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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 5, 1979

Time: 8:00 p.m.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY

SUPPLY — HIGHWAYS

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. Albert Driedger (Emerson): Come to Order, please. We are here to consider the Estimates of Highways and Transportation

1. General Administration — \$1,344,600; 1.(a) Minister's Compensation — \$15,600; Resolution No. 68 — the Honourable Minister.

HON. HARRY J. ENNS (Lakeside): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps just by way of general introduction, I should indicate that it be my wish that we would deal with the two segments of the Department, somewhat separately, that is, the Highway portion of the portfolio as distinct from the operations of the Motor Vehicle Branch. The Registrar of the Motor Vehicle Branch will be with us tomorrow afternoon and proceed. That's a somewhat historic division within the Department in any event.

I must also indicate that we are under some duress in the sense that we received rather short notice for the Estimates; I believe the Opposition initially asked for several other departments and then in rather short notice have asked us and we will do our best.

I think perhaps I would like to introduce senior members of the staff to some of you who may not be familiar with them: Joe Brako of course is I think is familiar to all of you, our Deputy Minister; Mr. Jack Peacock, the Associate Deputy Minister or Chief Engineer; and Mr. Bill Dyck, Chief Administrative Officer.

I'd like to read into the records just a short overview of the coming year for the Department before we proceed into the Estimates. We can have copies of this made available to Members of the Committee as well as to members of the media.

"The highway construction program for the year 1979-80 represents an attempt by the Department of Highways and Transportation to carry out work on those roads and bridges that are most in need of improvement, while at the same time trying to distribute the workload throughout the various regions of the Province. The usual effort has been made to maintain a reasonable balance between grading work, base and pavement construction, and I propose to, in this brief introduction, to simply list some of the highlights of the major projects to be undertaken in the coming year:

7. There will be three new sections of 4-lane divided highway opened to traffic just as soon as paving operations can be completed this summer; they are:

5 ½ miles on Highway No. 7, north of the Perimeter Highway towards Stonewall;

8 ½ miles on Highway No. 12, north of Steinbach; and

8 miles on Highway No. 59, north of Highway No. 44, towards the Grand Beach area.

All of these sections are in very heavily travelled highway corridors, and the work to be done this year is part of a continuing program to provide facilities in these areas that will move the large volumes of traffic more efficiently and with greater safety.

2. The Department also expects to have discussions with municipal officials and affected landowners to be able to finalize its plans and commence acquiring property this year for the proposed 4-laning of Highway 75 south from Winnipeg.

3. Even though the Government of Canada has seen fit to back out of its previous commitment to provide continued financial assistance for strengthening primary highways in Manitoba, the Province is obligated to proceed with this program on its own now that the load limits have been increased. Some of the major strengthening work programmed for this year includes base and pavement construction:

on the Yellowhead Route from Shoal Lake westerly for 20-½ miles; and

some 14-½ miles of Highway 12 from South Junction to west of Piney.

In addition, some more of the older concrete sections on Trans Canada Highway are planned to be overlaid with asphalt pavement this year as part of the strengthening program, as well as

to improve the ride-ability;

15-½ miles are to be overlaid east of Winnipeg; and
some 20 miles are to be done in the vicinity of Portage la Prairie.

Over one-half of the highway program proposed for 1979-80 is made up of work to be done on Provincial Roads, which is indicative of the growing pressures the Department is facing for upgrading and surfacing more of the secondary road network each year. I make note of the fact, that this is perhaps the first time in the Highways' Budget that a greater percentage of the budget is being spent on the PR, or the secondary road system rather than the provincial trunk highways. Not only do the inhabitants of the smaller communities in the Province want roads to travel on, but the continuing abandonment of rail lines in rural Manitoba is accelerating the need to rebuild many of the roads that will have to carry the expected increase in hauling by truck of certain commodities, principally grain and others of course.

In this connection, two items are worth noting:

As well as the many sections of Provincial Road that have been earmarked for grade and bridge construction during the upcoming season, it is intended also to carry out a considerable amount of preliminary engineering and right-of-way acquisition on PRs as a start on upgrading programs in various areas of the province. The program will enable us to provide some 200 miles of paving that are currently served by gravel roads.

The work included in this year's proposed highway program also reflects the continuing emphasis the Department is placing on road improvements in Northern Manitoba. In particular, a considerable amount of rehabilitation work is proposed on Provincial Road 391 southwest of Thompson."

I should add in concluding these very preliminary remarks that the Department has of course undergone some fairly major reorganization in October of this year, with the acquisition of a significant portion, major portion of the responsibilities of the former Department of Northern Affairs, in that the Transportation Division of that Department has been transferred to the now-called Department of Highways and Transportation.

The government air services, the government construction and operation services in the north, including the services of water supplies, the maintenance of water services in the northern communities, along with the maintenance and servicing of some 31 northern airports throughout Northern Manitoba, that serve isolated communities now comes under the jurisdiction of the Department of Highways and Transportation.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that with those few remarks I commend these estimates to the Members of the Committee in the hope that they can be approved and that we can get on with the business of building highways. The main features of the Estimates are, I suppose, apparent to all, that is, no increase in Highways spending this year. The spending is maintained at the level set pretty well last year. I'll be as helpful as I can with some of the figures that are before you in attempting to explain the Reconciliation Statement. The major ones are fairly obvious. For more detailed explanation, I would probably have to seek the assistance of the departmental staff and/or Finance staff to account for some of the smaller details involved in the reconciliation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Members, I understand that the normal practice has been to by-pass the Minister's Compensation which is dealt with at the end of Estimates. We would like to proceed with 1.(b) Administration, under Salaries — the Member for Burrows.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Yes, Mr. Chairman, perhaps more a point of order than going into a debate of this particular item in his Estimates. I think we would be happy to accept the Minister's offer to assist us in tying the in the Reconciliation Statement with his Estimates. Could he perhaps, at this time, or with the assistance of his staff, quickly go over the Reconciliation Statement and point out where specifically in the Estimates each of the various items are plugged in so that we would know at what point we could discuss the various items as shown in the Reconciliation Statement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To the Member for Burrows, is this part of the Minister's Compensation we're discussing here, or are we under Administration?

MR. HANUSCHAK: Yes, and when I'm referring to the Reconciliation Statement in general, in total.

MR. ENNS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I think that's a reasonable request. If we look at the Reconciliation Statement, we find that the last year's stated estimate 1978-79 of our Estimates of some \$160 million as compared to the \$134 million now shown as last year's vote is made up in the following

manner.

Allocation of general salary increase of \$1,167,000 I think is fairly self-explanatory. The transfer from Mines and Natural Resources is one SMY, one person, employee . . .

MR. HANUSCHAK: I'm sorry, transfer from or to?

MR. ENNS: Both. That's why it's a minus.

MR. HANUSCHAK: No, but with reference to the Highways Department, transfer from Highways to Mines, or from Mines to Highways.

MR. ENNS: One SMY transferred from Mines and Natural Resources to Highways.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Okay.

MR. ENNS: During the organization, and then transferred back to Mines and Natural Resources. You know, it's a plus and minus sort of a situation.

MR. BOYCE: More fancy footwork.

MR. ENNS: Now, if we can come to the next item which is, of course, the major item, if we can understand it, that involves with going to bloc funding, the somewhat major portions, some \$28,420,000 of moneys included in there are the substantial sums of money that were normally in my estimates and were shown in the estimates last year that made up the 160 last year as the \$3.5 million contribution that the Department made for the Winnipeg street maintenance grant, the \$15 million contribution that was shown in my Department's last year to the capital construction program for the City of Winnipeg, the \$9.12 million contribution that was shown in these estimates last year for the provincial transit grant made to the City of Winnipeg, as well as additional \$800 thousand that were provided to the innovative transit grants to the City of Winnipeg, the Handicapped Service, the Dial-a-Bus or Dash Bus or some of the other programs that were supported by the Province through my estimates last year in the regular listing of my estimates. That total amounted to some

\$28,,000 and I think it is apparent to the Members it substantially explains the major reason for the difference between \$160 million and \$134 million as you see it on your left-hand column of your Estimates. You take that 28 and add it onto 134 and you get very close to what our situation was.

Transfer of some seven \$7,984; \$600 of that is to the Department of Highways; that is the transportation division, that I just referred to in my closing remarks from Northern Affairs to Highways. The transfer out of the Department is the Northlands Road agreement, which, if you check and look into the Northern Affairs Department, is listed in Northlands Agreement.

Carry-over Capital Authority for acquisition or construction of physical assets. We had cleaned up our mix-up with Carry-over and Capital Authority. This came to us from Northern Affairs with the re-organization of the Department October last. Now, as I indicated, I'd be more than . . . I don't know whether I have it right now, but we can and will accept as notice a further breakdown of that \$1,576,000 and perhaps have it ready for Committee Members tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member from Ste. Rose.

MR. A. R. (Pete) ADAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Last year we had some difficulty in scrutinizing the estimates because the government was in the process of changing the system of bookkeeping into putting all the capital and the current expenditures all together. That is what we were advised last year, and we argued at that time that the capital carry-over should have shown differently than what it was. We had last year \$119,947,700, and the current in '79 was \$160 as the Minister has mentioned, \$160,545,400.00

The idea was to include both capital and operating in the same account, and this gave us a little bit of confusion because we felt that the \$20 million in Schedule B was left somewhat in the air and we find now that it is in fact in the 1979 Estimates where we said it should be all along, last year. Now we find that those figures are, in fact, back into the 1979 Estimates. We argued that the \$20,573,000 should have been shown differently.

What we would like to know so far as this year's concern is — we're on Administration now — I would like to ask the Minister what was the total number of employees? I'm not talking about staff man years now; I'm talking about employees. How many employees did we have working in

January of 1978, and how many employees did we have working for the department in January of 1979?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I'll accept that question as notice if I can, to make sure that the answer that I give to the honourable member is correct. But in answering that question, allow me to indicate for the benefit of the committee members, some other interesting data, that in the year 1969-70, the total staff complement of the Department of Highways in the Motor Vehicle Branch was some 2,218 persons. In the Estimates before us, in the year 1978-79, that has grown to 2,393 persons. So that we have had, in that decade, relatively little or no substantial growth. I don't mind at all complimenting the Department of Highways in terms of the fact that certainly the expansion of the road system has continued even under NDP years, and the responsibilities of the department haven't decreased in terms of additional programs undertaken. There was one noticeable increase. That occurred in the Motor Vehicle Branch between the years of 1971-72 when Autopac was introduced. That year in the Motor Vehicle Branch, the staff complement increased from 232 to 375 because of substantial work that had to be done by the Motor Vehicle Branch in conjunction with the introduction of Autopac.

But aside from that, if I repeat those figures again, and that's, I think, of some interest to the committee, that in the year 1969-70, there were 2,218 people working in the Department of Highways; in the year 1978-79, there were 2,393 people working in the Department of Highways. So, that if I may be permitted to say, the Department of Highways and Transportation has not contributed unduly to what, in some circles, is a matter of concern in terms of government growth and government expansion.

But I haven't forgotten the question asked by the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose. The Department will have those figures available to us some time tomorrow.

I'm sorry, my advice now is, in the sense that if you're asking us what the present staff complement is, that's quite possible, but in the manner and way in which you're asking the question, it doesn't fall within a fiscal year. It would take some compilation and I'm advised that I should advise the honourable member that that would be a suitable matter for an Order for Return.

MR. ADAM: I believe the figure that the Minister gave us last year was 2,753 as the full staff complement for the Department of Highways. Now, I believe the Minister has advised us that it's 2,393, is that correct? Did I understand that correctly for 1978-79?!

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I'm quoting these figures — in the Department of Highways we have, as in many other departments of government, the various categories of employment. We have a very substantial number of employees that are not permanent staff man years, that are on maintenance crews that historically and traditionally work between the months of spring, April, May to November. In addition, there has been a reorganization taking place within the department. Mr. Chairman, I'll have to take that question as notice and undertake to provide that information to the committee.

MR. ADAM: Yes, because I'm sure, Mr. Chairman, that I've looked at it here this afternoon as I was going through the Estimates that we debated last year and the figures I read in there were that the complement of staff last year was 2,753. The Minister has just indicated that it's 2,393. I just want to know where that difference is.

Now, the Minister has indicated that there is was some reorganization. I wonder if the Minister could provide us with an organizational chart to show us just what has happened there insofar as the change in organization is concerned.

MR. ENNS: In what . . .

MR. ADAM: Do you wish me to repeat that?

MR. ENNS: Please.

MR. ADAM: Yes, the Minister has indicated that there has been a reorganization in the Department of Highways. My question was, would the Minister be able to provide us with an organizational chart and what changes have really taken place?

MR. ENNS: Yes, we can undertake to provide the members of the committee with an organizational

chart as the department now stands. I would refer the member to Page 57 of the current Estimates Book. The Resolution No. 9 entitled Transportation Services is substantially the group that have transferred from Northern Affairs to the Department of Highways and Transportation as it is now constituted. That is substantially taking those services and people that were previously working under the jurisdiction of the Department of Northern Affairs, the Government Air Services, the operational and construction people involved in northern Manitoba, principally in the maintenance of the 31 airports I refer to, the staffing of same, the operation of the air radio services, the marine services, operation of the ferries in northern Manitoba, and in the administration and construction of the winter roads programs. That portion of responsibility formerly carried out by the Department of Northern Affairs, is included in this portion of my Estimates now entitled Transportation Services.

That is the extent to which reorganization took place. I should not leave the impression that organization is complete. Obviously, when you bring together these kind of responsibilities, that additional reorganization internally will take place within the department.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose. I have other members, with the concession of the rest of the Committee; the Member for St. Vital, the Member for Elmwood, the Member for Burrows, and then I have the Member for St. Johns. How do you want to deal with it?

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I am wondering if they would yield to me just for a moment, because I just came in for one group of questions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The members that I have on the agenda; do they yield?

MR. CHERNIACK: I appreciate that, Mr. Chairman. . .

A MEMBER: I'm not so sure that I appreciate it, Mr. Chairman, but. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: The fact is that the Minister of Highways and I are both sent here by our constituents to represent the best interests on behalf of Manitobans, and I am sure that the Minister of Highways does not resent my intrusion in this way. I wanted to ask him whether his administrative staff, as presently constituted, is capable of dealing with their current problems or administrative duties.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: I believe that we can answer that in the affirmative. I think that we would be the first to acknowledge that we are concerned about our capability of delivering those services that are new to the department, and I refer again specifically to the responsibilities the department has undertaken that were formerly within the jurisdiction of Northern Affairs.

I must in this instance indicate to the Committee, that one of the major responsibilities, for instance, facing us immediately in October, November, was the successful completion and construction of a considerable network of winter roads, some 700 miles, at a cost of slightly in excess of a million dollars. I can report to the Committee that the Winter Roads System has been introduced in possibly the best way that they have been over a considerable number of years. I don't take all particular credit for that, although a fair amount of it. The fact of the matter is that over the years we are gaining and the communities that are involved in the construction of these Winter Roads are gaining experience and we have been able to, in effect, bring down our per mile costs of the construction of these roads, have brought those roads onstream earlier, and are in fact, well ahead of schedule in moving freight to our isolated communities in these instances.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I'm very pleased to hear how satisfied the Minister is with the administrative achievements of his department. He must realize that the question I asked was in the form of being a loaded question, unless he think that I'm zeroing in on him, I want to assure him that there are a number of other Ministers to whom I intend to address similar questions. They come about, and I asked for permission to intercede amongst my colleagues to speak, when I came in earlier and heard Mr. Adam asking questions about numbers of employees on staff and I heard the Minister respond that he thought that the best way of dealing with that was by way of Order for Return.

I ran away quickly to find the Orders of the Day for February 28, 1979, which indicates that Mr. Adam asked questions by way of Orders for Return of this Minister, No. 17 on persons hired since October 24, 1977; No. 31 on terminations of employment since October 24, 1977, which are Orders that the Legislature ordered to be responded to on April 6, 1978, and I'd like the Minister's explanation for his failure to comply with an Order of the Legislature — 2 Orders. And lest it seem that these are isolated, I think this Minister was also Minister of Public Works at the time, and if necessary, I can find — yes easily — Resolutions 41 and 42, directions to him in regard to the same types of questions on Public Works. So I wonder if the Minister would please explain the lapse by him or his department in dealing with instructions given by the Legislative Assembly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister. **8MR. ENNS:** Mr. Chairman, I think it's entirely inappropriate for the Member for St. Johns to consider that I have, in any way, not been prepared to carry out a request by the Legislature. I think if the honourable member will read further down that same Order Paper, it will indicate that we, as the House Leader has indicated, will also attempt to answer to certain questions asked some considerable time prior to that when, we, in fact, were still Opposition, to the honourable member who, at that time, was part of a government, or to colleagues of whom were part of a government. The House Leader has indicated our preparedness to comply with the request of the Legislature to supply that information. I apologize for the delay in the matter, but a Highway's Minister is a very busy man in the summertime. Much to the chagrin of Members of the New Democratic Party, he is busy building roads and doing other things that don't seem to be that important to the New Democratic Party, but I will comply with that request and the information will be in the hands of the Legislature during the course of this Session.

