the upgrading of that particular portion. I had taken from that that it would be then high on the consideration of next year's Capital expenditures.

However, since I last posed that question, the word has come to me indirectly from Highways staff in the area that the government has now decided to not maintain that road, to allow it to go back to a pure gravel road state. Can the Minister indicate whether that policy decision has been made?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** It probably was discussed. I don't know if there was a formal decision made to do that. I believe the section that we're talking about has now got an AST surface or breaking-up AST surface? Is that correct? But when you're looking at so many different projects, priorities, obviously there are a lot of questions and discussion about what the possible alternatives are. It may have been discussed.

I'm rather surprised though that word would have been received, informally or formally or whatever, by the Member for Morris, because I think I vaguely recall that. I think a number of different roads we've discussed cost alternatives in situations, as to whether they warrant continued emphasis for paving and so on, but there's been no policy decision made to not pave that road. It is being recommended as a high priority for that area, and will receive consideration again next year in the same way it did this past year.

**MR. C. MANNES:** Mr. Chairman, I'm encouraged by the Minister's words. I'm taking them in good faith.

However, I guess then I would ask that he, or the Deputy Minister, be in contact with the district engineer in the Carman office, and attempt then to indicate to the district staff that, indeed, it is not the decision of the government, it is not the wish of the government that indeed the road break up again to a pure gravel state.

Furthermore, maybe the Minister can indicate, as I drive the road daily and notice through about two or three miles, many many orange signs indicating to me, the motorist, that there are breaks coming. Yet, I see no sign or indication of a patching crew coming along and filling in those particular potholes. I guess the best way to alleviate my concern is to see that particular portion brought up to some type of properly maintained level. I guess I'm searching, I'm trying to determine whether, indeed, there has been a decision to allow this road to go into a total state of disrepair.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Well in looking at it, this apparently is only six years old, this AST. It obviously, either was not prepared properly in the first place when it was laid down, it was done too quickly or not proper materials used, and so it has been deteriorating to such an extent that, until such time as it's resurfaced, the department feels that it is rather futile to continue to try and patch this and keep the surface that's there, because it's breaking up so badly. I think the member's attesting to that by talking about these orange signs. By the way, I think we should have orange signs for other purposes on the roads, rather than to indicate how bad they are.

**MR. C. MANNES:** All the roads then will have orange signs.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** I'm told by the department that there's a lack of adequate depth of existing base course there. There is extreme moisture susceptibility of the heavy clay that exists in the top portion of the subgrade there as well and, therefore, they are indeed — and I was referring just before when I said there was no policy to have this return to gravel surface. I was thinking in that in terms of a more permanent type of solution. They are recommending, and I guess that's why they're not patching, because of the severity of the situation, that it go back to gravel surface until such time as a decision is made to pave it.

So that probably is happening at the present time, but again, I think my answer still holds true, that there was no decision made to say that, in the future, this road would not be paved. But because of the situation right now, because of the fact that it wasn't done properly in the first place and that they will need to add at least another six inches of base course before redoing it as an AST, if that's the decision to do it, or whether to pave it with the bituminous overlay. In any event, either one would require more base, because it has not been done properly, and that's why it has to be allowed to go back.

**MR. C. MANNES:** Mr. Chairman, I guess, all of a sudden, my spirits are dashed just a few minutes later after the original comment by the Minister. As the Minister indicates, there are some problems with respect to the base of that road. I fully understand that.

Yet, it's apparent to me then that what the local Highways Department staff are saying is, in fact, accurate. The government has no intention to fill in those potholes, and I guess that begs the next question, how safe driving conditions will continue to exist on that road, because right now three-quarters of the road is in stable condition allowing full speed limits. All of a sudden, one drops into one of these gigantic-sized potholes with very little warning, I might add.

In time, will the government just allow the road to gradually break up, or will they put a scarifier in and totally break it up and turn it again back to a full gravel road, which maybe will be safer, which again will put us in the whole area, in the community back six years?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** There were some various opinions, as I said, as we discussed this particular road during the consideration of the construction program, that it possibly could be held another year. But it seems, from what the member is saying, that they haven't been able to do that, that it's getting to the stage where it's probably more dangerous to keep it as an AST than it would be to, as the member mentioned, do exactly what the member said, scarify it and then rebuild it. It would have to stay in that state then until such time as it was put in for the million-dollar surfacing.

**MR. C. MANNES:** Mr. Chairman, two points. First of all, I personally can't accept that being it's such a new road, serving a vibrant small community with two or three very significant businesses and a local consumer

co-op doing upwards of \$6 million worth of business, and the most successful cooperative in the Province of Manitoba.

I don't want to be shown as going on the record as indicating I would support that the road being broken up. I guess I would ask that the Minister would see fit to patch, in whatever form, those presently numbering six pothole areas, and whatever material he wishes to use, his department wishes to use, maybe to get us through one more additional year before the Minister in his wisdom decides to include that within his Capital Program.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Well, we can take a look at whether there is a patching program that can keep it for this year, but it is doubtful at the present time. It would have to be redone in any event. The amount of money that was identified would be for complete resurfacing of the road in any event and, if indeed it was not feasible to continue to patch it, then it would be safer to have it as a gravel road. Maybe that's the right decision. No one would suggest that the Member for Morris is suggesting that he favours that alternative.

I'm sure that none of us would suggest that, but it may be the only one. It's not a matter, I guess, of wisdom in making the decision to put it in the program next year. I'm hopeful that we can do that, that the overall priorities of that area are such that we will be able to make that the top priority, but I can't just say, without looking, I know what kinds of other requests are coming forward right across the province. So it's going to be difficult, but I think that the member's representations here will be well noted insofar as this road is concerned.

**MR. C. MANNES:** One final comment, and I say to the Minister that indeed four of the five-and-a-half miles associated with that road, I believe, are in pretty sound condition. There's basically a mile and-a-half that's very weak and that's the portion creating all the problem. I would ask that he be cognizant that the whole road, the whole five-and-a-half mile portion is not in such a bad state that it should be abandoned.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Okay, we'll look at, give special attention on that one-and-a-half miles that is currently in bad shape and see whether there's something that can be done to it. I will have to get a report from the department on the situation.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Springfield.

**MR. G. ROCH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a question in regard to the Sperry Road access to Highway 59. It was closed down some time ago, allegedly for safety reasons, which is debatable in itself. Right now the residents of that road have to go all the way down Pritchard Farm Road in order to get onto 59. If the access is not going to be reopened, is there the possibility that some kind of an alternative access serve those residents? I think it came up previously, I mean prior to this Session, but nothing was done about it. That's in the Bird's Hill area.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** I believe, Mr. Chairman, the member is referring to that changes were made at the

intersections and projections made for traffic as a result of a new hotel that was being built at the corner of Pritchard Farm Road and 59, somewhere in there. I know at the time that there were some special requests made by the developers. Finally, after a lot of discussion, there was a solution that was mutually agreed upon.

Since that time, I understand the development has been stopped, and obviously that will affect the long-term planning for that area, but I don't recall exactly what the solution was we had, and I don't understand exactly what the concern is that the member has with what was happening there.

**MR. G. ROCH:** The concern is that they closed the access. The people who live on Sperry Road had an access right there onto 59 Highway. They put up some little plastic tubes, I don't know what, to prevent people from using that access.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Mr. Chairman, for clarification, is the member talking about closing the access or closing the median?

**MR. G. ROCH:** No, reopening it.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Yes, the right turns? The access stays.

**MR. G. ROCH:** The access is there already. They're not allowed to use it.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** As I recall, the median was to be closed in the intersection so that there could not be any left turns at that intersection. That's the way we seem to recall the discussion. There was also some movement of an intersection slightly, of an access.

**MR. G. ROCH:** But closing the median would not prevent access to the highway. It would still be a right turn if the access was open. Right now the access is closed.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** If the access is closed completely now, I don't believe that was part of the decision and we'll have to find out why. But my understanding was that it was to eliminate left turns, not to eliminate access altogether. So, if that's the case now, how long has it been closed — months?

**MR. G. ROCH:** At least, I would say, and I'm just guessing here, but I'm guessing at least a year or more. It could be less than that, but I know at least since last March. It seems prior to last March because I heard about it.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** We had a number of meetings on this issue with the developers, with the municipality, with the MLA and tried to work out a solution that would be acceptable to the developers because they were contemplating not going ahead with the development if they couldn't have some means of reasonable access to their new facility. So there were a number of things that they were asking for and they weren't all acceptable to the Highways Department from a traffic safety point of view. So there were some

concessions made, some negotiations, some give and take, and finally there was a solution that we felt would be acceptable to the Highways Department, will not compromise safety and would also be satisfactory for the developers. Now with that development having been ceased there, it may be necessary to revert back to the previous situation. That would be in limbo at this stage because of the uncertainty about the development, but I would think that it may be appropriate at this time to get a report again on that situation and find out whether we should be changing the plans. Now that things have changed, circumstances have changed there.

**MR. G. ROCH:** Is it possible, then, that report would be available in the near future?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** I'll get it as soon as I can and provide some information to the member, either by memorandum or letter, on this situation.

**MR. G. ROCH:** Okay, that would be fine because I understand that the residents of that particular area had a meeting with departmental officials — and I don't know which ones some time ago — and at that time they were told that it would not be reopened. This goes back — I don't know how many months ago — but the point is that because circumstances have changed, as you've indicated, there is a very good reason now to re-examine the whole thing and reopen that access. So I'll be waiting for that report.

You made some comments some time ago — I believe it was near the opening of the Estimates — I'm not sure. There was a time you mentioned about signage on the highways — there would be improved signage to indicate the facilities — would that include recreational facilities as well?

I assume the signs you mean are for food, lodging, gas, etc. But for example in Birds Hill Park, there are riding stables there. I'm using that as an example. Would recreational facilities such as those be included on such signage?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** I guess it depends on whether this is a private development there.

**MR. G. ROCH:** It's a privately-operated facility within the Birds Hill Park, yes. I know some areas — I don't know if it's the case in Manitoba — but some areas in other jurisdictions will indicate boating rentals or similar types of tourist-related facilities and I was wondering if, in its new and improved signage, would a department consider indicating such facilities because food, lodging and gas are private facilities as well in most cases.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Yes. The difference, of course, is that there's no specific mention of any particular restaurant or any particular service station, company or so on. It's general service signs.

In this case, the individual who is operating there may want to discuss this with two groups: one with the Parks Branch to determine whether they will allow any signing there; and secondly, if it's off the highway that he's concerned about — with Ross Adamson, or

person in charge of traffic signage — he would be able to provide information to the individual as to what the specific requirements are and what can be made available.

When I was talking about improved signage, of course, I was talking about provincial historic sites, museums that we've increased signage for and made available for the travelling public, and also radio stations, station numbers, call letters, as well as the Community Signage Program which we're expanding.

But there's always other areas. We have to balance that against having a proliferation of signs that would be unlimited for all kinds of individuals who want to have the advertising.

**MR. G. ROCH:** No, I don't think I meant that he'd want advertising. It would just be like, for example, some people are not aware what facilities are in the park, especially if they're American tourists, or wherever they're from. There could be a general sign indicating gas, food, lodging. You could have a picture of a table. I'm just saying something could maybe be thought up for future use.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** I think that is a good suggestion and one that should be considered for various services that are available in our parks on our major highways — to notify the travelling public of what is available — I think that's what the member is getting at. We should look at that and we will take a look at whether the signage that is available now is not adequate and whether it should be expanded.

**MR. G. ROCH:** We dealt this afternoon with that portion of Provincial Road 206. In the same area there's a couple of other provincial roads which seem to be on hold. Maybe you can clarify it. In the case of Provincial Road 213, which is commonly known as Garven Road — it was supposed to extend all the way to No. 12. What is the status of that road at this point?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** That particular road, the plans are still that it would be extended through; the bridges in the program to be done this year and will be constructed and we're proceeding with that. I believe the tenders have been left for the bridge, isn't that right? Is it one or two structures? Two structures. There's one over Cooks Creek to replace the old municipal wood structure and another small one that will be carried out. They were advertised and they will be carried out this year.

Then the grading on the new alignment has been deferred for this year and will be considered again for the next coming construction program. It hasn't been cancelled; it has been — I guess the proper term would be — deferred, or a staged construction. We're doing the bridge, so we have intentions to proceed with the plan but it is not at the same pace that was projected.

There were about five major projects that were deferred because of the reduction in funding, so 213 was one of them; 238 River Road was another; 410 was another; 265 was another one — I should go through the districts — 213 was in District No. 1; 238 was in District No. 12, from No. 9 to Lockport in that area; 410 was in District No. 1 as well, from 230 to

PTH 8; 265 was in District No. 7; and 267 was in District No. 8. These five were slowed down or deferred so there were a couple of them in the Premier's constituency and one in Springfield.

**MR. G. ROCH:** I understand that expropriation proceedings had started in some areas for the Provincial Road 213. What happens in those cases? Is that deferred as well, or do expropriation proceedings go ahead?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Well, we brought our heavy hecklers from the NDP Caucus here, and it's hard to hear the member, so I would just like to have the member repeat it so we can hear.

**A MEMBER:** I don't think it's right to go ahead and call him an NDPer.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Oh, well I apologize to him.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Could I suggest that some of the members on my right, particularly, if they wish to hold a conversation, please do it in the rear so we can hear the honourable members. I won't mention any particular constituency.

The Member for Springfield.

**MR. G. ROCH:** As I was trying to say awhile ago, Mr. Chairman, expropriation proceedings had begun in the area of 213. I was just wondering, seeing as this is one of the roads that has been deferred, will these proceedings continue or will they be deferred as well?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** No, the expropriation that has begun will continue.

**MR. G. ROCH:** So then to what date or what approximate time have these projects been deferred to?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Well, they've been staged, they'll be reconsidered in next year's program.

**MR. G. ROCH:** So at that point the department could either decide to do them at that point or defer them again?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** We cannot make commitments completely from one year to the next. Each stage of construction, including the survey and design stage, the acquisition stage, the grading work, they're all separate approvals and money is budgeted in each year for the work.

**MR. G. ROCH:** Okay, in the case of Provincial Road 405, what is the status of that particular one?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** 405 in what . . . ?

**MR. G. ROCH:** From Lorette to Ile des Chenes. There were a lot of survey pegs up during the election.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** This particular road was included in our budget and is still there as a location study,

survey and design from PTH 59 to PR 206. I believe that's the area the member is asking about. We had included that in the program, we continue to have it in the program, and will identify the best alternative route for that section.

**MR. G. ROCH:** Are you getting more information?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** The proposal has been discussed already with the municipality there, but there has been no visitations with individual landowners or any public open house or any communication with the local people, but the proposal has been developed and there has been some discussion already with the municipality.

**MR. G. ROCH:** Has there been some surveying done?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Yes, the survey work will be part of this study.

**MR. G. ROCH:** So when will we find out when it's going ahead or not?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Well, as soon as the considerations, I would think, that have been brought forward by the municipality have been taken into consideration and the design finalized. There will obviously have to be some consultations with local people to find out what the impacts will be and see whether there has to be further revisions, and then it could be put in for acquisition in the next construction year for acquisition of property.

**MR. G. ROCH:** Because that road had been promised, I assumed that within the next year or two there would be something going ahead then. Am I correct in assuming that?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Well, you're not correct to assume anything on this because we have to reprogram the next stage. In the next year we will be considering this particular piece of road for acquisition of property, and then the following year we could be looking at construction, but it's at least two years down the road before you can presume that there can be any construction on that section.

**MR. G. ROCH:** If I understand you correctly, then, it would depend on the budgetary conditions of that time?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** And the priorities that we establish at that time, yes.

**MR. G. ROCH:** I have one final question. Although the capital expenditure has been cut back by a substantial amount — you indicated or it's shown that the operational/maintenance part of the budget has been increased slightly — yet the information I get from some people in district offices is that, in fact, out in the field there's been cutbacks of as high as 30 percent. Where is that increased operational money going to then? Is it going to administration or where?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Well, then we're back into maintenance, and in my understanding, I would be very

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shocked if I find out that there have been that kind of reductions in any maintenance activities. The fact is that we have not cut back in maintenance activities and we haven't intended there to be any cutbacks in maintenance activities.

**MR. G. ROCH:** Therefore, as far as maintenance by the departmental staff is concerned, that should keep on as before or even should be slightly improved?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** The standards have been maintained and we have added some additional programs such as additional seal-coating over the last couple of years, dust control and some special projects like that, additional monies, but the maintenance budget has been designed to maintain the standards that are in place.

**MR. G. ROCH:** So if there are specific areas where there have been or it can be shown that there has been cutbacks or the money is not being channelled to the proper places; it should be brought to the Minister's attention and it will be rectified?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Yes.

**MR. G. ROCH:** Okay, thank you.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Arthur.

**MR. J. DOWNEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had a couple of questions dealing with the road construction in the southwest. The first question is: why is the Minister not proceeding to pave and put a top on 452 between the Waskada and No. 3 Highway which has carried a tremendous amount of oil traffic and still continues to carry a lot of heavy traffic and there's been absolutely no money spent by the government? There's been a request for some four years now and absolutely nothing done. Why is the Minister not proceeding to carry out some paving on that road?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Well, 452, Mr. Chairman, was considered in this budget. It was brought forward as one of the 300-or-so million dollars worth of projects that were suggested by the department, and it is one that we will consider as a high priority for that area.

The member has brought this to my attention, I believe, before but not as the top priority for his consideration in the area. He had indicated to me, I believe, that 345 was a higher priority in a meeting that we had with the delegation from his constituency. We have proceeded to put that one in the program this year, and will consider 452 in the subsequent year for upgrading as well.

The traffic count varies on there. It is reasonably high, although it is not exorbitant, around 250 vehicles per day. So it's not excessive traffic on that road.

**MR. J. DOWNEY:** Mr. Chairman, probably the reason the traffic count isn't as high as it has been is the fact that it's not fit to travel on. I would think that's probably the No. 1 reason for low traffic count, if that's in fact the case.

I would like to correct the record. I did not at any time indicate that it was not my top priority. I have

several top priorities, Mr. Chairman, in my constituency. I guess the truth of the matter is that the Minister of Highways, with the continued cut in his budget, cannot demonstrate the need or any strength around his Cabinet table to get funds to carry out the work activity that has to be done. I certainly sympathize with his departmental staff that have to hide throughout the province, because they haven't got anything to do but resurvey the surveyed roads that they've done two and three years ago.

It's incredible that this government are allowing the continued depletion and deterioration of our road system, and it can't be tolerated. I wish he would, Mr. Chairman, get himself a bit of strength when he goes to Cabinet and caucus and get some funds to carry out the work activity that has to be done.

I ask the Minister as well — and I note, Mr. Chairman, you allowed a question on signage. Is it the policy of this Minister and this government to have both French and English signs when you enter Manitoba from the United States? Is that a policy of the Minister of Highways?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** What sign is the member referring to? I don't know that we have made any specific decisions about bilingual signs on entry into the province, unless Tourism has authorized such a Tourism sign.

**MR. J. DOWNEY:** The question is: why are there both French and English stop signs or signs when you're coming into Manitoba from the United States? Is it a directive from him or his department for bilingual signage?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Is that customs? It's probably a federal customs requirement from the Conservative Government in Ottawa.

**MR. J. DOWNEY:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister at certain times has to take certain responsibilities. In this particular case, he's responsible for signage. Is it his policy to have bilingual signs coming into the Province of Manitoba from the United States?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** I'm certain that I wouldn't want to dictate to the Federal Government what kind of signs they should be putting up under their jurisdiction.

We haven't had the occasion to have to make a decision on what kind of any particular change in our signage. Right now, it's one-language signs, English signs, and I don't believe that we have any inclination to be placing bilingual signs throughout the province.

**MR. J. DOWNEY:** Mr. Chairman, again another issue which you may rule me out of order, but I'll wait until the Minister's Salary if you do, and that is the transfer of provincial responsibilities, highway expenses, onto the local municipalities last year. Is the Minister going to live up to his responsibilities and not transfer those costs, which are his responsibilities, on the municipalities, particularly when it comes to the spraying programs?

Last year, many municipalities incurred high costs of spraying grasshoppers to control the pests along the

provincial highways. It's been rejected by this Minister and this government, again transferring their responsibilities on a municipal government, Mr. Chairman, at several thousands of dollars cost to municipalities. I'm asking the Minister if he won't consider carrying out his responsibilities this year, if in fact the need is there.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Mr. Chairman, we have discussed this on a number of occasions, I believe, with the member, both in the House and it has been raised on a number of different forums and occasions. The policy of the government is that Agriculture will supply the chemicals for all the spraying in the municipalities, including the rights-of-way of the Highways Department, and that the municipalities will apply those chemicals. We feel that is a fair policy and a contribution by the province.

Certainly last year, the Department of Agriculture provided some \$550,000, I believe, of assistance to municipalities by providing the chemicals, which is a substantial contribution compared to the costs of application. So it seems like a reasonable sharing, as opposed to shifting of costs to the municipalities, because indeed that policy has been in place for many years and has not been a change. So, therefore, it has not been a shift by the province, by the Department of Highways, of responsibilities to the municipalities.

**MR. J. DOWNEY:** Mr. Chairman, one final subject, and I wish the Minister would cease and desist from blaming other people for his shortfall.

The question is this: when is he going to stop discriminating against the people of the Province of Manitoba that don't live in an area that's serviced by a 100-kilometre per hour highway? I was to Russell on the weekend, and my turnoff from the Yellowhead Route onto 83 Highway, which is part and parcel of the same road from the Foxwarren corner on up to Russell, and I turned down south on 83 Highway. The quality of the road doesn't change, but the speed limit does, direct discrimination on people travelling other than on No. 1 Highway or on the Yellowhead Route.

I ask the Minister, why can he not standardize the traffic speed limit without saying he has to do another study, he's got to do this. Can he not simply go to Cabinet, and put an order through that says the major highway system in the Province of Manitoba has 100 kilometres per hour? What's so difficult about it? Is he that weak that he can't go forward, and remove the discriminatory policies throughout the province? That's really what he is, he's too weak to get anything passed through Cabinet.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Order please, order please. Could I suggest to the honourable member that his terms, he's attributing motivation to the Minister in negative terms. That is unparliamentary and out of order. Could the member please rephrase his statement?