MR. CHERNIACK: I'd like to point out to this Minister that he can juggle around all he likes with the thoughts of answering Orders for Return — which he's not required to do by the Rules of the House — he could answer them because that's not only his prerogative but he has the power so to do, but I don't think that he can in a cavalier fashion, say, "Yes, we'll get around to dealing with these". This is an Order passed by the Legislature of Manitoba on April 6, 1978, and is all very glib, really, for the House Leader, joined by this Minister to say: "Oh yes, we'll not only do what we were instructed to, but we will even go beyond that and do more". Mr. Chairman, the rules were changed to provide that when formerly Orders for Return were not dealt with during the Session, they lapsed and the rules were changed — and frankly, I don't remember by which government, which political party — but certainly, it was done with the concurrence of both parties. It was planned that way, that Orders should continue to be outstanding until complied with and I don't think that the Minister should have replied to Mr. Adam earlier this evening: "Well, file an Order for Return and that's best dealt with that way", when he knows, and I'm sure knows full well and knew before I brought it to his attention that since April 6 of last year, he did not comply with Orders for Return.

Now, he says he was very busy in the summertime building roads and he says the New Democratic Party doesn't care, you know Mr. Chairman, that's nonsense. What is also nonsense is that he wasn't busy building roads. The fact is, that he had a staff which I trust was not so depleted that they couldn't build roads without him, but he is in charge of the administrative responsibility in reporting to the Legislature. It's not good enough to say he was busy building roads in the summer because he has colleagues and I can list them, if necessary, but it's not apropos of this resolution, who are not building roads this summer, and who also did not reply. So, I am suggesting that maybe the restraints imposed on ministers are such that they can't find the staff that can do this for them, in spite of their promises of last year, or they don't care, or they're embarrassed. I mean, we can think of all sorts of reasons, but the best answer to my question is to file the return.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: The specific question asked in the manner in the way it was asked tonight by the Member for Ste. Rose is different from the Order for Return that is on the Order Paper, and the former Minister of Finance, or minister of any government department who recognizes that if you're dealing with other than the fiscal dates as they apply to our government operation, that calls for a different type of compilation. The order for return is quite specific. You know, I was well aware that the order for return is on the order paper standing. It asks from a particular date, from October, hirings since October, and firings or persons leaving the department since October. That again is different, and is not within the immediate grasp of the Director of Administration to simply pick up. We know the reasons why the questions were asked, why the order for return was asked for and we are, not in a glib way, quite prepared to furnish that information.

I take this note to object though, Mr. Chairman, that the Member for St. Johns attempts, I might say in his usual way, to attribute to other members a course of action when that is not the fact. You know, my reference to the fact that there are orders for returns that his government never

saw fit to respond to, and we will now respond to those orders as well, I think it is not cavalier, it is not out of keeping to point out to members of the committee that it is not unusual, not untraditional and backed with a fair amount of history, that orders for returns from time to time, and specific orders for return from time to time take some time to comply with.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: What is unusual and what is different is the change in the rules. What was done in the past by Conservative, New Democratic and probably Liberal Governments was that once the session ended, the orders for return lapsed and they were not responded to. But the rules have changed and now they have to be responded to. So that it is not the same thing and as I say, the Minister can by all means, if he wants to, deal with all sorts of information, factual information that was requested in the past and not answered. But is he going to tell us when these orders for return, two of which he is still responsible for, when they will be filed? Can we ask for an undertaking or is that too much?

MR. ENNS: I will give the committee the undertaking that that information will be made available to the committee within a week.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, that's great, Mr. Chairman. I hope I get the same response from his colleagues, and action.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to go back for a moment to the response that the Minister made in reply to a question from my colleague on the reconciliation statement. He mentioned the amount of \$16,300 as being one staff man year and I didn't fully understand his explanation of that. I wonder if he would mind giving it to me again, please.

MR. ENNS: You are referring specifically to the item of \$16,300 with regard to the transfer of a staff man year from Mines and Natural Resources to Highways during the reorganization and then the transfer back to Mines and Natural Resources of \$16,300, the same person again. As I said in my introduction, there may be a requirement for me to check with Finance just how and why that figure appears in this way but whether it was caught up in between a fiscal year end or just what that explanation is. In any event, it involves one staff person who was moved over from Mines and Natural Resources into our department.

Okay, I think I'm getting closer to it now. However, he didn't stay. The transfer went back to Mines and Natural Resources. If he would have stayed, that \$16,300 would have been a plus; the brackets would have been off of that and that would have been an addition in the reconciliation add-up. I'll undertake to give the Member for St. Vital a fuller explanation of that if I can.

MR. WALDING: If the Minister needs a little more time to find it, that's fine with me. I will await his reply. It is simply that the way the reconciliation statement states the fact, it appears to show that one person has been transferred from Highways to Mines and Natural Resources. If there was a change from one department to the other and then back again, this presumably would not show because one would cancel the other out. However, I await the Minister's reply to it.

I would like, while we are still under Administration and before we move on, to ask the Minister another question that he might have to take as notice. I recall, Mr. Chairman, sitting in that chair that you are now sitting in for two or three years and listening to members of the opposition at that time discussing Highways. While they were not too critical generally, they did have one specific complaint that seemed to go from year to year and that was that the amount of the budget that was spent on Highways was a declining amount. I have done a little bit of arithmetic here, even giving the Minister the benefit of the \$28 million that is transferred to Municipal Affairs, it would appear that about 9 percent of the budget for the coming year is being spent on Highways. I would like to ask the Minister if he can give an assurance to his own colleagues that a larger amount of the budget is being spent on Highways this year than last year and the year before.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I can indicate very clearly that more money is being spent on Highways in this budget than was spent the year before. I think I indicated in my opening remarks that there has not been an increase over last year's budget, that in effect it is pretty well the same with a slight reduction. That is yet to be determined, depending on some of the agreements that we can make, hopefully, conclude with Ottawa in seeking some additional supports. As you know, they have

withdrawn from the Highway Strengthening Program, which is reflected in this budget by some \$6 million. However, one lives in hope that there may be some help forthcoming, either in lieu of rail line abandonment programs or others. What should not be forgotten in this program is the involvement of The Northlands Agreements, particularly in its effect on our capability of providing improvement to the road system in northern Manitoba.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister answered very well a question I did not ask. I would like now to ask him the same question again: Can he give an assurance to his colleagues that a larger percent of the budget is being spent on Highways this year than last year.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, with the kind of support that the Member for St. Vital is demonstrating for the necessity for allocating the kind of funds for highway construction, I have every confidence that the kind of money will be forthcoming.

I should indicate to the Honourable Member and to the Members of the Committee, that in overall terms in the years '69-70, the year that the previous administration came into office, highway spending accounted for some 16 percent of the total revenue of the province. In the ensuing eight years, that slid down to some 8 percent and while I have, and the Department, and the government has been attacked for inordinate spending of public funds on highway construction even as late as this afternoon by my friend, the Honourable Member for Elmwood, what we are attempting to do is come back from 8 percent to 9 percent of the total revenue. So if you have that overview, I think it puts it in its proper perspective. I repeat in '69-70, 16 percent of government revenue went for highway construction, we are now at the figure of 9 percent.

MR. CuAIRMAN: Is the member finished?

MR. WALDING: Yes, no further questions on this, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask some questions of the Minister, and he is sort of dealing with one of the points, namely that I believe it's true to say —and I've said it and I stand to be corrected — but I believe that this is probably the No. 1 priority of the present administration. Highways construction is considered to be the most important program of the Lyon administration.

I want to ask the Minister again if he can explain that figure, because when I look at the summary — and he did explain it earlier but it's sort of hard to reconcile some of these figures again — when you look at the original summary at the beginning of the Estimate book, you get the impression that Highways has increased by .01 percent, but I think the Minister said that there were additional funds transferred in from . . . was it Northern Affairs?

MR. ENNS: Northern Affairs.

MR. DOERN: And what other Department? Where do we get the figure of \$175 million?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I believe the \$175 million that the Honourable Member for Elmwood is referring to does not come from anything I have said as a result of commenting on my Estimates, but rather a statement made to a gathering — convention of the Manitoba Trucking Association — recently, some two weeks ago, some three weeks ago, that was reported in the media, at which time I was indicating to the members of an association that is vitally concerned with the provision of roads and highways that the business of providing good transportation does not come cheaply to the public sector, that some \$175 millions of dollars will be spent in this year in doing just that.

Now that was not a reference to my Estimates, certainly not a reference to the new construction program for the year '79-80, but it was a reference in global terms of the kind of public dollars that are spent in this province in the provision of providing expanding and improving highway and road system and its ancillary services, which includes the city's contribution, which includes our contribution to the city, which includes the \$80 million of maintenance that we spend on snow removal, which includes the safety, de-icing programs that we carry on in that maintenance program, which in other words includes the total effect which we support as a rule on a 50-50 basis whether we go along with the city in the improvement of such major exchanges, bridges within the City

of Winnipeg which don't come totally under the Department of Highways but we co-operate with them, as well as grade separations.

In other words, I was saying to the delegates assembled at the Trucking Association that the cost to the public of providing a transportation and road network does not come cheaply, that it runs in the area of \$175 million. I don't blame the person covering the event, the media, for seizing on that statement as a possible reflection or indication of what in fact my specific budget was going to be, but I would ask the honourable member to also credit me with knowing that a month or several weeks in advance I would not be, with the Estimates not yet before me and printed, would not be specifically referring to the Estimates as you now see them.

MR. DOERN: So the Minister is saying that the reporter did not understand his statement or that the Minister's statement wasn't clear?

MR. ENNS: The reporter believed that I was going to build \$175 million worth of new roads this year which would have represented an inordinate increase in my new road construction.

MR. DOERN: And also referring to that particular article which — I'm quoting from one in the Free Press of February 10th to your speech to the Trucking Association — it said that, "your statement indicated a 9 percent increase over the \$160.5 million approved for highways in the year ending March 31st." So you're saying that is not a correct interpretation of the amount of moneys that you had available.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, the facts that are laid out before you in the Estimate Books are the correct interpretation or the correct facts in terms of the Highway Estimates. I really find it difficult, Mr. Chairman, at the best of times to argue or defend Estimates based on newspaper reports.

MR. DOERN: Then I would ask the Minister, in terms of the Estimates then, looking at the raw figures from last year to this year, the suggestion is that there was a .01 percent increase in the total budget of the department, is that correct?

MR. ENNS: That's correct.

MR. DOERN: What was the comparable increase last year over the previous year?

MR. ENNS: Last year's increase I believe was in the order of 8.7 percent, or roughly between 7 and 8 percent, I'm advised in terms of actual new construction. Now, again we're not necessarily talking about an increase within the departmental but in terms of dollars allocated for the new construction program.

MR. DOERN: Can the Minister indicate in this fiscal year and in the last fiscal year, in terms of new highway construction or I guess just new highway construction, new extensions, etc., and secondly, maintenance of highways, how many more millions of dollars there was and what percentage that was? If we just look at that aspect, constructing roads or repairing roads . . .

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I have no desire not to proceed with the manner and way in which the Estimate discussion is going except that the member is now asking for specific questions on which there are specific resolutions. We have the resolution pertaining to the actual construction of provincial trunk highways, provincial roads and related projects before us in Resolution 6 as well as the amounts with corresponding last year's amounts shown in the lefthand column for the maintenance budget and I would ask some guidance from other members of the Committee as to whether or not we shouldn't proceed in a reasonably orderly fashion in the discussion of these Estimates. I might even find concurrence for that belief from the former Chairman of the Committee who . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Rock Lake on a Point of order.

MR. HENRY J. EINARSON: Mr. Chairman, on a Point of Order. I would I think we've given considerable leeway listening to honourable members opposite this evening, but I find that the Member for Elmwood now is dwelling on anything but administration and is getting on to resolutions that can very well deal with his last question on Resolution No. 4, Maintenance of Highways and so on, and I think that is the area in which he can pose his question. But I believe if we are going

to carry on in this fashion we're going to be repetitious throughout the whole Estimates, so I suggest Mr. Chairman, the member is out of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Rock Lake's point is well taken. I think under Section 6, Resolution 73, we have the construction of provincial trunk highways. I allowed a certain amount of leeway to have the Reconciliation Statement being perused. If we can stick either to that or to Administration — the Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Well, just on the point of order, Mr. Chairman, I believe that it is in order to ask for the priorities or the thrust of the government under Administration to attempt to determine the importance of the department and the thrust of the department, and that can sometimes be done in general terms and sometimes in specific terms.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The way my interpretation is that that comes under the Minister's Compensation which is dealt with at the end of the Estimates and I've allowed the leeway, like I said, for the Reconciliation Statement to be involved brought in by the Member for Ste. Rose. If we can stick to that or to the Administration I think some of the other items are covered specifically as we go along. The Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Following those questions, I would ask the Minister, since he presumably understands the questions which are embarrassing to his colleagues, that perhaps what he could do — (Interjection) perhaps what he could do is answer those as he sees fit under those particular categories.

My point is this, Mr. Chairman, and my question is this: I am interested in the millions of dollars of increase in road construction and the percentage of increase because I believe that this department is, in fact, the No. 1 priority of this government and I would like to see those figures brought forward, given in clear terms, and admitted to. If Highways are the first priority of the government, let the Minister defend that priority.

MR. ENNS: I have no difficulty with priorities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the Member for Elmwood finished? Order please. Is the Member for Elmwood finished?

MR. DOERN: All right, I'll raise my questions later again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The Member for Burrows.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Yes. Mr. Chairman, would the Honourable Minister clarify some staff figures which he had given us earlier this evening? With reference to '69-70 he gave us a figure of 2,218 , and '78-9, 2,393. Now my question is, what does this figure represent? Approved staff man years or . . . ?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Yes. Mr. Chairman, those figures represent actual staff man years which I think is the same language as approved, actual staff man years, and I should point out that I did not have at the time — this was a general information book prepared for me some time — the figures do not include this present set of Estimates, '79-80. The last figures were '78-79, last year's.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Yes, that brings me to the next question. What are the approved staff man years for '79-80?

MR. ENNS: Our approved staff man years in this year are 2,998, or rather that was the situation '78-79. Now that's on the adjusted vote. Now that is further complicated in the '79-80 where we have the inclusion of the proponent of Northern Affairs when I came into the department. The approved or actual SMYs in this set of Estimates is 2,995 accounting for a slight reduction from the adjusted vote of '7879.

MR. HANUSCHAK: I see. So if I understand the Minister correctly, the adjusted figure for '78-79 of 2,998 which is an increase of 605 over the 2393 figure that he gave us previously, that would make allowance for the reorganization of the department taking in Northern Affairs and so forth

as if it had been part of the department from Day One of that fiscal year.

MR. ENNS: That's right.

MR. HANUSCHAK: That's the adjustment. So, then Mr. Chairman, it would seem that this department was one which did not in any way assist the Minister responsible for restraints and cutbacks in reducing the Civil Service by 1800, 2800, whatever the figure was that was quoted because, you know, given the size of the Civil Service and only a reduction of three, so there wasn't much of a contribution toward restraint from the Highways Department by way of a reduction in the Civil Service.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: That's correct.

MR. HANUSCHAK: I see. So then the reduction must have occurred elsewhere but not in Highways.

MR. ENNS: That's right. That's our policy decision.

A MEMBER: They haven't found it anywhere else, either.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the Member for Burrows finished?

MR. HANUSCHAK: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We would have to question the Minister a little more at length on these particular figures because the figures he gave us last year were definitely 2,753, and I could read the paragraph if he wishes but it's on Page 1357 in the fourth paragraph in which he states that the total is 2,753, and tonight he tells us that the total for 1978-79 is not 2,753 but 2,393, for a difference of 360 staff-man-years. I'd like to know first where this discrepancy comes in, and also would like to ask the Minister how many people were transferred from Northern Affairs with the reorganization.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I have already undertaken to provide the member with this kind of information, detailed information. I should point out that, in using some of the information from a general information book that is obviously, if it's dating back to 1969, of some age, we have had so many different ways of looking at it. I am advised that, for instance, those figures that I was referring to in a general comparative sense were payroll figures, not necessarily related to staff-man-years, approved or unapproved or what have you but just a general comparison that the department provided for me as a way of general information to, in general terms, state the size of growth of the Civil Service within the Department of Highways. Now, members opposite have, and there are enough members opposite that have experience that recognize that with a complement of that size to have several hundred vacancies or unfilled staff-man-years provided for but not necessarily filled in a given term, if you are taking, on the one hand, actual payroll figures and comparing them to approved staff-man-years you are really talking apples and oranges. But I believe for the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose, to get back to his initial question which I undertook to provide him the information with, was the personnel on staff and asked for within these Estimates, as compared to a year ago; and in addition to that, the commitment that I made to the Member for St. Johns to provide the information that's standing on the Order for Return on the Order Paper. If the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose will accept that as a commitment . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I am just wondering, Mr. Chairman, when we will be getting this information. We will not be able to get it on an Order for Return, that's just about out if we have to go by

the last Orders for Return that I filed last year. We'd like to know the actual number of employees from January to January, to ask from March to March. The fiscal year is March 31st.