**MR. J. DOWNEY:** I won't rephrase my statement, Mr. Chairman, because I don't think it's out of order.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Mr. Chairman, we have dealt with this issue on a number of occasions, the matter of speed limits here. The Member for Arthur isn't listening.

**MR. J. DOWNEY:** I'm listening.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** We have indicated that we have undertaken steps to have a consistent approach with regard to speed limits in the province. There was very much an ad hoc approach under the previous government, and resulted in fragments of highways throughout the province being designated as 100 kilometres, for whatever reason. I don't know why the former Minister of Agriculture at that time, the Member for Arthur, didn't take a more direct interest and exercise some clout in the Cabinet during the time that he was in there with the former Premier Lyon and insure that the Highways Minister at that time got hold of this problem and applied a consistent policy.

We're attempting now to correct those inadequacies that existed there. You can't clean them all up at once and over a period of time I believe that we will have that corrected. The traffic board is looking at a number of requests for changes. We have a plan for all of the major highways in the province that will be designated. I've indicated that during the discussions we had earlier, and Highway 83 will be one of those that over the next year or so will be changed to 100 kilometres providing, of course, that the shoulder width warrants it. There's certain conditions that will be applied and considered. So, it is important if you're increasing speeds to have proper road conditions as well and we want to have those considered on an individual basis. There is a plan in place and we'll be getting an update on that plan as to exactly where we are now.

Since last year, we've had a number of changes; 83 in the northern areas near Swan River has been changed to 100; Highway 5 to the Saskatchewan border has been added to the 100 kilometre system; Highway 12 to the American border has been added to the 100 kilometre system, so we're working in that direction and, certainly, there's been a lot of improvement in terms of consistency over the last year and there will be, I believe, more improvement over the next year.

**MR. D. ROCAN:** Specifically, I want to talk to you about the 431 off 23 Highway. A small hamlet of St. Leon is situated on the 431. It is also on the side of a hill. Is it not department policy whatever, can a highway go through the town that they would not pave say up to the sidewalks?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Through the towns the highways pass through, I believe the policy is two lanes. The paving does not always go. Many times there's diagonal parking and there's quite an extensive distance, the wide main street right to the sidewalks. The department has taken the position that the two lanes through should be those that should be paved, I believe, and that any additional would have to be paid for by the local government if they wanted to see that paved right to the centre when repaving is done — right to the sidewalks I should say.

This is the case in many towns. We're looking at that. I know some of the towns and villages have complained to me. They feel that this should be the whole thing. I want to see whether this is being applied consistently throughout the province.

**MR. D. ROCAN:** Is it not department policy also wherever there's a pothole and whatever to put up a red flag?

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**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Mr. Chairman, they ran out of red flags.

There's warnings on major problem areas, either bump signs and flags, whatever, as soon as they're detected until they're repaired. So, during that period of time the flags are put up to warn motorists.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Minnedosa.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** Mr. Chairman, Clearwater, a small village in Southern Manitoba is about, I think, the only village if not one of the one or two left that doesn't have a paved access into the village. Is there a reason for that or is the department getting around to paving the access into Clearwater?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Was Clearwater an incorporated village or town?

**MR. D. BLAKE:** No, it's right off No. 34, 3A; 3A just takes a little square jog there; Pilot Mound, Crystal City and across west a few miles to Clearwater.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Mr. Chairman, there is not only this one, of course. There's a number of other small little hamlets where this situation does exist but we're working to eliminate that problem. The Member for Minnedosa would know that we are working on providing that access to Clearwater as well as a couple of others that still exist.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** Has the Minister had any problem with the waterslide that was built in Brandon on the Grand Valley Road or what they call the "low road" out to Grand Valley to the waterslide? There was some concern expressed by the people there about the traffic that was going to be created on that road. I just wondered if there has been any traffic hazard there.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** I just want to mention, as well, I've been advised that regarding Clearwater we have received representation from people in that area asking us to pave this half mile. The planning is ongoing and I'm just awaiting a report on that, so we're actively reviewing that situation.

The member has asked about the waterslide. I think it's on 459. There's a new project in the program, shoulder repair and asphalt surface treatment, both shoulders. The paving of the shoulders is for bicycle traffic in that area which has been necessitated by the waterslide.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** Yes, I wonder if the Minister could confirm the Highways garage and snowplough shed in Swan River — the Minister has some correspondence. The Ombudsman has been involved with a dispute with a subcontractor, a Mr. Klekta. Has that been resolved or is that . . .

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Yes, that involved a subcontractor who did not get paid for the work he did allegedly for the contractor, and the money was paid out and we have an agreement with the subcontractor as to how it should be resolved. They're taking the matter to court and we're paying for that, yes.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** Mr. Chairman, on (b) Aid to Cities, Towns and Municipalities, it's down about \$400,000.00. Could the Minister give us some accounting for the reduction there? Is that dust-proofing — Item (b) Aid to Cities, Towns and Villages is down \$400,000.00.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Again, that was necessitated as a result of the requirement to keep the costs down. The requests in the past have indicated that the money was pretty well being spent, that the requests matched the budget. This year, we're going to be close. There were a number of projects that were put forward that were withdrawn by local municipalities for various reasons, and it looks like we're not going to be inconveniencing the plans of very many towns and villages with regard to the Grant and Aid Program. We're going to meet most of the requirements and I don't expect a severe curtailment or a problem because of the reduction there.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** I can see the municipalities may be cutting back somewhat although if funds were available there's always a great amount of work to be done in the villages.

I assume the Acquisition/Construction of Physical Assets, that big boost there is a water bomber, is it? Did you give us the price of that earlier?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Yes, I think I had it and I went through the cost of the water bomber. I think we're paying something like \$4 million — the cost is much higher than that. The original ones were \$4 million. The cost is \$7,801,900, which provides for two; and spare parts package.

The cash flow is \$88,000 last year for that plane; \$4,087,000 this year, so that's pretty well the big year. In 1987-88, we'll need another \$4,230,000; it's about the same. So we're going to need a similar amount in next year's budget to pay for this over the two-year period.

The delivery of the first one under that agreement is to take place this month — it's been postponed a bit, but any time now.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Pembina.

**MR. D. ORCHARD:** Mr. Chairman, has someone asked a question on Clearwater? He got a commitment from the Minister that the department is looking at it. Does that commitment mean that it will be paved this summer, the Clearwater access road?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** I don't believe that it's ready for that. There's some difficulties there in the design and acquisition, but it will be done as soon as we are able to solve those and it has not been programmed. The member knows what the process is, that we do not add projects in the middle of the year that aren't in the published program to any extent.

The member knows what the published construction program is for this year. It's not in this year's program and we'll consider it for next year's program, providing all of the other difficulties there can be worked out.

**MR. D. ORCHARD:** The municipality will help you work them out.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** I've just been notified that the municipality will help us work them out and that's very good to see, to have some assistance.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Inkster.

**MR. D. SCOTT:** Mr. Chairman, I just have a general question. I think it's probably too late, too far down the line — I've raised this issue a couple of times in past years — and that is, given the various constraints that one has in the government these days, I'm wondering — it is my understanding that Highway 44, are they still planning to twin Highway 44 between Highway 59 and Beausejour?

I travel that road frequently, going back and forth on weekends, on peak times. The road itself, there's absolutely no question that it needs a major upgrading. I'm really wondering if it absolutely has to go to a four-lane highway. Would it not be possible to rebuild that road up to a very good standard, a top standard, two-lane highway and perhaps put four lanes as you slow down and go through the Village of Garson, and then have the rest of it as a quality of road the same as, perhaps, on the Yellowhead, with paved shoulders? Would that not — I don't know if the Minister is listening to me or not — would that not make substantial reductions in land acquisition costs and still provide for the necessary traffic flow that we have there at peak times?

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** It is always a balancing act between whether a two-lane highway will suffice or whether we have to go to a four-lane. Actually, the traffic in the area on 44, when comparing it to other major highways, is actually higher than most. It's over the 3,000 range average daily traffic per day, up around 3,500, particularly during specific times of the year.

That is over the threshold when the department usually considers to look at four-laning, for future planning for the highway because obviously there's growth projections built in. But if it's over 3,000 at the present time, it certainly warrants consideration for four-laning.

So the traffic does warrant it. It's a question of the dollars and cents and whether to upgrade only as a two-lane and continue with the congestion that would exist. I think it's debatable. I feel on the basis of the traffic flows, it is warranted.

**MR. D. SCOTT:** Does the Minister know or could his staff perhaps assist us here in looking at some other provinces and what kind of traffic counts they require before one jumps into a four-lane exercise? Because certainly 3,500 or 4,000 cars a day in southwestern Ontario where you have a much, much higher population, I'm sure they don't dream of putting in a four-lane highway when you just have 4,000, or less than 4,000 cars a day.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** If you look at other jurisdictions, for example, Saskatchewan is dualing the Yellowhead Route. The traffic volumes that we have, there were 1,600 to 2,000 vehicles, and we're not considering dualing at this time. It's upgrading it with partially-paved shoulders, and a good two-lane highway. But that is again about 1,000 or 1,500 less than Highway 44.

Highway 59, which has been dualled, is less considerably than 44, insofar as the traffic is concerned. Highway 75 is less average daily traffic, around 2,600, 2,800, as opposed to 3,000 and 3,500.

So most other highways that are being four-laned in the province, none of them really, except probably Highway No. 1, would be of a higher volume than Highway 44, and other jurisdictions in Canada would certainly be from what I've seen, and I'd like to get more information right across the country as to what triggers four-laning. I think it has a lot to do with dollars and cents, but it also has to do with safety and volumes. I don't have access to all of that right at the present time, I would like to get it, but I know that we have looked at the neighbouring provinces, and it varies, but certainly the criteria is justified on the basis of what is there in traffic.

**MR. D. SCOTT:** Well I don't want to pursue the line of questioning further and I don't want to be misconstrued, I guess, in my slight intervention here, but I believe very strongly that we should try to maintain our highway system in as good a quality and standard as is possible.

I feel that one is able to do that more if you are able to limit the amount of twinning of highways. Certainly, in past years, I myself questioned whether the road into Steinbach really needed to be twinned or whether Highway 59 really needed to be twinned. From my own experience, in living in other jurisdictions, I travelled on a lot of two-lane highways with much higher volumes than I'm used to travelling on here.

The Minister has said that he would like to check up and see what some other provinces are doing before that triggers the consideration of four-laning. I'm sure it would be a good exercise for his own peace of mind, and I would appreciate it if he could inform me as well as to what he finds out in other jurisdictions as to when it triggers four-laning.

Thanks very much for your time.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** Mr. Chairman, I'll just mention as well that Highway 12 would indicate that even at points of highest traffic that they're not near the traffic volume of Highway 44, but I think that during times of where it is difficult to obtain funds, certainly those decisions have to be made with much more prudence. What may result in this particular case — for the Member for Inkster — is that it will just take longer to do it than it would when there are more funds.

**MR. D. SCOTT:** Thank you.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** There are no further speakers.

Item 8.(a)—pass; Item 8.(b)—pass; Item 8.(c)—pass; 8.(d)—pass; 8.(e)(1), 8.(e)(2)—pass; 8.(e)(3)—pass.

Resolution 97: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$96,939,000 for Highways and Transportation expenditures related to Capital for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1987—pass.

Okay, we now return to deferred item, Item 1.(a) Minister's Salary — the Member for Minnedosa.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, we mentioned, when we had the Minister's opening

statement starting the Estimates, how disappointed we were to see the tremendous cuts, more like slashing, that had been done to the Highways budget. We expressed our displeasure then and we express it again now because without the funds, I am sure the Minister wouldn't let his house deteriorate without repairing it and maintaining it properly, and that's what's happening to our road network and our highway structure.

The report from the heavy equipment industry I think sets it out just in as clear a term as it can be told in, Mr. Chairman, with the vehicle registrations increasing in the past numbers of years about 29 percent and 36 percent in trucks, licensed drivers have increased 22 percent, and the number of kilometres driven has increased. The total provincial Budget has increased 4.96 times and yet the Highways budget has only increased 2.45 times, and about 1.2 percent is paid to contractors. So, in constant dollars, the total provincial has more than doubled, total Highways has increased about 20 percent, and the payments to contractors have decreased probably about 40 percent.

That spells it out fairly clearly, Mr. Chairman. When we look at total expenditures from '73 to '87, we see the percentage from 51 percent paid to contractors down to about 26 percent. It's obvious that contractors are in dire straits to maintain their staff, to maintain their equipment, and try and keep enough work to keep even a skeleton staff on.

The Selkirk Bridge property and the Selkirk Bridge contract, Mr. Chairman, we have expressed our displeasure at that. We think it's been handled very badly. The people there are not being treated fairly in the expropriation of their property and I suspect that may be the case in some areas on Highway 44.

We're extremely disappointed from my constituency's point of view that Highway 16 is not going to be completed from the Franklin cutoff to Neepawa, but

**SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Order please, order please. The member is trying to make a statement on the record. It would be polite to have him heard.

**MR. D. BLAKE:** . . . sooner or later, we will have to have that finished because I've explained to the Minister the dangerous driving conditions on that road. It's quite treacherous and we're very very concerned.

So I think the Minister has to get some more clout around the Cabinet table and convince his colleagues that this is a serious situation what's happening to our road system. We've had no action on the abandoned rail lines; it's been dragging on for years. The other provinces, I understand, have settled. The Minister mentioned that he was having an emphasis on safety this year and we concur with that because there's no doubt safety is a prime concern and a prime importance to us all.

But the slashes in the budget, Mr. Chairman, are just not acceptable by members on this side of the House. We think the Minister has to go back to his Cabinet colleagues and say, look, we've got to have some more funds into the Highways budget. The heavy equipment operators are going to be out of business and if they

leave this province, it's very, very difficult if not impossible to get them back. You'll be at the mercy of the big contractors.

So we urge the Minister, Mr. Chairman, strongly, to go to his Cabinet colleagues and get some more funds into the Highways budget so that we can have a few more projects carried out this year; not only the new projects but the maintenance problems have to be attacked, and attacked vigorously, if we're going to maintain our road network.

So, Mr. Chairman, expressing that displeasure with the condition of the Highways Department that we've done throughout the Estimates, and the fact that the budget has been slashed so drastically, I move that Item 1.(a) be reduced to the amount of \$45, the cost of about one ton of asphalt paving.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Just to inform the member, Rule 55.(1) states "A motion to reduce the Minister's salary must be in writing." I have not received such a motion yet.

**MR. D. ORCHARD:** Mr. Chairman, I move the question be put.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The motion is, the question be put. All those in favour, voice vote.

**HON. J. COWAN:** On a point of order.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** On a point of order.

**MR. D. ORCHARD:** There is no point of order.

**HON. J. COWAN:** Moving the question to be put is a debatable motion.

**MR. D. ORCHARD:** It is not a debatable motion.

**HON. J. PLOHMAN:** I think we should debate whether it's debatable.

**MR. D. ORCHARD:** The question is, the motion is not debatable.

**A MEMBER:** Look at Rule 64.(14).

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Section 64.(14), the point of order is incorrect. It states: "Where the motion for the 'previous question' is moved in Committee of Supply, or in a section of the Committee of Supply, the motion is not debatable."

The motion is to move the previous question.

All those in favour, please say aye; those opposed, say nay.

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The Minister of Co-op Development.

**HON. J. COWAN:** Request a call out.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** A formal vote has been requested, the members will remove to the Chamber.

## SUPPLY — AGRICULTURE

**MR. CHAIRMAN, C. Santos:** This section of the Committee of Supply has been considering the

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Estimates of the Department of Agriculture. We are now on Item No. 4.(e)(1) Technical Services and Training Branch: Salaries.

The Member for Virden.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** No, not on this.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** No problems? 4.(e)(1)—pass. 4.(e)(2) Other Expenditures — the Member for Ste. Rose.

**MR. G. CUMMINGS:** What is the recoverable listed under that section?

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Minister of Agriculture.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, the recoverable to cover off the \$85,900 deals with Agricultural Manpower - 39,300; 4-H and Youth - 27,900; and the Toronto Royal Fair - 18,700.00. That deals with the federal-provincial agreement on transportation of show animals to the Royal, and 4-H and Youth is our sharing of the national program in 4-H. Agricultural Manpower deals with the rural manpower advisory corps, and it deals with some of the manpower issues as they relate to the farm labour pools.

**MR. G. CUMMINGS:** One question regarding the recoverable funds in 4-H area, is that a shared item or are the items totally covered federally in that area?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, what we do is we expend the funds. This amounts to cost-sharing that we receive from the Federal Government for training of 4-H leaders and volunteers for our shows and fairs, the specialty shows that we have. That recovers part of the training monies in terms of the volunteers and staff for the various shows. That is recoverable from Canada. The funding is expended by Manitoba and then there are certain items on which we can claim from the Federal Government, and that's what we're recovering on. This is just a small portion of the total funding for 4-H.

**MR. G. CUMMINGS:** That was going to be my next question. Is this the proper area to ask what the expenditure is in that area?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, centrally, we have a Budget for — and I say centrally because this is the central branch of 4-H — in the neighbourhood of \$200,000 for the youth specialist, 4-H leadership training and 4-H projects and activities centrally. As well, there are the regional specialists. Their funding in every region is contained in the Farm and Rural Development Division. The actual field staff, the 4-H assistants in each region, they are funded under the Farm and Rural Development Division. I would say the total Budget would be in the area of half-a-million for 4-H when you count the regional support and the central support. I'm not 100 percent certain, but in terms of what I have seen in the past, we're looking at about that amount of money in global terms.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** Of that \$500,000, how much of it goes directly to the 4-H Program, that which isn't used for salaries?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Pardon me?

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** How much of the \$500,000 goes directly to the 4-H Program? In other words, how much of that really goes to salaries and how much is left over for actual use in the 4-H Program?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, in the central Budget we are just discussing here, about \$140,000 of that \$200,000 would go to other than salary in the department. In terms of the regional expenditures, I would say that a portion of that funding, of that total half-a-million, you're probably looking at about 50-50, or thereabouts, in terms of wages and staff who do the liaison work along with the volunteers in training and the course material. Of course the regions sponsor the summer activities and camps. That funding would be part and parcel of the regional funding.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** Have there been any cutbacks in that area of money going to 4-H Programs in the last two, three or four years, or have there been increases?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** There was about four years ago a shift that we made of about \$10,000 within the program. But when you calculate everything that has gone on in 4-H over the last four or five years, and we're accused of emasculating the program which was not factual, but there has been, I would say, a slight increase in terms of overall budgets in the same area, generally in line with increases that the rest of the department has seen in administrative support and work.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** This may have been asked already, but just what is the participation in 4-H? Is it remaining static or is it increasing slightly, or what's happening?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, the last statistical year that we have is 1984 and to give you a range for — I have statistics here for 1981 to 1984. In 1981, we had 312 clubs; we went up to 320 in 1982 and we're down to 313 in 1984.

So it's fairly static. The number of members is basically in the 5,900 to 6,000 range and it's held fairly static in all four years, in that vicinity. The number of leaders continues to be around the 2,100 to 2,200 range. The volunteers — it's fairly static — from 2,140 in 1981 to 2,120 in 1984, so you're talking about fairly static.

The number of new leaders, in fact, in the last two years is a little bit higher. It was 676 in 1981; in 1984 there were 715 new leaders. So there's some turnover and new blood. As well, the number of new members, 1981 had a low of new members of 1,891 new members; in 1984, we went up to 2,108.

It's fairly static, but that's the kind of ranges we're in. The average age is running at around 12 years of age, with an average 10 years in the clubs, of running just under three years per activity or per member in the 4-H club.

**MR. G. CUMMINGS:** Is this the area, under Other Expenditures, where the part-time 4-H assistants in the various regions would come from, or would they come out of regional funding?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, the 4-H aides would be under the regional budget. They would be handled in the regions.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 4.(e)(2)—pass. 4.(e)(3) Agricultural Societies— the Member for Virden.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** As I recall, the building grant that goes out to them is around \$40,000 to \$50,000 each year. With the number of societies, it works out to something over \$1,000, or around \$1,000 a society. In our rural communities, the Ag Society performs a very important function, not only in terms of putting the fair on each year, but a number of other functions that they sponsor and put on during the course of the calendar year.

Many Ag Societies are faced, either fairly soon or in the next five to 10 years, with some major problems. It's very difficult to cover their total expenditure by charging more at the gate because people tend to rebel if you increase the gate admission by 50 cents or \$1.00. Certainly no community wants to see any social function deteriorate over time.

One of the things that I want to ask the Minister is if there's any plans in the not too distant future of being able to find more funds for Capital Expenditures on the part of Ag Societies, particularly in the way of major facility construction, replacing buildings which in many cases are getting quite old, there's been the building grant, the annual grant was used to repair and patch up; but if we're going to maintain these Ag Societies on the annual fare, we need sometime in the not too distant future, some opportunity for major capital for building replacement, the grounds, improvement and things of that nature. I would like his comments in that area.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I have had a number of discussions, not specifically with the board dealing with the Agricultural Society Program, but I've had meetings with our board as well.

I should mention, I believe the board is the same board that's been there for, probably before my colleague's time — (Interjection) — Pardon me?

**A MEMBER:** It's the only one you didn't . . .

**HON. B. URUSKI:** No, I think you mean the Water Services Board, you remember, from your area, is still on there. There's several that we didn't . . . The membership still remains the same.

But I wanted to put this on the record for my honourable friend, that there is in my mind a concern that I think most communities have — and I share the concern the honourable member raises — I think what has to happen within communities — and of course communities would like someone else to make the tough decisions for them — in terms of how they go for additional money from whatever source, whether it's lotteries, whether it's through the Jobs Fund in terms of the Community Assets Program.

What I would like to see, quite frankly, is the public groups in many of the communities who are competing for scarce dollars in terms of capital dollars to say, all of us will not get everything that we ask for. Would it be better for us in the community and combine our resources and say, all right, this year this group is the one that's going to apply and try and get capital funds. It's an easier thing to say than to make actually happen.

But I cannot see in the long term that there will be the ability of communities to get into the act of competing, to continue the competition as between groups within a community, for scarcer and scarcer public dollars in terms of capital works. So there will have to be some priorities set within the community and I think the sooner groups in communities sit down and deal with that question — because there will not be major amounts of new money — there may be one or two times in a number of years, some major funds available to communities, but obviously five or six groups who may have competing interests in a community, all of them will not be able to benefit by those.