MR. ENNS: So would you be . . . ?

MR. ADAM: That will be difficult because . . .

MR. ENNS: No, it's easier for us March 31st.\$

MR. ADAM: We'll be through the Estimates by then, hopefully, we will have gone through the entire Highway Estimates by March 31st, I hope. And we're being asked to . . .

MR. ENNS: My Director of Administration advises me that we will have that information for you some time tomorrow.

MR. ADAM: Oh, well, that will be nice. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes. I would like to ask the Minister how many vacancies did we have last year and how many vacancies are there now?

MR. ENNS: Full-time or part-time? Mr. Chairman, we have to accept that kind of a question as notice, as well. Perhaps if I can, and I'm not wishing to in any way sidetrack or refuse to respond to these questions, but again we're dealing with a complement of people of over 2,000 employees, one of the larger departments in the government service, if you will allow the administrative officers to provide that kind of information we will see whether we can't provide that kind of information for you some time, perhaps this time tomorrow.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, we had no difficulty getting that information last year. We got the number of vacancies and the number of vacancies that had been filled, and so on, and I'm just wondering why we're not able to get those figures now.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that last year the request was met section by section within the divisions. We did not provide it in the form in the way that the honourable member is asking for it today. We can attempt to go back and total that up; it will require a bit of staff work but we have undertaken to try and do that for the honourable member tomorrow. I might say if we do that would that then suffice to do it or will we then still want to go section by section and ask for the occupied and unoccupied staff positions in every section of the Estimates.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, if we could get a sheet showing us in each department how that breaks down tomorrow, that would be nice. It would save us a lot of trouble.

MR. ENNS: We will do our best to provide that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ADAM: I asked the member previously how many employees had been transferred from Northern Affairs. I wonder if that information is available tonight or not.

MR. ENNS: About 242, I am advised.

MR. ADAM: Yes, then that would indicate, if that is correct, I come up with the figure of 245, which makes a difference of 2,753, that the Minister indicated was on staff last year — not 2,393 but 2,753, and difference of 245. I'm just wondering if that is the increase. Has there been any other increase besides that?

MR. ENNS: I would think, Mr. Chairman, that the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose has just put his finger on it. That likely is what has taken place.

MR. ADAM: And the 2,393 is an incorrect figure that the Minister gave us awhile ago or . . . ?

MR. ENNS: I would have to beg the indulgence of the Committee. I should have explained that

when I referred to those earlier figures. They were figures given to me by the department for comparative purposes that do not necessarily bear a true relationship to the terminology that we now use — staff-man-years, approved in actual staff-man-years. These were figures, I am advised by the administrative officer, taken off payroll counts and could have been taken at different times of the year. In other words, they were not meant to stand up, actually, in this kind of a discussion.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, I would ask the Minister, he mentioned that last year there was an approximate increase of 8 percent over 1977. Did that include — the 8 percent — did that include the capital carry-over — the \$20 million, that was presumably already spent?

MR. ENNS: I think if the honourable member recalls that was part of the problem of last year's discussion on the Estimates — everybody was looking for the capital carry-over which we didn't have in the Department of Highways. It was, in the change-over of accounting procedure, allowed to lapse or it was in fact wiped out. It was loan authority, capital loan authority, which the department was no longer authorized to avail itself of and my Deputy Minister advised me that last year we had no capital authority, so consequently could use no capital authority, so that the 8 percent in fact was new money added to the departmental estimates last year.

MR. ADAM: Last year in Acquisition/Construction Physical Assets — I don't know if I should bring that out in Administration or not — there appears to be a difference of some . . . We're still in reconciliation now, the Statement of Reconciliation, there is \$1,576,000, as opposed to previous estimates. It's not in the reconciliation but it's up on Line 8 of last year's estimates, and it shows \$16,054,000.00. There is a difference of about \$14 million or \$15 million in that Acquisition of Physical Assets there. Could the Minister elaborate on that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wonder if I could suggest to the Member for Ste. Rose that he deal with it under that section, or do you want to deal with it now?

MR. ADAM: Well it is in the reconciliation chart.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have allowed it to be discussed. Does the Minister want to deal with it now?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, that substantial difference amount is involved in the transfer to the bloc funding to the City of Winnipeg, the urban assistance and the capital construction grants made available to the City of Winnipeg under that vote last year.

MR. ADAM: Is the Minister saying that that figure is brought back into the \$28 million?

MR. ENNS: That's right.

MR. ADAM: Is that what happened?

MR. ENNS: That's right.

MR. ADAM: And part of that \$28 million is transferred partly in Winnipeg — partly, not all. Is that the entire amount of \$28 million ?

MR. ENNS: All of it.

MR. ADAM: All of it?

MR. ENNS: All of it is transferred out of the Department of Highways in a bloc grant in that \$28 million reconciliation figure, part of the figures that were shown last year, as in this case, in these estimates.

MR. ADAM: Well, I understood that it was in the order of \$0 million last year and there had been over-expenditures of \$2 million, and that the Minister was asking for \$15 million last year for the City of Winnipeg.

MR. ENNS: No, I think I have already read that into the record. That \$28 million includes the \$3.5

million per lane mile maintenance grant that was contained in these \$16 million estimates shown to you. That includes a \$15 million capital construction grant to the City of Winnipeg; it includes a \$9,120,000 urban transit assistance grant under the obligation of assisting the City with their deficit position in transit, as well as some \$800,000 for the innovative transit grants made to the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Chairman, just in an attempt to be helpful to the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose, I believe I indicated that we can undertake to, perhaps on a separate sheet, show these items in a clearer form, but I assure the honourable member that that is contained within the Reconciliation Statement, the \$28 million listed as being transferred out of the Department of Highways to the Department of Municipal Affairs.

MR. ADAM: Then we'll get a breakdown of what the \$28,420,000 comprises. Was it for roads, for transit, for whatever.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Yes. I might indicate. I've read it into the record now twice and this listing that I gave you is complete to the dollar. I will do it one more time.

MR. ADAM: It's there? It's in?

MR. ENNS: It's in the record. I've just read it into the record. And that accounts for the \$28,420,000. as shown in the reconciliation statement item.

MR. ADAM: That's fine. How much supplementary supply was required last year?

MR. ENNS: Well, I'm advised that we have asked for no supplementary supply in the Department of Highways.

MR. ADAM: Repeat that, sir.

MR. ENNS: That information is not available to me at this time. Perhaps I can take that as notice and see whether we can supply it tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member from Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Did I hear the Minister correct to say that there was no supplementary requirements last year?

MR. ENNS: The Department of Highways spends the money that the Legislature authorizes it to spend and seldom spends more than that. We try to spend pretty well what we're authorized to spend. But in the rigidity that is sometimes built into the manner and way which government does things, it is, you know, quite possible that in a particular vote the necessity for some supplementary supply might well have taken place. But, in total, I speak fairly authoritively, that the overall money supplies voted to the Department of Highways and Transportation was not exceeded. Now there may well have been some supplementary supplies required because of the method of bookkeeping. We do find ourselves in several instances doing work for other agencies such as Manitoba Hydro, principally, where we have to secure the funds to do it. It is then and the gross accounting aspect of it shows a demand for supplementary supply over expenditure for Hydro's purposes. It then, when it gets reimbursed, when the government gets reimbursed by Hydro for that work, then it evens out. We have in the last few years undertaken several major contracts for Manitoba Hydro in the North. I can think of one contract amounting to the neighbourhood of a million dollars for the provision of road work, specifically for Hydro associated with some of their northern Hydro projects.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member from Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes, that wouldn't show up in the estimates, then?

MR. ENNS: NO.

MR. ADAM: What about the supplementary supply? Where would that be shown as being spent?

how would that show up?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman. I think the matters of supplementary supply are dealt with the Estimates of Finance. He has to account for the supplementary and special warrant monies that have been voted.

MR. ADAM: I have a figure of \$2.7 million as being required last year and I'm just wondering if the Minister anticipates having to go to supplementary supply again this year or is he cutting it short on these requests for \$136 million and having to go to supplementary supply during the summer.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, the nature of highway construction is such that given good weather and a good construction season, it's quite conceivable that rather than to stop five hundred feet short of paving a road in the Constituency of Ste. Rose that I would permit the contract to be finished but that may result in an overexpenditure and I may then have to go to supplementary supply or ask for special warrant. Those kind of things, of course, show up in the following year and to be then held accountable for. We have another item that we cannot control. We do our best to estimate the expenditure but certainly an item such as snowplowing, for instance, cannot be rigidly fixed by us. We account for that in our maintenance budget, a difficult year, a heavy year, a heavy snowfall year, not unlike the kind of estimate procedure that the Department of Mines and Natural Resources undertakes when they put in a figure for fire fighting, for instance, which can change radically as a result of the kind of season we have. In the Department of Highways we've been able to, over the years, come very close with our estimating, so that I can say again, I won't use these figures because somebody's going to take me to task for them because they may not jive to assent to other prepared printed estimates. But the record of the Department of Highways and Transportation is admirable in the sense that it has operated, as a rule, very religiously within its approved budget. There have been only minor occasions where we have had to exceed the budget and have had to resort to supplementary supply or special warrant.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member from Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes, am I clear now that the \$160 million that we had in the estimate book last year is reconciled in the 1979 on the left side of our estimate book.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: I think, I'm clear. And, if I'm clear, maybe the Member of Ste. Rose will be clear.

MR. ADAM: If he'd give us a good explanation of why he wouldn't put it in the '79 estimates last year, that's what we're getting at. It shows up there now.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's difficulty and it's a difficulty that all of us have, including the Minister on occasion, in reconciling my own estimates but we undertaken major reorganization within the Department in the inclusion of those functions already described from Northern Affairs. In addition to that are complicating factors such as shared programs that we work together with Ottawa. A major one in that division being the agreements that we have with the Northlands Agreement which we have to again show in gross accounting form and then wait for recoveries accruing back to us. And, I might say, they don't come back to us, they come back to the general revenues of the government, as well as such changes of programs that we have undertaken with Ottawa in the past few years, such as the Highway Strengthening Program of which, while it has a net effect of some \$6 million on us, there is nonetheless still a one year carryover of some \$8 million of indexing that we're still recipient of in this year's program.

MR. ADAM: Has there been any other increase in staff outside of those transferred from Northern Affairs?

MR. ENNS: The one area within the Department that we have endeavored to increase staff and will continue to do and that is in the area of planning. My advice is that that staff has been minimal, an increase of one or two persons. My deputy minister advises me that in total we have increased by one in planning. I think honourable members on both sides of the House will appreciate the fact that one of the areas of concern to us all is in the planning aspects of highways. All too often

development projects both of small or larger nature are held up because our inability to have far in advance the clear plans drawn up as to what kind of an intersection we plan at that major highway crossing or what kind of land control and reserves we need to place. Unfortunately, in the absence of knowing precisely what the future plans are, our only protection in the department is to place control lines on development and effectively blocking development in those areas where we know. In the future we will require additional land for additional improvements to the road system. So, I don't mind admitting to the honourable members opposite, it's a priority within the Department to increase our capability of speeding up our planning process. It's a long answer to your question, Honourable Member of Ste. Rose. We've increased the staff by one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I'd like to ask the Minister, this transfer from Northern Affairs' I believe the Northern Affairs were not constructing roads to the same standards as is the Department of Highways. In other words, they may not have had a 25 foot top or whatever. If they could get away with a 20 foot top, they would do it. I'm just wondering what are the ...

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, if I may interrupt. I think again, we are now beginning to delve into specific areas of the estimates which quite correctly would come under the various items listed in the estimates. In this case you could make that request in the transportation division that is involved in the delivery of this service in the North or indeed under our general construction program.

MR. ADAM: Where will it show?

MR. ENNS: In a number of resolutions. Resolution 3 which talks about planning and design. You know, are we planning and designing roads appropriate to the North or in the actual carrying out of the construction program.

MR. ADAM: I'll defer my question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Section 9. The Member for Ste. Rose, I think covers the Manitoba Winter Roads area.

MR. ADAM: I'll defer my question until we get to another area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member from Burrows.

MR. HANUSCHAK: When they transferred the \$28 million to Municipal Urban Affairs, how many staff man years did that transfer include?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: I'm advised that it includes no transfer of staff as far as the Department of Highways is concerned.

MR. HANUSCHAK: The capital grant, whether it was the per lane mile grant, or the transit grant, had no administrative function for the Department of Highways. It was merely a place that the government of the day, and I believe carrying on in the same manner that the previous administration had a place in the estimates where that grant money was shown as being provided to the city.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member from St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Can I ask the Minister whether any special warrants issued for highways since last April 1st.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: I'm advised that there was a special warrant or some special warrants issued but we would have to take the question as notice as to the amount, the specific purpose.

MR. WALDING: I'd appreciate that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Of course, Mr. Chairman I suggest that the Minister should have a reasonably good recollection of special warrants because he had to get an Order-in-Council approved in cabinet. A special warrant has to be approved by cabinet. This was not something done without the direct involvement of the Minister. I think that that point should go on the record, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister was involved in getting approval for a special warrant. —(Int)— For the benefit of my friends across the table, the point that I am making is that the Minister seems to have difficulty in recalling whether or not and the amount of the special warrants.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could I ask the members please to direct their comments to the Chair.
The Member from Burrows.

MR. HANUSCHAK: For the benefit of the Honourable Member for Minnedosa, I simply wanted to put the point on the record that one would think that the Minister would be able to give us at least a ballpark figure, a general indication of the approximate amount of the special awards that were approved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: I'll pass for now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1(b)(1)—pass; 1(b)(2)—pass; 1(c)(1) Computer Services—pass — Salaries — the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, I wonder, there is only a slight increase there so I presume that there isn't any, except increase in salaries is about all. Could the Minister advise if Computer Services still handle in-service, or is that contracted out? Or is that done by another department?

MR. ENNS: I am advised that Data Services, formerly, or still of MTS, provides that computer in-service.

MR. ADAM: It still does? The Manitoba Telephone System provides that service?

MR. ENNS: Right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted an explanation of what this section is and what it does.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, a good portion of the program is involved in what we call the RDS Program.

MR. WALDING: Which is?

MR. ENNS: It is a computerized system whereby — it is a very substantial aid in the plotting, in the laying out of highway design and profiles. I don't believe that in this system that we have the — although we have an involvement here with the Motor Vehicles Branch. . . I would say most of this is involved with respect to the RDS Program for Highways. It provides support to all departmental programs and other government agencies and the general public. If I can read you the general literature: To provide the department with a co-ordinated administrative support service specializing in such areas as operational support, finance, personnel, central records, and other related computer services with other aspects of government. Within the Department of Highways itself, we have an in-house capability program, not the computer hardware, of the program that I referred to, known as the RDS. What does that really stand for? Road Design System.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister told me first of all that this department had to do with technical design work of highways. Then he went on to add in a number of other functions. Can he maybe expand on that a little and tell me if that is split half-and-half or is it mostly road design, or is he talking more of departmental payroll and finance and a few other things that he mentioned?

MR. ENNS: Principally it is the latter description that fits the services provided under this vote. It provides for staff programmers, keypunch operators, etc., equipment expenses for Highways Division computer systems. Highways has its own remote terminal with printers and does its own keypunching that ties in with the data banks that MDS stores for us. It gives the department a remote access to the main computer and better control over programming and computer operation. Whenever possible, the department takes advantage of systems that have already been developed by other highway jurisdictions, resulting in substantial savings in development costs. And that particular program, The Highway Design Program, RDS, is that kind of a program. It is a computerized design system that has been developed and the costs are shared by being a member to a growing network of states and some provinces now.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the \$83,000 that it is proposed to spend on Other Expenditures for the coming year represent only computer time, or is there terminal rental or other costs involved in the Other Expenditures?

MR. ENNS: My information would be that this is principally the costs of consumable items, paper, tapes, etc. which were previously charged back to each section. It is just truly Other Expenditure costs involved in the operation of this kind of a section.

MR. WALDING: Can the Minister tell me how many people are involved in the \$248,000.00?

MR. ENNS: Thirty-eight, which is the same as last year.

MR. WALDING: Is that 38 staff man years, or 38 people?

MR. ENNS: Staff man years.

MR. WALDING: How many people would that represent, Mr. Chairman. .

MR. ENNS: We list no vacancies.

MR. WALDING: Can the Minister tell me approximately how many dollars worth of computer time would these 38 people use in the coming year?