I do not see, for example, a special program in terms of — in the short run anyway — in terms of major capital investments in Ag Societies. I could see the money that we put in to rural projects, through lotteries or whatever programs, this group being eligible; but quite frankly that competition that does exist within communities as amongst groups, will be a problem in terms of who gets what in terms of the priorities.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** Just a little further on that, the Minister has been in my hometown — I hate to talk about a personal situation — but you saw the building that community has got going and it took us four years to get it off the ground. Then it's a year since they started, that's five years now; and it was a major grouping of organizations and a lot of effort to pull the thing together and it's still ongoing in terms of getting it done. Really, I guess, from their point of view they're looking to what happened in Brandon, the Keystone Centre gets major funding. I realize it's the larger number of people being serviced, but they're also wondering if the smaller centres could have that opportunity somewhere down the road.

You've pretty well answered, but those kinds of commitments within communities can be done, are being done, but the ability to fund some of those projects becomes a little bit difficult.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** I have to say, as another member who serves a rural constituency, I always cautioned community groups, and I say that from the point of view that it's probably the easiest, in the short term, to get capital dollars, from whatever source. The difficulty will be to pay those ongoing operating costs and those maintenance costs; and we see that with Brandon in terms of the provincial commitment to the Western Regional Centre, an agricultural centre of the province, and the province recognizing it as such. The major ongoing cost is the operating. The capital dollars seem to come up because they're one time, but it's the ongoing costs.

The province, historically, has taken a different position vis-a-vis — and I say that quite openly — Brandon and any other community, because of the historical perspective of the Royal Winter Fair and the significance of Brandon to the western part of the province and it's been recognized in that way. The same way for example that Austin is recognized in terms of the one agricultural museum in the province. There have been a number of applications and considerations from other groups to set up major museums and some very good ideas in terms of agricultural museums.

We have not encouraged them because it is the ongoing costs which, in fact, many communities cannot meet and the province in terms of its limited resources in terms of, I believe, our priorities we should be putting our money into at least one major institution as much as we can, and even that is likely not quite enough as I would like to see from time to time. But that's where we've said our commitment is to one institution, the same way as Brandon is the focal point for western Manitoba. We've done the same thing with the agricultural museum in Austin even though there have been requests from other regions of the province to set up major museums.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** Another comment in this area is, in some communities the buildings are old — and I'm thinking now I guess of rinks and if they're on Ag Society grounds or part of that facility — but the older structures are inefficient in terms of energy, operating costs are higher in other areas and they believe a new building is much more cost efficient and maybe the operating costs actually go down.

I know this is not the area to talk about it but many of these community leaders speak very strongly against demand building by Hydro which puts a high cost on them that they feel is unwarranted but that can be addressed later, but is a major issue in terms of funding these kind of facilities on Ag Society grounds.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 4.(e)(3)—the Member for Gladstone.

**MRS. C. OLESON:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad the Minister mentioned the museum. I was just sitting here waiting to ask about it.

I'm wondering under whose initiative the Manitoba Agricultural Museum was switched from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Cultural Affairs.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, the decision was made by the government, by Cabinet. It took into account their ongoing deficit and the need to get that deficit under control and to bring about some, I guess I would say additional input, in terms of planning of museums, and having the expertise in the Cultural Affairs Department which deals with the rest of the museums in the province to try and work through, over a number of years, on a deficit reduction program and a more stable financial footing to the museum. That was basically the decision that Cabinet made.

**MRS. C. OLESON:** Did the Minister have any input into just how the Department of Cultural Affairs was to handle this? For instance, is there going to be a major shift in the character of the museum? Are they going to suggest that it be different in some way; for instance, to run the same as agricultural museums in other provinces?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I believe that a comprehensive review, and although I am not the Minister anymore, really should be undertaken of Austin to see what kind of improvements can be made to bring about greater public awareness, not only public awareness but public participation in that museum.

I have been there on a number of occasions and I have enjoyed it, but outside of the Threshermen's

Reunion that museum brings through it very few people. When I say very few, it may be a few thousand in a year. The Threshermen's Reunion is the big time during the year when a lot of Manitobans and Canadians visit that site. There has to be a way to try and make that museum possibly bring in more people in to visit it because there are so many artifacts and so much history in that museum that I think the Cabinet felt that the Cultural Affairs Department, in terms of dealing with other museums and promotion, would be the better place for that one major museum to be dealt with.

I hope in fact that in terms of the longer term, the financial stability for that museum, even though agricultural has provided a stable income, it's not what the museum really required. They required a fairly major infusion of dollars to first of all get rid of that deficit. I think what has to be done is to change it just from a storage of artifacts to one of bringing people in and making it more possibly a living museum. I am not the expert in the area, I am giving you one member's opinion, but the expertise does lie for museums in that department.

**MRS. C. OLESON:** The Honourable Minister touched on something he says should be more of a — what did you say? — living example. I think that's one of the great features of that museum is the Reunion Days and the other days that are held where the machinery that's there is actually put into use and demonstrations are done.

Now, in some provinces they don't do that at all. The government says no, you store that thing in the shed and all you do is look at it. So I hope that that character of the museum is not going to be changed. I have been told that there are some changes that the government has suggested and they even, I am told, suggested that they cannot have the type of reunion days they hold. Well, that is the only function that they have that really brings in money. I don't know why the government would suggest that they would cancel that sort of thing.

Now with regard to that, earlier this year, as I mentioned in question period the other day, the Museum Board came and made several representations to the government, to the Minister and others, asking that their allocation for this year be given to them in advance so that they could get under way because there was a thought earlier this year they weren't going to be able to open their gates, and now they are faced with the fact that they may not be able to have their annual reunion if they don't get these funds.

I was talking to them yesterday and they still haven't got that cheque that the Minister said was on the way. In the regular turn of events, they usually get that funding by now. They are asking for special dispensation this year, they are told that they'll get it, and it's coming later than it usually does.

**A MEMBER:** That's two weeks ago it was in the mail.

**MRS. C. OLESON:** Correct.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, first of all, any changes in terms of the character of the museum, I want to assure the honourable member, would not be imposed by anyone. I believe the character of the museum, if

there are going to be any changes, should be a complimentary one that really should be discussed and worked through a long period of time so that everyone involved in the process, if there is going to be any change, is satisfied with the change and will in fact be one that will bring in greater numbers of people to visit that museum.

I have not heard of a suggestion and I don't know who would have suggested this to the museum that they now shouldn't hold their Threshermen's Reunion. I agree with the honourable member. If someone did, quite frankly, that is the one time of the year that that board and that museum has an opportunity to raise some money. The living museum as a concept, and I am not saying that is what's going to occur, would be one that there would be someone there for a longer period of time than the four days of the Threshermen's Reunion when in fact there is public participation and activities in the whole process of farming, steam engines, stooking and threshing.

You know, I know the Brandon Fair, one year that I was there, I sure got into the act. I hadn't pitched stooks since I was, as the saying goes, knee high to a grasshopper, and it was a good opportunity to recollect some of the younger days.

But the funding for Austin is now within the department. If that cheque isn't there, it should be there, quite frankly. They are going to receive their money, that undertaking is there, but there is more than the question of just this year's operating. We have to address the longer term and that deficit that is plaguing that board.

**MRS. C. OLESON:** Some time ago there was an agreement worked out, I think it must have been with the Tourism Branch, for a Destination Manitoba grant to do with a building program. Is that still ongoing? Will they still get that Destination Manitoba money?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I can't answer that question at all. I wish I could, but I can't confirm or deny one way or the other where that is in the process. I think one of the major considerations, and I'm not even sure that my colleague can answer that, because one of the major considerations is it's fine to apply for a grant from another arm of government, but the real question of that museum has to be the addressing of that deficit and wiping that out and making those kinds of assessments. That would be part of that overview that I would assume would be undertaken in conjunction with the Department of Cultural and Historic Services.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Portage.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** Before the decision was made to take the museum out of Agriculture and put it into Culture and Heritage, was it discussed with the board of directors of the Austin Museum?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, in terms of actual discussion before the fact, no, there was no discussion with the board before the fact. I did communicate with the board after the fact, advising them that the shift is being made. Quite frankly, in the long term, it's not only my hope, it's really the intention to provide them

with, I believe, much more favourable conditions in terms of funding because they will be eligible in terms of the Lottery funds that might be available. To me, they have to address the longer term and there are, quite frankly, more dollars available there than there would be for those kinds of activities in the Department of Agriculture.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** Does the Minister of Agriculture honestly believe that the museum at Austin will be better served under Culture and Heritage, which is basically an urban-oriented function, than under Agriculture? I don't think it will, and I think you're doing an injustice to the agricultural museum by moving it out of Agriculture. It is an agricultural museum and it is basically for agricultural people. I think you've made a gross error.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I was advised by staff and I gave the honourable members what my involvement was. Over the years, I am advised that our staff have, in fact, explored various options of funding and possible funding options with the board of directors.

I want to tell my honourable friend that most museums across this country, I think the agricultural museum in Saskatchewan, most of them are funded out of the cultural and museum areas of provincial budgets. I think this one, in fact, is probably one of the last that's been in the department.

Quite frankly, the member can make whatever case he wants and damn whatever he wants. He may be in fact doing that museum, if he insists on having it back here, a greater disservice in not being able to have the kind of flexibility that the Department of Museum Resources has because of Lottery funding.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** Does that mean that the Minister of Agriculture is not concerned and interested in the museum at Austin, which is an agricultural museum?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, you know, I don't even want to get into a debate at that kind of level with the honourable member.

Mr. Chairman, I gave his colleague, the Member for Virden, comments that there have been other applications for other museums in the Province of Manitoba. We have basically said our commitment as a province is to one major agricultural museum and that is in Austin. We have kept it at that.

We could have said, yes, we will allow you to go to whatever source you want and we'll allow two or three museums. Would that have been doing a service to agriculture in the Province of Manitoba? Then you would have had a legitimate complaint in this House, saying you're now allowing this museum to die on the vine, and you would have been accurate — (Interjection) — Pardon me?

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** There are five in Saskatchewan.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, in fact you now want to say let's invest in five, let's hear that, because that will add to the numbers that add on in terms of the request. We didn't take that position. We have worked with the board. We have had close liaison in

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the provision of student support during the summer. There has been a close, harmonious working relationship.

Mr. Chairman, I ask the Member for Portage just to not do a disservice to that museum by making the kind of, I would call, uninformed charges that he's making.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** A couple of programs that have been run in the department that are well-received in the country, and one is the century farm signs that were commenced back in the late Seventies by the Lyon administration in the recognition of the ag societies that celebrate a 100th fair, are those programs still going to be maintained for the foreseeable future? The century farm signs and the recognition of the 100th fair, is that going to carry on for the foreseeable future?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, yes, in fact, it is continuing and I expect that it will be continue. I think the idea that was brought forward by your colleague during his term in office was a good idea in terms of the recognition of century farms, and we have supported it and intend to continue that support to those farm families where the farm has remained in the family for at least one century. Yes, I fully endorse that concept and I'm very proud of that program in terms of the recognition of those family farms. I give your colleague his full marks on that one.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** I guess a couple of my colleagues have some questions, it's back a line or two, if the Minister would be prepared to go back in Technical Services on some questions that were missed earlier.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Portage.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** In the area of entomology, the province has, how many people in entomology? Entomology will be an extension service, but they must be working with the university as far as some of the information that these people are using. What is the relationship between the two?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, there is a very close relationship between the university and our entomology staff. I'm advised that our chief entomologist, Dave Smith, does even deliver some lectures at the University of Manitoba on entomology and some of the expertise that he has had in the practical sense so that there is a very close working relationship.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 4.(a)(3) — the Member for Portage.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** Is there adequate funding? Are the requests from the farmers being adequately met? I don't know. We get good service, but are the total requirements of the province being met in entomology, or is there a backlog of requests?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I don't believe that there is any backlog of requests. There may be at times that it may be a little while before we can deal with all the requests. During the summertime, of course, we do supplement the regular staff with summer students who come from the university in terms of assistance

in monitoring some of the work that the branch does. So we do assist the branch with, I think, three or four summer staff as students in the university involved in addition to the regular staff that we have for the summer, specifically in the entomology area. I'm not aware of any sort of major lacking work in terms of response and our staff have advised me on that as well.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** In the area of the honeybees, in the past there have been some concerns and some severe damage from aerial spraying at a time when it had to be done. What is the provincial program now for protecting beekeepers, or I guess paying them for their losses if there is a severe spraying program?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, there has never been any ongoing program within the province to compensate beekeepers for loss of bees. When we did spray for encephalitis, the outbreak in the province a number of years ago, this was the first time I believe anywhere in Canada that a province automatically said if there are going to be losses, we will compensate directly on a formula established working with the Beekeepers' Association.

On that major program, I believe there are still two claims outstanding and I want to tell — I don't know if I conveyed it to my honourable friend from Portage — I think that from the precedents that would set, that those two agreements should be signed and so those final payments can be made because there will be no change in policy in this area. So I think the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose knows of what I speak.

But in terms of the ongoing spraying, dealing with aerial applicators, we do try and cooperate between the aerial applicators, our staff and beekeepers to try and advise aerial applicators as best one can of the locations of beehives in the province. Of course, the member knows that honey production is now an insured crop under crop insurance and for any loss in production. I'm not sure whether it in fact covers losses due to spray damage, because that would be a liability clause that would be borne by the aerial applicators, but from other production losses. The Province of Manitoba did pioneer several years ago to automatically compensate losses due to aerial spraying that was undertaken by the province.

We did, in fact, in one instance — I should share with my honourable friend, he maybe read about it — here just east of Winnipeg, did move a huge amount, I may be wrong in my amount, but something like 10 million or several million leafcutter bees and there was four, five or maybe six hours notice that the spraying would go on in the Oakbank area and a troop of local people, our staff, RCMP gathered up all the leafcutter bee houses or shelters and moved them into the curling rink for a period of 48 or 72 hours, pending the spray being dissipated, and in fact very few losses occurred as a result of that move. The bees were kept in basically cold storage and we had almost no losses in the process. It was a good community effort in terms of trying a different approach in terms of trying to save the bees.

It's my hope, of course, Mr. Chairman, that the Province of Manitoba in the longer term will really refrain from that kind of massive spraying program. It's a

damned if you do, and damned if you don't situation. You kind of spray the more populated areas, and the rest of society, those of us who live in the boondocks in rural Manitoba, as some would put it. — (Interjection) — Well, there are some that would say that because we are not . . .

**MR. J. ERNST:** Are you talking about Charleswood?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** No, not Charleswood. It would just be impractical to provide that kind of service. I think really it's not warranted and, hopefully, we've learned from our past and we'll go on to the future. But that's generally how we handle the question of working with applicators.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** That must have been quite a stinger of an event when you moved all those bees. — (Interjection) — They don't sting, yes, the leafcutters don't sting.

Does the department have any regulations or recommendations as far as bees and spraying and so forth? I know in the Portage area where we do an awful lot of spraying on the vegetable crops and the chemicals may kill the bees, but we'll have somebody move in a bunch of beehives in behind a bluff, next to a field that is sprayed, doesn't tell anybody, and then of course is all upset because some of the bees get killed. Are there recommendations or regulations as to kind of eliminate this sort of tragedy and confrontation?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, that's really the practical difficulty of co-ordination as the member points out, that exactly happens as he indicated where someone, in fact, moves in — a colony of bees or several colonies of bee hives — into an area that the one spraying isn't aware of. That's why we attempt to assist in co-ordination of spraying if we know and in co-operation with the beekeepers, but it's a matter of communication. There are no regulations per se. People can, in fact, with permission, of course, of the property owner can put their bee hives wherever they get permission to, but there is no specific regulation in that respect.

Mr. Chairman, in our . . . of aerial applicators, part of the training program try and provide some training for visual identity in terms of being able to spot those kinds of situations with air hives, but I fully agree, not always possible, and the scenario, as I've indicated earlier that the member pointed out, is one of those practical difficulties that I think from time to time will occur and no one will be able to really avoid those kinds of occurrences from time to time.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** In terms of the use of pesticides in and around areas where honey bees are operating, there's naturally the opportunity for residues to reach the honey supply. Is there any kind of monitoring going on to determine if such is happening and has there been occasions where residue levels in honey at harvest have found to be above the maximum tolerable residue level?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, we're not aware of any problem in this area, although I believe that there

may some testing that goes on in terms of the honey co-op for quality testing. That one I'd have to take as notice and find out whether or not the extent of the monitoring that does go on, and whether not, in fact, some residues get picked up by the bees after the fact. I'm not sure that does, in fact, occur but we'll get the technical advice and try and provide it for my honourable friend.

Mr. Chairman, the inspections in terms of the quality of honey would not be done by the province. It would be done by the federal people in terms of food products inspection, but we'll try and get some further information for my honourable friend.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** Just for my own information. Does not the province have a residue testing laboratory somewhere in its buildings around here?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, there was a dual service being operated in the province. There was a provincial one and a federal one. In this whole area we cooperate with the federal people. We no longer run a pesticide residue lab, we've cooperated that service with the federal people because we were running a duplicate service in the province.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** Just further to that. With the funding you give to the University of Manitoba is there not one out there and do you not utilize that service?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, yes, the member is correct in that assertion. We would still do some if we had occasion to do some monitoring and testing, but generally, any work that's undertaken we cooperate with the federal people in this whole area.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Portage.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** I'm not sure what they call it, Mr. Chairman, but is it a mite that is coming in out of the Southern States? What is being done to insure that the bees in Manitoba don't get infested with it? Is there an adequate inspection program on?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, the mite that the member speaks of is the acarine disease, acarine mite. I'll provide him with some of the information that we have. During the summer of '84 acarine disease caused by the honey bee tracheal mite, *acarus woody* — that's the technical name — was discovered for the first time in the United States. In an attempt to insure that Canadian beekeepers' needs for U.S. packaged bees are met with disease-free bees, an agreement was reached last year with the U.S. officials to inspect U.S. apiaries that ship bees to Canada.

Only those U.S. apiaries that were inspected and certified to be apparently free of acarine disease were allowed to ship bees to this country. During the summer of 1985, two summer students were hired to assist the Manitoba Agriculture staff in examining U.S. packages entering Manitoba for acarine disease. A total of 805, 100-bee samples from 21 U.S. shippers were analyzed with no acarine disease being detected.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** Under the area of the Agricultural Engineer in the assistance to farmers on buildings, one

of the real big problems for vegetable storage is for an adequate preservative. There's been much discussion and much loss of buildings and the very short lifespan of buildings because of the inadequate material to protect the wood. Where are we at now? I know in the last year or two there's been a lot of discussion over it with the federal people. I think there's been a lot of discussion with the potato storage at Portage. Does the Minister have some answers for that?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I'm trying to go through the various areas where engineering staff have been involved and I'm not certain that I can provide the honourable member with any definitive information on the specifics of his question dealing with the quality of wood.

I will give him some general comments here. Work has commenced on a project to analyze the performance of various components of the vegetable and potato storage ventilation system. The objective is to further refine the recommended design parameters of this critical area for vegetable production. I'm not sure that, in fact, deals with the question of the ability of wood — a wood preserver — that is safe and lasts in terms of it being able to hold the building together without basically rotting and falling apart in very quick order. That was the member's comment.

I'll get our staff to get some comments and either provide it verbally or in writing to my honourable friend. I don't have that information handy.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** Is the Minister aware of the problems that are being experienced by the Plains Potatoes Storage at Portage in their renovation of the roof, vis-a-vis their problems with Ottawa with the engineers over the use of certain material as to whether they're making some progress. There was a large grant that may be in jeopardy.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** We don't have any information that we can share with the Member for Portage at this point in time. We'll add it to the questions that he's raised, and try and provide that to him as soon as we can.

Let me just clarify that, Mr. Chairman. We'll check the record in terms of his comments and then get it back to him.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Virden.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** With regard to the Farm Machinery Board, can you give us some idea as to what activities they have ongoing?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I can provide the honourable member with a resume of, for example, the activities of the board in terms of complaints by category. The bulk of the complaints that we would receive, for example, last year we received 109 complaints. The bulk of the complaints would be warranty complaints; 50 of the 109 were warranty; 21 were service; 14 were parts availability; and 24 were other. Now, other, would be other than those — Mr. Chairman, in terms of the question of repossessions of farm equipment that are dealt with by the board, because that's one area that the board has jurisdiction

over in terms of the conditional sales contracts which dealers, both on new and used equipment, use and which incidentally are exempted by our present legislation.

During the period of April 1, 1985, to February 1, 1986, 92 applications for leave to repossess were received by the board. Each application was thoroughly investigated and assistance rendered to the producer by means of financial counselling, also negotiations with the lender for grace periods, extensions and often rescheduling of payments, which often enabled the producer to retain possession of the farm machinery and thus continue with the farming operations.

The board's records indicate a significant portion of the applications now being received are being filed against producers for the second and, in some instances, the third time. This indicates that producers experiencing financial pressure in the past continue to have the same problem. Of significant importance is that with the board's intervention and the counselling service provided by administrative staff 75 percent of the applications for leave to repossess are resolved to the satisfaction of both the lender and the producer. So we've been able to mediate fairly successfully in this whole area of farm equipment. This whole process, of course, is tied into the financial counselling through our farm management specialists in the regions and the like.

Mr. Chairman, for information of honourable members, as of January 31, 1986, the board has 423 licensed dealers and 165 licensed vendors. A condition of licensing requires both the dealer and the vendor to post with the board a penal bond of an amount designated by the board. Penal bonds are available from surety companies or subscribed for under the Farm Machinery Act Fund. It must be noted that the Farm Machinery Act Fund is administered with the identical rigid standards common in the bonding industry.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** When an individual or a company has a complaint or a repossession, do they have to appear before the board before action can take place, or is there a streamlined method of handling the complaints?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, when the member speaks of complaint, is he talking about the service or a problem with repossession? I'm not sure — (Interjection) — okay, I would think that, for example, in terms of availability of parts as being one of the — not so much anymore but it was a number of years ago — warranty. Generally speaking, a telephone call outlining the circumstances, and if it can be resolved basically by a telephone call and information back again they can be handled that way. But a number of these complaints, when the staff investigating get another side of the story, the situation becomes more complicated. It then would require, I'm sure, a letter in writing from the individual complaining and likely a process of arbitration and mediation would ensue between the board and the farmer and the machine dealer to try and resolve the issue.

In the same manner, it would be, in terms of the leave to repossess, farmers would contact the board.