MR. ENNS: I'm sorry, perhaps I could just read a correction into the record. We were looking at the wrong section. The numbers of persons involved in this section are 16, which is the same as last year. And the second question was as to the amount of actual computer time purchased. I would have to defer to the staff for some information on that. Roughly about \$50,000.00. We don't have time figures attached to that; that is just an expenditure.

MR. WALDING: Is that approximately \$50,000 part of the \$83,000, Mr. Chairman?

MR. ENNS: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Burrows.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Mr. Chairman, so we have a better appreciation of what this program is about, is this the machine into which the Minister feeds the 1977 election results into one end and the road design systems come out of the other?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, that is a facetious question and I refuse to answer on the grounds that it may be incriminating.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1(c)(1) — the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: There were some questions asked about staff man years in this department. We will be getting a report tomorrow to cover all this, I assume?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister. Is that the indication?

MR. ENNS: Yes, I indicated that. I am looking at my staff to see whether or not we can deliver

but we will attempt to deliver that, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is the Member for Ste. Rose finished?

MR. ADAM: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1(c)(1) Salaries—pass; 1(c)(2) Other Expenditures — pass. We'll leave the item now and go on to Resolution Number 69, Management Services and Engineering:
2(a) Operations and Contracts, (1) Salaries and Wages. The Member for Virden.

MR. MCGREGOR: Inasmuch as, Mr. Chairman, we are making pretty good time, I am just wondering, have you got a target date for our so-called pink papers, blue papers of construction finished and the proposed . . . because we might well in a day or two be down past where that's coming in. I know the Minister got rushed into this. Is there a target date that we would have that, because that's the one I always look at and wondered how many votes I have lost or maybe . . . I'll gain some through it.

MR. ENNS: hopefully, as I indicated at the outset . . .

MR. MCGREGOR: I didn't notice. I was listening and I missed it if you mentioned it.

MR. ENNS: . . . to the Honourable Member for Virden, that should be available not for another couple of weeks, another week anyway. We have just — probably two weeks in terms of the kind of detailed work that involves in marrying it together with the carry-over programs from last year. It gets to be quite a complicated list and I was asked on rather short notice to present these Estimates at this time.

MR. MCGREGOR: In that case, Mr. Chairman, we will likely be past the Estimates before we see that. Then is there a come-back, or is that . . .

MR. ENNS: There is always a come-back to the Minister.

MR. MCGREGOR: If I got a couple more miles, I would like to say something nice to the Minister and say otherwise if I don't get anything. But in this case, maybe that is what you are doing. I'm sorry to intrude it on that, but it seems funny going through them without that in front of us. Okay, I accept it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, are there any changes in the tendering procedures in that? The Specialized Functional Support Services tendering.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, there has been no change at all in the manner and way in which the department has over the years drawn up its requirements for any of the kind of work that we are engaged in in the kind of tendering process that we engage in.

MR. ADAM: Are there any changes at all in this area?

MR. ENNS: I am just checking the list, Mr. Chairman. I am advised that the only changes, as the Member for Ste. Rose asks, are salary adjustment figures, and/or some increases in associated office supplies and equipment as shown in Other Expenditures. But there are no changes of substance in this section. There is one reduction of \$16,000 which is attributed to an anticipated savings due to amalgamation of Transportation Services with Highways. There will be, and I suspect that there will be more as we are merging the former Northern Affairs staff into some of the mainline and regular duties of the Department of Highways and Transportation, that there will be a savings of staff and individuals scattered throughout the department. In this case, there is one staff man position with a dollar value of \$16,000 that is being saved.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2(a)(1) Salaries and Wages, \$567,000— pass; 2(a)(2) Other Expenditures, \$205,000—pass; 2(b) Laboratory and Materials (1) Salaries and Wages, \$707,000 — the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I wonder if the Minister could advise if there is anything new insofar as materials on research and new methods of construction and so on? Is there anything new to improve our roads in that?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member may have noticed from time to time some reports with respect to new and innovative procedures that are being experimented with by the department. The on-going quest for some material or product that will enable us to provide a dust-free surface on some of our lesser travelled rural roads is being experimented with. The product in this case is called terrazime, I believe. It is a product that we have laid down a few miles of experimental road work with. We can't at this time say as to whether or not it is the answer. We are faced with a problem that has always been there, that in some instances a secondary road doesn't warrant, traffic-wise, the kind of expensive surfacing that is conventional and available, but at the same time, if we could devise a way and means of settling the dust and providing a dust-free surface, it would very often meet the requirements of a community or of a particular road.

So the department has tried and is experimenting and it has feelers out for different types of approaches that can be used. In some of these instances, these applications could be applied in some of our recreational areas where, again, for a relatively short period of the year, particularly in our summer and our climate, the road is otherwise not subject to heavy traffic and yet the weekend traffic or the short summer traffic, causes the kind of pressures to build up for paving when really it isn't justifiable in terms of traffic count. That is one area, Mr. Chairman, that the department is constantly looking at.

We have also experimented with another product called verglimic. It is a Swiss product developed in the Swiss Alps, that is mixed right into the asphalt paving at the time the asphalt is applied. It is essentially a calcium chloride produce that is imbedded right in the pavement and reports from Europe tell us that that then does away with the necessity of daily or weekly applications of some kind of de-icing material, whether it is salt or other material and it can be used successfully under certain conditions to keep particularly dangerous areas such as overpasses, approaches to bridges or underpasses ice-free. Now, if that product works satisfactorily, it could be quite a help in reducing dangerous intersections, particularly here in the city where very often these kind of conditions come on us overnight, sleeting, icing rain. Before the sanding trucks are out, we have extremely difficult intersections.

One test section of pavement of this type was laid down over the overpass of the perimeter over Portage Avenue this summer past. This is a program that is being monitored by a research group at the University of Manitoba. It is being supported to some extent by a research grant from Ottawa and the Department of Highways. As I say, we have applied this — not a long stretch but just a stretch covering one of the overpasses at Portage and the perimeter — and we will be monitoring the same and if indeed we find an appreciable, or at least an acceptable level of service from that, then we would consider introducing that into our paving programs. We doubt very much whether it will be applicable to the overall highway program, (a) for reasons of expense and (b) also, whether its effectiveness in the exposed wind conditions of cruel highway conditions would make it work. It again is a product not unlike our own applications now, that works best at particular temperatures. Once the temperatures become extreme, then nothing seems to work.

But these are just to mention a few of the new innovative programs that the department is looking at.

MR. ADAM: There were, Mr. Chairman, some experiments done, I believe, around Souris, am I correct, a few years back, or up in the southwest, for slippery conditions? Is there anything to report on the success or non-success of that program?

MR. ENNS: The Deputy Minister says that must be before his time and he has been with the department since 1939.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, maybe he's like the Minister who forgot how much the warrants were. Maybe he has forgotten that there were some experiments going on.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the department is constantly receiving, as you would expect us to receive, different reports from different jurisdictions. We try to keep in touch with what is happening in highway construction throughout Canada and in many of the American states. We are often experimenting with different types of applying pavement, even the traditional pavements such as concrete and asphalt. The question of getting away from some of the problems associated with concrete pavement, to go to greater thicknesses of pavement these are the kinds of construction experiments that are being carried on.

I think what the honourable member is referring to is a particular section of Trans Canada,

pavement there that experienced some difficulties in around the McGregor area, or in that area there, that had a problem. But that possibly was as much associated with road design and that wasn't an experiment as such. We sometimes get into situations where under the right coming together of weather conditions, our existing long tried and proven pavements can prove dangerous.

MR. ADAM: Has the department pretty well abandoned concrete use?

MR. ENNS: Oh, no.

MR. ADAM: Is that still going on? That hasn't been too successful has it? We have had to resurface a lot of the concrete roads, highways.

MR. ENNS: No, the choice of going to concrete or asphalt paving depends to a large extent on the availability of the aggregate, of gravel for your sub base, and/or the soil conditions. We will find ourselves in the Red River Valley, for instance, continuing to rely on concrete for a major portion of our paving. It becomes a question of dollars and cents in terms of the supply of aggregate and gravel. If you were having to haul aggregate from considerable distances, it becomes a major expense factor. Generally speaking, in an asphalt paved road, there has to be a considerably greater depth and greater amount of sub base provided. Now, I say generally speaking, it depends a great deal too on where you are building the road. In certain areas of the province, this varies.

These are the considerations, though, that are taken in by the design people when they lay out the specs for a road, that takes into account these various factors. But to suggest that we are not going to be carrying on with concrete paving would be erroneous. In fact, we have some major concrete paving projects in mind for the coming construction year.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, we are doing a lot of resurfacing with asphalt on cement roads.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, the concrete that we are resurfacing has been in place for 18 or 20 years in many instances, in some cases, 20 to 25 years. We find ourselves looking at resurfacing asphalt pavements within a shorter period of time. There is no question — I know what the honourable member is alluding to. If we had greater funds and built our highways on the specifications that many of our neighbouring American states build concrete highways with, we would perhaps get a greater lifetime out of those same roads and not have to resurface as soon. But our problem is in stretching a budget across the width and breadth of this province. Our American jurisdictions by and large are spending a considerable amount. When I mean a considerable amount, just about double the amount per lane of pavement than we are.

I am often asked that question, why can't we build a road as good as they can build it in Minnesota or in some of the southern states. The difference is that they are going down to 10 to 12 inches of concrete on top of an asphalt cushion, and coming up with costs per mile of paved road of something like \$400,000.00. Well, if we were to approach it that way in the Province of Manitoba, we would be paving a few very good miles of road, and they would stand up just as well, but there would be a lot of waiting — as they still is — for road improvement in the Province of Manitoba.

MR. ADAM: The cost of a mile of cement highway would be considerably higher than asphalt, would it not?

MR. ENNS: Not necessarily the case. It depends again entirely on the amount of material required to build to certain specifications. If the soil conditions are such and the availability of aggregate is such, then an asphalt highway will come out at a certain price. On the other hand, if you are building a highway in the Altona, Winkler or Morden area where you have to truck in gravel, where the closest source of gravel is perhaps 40, 50 or 60 miles away, then the cost of concrete is more attractive because it requires less of an aggregate base.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, just for the record, as far as roads in Ste. Rose are concerned, you can do whichever is the cheapest, whatever is the lowest cost, that's what you can do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2(b)(1) \$707,000—pass; 2(b)(2) Other Expenditures, \$152,000—pass; 2(c) Surveys and Titles (1) Salaries and Wages, \$486,500 — the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes, is the Surveys Department under the purview of Highways? Has that always been

there or is that Mines and Resources?

MR. ENNS: I am advised, Mr. Chairman, that this complement of people, they are Highways, Surveys and Titles and work exclusively for Highways and do not duplicate or work in the same jurisdiction that the Mines and Resources, for instance, do.

MR. ADAM: Is there a Department of Surveys there as well?

MR. ENNS: Yes.

MR. ADAM: And that's the group that does surveying for other departments? Does the Highways Department do surveys for any . . . ?

MR. ENNS: The kind of work we do, prior to any building of a road or improving of a road, we survey the requirements for that improvement in terms of where the road ought to go and the amount of additional land that may be required for the department to effect that improvement. That simply enables us then to make the application for purchase of that land in proper form acceptable to the Land Titles Office and this land then can be purchased by government for Highway purposes. These surveyors do not work for non-Highways purposes.

MR. ADAM: I'm just wondering why we have a duplication of highways in two branches rather than just the one. Either all under highways or all under...What is the advantage of having survey staff in two departments?

MR. ENNS: Essentially it's because, as within many professions, different functions carried out. In engineering you can have your electrical engineer, you have your mechanical engineer, you can have various components within a profession, or within a group, or within a discipline. Our survey people are specifically geared to doing the kind of survey work necessary to the acquisition and the design of roadways and they need to have the authorization as qualified surveyors because they are making up legal documents that have to have the stamp of an approved surveyor because we are making up these documents that involve land transfer, transfer of private land to the Crown, to the Department of Highways for the purpose of highway construction.

MR. ADAM: Do these surveys have to be approved by the Municipal Board or Committee?

MR. ENNS: They are duly qualified land surveyors and their surveys are accepted as such by the Land Titles Office.

MR. ADAM: Does the department do any surveying for the municipalities?

MR. ENNS: On occasion, I'm advised. Although we don't have a specific program I believe that for instance, Mines and Resources and the Water Control Division has where they carry out a fair bit of work in terms of helping municipalities in their design of municipal drainage facilities. I'm told that there's a difference too in the sense that again you're dealing with different definitions within the term surveyor. Those are land surveyors that are capable of carrying out those functions whereas in our case these are bonafide land surveyors that have the full authorization to complete the kind of documents and the kind of facts that are required for the legal transfer of lands.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2(c)(1) Salaries \$486,500—pass. 2(c)(2) Other Expenditures \$118,000—pass; \$604,500 —pass; 2(d) Bridges (1) Salaries and Wages \$827,000.

The Member from Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: We have, I believe, a program undertaken perhaps in the last few years to upgrade bridges to a higher capacity. Is it 110,000 pounds capacity?

MR. ENNS: All those routes that we have designated and indeed are obligated to continue to bring to the full capacity under the Highway Strengthening Program, those bridges have to be designed for 110,000 pounds capacity. The old design in fact carried a bit more.

MR. ADAM: How is that program proceeding? Are we right up or how many do we do a

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I'm advised by my chief engineer, Mr. Peacock that we are pretty well on line. We need one more bridge this year to bring that into completion. Now that is on the designated roads, that are designated under the Highway Strengthening Program. I would undertake, Mr. Chairman, I think it might be of interest to all members of the committee to provide a map indicating those roads that are on this designated program. I can recite you them just briefly. They're No. 4, Trans Canada of course, No. 12, but there are additional roads scattered throughout the Province, No. 9. It may be of service for the Member of Ste. Rose to have, No. 5 is on that list, No. 10, No. 83...

MR. BARROW: Cost shared with the Federal Government?

MR. ENNS: Well, this is a point that I'm just making. This was an effective program that was entered into by the Department some three years ago, I believe, in 1973 and we had hoped to extend that program by another two years but unfortunately received notice from Ottawa that it has been indefinitely deferred and in terms of our budget this year, it means a \$6 million loss of federal contribution.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Vital. Was the Member from Ste. Rose finished? The Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister the extent, if any, to which this section is involved with the City of Winnipeg on the Sherbrook-McGregor overpass.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: No, Mr. Chairman. This is not the area where there is any involvement by the Provincial Government in that project. That would come under the UTAP Program and now is included in the bloc grant to the City of Winnipeg.

MR. WALDING: May I just ask, does the City of Winnipeg's own department do the planning and design of bridges within the City?

MR. ENNS: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Flin Flon.

MR. BARROW: You mentioned bridge No. 10, Mr. Minister. Does that take in the bridge to Baker's Narrows that you're going to replace for a higher load capacity?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: I'm advised by staff that that is the bridge that is the one remaining bridge on the designated route that...

MR. BARROW: Just the one? There's two bridges. Does that just include one bridge. There's two bridges in that area.

MR. ENNS: We call it one location. There are two bridges involved.

MR. BARROW: They both will be replaced on this program?

MR. ENNS: Money permitting they will be replaced.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2(d)(1) \$827,000—pass; 2(d) (2) \$82,000—pass; \$909,000 —pass; 2(e) Traffic, Salaries and Wages \$216,100. The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Does the Highway Safety Program come under this or student

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, that matter will be dealt with under the Motor Vehicle Branch.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If I can direct the Member for Ste. Rose that's under 7(b). The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: What does this department do?

MR. ENNS: This provides for salaries and offices of field expenses of staff engaged in the maintenance and improvement of the safety and efficiency of traffic movement of the highway system. It involves, we get enquiries as to appropriate signing, reduction of speed limits, the installation of crosswalks on certain highways, the removal of crosswalks on some highways, where traffic signalling should take place. We often get requests for signals to be installed on a major highway and that requires considerable amount of work to find out whether we are in fact creating a bigger problem by all of a sudden slowing up traffic on a high speed highway or rather should we be finding other solutions to the problem. It also is a constant monitor I might say on the engineers in terms of the design and construction of the highways, the degree of corners, turns. They monitor bad situations where accidents start to develop and a pattern starts to develop and then pressure within the department for modifications and improvements in the design of the highway to obviate obviously a dangerous situation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister bring the committee up to date on metric conversion signs in the province?

MR. ENNS: I don't think this is the appropriate place to talk about that, is it? It doesn't matter. Yes, we are proceeding as I indicated when we introduced the metrification to highway system with dispatch. The first priority was to have virtually immediately all the speed signs, regulatory speed signs, uniform across the province in complying with the metric system. We appreciate that we've caused some inconvenience in terms of some of the additional signs, that is the distance markers between communities and villages and if the honourable member has been travelling on our highways you will note that the little km has appeared on more and more of these signs as those signs are being converted. It's a program that we are pursuing because it is the law of the land. We are attempting to do it at a pace that is consistent with good management. Where signs need to be replaced, we are replacing them, of course, in the metric system. In some instances, there will be miles per hour signs still around for awhile. It bothers me a bit when we have to tear down signs that are obviously in pretty good condition yet to accommodate this. We think that we have done the immediate and necessary ones which regulate such things as speed of traffic. The metrification of course is complete on the highways map and I suspect that within the next year or two metrification will be total and complete throughout the province.

MR. WALDING: Does the Minister have an estimate of the cost of this metric change-over?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, that's difficult for us to say at this time. I know there's been some question as to our willingness to provide information through orders for return. But I would recommend to the honourable member that it is the most appropriate question to be raised by that form we would have certainly no objection to providing to the best information available to us recognizing that it's an ongoing program at this time but I'm waiting for some information from the Deputy Minister at this particular time, but I would say that we have to date spent somewhere in the area of... We have taken a look at the two routes of kind of doing it all over night. This was a year ago. It would have cost us in the neighbourhood of a half a million dollars doing it our way where we are stretching it somewhat. And that is by replacing signs that we would normally replace because of wear and tear. The cost will possibly come in between \$350,000 to \$400,000.00.

MR. WALDING: I thank the Minister for that information, Mr. Chairman. If I were to put in an order for return it would have to ask for specific amount would be difficult to judge because some signs are replaced because they've worn out or broken or whatever it is. What I wanted was a rough approximation of the cost and the Minister has given it to me and I thank him for it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Virden.

MR. MCGREGOR: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the question, in the case of a crosswalk going

up or lowering of say, from 90 km to 60 with no notice given to the local people or municipal people, mayor. Is that a normal procedure to go that route? And the mention of the crosswalk, as the Minister is quite aware, I'm concerned about it, because I have asked everybody — municipal people, local people, RCMP people, department people — and I've yet to hear one person say, we've seen anyone walk across it or one individual there, I know it's an intersection, I know there was an accident there but how does the local member or the municipal people who are unhappy about this — how do they handle it? I know that doesn't go through a Board, that it's directly from a department head. How should a member handle it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, you know it falls within the ambit of the Traffic Board and the Traffic Board normally would turn to the department for advice, I would assume would normally solicit advice from the community involved and, I would hope, the member involved. Normally the Traffic Board responds to requests from a community. I would say in most instances that's the way an action of this kind gets initiated — either as a result of bad experience, a number of accidents, concerned parents asking for a reduction of the speed limit within what they consider to be a built-up area. Now, the Member for Virden has drawn this matter to my attention on other occasions and I have asked the department to examine the situation on this particular location — I believe it's located on Highway No. 21 — and I am somewhat disappointed to learn, if the member is indicating to us now that these steps were not taken that I would assume to be the normal procedure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2(e)(1). The Honourable Member for Virden.

MR. MCGREGOR: Mr. Chairman, I realize no one knew when it was put up and now we're trying to move it back and we're getting heard all right, but the thing was it came there and no one knew, and luckily I wasn't one of the ones who got a ticket — there were a good many tickets — just because of the way it's located, you're making a turn, you're coming over a rise, you're looking for that oncoming traffic and it isn't a normal thing for your eyes to hit is where that sign is.

MR. ENNS: Would the Honourable Member for Virden be prepared to give us the benefit of his wisdom and make a recommendation with respect to that crosswalk on that particular location?

MR. MCGREGOR: I have made it, Sir, to you personally but I will be in Brandon, not to do with the crosswalk because the Traffic Board, I understand, does not listening to the crosswalk problem, it does the changing of the speed; am I correct there?

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2(e) — the Member for Virden.

MR. MCGREGOR: All right, I am satisfied, Mr. Minister, with regard to this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2(e)(1)..\$216,100—pass; 2(e)(2)Other Expenditures \$40,500—pass; \$256,600 0—pass 2(f)(1) Salaries \$4,888,000 — the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: I'm just wondering how long are we going to sit tonight.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm at the disposition of the Committee. Shall we carry on for a little while yet?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, since we've been moving fairly smoothly through this, we are now coming to the end of an appropriation. I wonder if we might finish to pass item 2 before adjourning?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is that the wish of the Committee? (Agreed) 2(f)(1) \$4,888,000—pass; 2(f)(2) Other Expenditures \$1,043,000—pass; \$5,931,000—pass; 2(g) Highway Traffic Inspection: (1) Salaries and Wages \$832,500—pass. The Member for Minnedosa.

MR. BLAKE: Yes, Mr. Chairman, this is one particular item I might ask the Minister if he could just explain to the Committee what this particular department, what their function is, how successful it is or how necessary it is, and has he been getting any complaints on the highway inspection teams.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, this is the section of the department that provides for the salaries, the office and travel expenses of highway traffic inspectors. It's situated at highway scales and is strategically located throughout the province, and inspectors operating portable scales. You know the general purpose for the group, of course, is to protect the public investment in our roadways from the illegal use of the highways that would bring about premature damage and aging, and deterioration of our road system. I appreciate that the particular role of these inspectors can at some times be aggravating, but they have the responsibility for uniform inspection and enforcement of the Highway Traffic Act. If there are specific areas that you think are not in keeping with the public interest then an examination of the Highway Traffic Act perhaps is in order. I would like to believe and I would like to think that the traffic inspectors are carrying out the will and the intent of the Highway Traffic Act and, as such, are being judicious in their application of that Act. Now, people are people and there may well be occasions where we have over-zealous inspectors that are perhaps stepping beyond the requirements but those situations should certainly be brought to the attention of the Minister and of the department when and if that occurs.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How much duplication would there be with the function and the operation of the RCMP on highway patrol and the highway inspection teams, speaking not of the ones that are located at the scales, the ones that patrol the highways in their little vans and there are one or two men to a van; how much duplication would there be in their role and that of the RCMP on highway traffic patrol?

MR. ENNS: Well I suppose that there is some duplication in the sense that the RCMP are certainly also empowered and does, in fact, carry out an inspection role and/or an enforcement role in enforcing those infractions of the Highway Traffic Act, as they would enforce any other Highway Traffic Act violation, whether it's speeding or driving while impaired. However, I must assume that the inspection role within the department grew out of the requirement that we have built into the Traffic Act. You know, a considerable amount of additional concerns, such as hauling of overweight over-width loads prescribed by law to be hauled only under certain circumstances, sunrise to sunset, our general complaint from the established trucking and PSV operators, for instance, is that we don't have enough inspectors around to catch what they call the "bootleggers" in the trucking industry, that they have to, as a licensed PSV operators, pay a substantial licence and permit fee to operate and somebody, either from in or out of the province, operates — if he slips past these inspection stations and inspectors — operates on a CT or even on a farm plate without paying these same charges.

Now, I have to admit to the Committee that this whole question is one that's, I think, a cause for concern, that there has to be a — now I'm straying a little bit from the immediate inspection role and perhaps more into the whole role of the Transport Board and its functions, recognizing that 1979 isn't 1935 or 1940 when many of these regulations were drawn up when there was only one good trucker or truck to be had or to be financed in a community, and when there weren't that many units of a substantial size in rural Manitoba. But that's generally the observations that I can make on this matter.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Chairman, I would assume that the fact that these teams operate from vans that they would be mobile and subject to transfer, similar to the RCMP officers, from time to time.

MR. ENNS: If the honourable member is prepared to make recommendations, we're always prepared to listen to them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Dauphin.

MR. JIM GALBRAITH: Mr. Chairman, through you to the Honourable Minister, we have teams that go around the province inspecting cars, trucks and highway traffic motor vehicle inspection stations that sort of tour the province. Is this the department that deals with that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Yes, it is.

MR. GALBRAITH: That's just all I wanted to know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: My question is on this particular item. I understand that there are a number of people that, after being asked to blow into the alert, somehow there are a number of cases now where they have been charged. I'm just wondering what the department is doing in this area? Is this part of this department or would that be part of the RCMP?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, these inspectors do not ask you to blow into a balloon bag or anything else. That comes under the administration of the Attorney-General's Department, quite frankly, and the enforcement of their inspectors.

MR. ADAM: Impaired driving would not come under this?

MR. ENNS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2(g)(1), \$832,500—pass; 2(g)(2) Other Expenditures \$189,500—pass. That concludes Resolution No. 69. Committee rise.

MR. WALDING: No, Mr. Chairman. Would you read the resolution?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I understand that this has been dispensed with, that the Committee has agreed that the resolution not be read. If you so desire, we have it here; it can be read.

MR. WALDING: Is this something that the Committee decided on just this evening, Mr. Chairman? It's news to me . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I was informed by the Clerk here that this is what has been decided, that we will be discontinuing to read the resolution as such.

MR. ENNS: I would like you to read the resolution just to make sure that I get the money.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution No. 69, Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding ten million three hundred and fifty-four thousand one hundred dollars (\$10,354,100) for Highways and Transportation, Management Services and Engineering. \$10,354,100—pass. Committee rise. The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, on that point, I wasn't aware that the Committee had agreed not to read the resolutions. Did we read the first item?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, we did not, because we did not pass the Minister's Salary, to the Member for Ste. Rose. That comes up for debate when we get to the end of the Estimates. Committee rise. The Member for Rock Lake.

MR. EINARSON: Mr. Chairman, on the point of order. I didn't make any comment when it was asked how long we should go; I'm wondering if we could reconsider, and not go at 11 o'clock at least.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have a motion for Committee rise. Agreed? (Agreed)

SUPPLY — MINES, NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would direct the honourable members' attention to Page 63 in the Estimates. We are in the Department of Mines, Natural Resources and Environment, Resolution No. 82, 2. Environmental Management, Item (b)(2) Other Expenditures — pass — the Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have missed some of the Estimates discussion, and I would just like to ask the Minister whether he has given out an organizational chart for this particular section and if he has indicated how many bodies are employed now as opposed to being employed in this particular section one year ago, because I notice a reduction here in Other Expenditures. And I notice a very small increase in Salaries that wouldn't take into account any adjustment for salary increases, so there must be some type of reduction here under Salaries, and it looks as if there is a reduction taking place on the type of activity that this section is carrying out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, I gave some details on the reductions in this section a couple of days ago, and advised members in my opening remarks and subsequently, as well, I believe that reorganization of the department has not been completed and that these various divisions are structured essentially as they were previously.

If I could just give answers to a couple of questions, Mr. Chairman, that were raised earlier. There was a question concerning a study to do with lead levels in the blood of school children, and my understanding is that that report is under the control of the Department of Labour, and we do not have that report. The Canadian Bronze stack emission tests were last conducted in May of 1977, and emissions were found to be approximately twice what they should have been, and in October of 1977, the federal government ordered them to take remedial action, which has been done, and further testing is tentatively scheduled for this coming summer.

Another question, Mr. Chairman, had to do with the reductions in staff from 1977 to 1979. I previously had given figures on reductions from January 1978 to 1979. Now, the total reduction from January 28, 1977 to January 26, 1979, would be 273 people, and those are actual numbers of people on the payroll.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I just want clarification from the Minister as to under what item it would be appropriate to ask questions regarding the development of indices on the quality of the environment. I think there has been some mention of this in the press about three months ago and I just wanted to determine where I might follow this up in the Estimates procedure. Is it this section or would it be the next one? On Environmental Research and Development, or with respect to the Environmental Council? Could you advise me where it might be appropriate to ask questions there?

MR. RANSOM: Well, I guess Research and Development would be an appropriate section, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, okay, I'll save my questions on that item for the next section.

Can he inform me if there are any tests being undertaken on the air quality in the Transcona area because we have Border Chemical there which is manufacturing and storing sulphur openly? Does he have any information to that effect, or would he take that as notice and try and get back to me with information on it? It's stored out in the open, near residential areas.

MR. RANSOM: We talked briefly a couple of days ago about the number of test stations that are in the city to test the ambient air quality. Those are general types of tests. There would not be any specific tests of the situation you refer to unless there was some specific reason or complaint that required it.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the Minister would undertake to look into the specific matter of Border Chemicals. Sulphur is stored in an open space; it's not covered; it's near the Cordite Ditch which flows into what's called Bunn's Creek and Bunn's Creek is the storm drainage system for a very large set of developments in North Kildonan. It flows into the Red River. There have been some concerns there with the water quality in Bunn's Creek further up. I do know that the Cordite Ditch, which is the basis of Bunn's Creek — Bunn's Creek is just the development of lakes out of the old Cordite Ditch — the Cordite Ditch originates right beside Border Chemicals' plant site. With the wind blowing, it would strike me that there might be some danger of water becoming contaminated in that manner. I don't know if that's been looked at and I would ask the Minister if he would undertake to have either the Clean Environment Commission or some other agency look into that in some depth.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (2)—pass — the Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. WILLIAM JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister for getting the answers to the questions that I raised the other day. Just one thing that flows from the reply that he gave me, it seems that the last test at Canadian Bronze was in 1977, in the month of June, I believe he said. The next test is scheduled for mid-summer of 1979. I believe I understand the Minister correctly, if that's what his answer was. As we determined the other day, the testing of the air quality is the responsibility of the federal monitoring station.

Now, is this set up on a two-year period that they test them, or is this a special test that is now taking place in the middle of the year 1979, or is there any schedule for periodic testing just to make sure that the air quality is not deteriorating? And if it is every two years then I would suggest in all fairness to the Minister that I don't think that that would be a satisfactory time schedule for the monitoring of pollutants emittance into the air for any plant regardless of whether its a plant dealing with lead or anything else. I think if there are emission qualities that they should be on a much shorter time frame than what seems to be coming out from the Minister at this time. If the Minister could assure me that he will raise with his federal counterparts who are in the monitoring that testing be done on a much shorter time frame than what seems to be appearing at the present time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: Testing is done, Mr. Chairman, as necessity seem to arise, so certainly it could be done on a more frequent basis if there is clearly a requirement to do that and naturally under these circumstances we're going to be watching developments there rather closely.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2 — pass. The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairperson, I want to return just to a subject we were discussing just before the supper break and that was mercury in the Rat River system in Northern Manitoba. And the reason I bring this subject before the Committee at this point, is not because it at this moment represents a grave danger to the residents in South Indian Lake and the residents in that area but because there is a potential there that could in the future represent grave danger to these residents.

I would like to ask the Minister in light of fact that there have been numerous reports of elevated mercury levels along Burntwood and the Rat River system in the past year, and in light of the fact that there have been a number of residents in northern communities who were found to have more than 100 parts per billion of mercury in their blood which is considered to be a high risk reading — and I have to hasten that there have only been five in 1977, five who were found to have greater than 100 parts per billion out of some 1,809 tests that were conducted in that year. So as I say, we are not talking about an immediate problem.

At the same time, there were 596 who were found to have between 20 and 99 parts per billion of mercury in their blood and the hazard increases as it goes up towards the 100 parts per billion level, so there is a potential problem. It's a frightening problem for anyone who is acquainted with the results of mercury poisoning that occurred in Japan in Minomota and has done any study of that at all, will know that when mercury poisoning rears its ugly head, when it does reach a level where it is starting to have a significant impact on the community, it is devastating.

It is not only at great human cost to the people that live in those communities, but it will be a great social cost to the province and the country as a whole if these conditions are allowed to worsen. So what I would ask the Minister is what is being done to ensure that we have, this Province, that they have some handle on this very serious problem and to ensure that testing is ongoing so that at the first sign of elevations in the mercury level in people in these communities that a contingency plan can be brought in and I would ask the Minister if there is any contingency plan, and if so, what the details of that plan would be.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: At this stage, Mr. Chairman, we are attempting through testing to try and see what the magnitude of the problem is. The Honourable Member referred to levels in the water, I believe, as I pointed out previously, doesn't appear to be high levels in the water, but it is known to be in the fish. There doesn't at this point appear to be any logical explanation for those high levels. That doesn't of course lessen the problem by any means, but at this stage it's still necessary to do some additional testing to try and get an understanding of the magnitude of the problem at least, and then we'll have to go from there on what might be done, what possibilities there are to prevent the sort of situation developing that the Honourable Member refers to, and at this stage

there really isn't enough understood about it to be able to contemplate what action might be taken to prevent a bad situation developing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Well, the Minister indicates that they're doing surveys to determine the extent of the problem, and the problem is, as I say, not substantial at this moment, but it does exist. The Freshwater Fish Marketing Board found pike and pickerel in Rat River Lake with mercury levels of two parts per million of mercury, which is four times the accepted Canadian level of .5 parts per million, and there have also been elevated readings found in the South Bay, the Rat Lake, Footprint Lake, Three Point Lakes and a number of others along that Rat River-Burntwood system.