I'm not certain whether the board requires something in writing, but I would think that the board would require a letter saying we want your intervention. I want your intervention in this process, because I'm being threatened with repossession. Is there a way of mediating this process? They would then, of course, try and alert our staff and appeal to see — when it comes to farm machinery, that's only the tip of the iceberg. What is the total financial situation? Are there some options in there and can we, in fact, provide some financial counselling and then see what options are available to the board in the mediation and arbitration process?

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** In those situations, does either side have an appeal process if they're not satisfied with the initial contact with the board?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I'd have to check that legal question. I believe that — maybe the Clerk could get me The Farm Machinery Act, but I believe that decision of the board is final. I'm not certain that there may be an appeal from the decision to the Court of Appeal. If it is, I'm just not up to date on that. We'll get The Farm Machinery Act, and we'll check it out.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** Does the Farm Machinery Board deal with problems between, say, two farmers where they've got an agreement on a piece of equipment, or is it only dealing with licensed dealers and vendors?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, the Farm Machinery Board would deal primarily with the conditional sales contracts. Any private dealings, the Farm Machinery Board would not be involved in that process. It would be dealing with primarily the legal instruments as defined in the act.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 4.(e)(3) — the Member for Portage.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** The PAMI Agricultural Institute, what is the percentage that Manitoba puts towards that? I think it's a three- or four-province agreement, the PAMI? It's four? Three. What is the percentage that Manitoba pays towards that institute?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, it's a three-province agreement: Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta. Manitoba's share in that agreement is 20 percent.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** What would that be in dollars?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, \$470,000.00.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** In the area of general farm management, I would say that I've had a significant amount of involvement with different programs that the department does. I must say that I'm very pleased and appreciative of what they've done. Can the Minister elaborate on the difference? I know the areas that I've been involved where they've put on specific programs where it's been a joint-funded, partly province and partly producers involved. I'd like a little bit of an outline on it because I think in this area, the area of general farm management is one of the keys to the survival of

agriculture. A lot of the problems that we see now, with the need for The Family Farm Protection Bill, maybe relates to farm management. I'd like to know the extent and the concern that the department has over the farm management courses.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I thank the honourable member for those comments. I wish to indicate to him that the major thrust of this government, of this department over the last five years, has specifically been, in terms of extension thrust, in the whole area of farm financial management and, of course, technology transfer. But the financial management and counselling and upgrading, management upgrading, has been our major thrust both in terms of families and individuals, and in the various farming operations.

We've had the one-to-one beef consultant program, which basically did cost projections on beef farms and assisted farmers in doing their projections. We've gone into the whole area of farm business groups, whereby there's a two-year farm financial management program dealing with law and all aspects of accounting and decision making and the like. It's a very extensive program.

Our whole staff orientation, both from the home ec side and the extension staff, our management ag rep, has been in this whole area. In fact, I believe that we've been complimented by writers right across Western Canada as being the innovator and leader in this whole area of extension thrust. In fact, so much so, that even the universities in the last couple of years have recognized the needs and have, in terms of their instructional staff, gone into beefing up their whole course studies with expertise in the farm management specialist at the university level.

That has been our major thrust and it continues to be our major thrust in the department.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** What is the manpower and the financial commitment to this program versus the previous years? Has the department increased the manpower and the dollars available to education, or has it remained static, or has it gone down? Where's it at?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, there have been increased dollars flowing into this whole area of farm management. In terms of our thrust, we have increased the farm management staff within the department on a regional basis across the province. As well, our whole thrust in terms of ag reps has been in general more towards the farm management side than it has been on the technical side. That's not to say that we still don't provide a continuum of information in those areas but our major thrust has been on the farm management side, with the increase in staff and training for staff, both ag reps, farm management specialists, and updating in terms of staff training, counselling, the whole area of computerization in terms of having many computers available in pretty well — it will be by the end of this year — pretty well one in every ag rep office to facilitate, I guess basically the demand on the workload of staff to assist producers in financial projections and the like, and the training of our staff to be able to handle that kind of work and to benefit producers.

Work that normally took maybe a whole day can now be done in one to two hours in terms of projections and multiple projections, which would normally take a day or longer.

Those are the areas of increase. I think there's been an increase of about five or six staff in the farm management area, both centrally and in the regions, over what there was, say, five years ago.

To answer the honourable member's question about The Farm Machinery Act, there has to be a letter submitted by the individual asking for the board to investigate the demand for repossession, or the possible repossession of the equipment. The board then does mediate and where the board grants leave to a lien holder to repossess farm machinery and equipment, or refuses leave to a lien holder to repossess farm machinery and equipment, the purchaser or the lien holder, as the case may be, within 10 clear days of the date of the decision of the board, apply to a Judge of the Court of Queen's Bench, (c) in the case of the purchasers, for an order revoking the leave granted to repossess, or in the case of the lien holder, for an order granting leave to repossess. So either one can still appeal to the court if they're not satisfied with the decision of the board.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** Does the department have some sort of mandatory action where people that are going through MACC, whether it be in the Interest Rate Relief Program, or Debt Consolidation, where they're obligated to take some of these financial courses to help them on their way? Is there some sort of mandatory program?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I would put it in this way. There is no mandatory program but I can say that there's strong encouragement.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** Non-mandatory program. On the Portage Action Project, what is the position of the government now vis-a-vis the farm labourer in the vegetable industry? I don't know what the official position is at this point.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, it hasn't changed for the last number of years. — (Interjection) — Pardon me? Something like lupins.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** Mr. Chairman, we did have an excellent LEAP program which, when we were today in the logger's group, also, they were discussing absenteeism and I think the Portage area had an excellent program in the LEAP program where they were assisting workers who had problems. The workers we are dealing with are people with multi problems, whether they be financial, whether they be alcoholic or family-related programs. Unfortunately, this program was deleted. It was a federal-provincial joint program, I do believe. There is no program that has taken the place of this one. There is a program but it's for all workers.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, we do still provide the limited counselling that our staff people can provide. The member is correct, the extent of the type of program

that LEAP did provide was, I'm sure, a loss to some of those in the industry.

Mr. Chairman, the programs to the vegetable industry and services, in 1985, were as follows. Daily transportation service bringing workers to the farms, funded by Employment and Immigration Canada. Training for this year: a personnel management seminar was delivered to 29 vegetable and potato growers. Topics included selection, recruitment, induction, motivation and remuneration. Continuing availability of resources of the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba for any employee assistance program needs that arise, and continued use of inmates from Headingley and Portage on an ad hoc basis.

There were 241 employees on the three farms employing offshore labour in 1985 and — oh yes, the offshore workers totalled 32 in 1985 — the same number anticipated for 1986. The number agreed upon is a joint decision of the Manitoba Farm Workers Association and the growers and is presented to the Provincial and Federal Governments as a joint recommendation. Both levels of government participate in the discussions.

As well there is provision in the seasonal housing in the Federal-Provincial Agricultural Employment Development Agreement, has not been used in the last three or four years, has no request for financial assistance as being received for seasonal housing. The agreement expires March 31, 1986, and your agreement is being negotiated.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** I thank the Honourable Minister for reminding me of one area that I might have overlooked. It is in the area of the housing assistance and because of the small number of growers — three or four or five — you shouldn't expect that there be applications every year. So I would ask the Honourable Minister to leave that particular section in, because it is very important that we have adequate accommodation for those people coming from reserves or areas far away in Manitoba, and this is basically what the funds are used for. It has been used and it will be used again, so we ask that you leave it in the agreement.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, as I indicated, the agreement has expired and we're in the initial stages of renegotiating that agreement at the present time. But obviously, I can't give an ironclad commitment as to how the negotiations will end, but I expect that they will be positive as they have been in the past.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Virden.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** Yes, I'd like to get some comments from the Minister on the demonstration projects that have been put on in recent years. I'm thinking of the pasture projects, the feedlot projects. How many are there and where are they located and some ideas as to what degree they're self-sustaining? If this isn't the area to bring it up, we could bring it up in an appropriate area later on.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, we still didn't have the updated copies and I'm assuming the pasture

projects the member speaks of are not the community pastures?

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** No.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** No, you're talking about the demonstrations that we have. I think what I should do, Mr. Chairman, I did undertake the other night to provide all members of the House with the updated version of the summary of Agri-Food projects. What I will do is I'll send this copy over to my honourable friend and we'll be into that whole area again.

I'm advised that this may be one of the last remaining copies that we've got. We'll try and scare one up and have them in your hands by tomorrow, so that if we don't ask the questions here, there will still be ample opportunity to discuss it in the regions or Agri-Food in the next area or Resolution No. 7 in the Federal-Provincial Agreement. So I'll try and have that information, or at least a copy of the book and then we can go into that detailed discussion when we get to the Federal-Provincial Agreements, if that's agreeable.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** Again, another area I'd like some comments on, maybe some statistics if they've been compiled yet and that is, about a month or two months ago some fuel-dying stations were opened at the border and I see that four have been closed. I'd like some idea as to whether those stations were actually used. How many farmers had access to them — I see the Minister smiling, that must mean not many — how many litres went through, and if any analysis was done to see if fuel that was laid into the farmer's tanks by that process was actually any cheaper than buying it at our local dealers; if that is available now, or sometime when it is available.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, that is I would say, in terms of this whole process, I want to tell my honourable friend, I would hope that he would agree that we would not even attempt to reveal any of that information, and I say that because it did have a major impact on pricing in this province, and I say that quite clearly.

For the first time in about three or four years, did farmers see clearly that differential of the tax forgiveness between their price for purple fuel and the price at the pumps; the price that farmers received clearly reflected that entire differential. For the last three or four years, very few farmers were able to get that differential of the tax forgiveness that the province had provided for farmers over many years, and it was this move that in fact allowed that so-called competition that it did occur.

I want to say to my honourable friend that there were occasions where farmers, as I understand it, received more than the benefit differential by virtue of the fuel purchases that they made.

All borders were given access to — and I can't say whether in fact all of them were used and to what extent that they were used — but the process is still open to any farmer wanting to use it and we've maintained a couple of key points in the process, just to make sure that if there is any further change or shift by the oil companies in the marketplace, that we are

prepared to reopen and continue redying the fuel as we had done during the spring. It did have the desired effect and we are prepared to continue it and expand it, if need be.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** I don't see anything wrong with revealing the number of farmers who actually moved the fuel through there. That's not any trade secret in any fashion, I wouldn't say. I'd also like to remind the Minister that this time last year, sizeable discounts were available to farmers and because of the procedures that happened over the winter, and maybe some of the actions taken by government, caused the companies to withdraw those discounts as of January 1, and not reinstitute them to any extent that I am aware of. I would like his comment in that area because right now — or say as a month ago — we weren't paying any less than we were a year ago, when all the factors were sifted out and the actual dollars had to be paid at the bottom of the invoice.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, during the winter months, we were wondering whether or not the very same point that the member raised about whether or not Manitoba was being singled out for a reduction in the discounting by oil companies because of our discussion with farm groups about doing away with purple fuel and using a different method of rebating the tax forgiveness that the province provides, but we quickly realized that the discounting procedure occurred right across Western Canada and it wasn't just a case in Manitoba. The oil companies were making sure they were getting, what I would say, more than they needed.

I want to say to my honourable friend, I believe that the border points were used fairly extensively and there were some purchases made that far exceeded the 9.2 cents differential on diesel in terms of the cost of transportation and bringing it back to Manitoba.