I would ask the Minister if, outside of doing surveys, which is a very integral part of examining a problem in finding out what extent that problem exists, I would ask the Minister if they presently have any sort of a committee or any sort of a group functioning to develop contingency plans, because I think if they do find out that the problem is extensive or if the problem seems to be a growing problem, they will need these contingency plans. I think now is the time to start talking about the solution, while examining the problem, rather than waiting until the problem becomes so widespread that any solution you were going to implement would be too late to protect the people that the government should be protecting. So I'd ask the Minister, is there any group that is formulating or working on formulating contingency plans so if this problem does increase in the near future, at least there is something that the government would be prepared to implement immediately.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: I would say that there is no specific committee to look at this problem. There is good co-operation and communication between the Institute and Department people and so forth, and there had been additional tests done, I understand, in January, the results of which are not available yet. When those results are available, then I guess it will give some indication of a trend if there is one and if it's in the wrong direction, then I would agree with the Honourable Member that it would necessitate taking some steps that have not been taken to this date.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairperson, I'm assured to hear that statement from the Minister, that they are prepared to initiate action if the trend seems to be going towards higher levels of mercury in the fish in the river system and the lake system up north. He mentions that there were tests made in January, I'm wondering when we can expect the results of those tests to be coming through.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: They will be coming from the institute, I understand, and we don't know precisely when but fairly soon.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Just as a point of clarification, Mr. Chairperson, we can assume those tests are being done in fish that are fished out of that river system, or are there tests being done on residents of the communities in the north?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I confused the issue on that one. The tests I was referring to are tests on blood, and hair samples, and they will be coming from Ottawa. Fish samples are done by the institute, and these other results are apparently more or less available now, but they haven't been communicated to us yet.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (2) — pass. The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Just as another point of clarification, there are samples that are being done, I just

want to make sure I have it correct, Mr. Chairperson, there are samples being done on human hair and blood in communities in northern Manitoba, that are I assume a result of a specific study that was initiated by the federal government — and the minister can correct me when I'm wrong — for the purpose of determining the extent of the levels of mercury or determining the levels of mercury in northern residents, that that is a special study and that there is an ongoing process of determining the parts per billion in fish that come out of the institute. Is that correct?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: I think that's a correct understanding, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I'd ask the Minister then, if he knows which communities the sampling of hair and blood is being done in, and what percentage of the population the samples are being performed on in those specific communities.

MR. RANSOM: I'll undertake to provide a list in order that I don't make any errors, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairperson, I'd like to continue on in the report, in the annual for just one moment, and would hope that those lists would come back before the Minister's Salary, at least so that we can have an opportunity to discuss them in a bit more detail at a future date, when we have more information before us, which I think is appropriate at the time.

The report mentions on page 19, that "Special investigations were carried out on abandoned sites at Sherridon materials on land surrounding the Snow Lake in the Sheridan Mine.

MR. RANSOM: There has been some testing done, as I referred to earlier, at the Snow Lake Mine and I should have some results available perhaps by tomorrow. We weren't able to put together the test results today.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Am I to infer then that the investigations that were done in the Snow Lake area, at the Snow Lake Mine, would be those investigations that were done in reference to arsenic monitoring in the Snow Lake itself? Is arsenic the problem we are talking about in this particular instance? That's a more serious problem than I thought from my initial reading of the report, and I look forward to having some of the results of that because as the Members of this House well know, and as the residents of Snow Lake well know also, arsenic can represent a very serious environmental hazard and I would hope that the problem is not so serious as to put the residents of that northern community in any sort of jeopardy.

I'd also ask the Minister if arsenic was involved in the testing that was done at the Sherridon Mine site?

MR. RANSOM: Part of it would be a similar test, Mr. Chairman, and I will have to undertake to get additional details on any other tests that might be taken.

MR. COWAN: Mr. Chairperson, my own knowledge of the Snow Lake mining area and the Sherridon Mine area and my own knowledge of where arsenic would be used in the mining process, leads me back to gold, I believe that it would be part of a gold mining process, and my own recollection, and I could be wrong, would indicate to me that gold mining has not been done in the Snow Lake area for quite a number of years now and I don't believe any mining at all has been done in the Sheridan area since the early 1950s— I could stand corrected on that, at least no major mining— I know Sherritt-Gordon Mines Limited moved their operation from Sherridon in the late 1940s and early 1950s. I'm wondering if these problems are problems arising out of the mining activity that took place in the province some 25 years ago?

MR. RANSOM: That's my understanding, Mr. Chairman, that there's monitoring taking place.

MR. COWAN: But the question to the Minister, Mr. Chairperson, was is this monitoring taking place in specific reference to mines that have been out of operation now for some 20-25 years? In other words, is this a 20 or 25 year old problem we are discussing at the moment?

MR. RANSOM: That's correct.

MR. COWAN: Which just leads me back to my comments of yesterday, that the environment is a very fragile system, and we have an example here where we have problems coming to light today. And perhaps they're not just coming to light today, maybe they've been known for a number of years. But we have problems that exist today as a result of mines that have not been operation for 20 or 25 years and there are a lot of mines in Northern Manitoba that have not been in operation for that number of years.

I'm a bit concerned now because my recollection is that there was a gold mine in the Island Lake area on Elk Island I believe — and I could stand corrected on that — operating about 25 years ago. I'm wondering if there have been any studies done in that area because that is a lake ws' in the God's Lake Narro area, which I happen to be in. There's one major reserve and one small reserve, and people are depending upon that lake as a source of livelihood and as also a source of food, and that if there were any problems in that area it would have significant impact on the people in those communities, much quicker than it would on the people in Snow Lake or the people in Sherridon, who rely a lot on outside sources for their food. In other words, if there is an arsenic problem in the lake, is that entering the food-eco system, and if it is then what studies are being done to ensure that the people eating fish from that lake are doing so at no health risk to themselves. So I'm talking this particular instance about the gold mine that was back in the Thirties and Forties in the Gods Lake Narrows' area.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, my understanding is that any place where there is a possibility of leeching from tailings at old mines that there have been tests done and are some done. I am not certain whether it is on a continuing basis or an irregular basis, but in addition there are approximately 40 sampling sites across the north where water quality is being tested on a regular basis to provide some sort of base line information.

In addition, any place where there are fish caught commercially, then they are tested occasionally through the marketing corporation in order to determine the levels in most fish.

MR. COWAN: Yes, the Minister says, Mr. Chairperson, that there are some 40 sites across the north. I won't ask him for the information now because I realize that it's of a detailed nature but I'm wondering if he could undertake to have a list of those sites prepared so that I and my colleagues could peruse them. I'm wondering where the water from those 40 testing sites is being tested currently.

MR. RANSOM: In our lab.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I would just like assurance from the Minister then that that testing of those water levels is not being discouraged because of the congestion that currently exists at the Provincial Lab. In other words, can he assure us that that testing is not part of the testing that has been discouraged or delayed because of the congestion?

MR. RANSOM: I certainly give him that assurance, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COWAN: Yes, going down in that paragraph the next sentence says that site inspections were carried out at Lynn Lake, Manibridge and Dunbarton mine sites, and I would just ask the Minister right now about Lynn Lake. I understand that the nickel mine at Varley has shut down in the past number of years and that when a mine does close down or stop operations that there are certain procedures that must be followed in regard to the tailings' area which is left as a result of the mine pumping its tailings, the mill pumping its tailings out into the surrounding area. And I'm wondering if those site inspections were inspections done in those tailing areas, and if any orders have been issued to the company. I believe what is necessary is that they try to revert those areas back to their natural habitat, or to their natural state, in other words how they were before the tailings were pumped in.

MR. RANSOM: I can't answer a question that specifically just in general terms, Mr. Chairman. I'd have to take that as notice to undertake to get him the appropriate answer.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you. I appreciate the detailed aspect of the answer and would just ask the Minister while he is compiling that material if he can compile material on any extensions that have been granted to Sherritt-Gordon Mines Limited, in regard to returning the habitat to its natural environment.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2—pass — The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Just before we leave this item, Mr. Chairman, I have a question to the Minister. It's dealing with his Environmental Control Branch. In the report, my colleague, the Member for Churchill touched on it briefly this afternoon, and it deals with the storage of wastes that are not suitable for handling by existing facilities that were directed to temporary storage at the Gimli Industrial Park. How long a time-frame do we look at at the temporary storage and what is the final disposal of the wastes that are stored there, and also are there any radio-active wastes included in the temporary storage at the Gimli Industrial site at the present time? I realize that the Minister may not have the answers for that now. He can perhaps dig them out and we can discuss them when his salary comes up, but if he could give us the time-frame that the temporary storage takes place, what is his final disposition and are there any radioactive wastes in temporary storage at the Gimli Industrial Park? If he could get them some time for us before we get to his salary then we would be very appreciative.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2—pass — The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: When the Minister was rising it was a mad scramble to the seat. I'm wondering if the Minister had an answer for the Member for Logan. I know that the Minister didn't want me to lose my opportunity for further questions on this part of the Estimates.

MR. RANSOM: I thought for a minute we were going to pass that item, Mr. Chairman. Just to back up a little bit on the matter of hazardous wastes, I believe that Members are probably aware that there has been an inventory conducted in the west, in the Prairie Provinces and Territories with respect to hazardous wastes. That inventory has only recently been completed and there are ongoing discussions with the various governments as to what might be done to deal with the wastes that we now have inventoried.

The storage at Gimli has been used for some years now in an effort to prevent people from simply dumping wastes into sewers and that sort of thing; the government had been taking responsibility for them and storing them in one or two of the old fuel tanks at Gimli.

We are now looking at other, not only means of disposal, but perhaps even another type of interim storage because some of these items may have to be stored for a substantial period of time until suitable facilities are developed for their destruction. It's one item that we have devoted some small additional amount of money to this year in categorizing our hazardous wastes and in trying to further our negotiations and discussions with the Federal Government as to what's the next step in dealing with these materials, but some could be in storage for a substantial period of time. I don't think that's something that is necessarily a critical problem at all, providing they are safely stored.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: I thank the Honourable Minister for that information. There was a question that he didn't reply to and that was radioactive wastes. There are no radioactive wastes. I'd like to also ask him when this inventory is completed, whether it will become public information and whether it could be tabled in the House.

MR. RANSOM: Well, I see no difficulty with that, Mr. Chairman. I guess I would have to check with the other agencies that were involved in the preparation of the report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2—pass — The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I assure the Minister and the House, I'm not trying to belabor this point. As a matter of fact, I'm trying to move along as quickly as is possible. The Annual Report gives rise to so many questions, that I feel this is the proper opportunity to get the answers to them and so appreciate the patience of the Minister and of the Chairperson in the House in this regard. Just a few more questions, I assure you, in this particular section.

On Page 22 of the Annual Report, it says that inspection service is staffed by Public Health Inspectors, geographically distributed throughout the province. I'm wondering if this is the reference to the one staff man year that was lost, that I think the Minister mentioned earlier, in the Public Health field. The Minister is shaking his head yes. I'm wondering if the Minister could tell me where the one Public Health Inspector that has been lost to this particular section, where he or she was stationed?

MR. RANSOM: If I recall correctly, Mr. Chairman, that position had been originally stationed at Swan River, has been vacant for the past year, at least, and through the redistribution of effort by other health inspectors, they've assumed the workload.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Can the Minister inform us, too, if there have been any other changes in the distribution of these Public Health Inspectors in the province? In other words, we know that one position is gone. It turns out that it wasn't an actual person now, but a position. Can he inform us as to whether there were other changes, perhaps shifting people from the north to the south or throughout the city or from the city to Brandon?

MR. RANSOM: Well, in general, Mr. Chairman, that sort of thing, of course is a management responsibility of the people in the department. I'm not aware of any shifts, certainly not any major shift at all, but I think they do direct effort to areas where there's a need and I guess it can change somewhat seasonally, as well, with beach inspections, and things like that.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Then, we can assume that any changes were done so in respect to specific instances, rather than as part of an ongoing shift in the placement of inspectors. Continuing on in the Inspection Services Branch, it says: "During the past year expanded program-involvement took place in the fields of primary investigations of environmental accidents, municipal waste disposal grounds, group foster homes and municipal water supplies". I'm wondering if the Minister can just explain what this expanded program was in reference to the group foster homes that are mentioned in that sentence?

MR. RANSOM: What page is the honourable member referring to?

MR. COWAN: 22. It's at the top of the right-hand column.

MR. RANSOM: 22? I should point out that the Annual Reports, Mr. Chairman, are meant to provide information and answer questions for the public. It's clearly an item that's going to have to be reviewed because we seem to be creating more questions than we are answering at this stage. It's basically a public health type of inspection. Some years ago, the, what were called, Public Health Inspectors, were transferred from the Health Department into this department and they do inspections of kitchens and barber shops and things of that nature, so I'm assuming that a foster home then, would require that sort of inspection in the Public Health aspect.

MR. COWAN: Yes, a question that arises from the previous answer of the Minister. I note that there weren't enough copies of the Annual Report this year to go around to the Press Gallery. Or perhaps there was this specific one, although I don't think so. But as a general phenomena, there weren't enough to go around to the Press Gallery. I'm wondering if the Minister can assure us that there are enough to go around to the public so that some of these questions can be answered?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Just one more question, Mr. Chairman, before we leave this item, and I can assure the Minister that I'm not going to belabor the point any more. I wish him well when he says that he's going to have to do something about the Annual Report, but I can assure him as one who sat down there for many, many years, during Estimates, that I haven't seen reports yet, by any department, that didn't raise questions in this Chamber, so if he can devise a new report, I wish him well in that matter. Dealing again with the Gimli Industrial Park. The Minister said that these are being stored in old, abandoned gasoline storage tanks. Due to the fact that there are a number of flowing wells within the Gimli area which are being used for drinking water, and I believe that the Town of Gimli itself gets water from flowing wells, as well, is the Minister's department and his officials continually monitoring and checking these tanks that there is no seepage or escape of waste materials into the ground level which would cause problems, because Gimli is a town of about 2500 people, plus the fact that you have a summer population of maybe, 15 or 20,000, around there. A lot of those people do use the wells.

Having a cottage in the Gimli area myself, I'm asking this question because it's one that I'm sure other people in the area would be very interested in. And when we, as summer residents there, heard that there was storage of hazardous materials — and I'm not saying that it's just happened, it's been going on for some time — but I do want the assurance of the Minister that there is a

continual check of these storage facilities. I accept the fact that it's not something you can get rid of just overnight, but I hope that there is a continual check being made on these storage tanks to make sure that there is no escape of hazardous waste which can, in turn, pollute the water for the people. And many of the people use the water in that area, including the permanent residents.

MR. RANSOM: That is certainly the case, Mr. Chairman, and if the honourable member would care to see the facilities and inspect them personally, I could arrange that for him.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: One last question, Mr. Chairperson, I hope on this. They say that a good opposition can make a good government. I didn't realize that, and I won't be so pompous as to say that I'm a good opposition MLA, but that an opposition MLA could make a good Annual Report, but I hope that this discussion will serve that purpose. I assure the Minister that the answers that he is giving during this, and the questions that I'm asking, are just one more way of getting this information out to the public, those who don't have access to the Annual Report, so I assure him that at least I consider the time being put to good use.

Under the Technical Services Section in which it talks about the Laboratory, is this the Laboratory that we were discussing in detail the other day? The Minister says yes. And at the end of it it says, "Some examples of Laboratory clients are Water Pollution Control, Air Pollution Control, Research Branch, Water Resources Division, Department of Labour, Fire Commissioner, and the general public, and if I recollect correctly from our conversations previously, the general public has very little access to the Technical Services Laboratory. I'm wondering if the Minister can indicate if there were any specific examples of the general public using this Laboratory in the past year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: That would basically be testing well water, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2.—pass; (b)—pass; (c) Environmental Research and Development. (1) Salaries—pass — the Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. PARASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I'd like to ask the Minister what is being done to develop an index of what I'll call the existing quality of the environment? For example, could he tell us if the Red River is safe enough to swim in right now? Is the Assiniboine River safe enough to swim in? Is it safe biologically? Would it give you a rash if you swim in it? I know that years back people used to swim in the Red River and everyone says now you shouldn't swim in it, you'd probably float rather than swim now. Can the Minister give us any indication of what's being done within the department to tell us what our existing quality of the environment is?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: Well, I think that the honourable member knows, Mr. Chairman, that I have publicly made reference to what I would regard as a desirable state of affairs where we had some positively stated environmental goals, and so that all environmental activities were not of a reactionary type but that were directed towards achieving some positive level of quality, and we are attempting to address that in the department now and at this stage it's still in the process of being developed and we don't know really at this stage how successful we're going to be in doing it.

In addition to that though there have been some tentative water quality standards that have been published as a result of Clean Environment Commission hearings into water quality and the public had a chance to react to that and I think the report came out last May some time. I since then have asked the Clean Environment Commission to hold specific hearings with respect to one or two drainage areas to see how those standards might actually be applied and what kind of difficulties would be encountered and what sort of reaction we would get from users of water and interested people generally, so we're moving in the direction of trying to get some positively stated standards, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, Mr. Chairperson. As a follow-up to this I'd like to ask the Minister where

I could get a list of the environmental quality indicators that the department or the government thinks are important. The reason why I ask this is that I think it is important for us to develop an index of the environmental quality of life in Manitoba and unfortunately I think people talk a lot about it but we don't seem to get down to doing it.

You mentioned that there was a report put out — I wasn't that aware of it — I know that you had made some statements in this regard about possibly two or three months ago. I can't remember specifically what you said in this respect. I do recall that you indicated that something should be done on it, but I think what we need as a starting point, Mr. Chairperson, is a set of indicators telling us what exists right now so that we can determine whether we're satisfied with our existing environmental quality, what areas are we dissatisfied, what can we do to try and improve the quality of the air in certain locations, the quality of water — and I mentioned the Red River as one, I've mentioned the Assiniboine River as another. These are two natural features that surely could be amenities for Winnipeggers yet they're not used sufficiently so people are using them from the safety of their boats but very few people are really using them in terms of swimming or fishing, at least in the Winnipeg area. That's of concern to me and I think it's important for us to determine whether we are developing the base about what already exists, and I'd like the Minister to tell me if the department has done something in this respect? If it has, has it published it? Could I get a copy of it? If any of my constituents are interested in it, where could they get a copy of what I'd call the index of the present environmental quality?

MR. RANSOM: I would not say that there is something that we'd call an index on environmental quality available at this time by any means, Mr. Chairman, but the Clean Environment Report that deals with standards and categories certainly is available and would be available to the honourable member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (c)(1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, Mr. Chairperson. I'd like to ask the Minister whether he feels that an index of the existing environmental quality, a comprehensive index, would be a desirable thing for Manitobans to have?

MR. RANSOM: And I said, Mr. Chairman, that that is the sort of thing that we are trying to examine now to see if it can meaningfully be done. At this stage it's not sufficiently advanced to be able to say that yes, we will have something that's meaningful. I know that it exists in other jurisdictions and I regard that as something that's desirable if it can be meaningful and it then becomes possible to measure changes that take place. Unless you can do that then it isn't meaningful and so, while I agree with the honourable member in concept, I can't tell him unfortunately that we have it sufficiently refined at this point.

MR. PARASIUK: Mr. Chairperson, the reason why I'm asking questions on this is that we are talking about environmental research and development and it would strike me that this would be the area in which this type of task would be conceptualized, would be programmed, and would be carried out in the next fiscal year. We aren't quite into the fiscal year yet and I noticed that there has been an increase allocated from \$232,000 gross to \$271,000 gross and I'm wondering whether, in fact, something is being done in this area. Is it more than just a fond hope or is it something that we can look forward to within one year as coming out. It strikes me that when the budgets are being developed for departments, when the Estimates are being developed for departments, they are developed in response to definitions of programs, what will be carried out over the course of the next year. It struck me that this would probably be the most important task for this particular branch to undertake. It is budgeted; there is a budget item in there. There is an expansion indicated and I guess I'm asking the Minister whether in fact, what this expansion is for and whether we can expect concrete results within the next fiscal year on this matter?

MR. RANSOM: The expansion, Mr. Chairman, is budgeted for water quality investigations. At this point, I'm not entirely certain in what particular situation that it is going to be directed but there was previously a joint study that had been worked out between the federal and the provincial governments with respect to Lake Winnipeg water quality. Both governments have now, partly as a result of restraint and partly because we had questioned the type of study that was being proposed, we have dropped the study as planned, the magnitude as planned, and we now are looking at what can be done to address that problem in terms of meaningful decision-making and not in the more academic sense.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, the Minister indicated in a previous answer that other jurisdictions do have indices of the present or existing environmental quality and that he was looking into whether in fact the development of such an index in Manitoba would be meaningful. I guess he defined meaningful as enabling one to measure or determine change that was taking place with respect to those indicators.

Is it possible for the Minister to indicate which other jurisdictions do indeed have the index, when they were developed, and what experience they have had in it? Because frankly, I don't think we have got enough information in this area and I think it is important for us, especially in the urban milieu, to develop a better list of indicators regarding our environmental quality and for us to get people interested in it. I think people should be interested in what the quality of their environment is. I am asking the Minister if he has done some checking already into what exists in other jurisdictions and if he has found that they have developed a system. I think that there are a couple of provinces that have them but I don't have the research facilities at my disposal in this respect to determine what has been done. If he has been doing some exploration of this matter, perhaps he could tell some of the Members of the House what he has found out in this respect.

MR. RANSOM: Well, Mr. Chairman, I haven't really been involved in the research of this sort of thing myself. We have competent staff in the department and I have acknowledged the necessity of addressing this issue and I have given the staff the responsibility of looking at it and reporting to me. So I'm really not in a position to debate the technical merits of an index. I agree with the concept obviously because we are addressing it. Beyond that, I'm really not in a position to debate the technical points of that index.

MR. RANSOM: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, just to get back to a couple of the specifics I raised, in the opinion of his expert staff, could the Minister inform us whether the Red River and the Assiniboine River, within the boundaries of the City of Winnipeg, are safe to swim in?

MR. RANSOM: I don't think they are regarded at this stage as being safe to swim in, Mr. Chairman, particularly not at this time of the year.

MR. PARASIUK: I think that he is referring to obviously an impossibility. But in the summertime, when water is flowing, when there isn't any ice cover, is it safe for young people or older people to use the river within the city they live in, to swim in? It strikes me as being a very simple question but one that we can't seem to get an answer to.

MR. RANSOM: I am advised, Mr. Chairman, that within the city itself, or at least entering the city, it probably would be regarded as marginally acceptable.

MR. PARASIUK: Mr. Chairperson, the Minister's answer leads to another question. What is the quality of the water where the river leaves the city? He is saying that the river is marginally safe to swim in when it enters the city boundaries, what is it like at the other end of the boundaries where it flows through the city? Is the city in fact discharging raw sewage, or are there other effluents going into the river that would contaminate the river and make it marginally unsafe to swim in?

MR. RANSOM: It could not be regarded as safe for body contact, sports use below the city, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PARASIUK: Well, you see, when you start pressing, Mr. Chairperson, you start finding that the water quality isn't good enough in the two major rivers that flow through the City of Winnipeg. The point is, if we do know that, is there anything that we can do to try and improve the water quality so that it can be brought to a level of safety so that people can swim in it?

MR. RANSOM: Well, Mr. Chairman, this is a problem of long standing, of course, and I guess over the years there have been some improvements made in the water quality. Probably the next major step that would have to be taken would be for the City of Winnipeg to disinfect the sewage going into the river and that would be an extremely costly undertaking. There would have to be a judgment made before that kind of expenditure is made, as to what the advantages are in making it.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, if the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers aren't biologically

safe for swimming, what process do we have in place for looking at this particular problem? What process do we have in place for assessing how much it would cost to bring the water quality of the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers up to a biologically safe level? What process do we have for determining whether in fact something can be done about it? —(Interjection)— Well, you know, Mr. Chairperson, a lot of people are saying that this isn't an important matter, and I think it is an important matter when we have a city where the rivers are unsafe to swim in. That is a very serious matter. We have only been living in this city for a little over 100 years and if within just over 100 years we have made the river unsafe to swim in, what are we going to do over the next 100 years? You know, one of the things that is quite astounding about the St. Lawrence River is that it is one of the most beautiful rivers in the world and yet it too is unsafe to swim in because the City of Montreal pumps untreated sewage into it. Now, if that is the case with the City of Winnipeg, I think we should know how much effluent is being pumped into these rivers and what has to be done to clean it up. I think this is a matter of great seriousness; it is not a matter of joking. Because if it is unsafe to swim in, what about the fish that swim in it? What about those kids on the piers who are fishing for fish? . What is the quality of the fish that they catch? Shouldn't they eat it? If they shouldn't eat it, shouldn't they be told that they shouldn't eat it. Maybe they shouldn't fish. Maybe there should be signs posted saying, "No Fishing, Water Contaminated." I haven't seen those signs. I haven't seen signs saying, "No Swimming, Water Contaminated."

So, again, I ask the Minister what work is being done to determine what it would take to bring the water quality of the rivers up to a safe enough level to swim in? And secondly, does this have any effect on the quality of the fish within the Red and Assiniboine Rivers within the boundaries of the City of Winnipeg?

MR. RANSOM: No, but what probably would have some effect on the fish would be if they chlorinated the sewage, Mr. Chairman, then we would have a problem with the fish.

The problem is to some extent being addressed by the hearings that I referred to, really, in that we have got to address the various rivers and determine what sort of standard we wish to maintain for them. If our standard is to return every river to the pristine condition, then that is one thing. If in some other cases we regard a river as being a resource that is capable of carrying away effluent from a city and degrading the effluent, then that is a use of a river and a decision has to be made, really, what use the people want to make of the river. That's why we are addressing the question that I referred to previously. I dare say at the moment it is probably a fairly simple matter to determine how many millions and millions of dollars would have to be spent from a technical point of view to bring about those improvements, or those changes. Whether or not that is a desirable thing hinges on quite a number of other judgments.

MR. PARASIUK: Mr. Chairperson, you know, we can't really deal with the matter well enough if we just say that in order to clean it up, it would cost a lot of money, it would cost millions and millions of dollars. Would it be possible for the Minister to indicate to me how I could determine what the existing water quality of the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers is within the boundaries of the City of Winnipeg, what I could do to determine what the standards, what a biologically safe standard of water quality for these two rivers might be? What information should I get and where can I get it to determine that? Or does he have it at his disposal right now to give it to me now?

MR. RANSOM: We do some water testing, Mr. Chairman, and I would be quite prepared to make results available to the honourable member.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I can appreciate the Minister's previous comments when he said that these matters are complicated. I appreciate that they are complicated, which means that you have to have good technical work done to determine first what the existing level is, and then to determine what you would like to have as a target. And it strikes me that you can only establish what the target might be if you have some idea of what exists right now.

If the Minister would pass over the information as to what exists right now, I would appreciate that and I would appreciate his informing the House the process by which he hopes to establish the targets for what should exist with environmental indicators like the quality of water in the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers, or the quality of air around the packing houses, or the quality of air in your industrial plants where there are smoke stacks, a place like the CN Shops, for example. What is the process involved in determining what the targets should be, because I think that if the public are going to get interested in these matters, they have to determine what the information is with respect to these matters?

And secondly, they have to determine how they themselves can get involved in the process of

establishing targets that they themselves have some faith in. I think the best way that that can happen is if they get involved in that process.

So, could the Minister indicate to us how the public can get this information and how they can get involved in the process?

MR. RANSOM: Well, Mr. Chairman, I believe I made it reasonably clear that the Clean Environment Commission has been asked to address the question of standards for some rivers and one of the things they do is hold public hearings. It is an excellent opportunity for the public to become involved. Some of the other work that is ongoing is at this stage internal within the department and when it gets to a satisfactory level of development, then we will look for some means of public involvement. There already have been some objectives adopted, air quality objectives, for instance, that have been adopted and published and are available. The honourable member should be familiar with those, I would think.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, Mr. Chairperson. How could I get this information? Is it available directly from your department? For example, if a group of students in a school in my constituency — because a group has expressed interest in the environment — if they wanted to get information on environmental quality, what should they do, contact your department directly and you will provide the information, you have it? Or should they contact the Clean Environment Commission? What are the specific mechanics in that respect, rather than just saying they are available? I have looked at his department and I think there are about four or five reports emanating from his department and I think it is somewhat difficult for the general public to start determining where this type of information exists with respect to environmental quality.

I think that is a problem. And again, with respect to the Clean Environment Commission holding hearings, how well advertised are these hearings? Are they put in the public notices with all the legal notices or are they advertised somewhere else where the public might get a chance to see them and understand them and try to attend? Or are the hearings advertised to that little group that is specifically interested, know the procedures, know how to get involved already, and look for the advertisements on certain pages? How do you reach the general public on something that I think would be of great concern to them? I know that there has been a review of the City of Winnipeg Development Plan and nowhere in that review can I recall information coming forward regarding the quality of water in the rivers, which I think are the major amenities within the city. If you look at the major geographical features of this city, I think you would have to say that the junction of the Red and the Assiniboine is a major, major amenity geographically, physically, and yet we find that the water is too contaminated to swim in, which is really quite amazing.

I think that if the citizens of Winnipeg knew that and could get information on that, I think that they may be willing to make the trade-offs, to make the expenditures necessary to clean up their rivers. First of all they have to know how to get the information, how to determine whether this is just sewage effluent, or industrial effluent, that's not been clarified. What is contaminating the water? It's supposedly coming into the City in a marginally safe condition but once it enters the City boundaries it becomes marginally unsafe biologically. And I would think that that is a very large policy question facing the citizens of Winnipeg. Do they want a clean river or not? But that question has never been addressed. They aren't aware of that.

So, I'm asking if the Clean Environment Commission has advertised that it's going to have these hearings; has it sent out information to people? Has it tied into the City of Winnipeg Development Plan Review, because that planning process itself is trying to contact a lot of people. I think they sent out something in the order of 3,000 questionnaires. I don't recall information being sent out to people with these questionnaires, giving the water quality, or the environmental quality. They talked about housing; they talked about transportation, but no one talked about the environmental quality in this City. So, I think this is an opportunity for the Clean Environment Commission. This is an opportunity for the Department to do something with a matter that I think is very important.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, I simply wanted to bring some matters to the Minister's attention. I promised him I would do this and I wouldn't want to disappoint him because I know how much he likes to take all these questions into account. But, he would recall that we asked some questions during question period related to the existence of different variations of 2-4D Pesticides and Chemicals in the different parts of Manitoba and their influence as well in the environmental areas and the Minister said he would come back to me when he took the question as notice. He hasn't done it yet so maybe we have an opportunity at this time.

First, let me bring to his attention the following. The branch of the Environment Canada in the

Northwest Territories, for the prairie Northwest Territories says, and I quote: "Long lasting organic chlorine pesticides such as lindane and alpha BHC were found in mountains in the Canadian Shield areas north of Manitoba and in Manitoba and Saskatchewan farming districts showing pesticide drifts as far more serious than previously thought. Organic chlorine pesticides do not readily break down in the environment and lindane for example, accumulates in the food chain and is more toxic than DDT."

This particular article which is from the Toronto Globe and Mail goes around to say that year round samples of 2-4D have been found in Saskatchewan's Qu'Appelle River system and the Manitoba's Red River system, both which run through farmland. Reading further on, they point out that a National Research Council study on 2-4D found very substantial linkages between the toxicity of 2-4D and cancer and that there is an increasing number of kinds and varieties in usages of variants of this particular chemical. Now, in the same page the Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan, Mr. Edgar Kaeding, indicates that certain forms of pesticides again with a 2-4D base will be removed from the Canadian market to reduce pollution according to Mr. Kaeding, the Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture. He said last year a total of 3.3 million pounds of 2-4D was used in Canada, most of it in the prairie regions. And he talks about the Saskatchewan area.

Now, this reason I bring it up is I also just came across another article which maybe puts the cap on this particular item and it is the following, that the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States has just 2-4D now banned two herbicides which are components and that the Province of British Columbia is now considering a similar ban of chemicals. It is now investigating and studying the situation. Which leads me to the question to the Minister, what are we doing in this area to examine the toxicity and its potential effects in human and animal consumption in the Province of Manitoba? Are we studying the problem? Are we looking into it? Are we trying to assess the dangers as is apparent in the Province of Saskatchewan, the Province of British Columbia and the outright banning in the United States? It would seem to me those are pretty fair indicators that there is something substantially and seriously wrong and that it does bear some examination and I would like to know from the Minister what's being done to research and investigate this problem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: That work is basically done by the Federal Government, Mr. Chairman. The province is not involved in specific research in the effects of a particular chemical.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman. I think that that answer of the Minister comes under the general category that is know as a cop-out and I would simply refer to the statement made by his contemporary though perhaps philosophically and otherwise, the Environmental Minister, Mr. Raithe Mair, who is the environmental minister in the Province of British Columbia, a provincial jurisdiction last I heard, who has ordered his staff to look into the United States Environmental Protection Agency's ban on the use of two herbicides. The EPA banned major use of the chemical 2-4-5T and silvex Thursday, saying it has found significant new evidence linking of chemicals with miscarriages suffered by women in Oregon's coastal mountains. Mair said the decision on banning the chemicals in British Columbia will not be made until the situation is thoroughly investigated. Various environmental protest groups and so on have called upon the British Columbia government to ban this item. Now, it would seem to me what is good for British Columbia might be good for Manitoba and I wonder if somehow we are living under different rules and I would certainly beg to differ with the Minister's statement that that is the responsibility primarily the Federal Government. I would suggest that's one reason why we have a Department of Environment with a division called Research and Development. It is exactly to look into these matters and determine whether there is any harmful effects that might be created by these kinds of chemicals and pesticides and if there are problems they may, in fact, not do the research themselves but they sure as heck should be getting in touch with the authorities that are doing it to determine whether in fact such things are unsafe and should not be used in the Province of Manitoba.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: Well, Mr. Chairman, I believe that the record will show that the honourable member's question referred to actual research on the effects of the chemical. If he's talking about being aware of what's going on in other jurisdictions, certainly that's the sort of thing that we are able to do, but we are not able to undertake specific research on any given chemical. It simply is an extremely

expensive undertaking and it's being done the federal government in Canada to some extent and the federal government in the United States and all we can do in those cases is to keep informed of what the latest information is. Now the material that the honourable member refers to with respect to 2-4-5T is a line of reasoning at least or findings that is not particularly new. It's been known for some time, or at least it's been alleged that those have been the possible effects for some time and to my knowledge it's not the 2-4-D component that's in that mixture, it's the 2-4-5T. So, one has to be very careful in not confusing in an area that is very technical as we did last year in the discussion of this sort of thing. I can say certainly our people are in constant touch with the Federal Environment people. They meet about every two weeks to discuss this sort of thing, what's the latest information available.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I take the Minister's further explanation, but I would suggest that it still doesn't absolve them of some responsibility for beginning to look at this problem, that even if they can't undertake the direct chemical investigations and are simply confined to finding out what other people are doing and what other research is available, then, my question is if there is some danger involved, why are we not doing it and should we not be doing it?