There were some variations in terms of prices being charged in Manitoba as a result of those moves but there was, I would venture to say, fairly extensive use up until the prices in Manitoba started declining to make up for that differential.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** I'm still not clear as to whether you're going to provide details on how many farmers, because the province spent money to set those depots up, so I think maybe the province has the right to know whether anybody benefitted from it.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I want to tell my honourable friend that I believe the entire farm community benefitted from that process. Whether or not they took advantage of it was in fact, at this point in time, not the major point.

What did occur is that, for the first time in about four years, farmers were provided with the full tax forgiveness in terms of fuel that was being sold at the pumps and the price that farmers were paying. In fact, statistics were that, in terms of the average price differential, it reached about 11 cents a litre which exceeded the 9.2 cents tax differential. It's the first time that's occurred in at least four years.

Mr. Chairman, the honourable member should be aware that the tax forgiveness in terms of purple fuel

is in excess of, I believe, over \$30 million or more per year. That's really what was being absorbed by the oil companies by not allowing that differential. That's how much farmers were losing and the government was losing, because they basically were providing a benefit to farmers that didn't occur. It was being eaten up by the oil companies.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** I'm just not sure what you said when you said 30 million. Is that 30 million that was ripped off or is that the 30 million that the total 8.9 cents and 9.2 cents amounts to the total of 30 million, most of which was getting back to the farmer, maybe not all but most. Now what is the 30 million really?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, on the gallonage of, I believe, a year ago, it was in the neighbourhood of \$35 million, the actual tax benefit to farmers, based on the gallonage of purple fuel used for purchase by the farm community in Manitoba.

Now there's no doubt that there would have been some benefit there in terms of some of the discounting policies, but I can tell my honourable friend that there were many producers on many occasions over the last number of years who came to retail pumps to purchase fuel, paid their full tax, and they could buy it cheaper at the pumps than they could have purple fuel delivered to the door. I mean, that was a common complaint right throughout Manitoba.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** If you lived close to Winnipeg, you could take advantage of that. That was because of a price war going on in here.

But still, I still don't understand what the 35 million is. Is that the total tax forgiveness that was achieved by farmers? Then I'd like the Minister's estimate as to how much he felt wasn't getting to the farmers — 5 million, 10 million — what does he feel was lost in the process?

**HON. B. URUSKI:** That figure that I gave is the total tax forgiveness of the province. I would say that there would be at least a \$10 million loss to the farm community.

Mr. Chairman, I should add that there have been groups of farmers and farm organizations who have argued that they've lost the whole thing. They've lost the actual \$35 million that farmers have. We're saying that, at a minimum of at least \$10 million that we felt, in terms of our surveys that were done by the Department of Finance in this whole area, would have shown at least that much leakage in terms of what the oil companies siphoned off from the farm community.

**MR. G. FINDLAY:** Okay, in that area then, I'd like the Minister to comment on how they did it, because any invoice I've seen has shown the posted price. It then shows the tax being deducted from the posted price, and you end up with the amount that's invoiced out. Now I'd like the Minister's comments on how the oil companies did it.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, very simply, their posted price, whatever they posted, in many instance the price at the pumps with tax, for example, was say

45 cents a litre. The price for fuel delivered to the farm was running at, say, 39 cents or 40 cents for a long time. The differential was basically 5 cents, 6 cents. You're still losing 3 cents there somewhere.

There were many occasions for a number of months when, in fact, the pump price was running at 30 cents a litre and the purple fuel delivered to the farm was 39 cents a litre. Not only were the farmers not getting the tax differential, they were paying nine cents a litre more. So those kinds of arguments as to the losses by the farm community in terms of the tax forgiveness by the province, one can't determine 100 percent what the actual loss was, but clearly there is a lot of room for speculation as to what it really was because, in fact, not only did you lose that amount, but you ended up paying that much more than you could have bought at the pumps. Is that not what can be construed as a genuine rip-off to a captive market?

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The Member for Portage.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** I've never seen a time, Mr. Chairman, when a government had a successful program where they wouldn't divulge the figures. The Minister refuses to divulge how many farmers took advantage of the importation or the gallonage coming in from the United States. So if he won't divulge the numbers, obviously the program was not immensely successful, because not many people took advantage of it. So if it was a successful program, tell us.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The member is making inferences.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I guess for one, our department doesn't keep those statistics. The real proof of the pudding is in the eating, Mr. Chairman. The price came down for all producers in the Province of Manitoba.

I repeat now for the third time that I've gotten up, to say that, for the first time in at least four years, that farmers in terms of the price that they paid for purple fuel received the full benefit of the provincial tax exemption. They had the full benefit. The retail price was here. The farm price exceeded, in most instances, the tax differential, which was 8.6 cents on leaded fuel and 9.2 cents on diesel. That is really the proof of the pudding, and that hadn't occurred for four years running. How much greater proof does the honourable member want?

**MR. E. CONNERY:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister said the fuel for everybody came down in the province. It was only the farmers who are allowed to bring in fuel from across the border and colour it. Now how come the other fuel came down? The government made a very carefully calculated guesstimate as to how much the fuel prices would drop, made that prediction, and it came true because they knew what they were saying, taking credit for something that never happened. It's a sham.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, maybe the Honourable Member for Portage should go back to either mathematics class or some area.

Mr. Chairman, it is only simple arithmetic in terms of the calculation, and I'll explain it to my honourable

friend. For a number of years, and I gave him the calculations as I related to the Member for Virden, for many months in the year of 1985 during the spring and summer, farmers could go to the pumps and buy what is known as clear fuel less expensively than they could have had purple fuel sent to the farms. Clearly, the member would acknowledge that they are not receiving the full benefit of the tax forgiveness from the province.

What occurred is that, at the pump price in the City of Winnipeg and in major retailers around the province during the survey, in the period where we allowed fuel to be brought in from the United States and died, Mr. Chairman, the differential started occurring whereby the retail price was running roughly at 45 cents a litre and the farm price was running at 34 or 35 cents. In fact, it was running at an average of about 11 cents differential per litre based on about — I think the survey was done on about 20 retail outlets around the province and, clearly, for the first time in about four years farmers achieved the full differential. If that isn't a way of outlining what the benefits were, I don't know why the honourable member is so exercised about it.

But I want to tell my honourable friend that I believe that even though oil companies did move in terms of the retail price for everyone, by 9.5 cents by the threat that the Premier made during the election campaign, they did lower the price, but I don't believe they've moved far enough, Mr. Chairman, for all consumers in the province, including the farmers without differential.

I believe that oil companies are still charging the consumers of this province too much in terms of the fuel prices that they are paying. They wanted world prices in oil and their colleagues in Ottawa gave them in revenues \$2.5 billion when they came into office. Now the oil companies can't have it both ways. They were crying for years that the energy policy was detrimental to the oil companies and they wanted world prices in oil. The Conservatives came in, they gave it them; they gave up \$2.5 billion of revenues. The consumers didn't see those benefits, and I believe the oil companies are still, in my mind, overcharging all consumers in this province, not only the farm community.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** That's pure bafflelegab. That Minister knows over there, because of the threat of the First Minister to reduce the price by 9.5 cents a gallon, that the companies took away their bulk discounts. We were getting 6, 7 and 8 cents bulk discounts before that threat came through and they were eliminated.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I don't know what kind of a deal the Honourable Member for Portage had with the oil companies, but I know the Honourable Member for Virden confirmed that the discounting practices of the oil companies were not discontinued this spring. They were discontinued in the fall of 1985. His information is accurate and the end of the discounting occurred not only in Manitoba, because we were concerned that that discounting, and as I told your colleague, the Member for Virden, that discounting practice when we were discussing with farm groups of doing away with coloured fuel in this province so that farmers could go and purchase fuel at the best deal they could, we thought that maybe Manitoba was in

fact being singled out, but that discounting policy occurred months before the member's comments. So one of you get your information straight.

**MR. E. CONNERY:** Mr. Chairman, maybe we could say the Government of Manitoba also hurt the Saskatchewan and Alberta farmers.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** 4.(e)(3) — the Member for La Verendrye.

**MR. H. PANKRATZ:** I just want to go on record stating that I think if anybody should learn to calculate, that would be our Minister because, Mr. Minister, I'd like to indicate to you, the Federal Government has taken off the additional 2.5 cents and I'm paying today more for fuel than I had last year.

It's exactly like the Honourable Member for Portage indicated. I think the Minister of Agriculture should get his figures straight because I think he has cost us money in the agricultural sector.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** I regret, I missed the comments of my honourable friend. I apologize for that. Perhaps he can raise the matter again so that I can devote the kind of attention to his comments that he deserves.

**MR. H. PANKRATZ:** Mr. Minister, I would like to get a response from you on that because the fuel that we are buying today on the farm level, after taking off the additional deduction we got from the Federal Government, we're paying way more than last year for the same fuel. So whichever way you calculate it — I can only calculate it if it costs me a dollar; I mean that's very simple to calculate for me — I don't know how you're calculating it, but I would like to bring that to your attention because the fuel today is costing us more after we are receiving 2 cents for a discount from the feds.

**HON. B. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, I have not even dealt with the question of the federal discounts. I think the honourable member should be aware that the federal excise tax is now just where it was prior to Brian Mulroney being elected. He imposed it and then took it away. The basic calculations that staff made in terms of the differential was that a survey was done at the retail pumps in about 10 or 15 to 20 retail outlets across the province.

The comparison was made to what purple fuel was in fact being delivered to the farms; if that differential in fact was the retail price versus the purple fuel, whether in fact it was the full tax differential there passed onto farmers. For the last number of years that differential was not there as between the retail price of the pumps and that for purple fuel. That's how the calculation was made, based on a sampling of about 15 to 20 service stations in the province. That's how we made those calculations.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Committee rise.

(Committee adjourned to House for a whole House counted vote)

**MR. M. DOLIN:** Mr. Chairman, in the section of Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 to consider the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation, an amendment was moved that the Minister's Salary, the Budget Item 1.(a), be reduced to \$45, the cost of one ton of asphalt paving.

The question was moved by the Member for Pembina, a voice vote was taken on putting the question, and subsequently passed. The Minister of Co-op Development then requested a formal vote be taken on the motion.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Call in the members.

The question before this House is that the question be now put.

**A COUNTED VOTE** was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas, 53; Nays, 0.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The motion on the privilege question is carried.

The motion now before the House is that the Minister's Salary, budget item Line 1.(a) of the Estimates for the Department of Highways and Transportation be reduced to \$45, the cost of one tonne of asphalt paving.

All those in favour of this motion, please stand.

**MR. G. MERCIER:** On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The rules clearly provide for a voice vote first.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The point is well taken. Those who are in favour, say aye. Those who are against the motion, say nay.

In the Chair's opinion, it's nay.

**MR. G. MERCIER:** Mr. Chairman, I would request a formal vote.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Call in the members.

The question before this House is that the Minister's salary, at budget item Line 1.(a) of the Department of Highways and Transportation be reduced to \$45, the cost of one tonne of asphalt paving.

**A COUNTED VOTE** was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas, 25; Nays, 28.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** The motion is defeated.

The hour being 10:00 p.m., what is the will of the committee?

If it is so, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

### IN SESSION

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The hour being 10:00 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:00 p.m. tomorrow. (Wednesday)