Let me just clarify further and I apologize to the Minister perhaps for not reading the full import of this particular piece. It points out that a National Research Council Study of herbicides released last August, indicates that in a survey of 3,300 farmers and grain elevator operators, about 20 percent, say that they encountered major problems after handling agricultural chemicals and said 2-4-D was the most troublesome. Symptoms included nausea, loss of weight, skin rash and occasional vomiting. Repeat exposure to chemicals resulted in enhanced sensitivity to pesticides. According to survey results, the symptoms have led to a significant number of farmers to contract out of their spraying.

The NRC called for an investigation of the effects pesticides have on the agricultural community, especially on women of child-bearing age. Well, National Research Council, I think we would agree, is a pretty reputable organization. It has called upon provincial governments to do this and the Minister in Saskatchewan has responded by saying that they are going to be doing it. British Columbia is also beginning to look into whether another variation, the 2-4-5T and Silvex should be banned. And I guess the point I'm coming to, Mr. Chairman, is this, that there seemed to be a growing level of concern about the accumulative effect of different chemicals used, particularly in agricultural settings. And it would strike me that the Province of Manitoba, through its Department of Environment, should be treating this with some priority and giving it some attention so that we could begin determining which of these chemicals and pesticides are harmless and which, in fact, are harmful, and I think that particularly, where there is accumulative effect, where one is used upon the other and they begin building up certain deposits in water streams and to get into the food chain and all of a sudden you may be finding trouble and I think that we can now say that the Health Research is certainly beginning to show very close linkages between the incidence of cancer in the areas where there is a high usage of chemicals and other forms of materials of that nature.

So, what I haven't heard the Minister say, is he said: "We can't do these things". The question I would put to him: "Why don't we do these things and isn't it about time we began to begin examining the range and variety of heavy-usage pesticides and agricultural chemicals in the Province of Manitoba, to borrow, if we need be, the research and examinations done by other groups of people to determine as the NRC said, if, in fact, it's having significant effect upon women of child-bearing age in agricultural communities it would seem to require some degree of priority?"

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: First of all, Mr. Chairman, when one looks for scientific information, I guess you don't get it out of news clippings necessarily, that the NRC, no one is questioning their integrity, but this sort of thing is very subject to errors in reporting and I have some doubts about some of the statements with respect to 2-4-D, but I can assure the Member that we are in touch with other agencies that do testing of these things and if there is some problem that appears to be substantiated scientifically, then we will address it.

MR. AXWORTHY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I would perhaps maybe in bargaining the Minister up a little bit in terms of what he is prepared to do, why don't we agree upon this, that aside from just doing some random selection, could the Minister commit himself to undertake a major collection of the different kinds of examinations that have been conducted by even the agencies I've admitted. I presume that even the Globe and Mail wouldn't lie about what the NRC is doing; that they would

see what the Government of Saskatchewan is doing; the Government of British Columbia; the NRC and The Environmental Protection Agency in the United States; the findings that they have made, the reasons why they are beginning to seriously look at the banning of some of these chemicals and prepare a specific report that could be released to members of this Legislature so we would know whether we, in fact, are simply letting something happen by omission and in fact, really determine that there really is no problem. Would the Minister undertake to do that?

MR. RANSOM: We will, Mr. Chairman, be in touch with the Federal Minister of the Environment and his department and we will be determining how they view this situation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1)—pass. The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I note that the Research and Development Branch is responsible for the setting of environmental standards. I assume this would be the setting of whatever the environmental equivalent of a threshold limit value is, or it may even be threshold limit values. I'm just wondering if the Minister can explain the process by which these environmental standards are researched and set. In other words, how do they go about determining a specific level of a specific environmental hazard or a specific environmental chemical or pesticide or herbicide is an allowable limit?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: It's basically through literature review, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I'd ask the Minister, then, if he could inform us as to where, generally, this literature comes from. Are we, as we do in the example of workplace, accept the TLVs that come up mostly from the Occupational Safety and Health Division of the United States Department of Labour, or are we accepting environmental standard limits that are coming from other jurisdictions within the country, or outside the country or offshore? I'm just wondering if the Minister can tell us where the bulk of these journals come from and what other jurisdiction's experience we are using to determine our own environmental standards?

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, the review that the body of scientific literature, at least that is available in the English language; beyond that, I'm uncertain as to how much they would do in other languages.

MR. COWAN: Well, I'm wondering if the Minister can be more specific. I understand that the problem, that there would be a lot of environmental impact assessments coming from a number of different agencies, but I'm just trying to pinpoint on whose experience, primarily, we're basing our own environmental standards. Is it on the U.S. experience, or is it coming out of, perhaps, The Science Council of Canada, or is there a function that has been set in motion specifically for dealing with environmental standards within either the Federal Government or a coalition of provincial governments?

MR. RANSOM: That's perhaps somewhat misleading in saying that they set standards, in that really they make recommendations in some cases to The Clean Environment Commission in specific cases of where an application exists to discharge contaminants, for instance. They will make recommendations and the Commission will make the judgment in that case what is acceptable and what isn't acceptable. The recommendation might be based just on general scientific information that's available from North America and Britain. The air standard or air quality objectives, I understand, were, to a great extent, based on the standards used by The Environmental Protection Agency in the U.S.

MR. COWAN: In other words, The Research and Development Branch is responsible for reacting to a specific request that may come to it for recommendation to the Council and that it is not their policy to predetermine a general set of standards.

MR. RANSOM: That's, I would say, is more or less, a correct understanding, except that at this point, we are now trying to address on our own, the broader issue of environmental quality.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass. The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I'd ask the Minister, then, how they are going about trying to address themselves to the broader environmental question here? Are they doing it through the Commission or are they doing it through in-House committees or are they doing it through public hearings. In other words,

what is the procedure that they are following in order to determine broader impact assessments which I have to commend the government for doing if they are sincere in this regard? It will be an innovative step and it will be a positive step, but I would like some more information on exactly what is happening in this regard, the specifics of that process.

MR. RANSOM: It is still an internal review at this stage, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1)—pass. The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, Mr. Chairperson. I note in the Estimates book that there is a substantial increase in the expenditures for the Environmental Research and Development Branch going from approximately \$59,400 to \$110,200.00. I'm wondering if the Minister can detail out those expenditures and if this increase, is, in fact going largely for that internal review?

MR. RANSOM: Well, I just explained that increase, Mr. Chairman, to the Honourable Member from Transcona.

MR. COWAN: Okay. I thank the Minister. I wanted to confirm that that, in fact, was the case. On the Annual Report, it shows a picture of establish and precipitation gauges in Northern Manitoba to study SO₂ rainfall, which is commonly called acid rainfall and which is a problem peculiar to areas where they have a large amount of sulphur, I assume, as they would because the nickel-bearing ore coming out of the Thompson plant is a sulphide ore, so I imagine that sulphur would be entering the environment either through the tailings or through the emissions from the smokestack. I'm wondering if the Minister can inform us as to exactly what sort of problem we are facing in Northern Manitoba in regard to acid rainfall?

MR. RANSOM: There is a study under way, Mr. Chairman, a continuing study to deal with the effects on vegetation and soil and some of the biological organisms, so until those studies are completed, then, it's really impossible to answer a question such as what's the nature of the problem there. It's just too broad a question to answer until we have the studies completed.

MR. COWAN: Can we infer from the fact that the government is implementing a study and they have assured us that they are spending their money in what they consider to be the most efficient manner that they are implementing such a study because they believe a problem with reference to acid rainfall does exist in Northern Manitoba?

MR. RANSOM: This is the third year of the study, now, Mr. Chairman, it's in co-operation with The Canadian Forestry Service and I think the honourable member is probably aware that The Clean Environment Commission had held hearings with respect to the plant and there has been public discussion and there is some knowledge of the agnitude of the specific problem relating to that plant.

MR. CHAIRMAN: ()—pass. The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, Mr. Chairperson. Certain scientific documents acid rainfall has been linked with mercury pollution. I'm wondering if there is any cause for concern that the acid rainfall that is being created as a result of emissions from the Thompson and Flin Flon Smelters, may, in some way, be contributing to the high levels of mercury that we are finding in the Rat River and Burntwood River fish?

MR. RANSOM: I really could neither confirm nor deny that hypothesis, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I recall reading a study done several years ago: The effect of acid rainfall in the Sudbury area — the economic impact of acid rainfall. You know, we must understand that SO₂ rain has a very detrimental impact on the environment and it has an impact on the forestry, as the Minister has mentioned, has an impact on small animals in the area.

It has been linked with mercury pollution. . . has been linked with a number of other toxic situations that are being created around smelters, around industrial areas that are pumping a lot of sulphur into the air; sulphur being then mixed with the precipitation to fall back to the earth in the form of acid rainfall. I'm wondering if this particular study that's being done in the Thompson or Northern Manitoba I guess — it doesn't specify it's being done in the Thompson area — but if this particular study that's being done is addressing itself to detailing out some of the economic

costs that are being borne by the public of Manitoba because of emissions that are coming from the smelters at Thompson and Flin Flon and resulting in an acid rainfall over the northern part of the Province.

MR. RANSOM: The study in question is one that deals with biological effects, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COWAN: Well, I would just ask the Minister then, Mr. Chairperson, to specify biological effects on small mammals or biological effects on the forest or the bush as we call it in Northern Manitoba. Well if it is being done on — the Minister indicates from his seat that it's being done on both — if it is being done on both, can the Minister tell us if this study that is being done on the small mammal population — I believe it would be the small mammal population that would be most effected by acid rainfall and the forest — is taking into consideration the loss to the Province's economy because of the destruction of pulp wood in Northern Manitoba and because of the destruction of an economy that is created by trappers, who rely on the small mammal population for much of their livelihood. And if it is linked with mercury it would be also having an economic, detrimental economic impact on the fishing industry in Northern Manitoba, and I'm wondering if the Minister can assure us that the study that's being done will take this into consideration so that we have some sort of gauge by which we can determine the economic impact of allowing industries to continue to pollute the air?

MR. RANSOM: The study, Mr. Chairman, is designed to determine the biological impacts of the discharge of contaminants from the plant.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I'd ask the Minister to refresh my memory in something he just said a moment ago. Is this study being done jointly between the Federal and Provincial Government? The Minister says it is. I'm asking the Minister if his Department or himself would have any impact on the direction that that study can take in regard to determining the economic impact of acid rainfall in Northern Manitoba?

MR. RANSOM: Before you should do that, Mr. Chairman, you have to know what the biological impact is.

MR. COWAN: Is the Minister inferring that once this study is done then, Mr. Chairperson, that will determine the biological impact which is going to be devastating if this study is going to bear out the facts that have been found in other jurisdictions and other areas surrounding smelters? Once that is done, is the Minister prepared then to initiate a study to determine the economic impact?

MR. RANSOM: At the moment, Mr. Chairman, that is a hypothetical question and I really can't respond to it.

MR. COWAN: Yes, Mr. Chairperson. I would argue with the Minister that it is a hypothetical question. The fact is that acid precipitation does occur in Northern Manitoba. It is a fact the mere instance of a study being initiated over 3 years ago would prove out my contention that there is a problem in Northern Manitoba, that it has been an ongoing problem for some time. I'm not trying in this instance to assess blame. The smelter in Flin Flon has been around for 40-some years and the one in Thompson has been around for 20-some years. It is not something that any one government, or any one political party can be held accountable for; it is a problem that is day-to-day coming to be of more importance. Not that the problem is changing but just our perception of the problem is changing and we are realizing that problems such as acid precipitation have a tremendous economic impact on the areas surrounding industrial sites that are pumping sulphur into the air.

And I'm recalling, I can't recall the hard figures, but I recall in Sudbury, that they did a study that showed exactly how much every pound of sulphur that was emitted would cost the people of the Province of Ontario in reduced revenues from wood production in the area, and reduced revenues from trapping, and reduced revenues from fishing. And I think it's a very important problem.

I think it's a social problem. It's a social problem because if, and this is hypothetical, if acid rainfall is linked with mercury poisoning, which there has been some suggestion that it is, if that is the case, then we are poisoning our people with mercury. And there is no other simple or nicer

term for it so it has tremendous social significance. Acid rainfall, and this is not hypothetical, has been linked with extreme economic cost to Provinces where it occurs and to areas where it occurs due to the lack of, or due to the destruction that it has on the forest industry in the area, and the destruction that it would have on the trapping industry in the area. So I think it's incumbent upon the Minister. This is a government that likes to think, or at least in my opinion, they like to think in monetary terms. And here is an issue that is a social issue, but can be documented in monetary terms. In other words, the pollution that is occurring at Flin Flon, and the pollution that is occurring at Thompson is having a direct economic impact on all the citizens of this Province, and I think the Minister has a responsibility to determine exactly how much that pollution is costing us.

And it can be done. There are methods by which it can be done. Once the initial study is done on the biological impact it is not a major step to go from there to putting it in dollar terms. And once we have it in dollar terms, then we can start to assess, not only on a social level but on an economic level, the cost of pollution to the Province, and I think that is a worthy goal. I think that is something that has to be done. For a government that prides itself on efficiency and for a government that prides itself on good, monetary sense, then they have to make a commitment to find out exactly what the costs of this problem in particular, acid rainfall, exactly what those costs are to the Province, and they also have to direct their attention to some of the other costs of environmental hazards and environmental pollution. So I'd ask the Minister if he's prepared, once this biological survey is done, instead of disbanding the whole survey, to carry on, and it won't entail much greater costs than is already being spent, to carry on to determine the economic, even in broad terms, the economic impact of acid rainfall in Northern Manitoba.

MR. RANSOM: Well, Mr. Chairman, I will not prejudge the outcome of that study.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I ask the Minister when that study is intended to be completed?

MR. RANSOM: I'm advised that it may be completed within a year.

MR. COWAN: And I'd ask the Minister how many people are involved currently with the preparation of that study?

MR. RANSOM: I'm advised two-and-a-half people in Manitoba and one in Edmonton.

MR. COWAN: I thank the Minister for that answer, Mr. Chairperson. I ask the Minister what is the economic commitment of the Province to this study over the three years or four I guess, that it's being undertaken in?

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, perhaps the Honourable Member would like to proceed with some of his other questioning and we'll get an answer to that.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I would like to ask the Minister which agencies, or which groups, have received environmental research aid grants from the Research and Development Branch in the past year?

MR. RANSOM: I'll have to get that listed as well, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COWAN: Perhaps the Minister can tell me then where the funding for those grants come from. Do they come from this specific item in the expenditures?

MR. RANSOM: I'm advised, Mr. Chairman, there are no grants paid out of this section.

MR. COWAN: So then this section, Mr. Chairperson, is responsible only for the administering of grants that come from other Departments, other branches of this Department or other Departments within the government, or perhaps even the Federal Government. I'm asking the Minister if that would be the correct case? In other words, does just administer money that's coming from other areas?

MR. RANSOM: I don't believe so, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps you could refer us to the item that leads you to that conclusion. Is it something in the report?

MR. COWAN: I was trying specifically, Mr. Chairperson not to mention the report in this case,

and to make it seem as if I knew this information and wasn't relying on the report so as not to have the Minister put too much effort into changing the formula or the format of the report because I found it very useful, but I'll have to refer the Minister to Page 13, under Research and Development Branch, the 4th item down where it says, "Administers environmental research aid grants."

MR. RANSOM: Oh, I'm advised, Mr. Chairman, that there must be some sort of technical difference in understanding there of what's a grant and what is paid in support of specific research that's undertaken. In loose terms it may be a grant and in budgeting terms perhaps not treated that way.

MR. COWAN: So there are no outside grants that are being administered by this Department; what we're actually talking about would be the next item in the Research and Development Branch, which says it provides research support functions to environmental assessment and review process. Is that correct?

MR. RANSOM: In the absence of a better explanation, Mr. Chairman, I would think that he is probably correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1—pass — the Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. There is in the expenditures item, under Salaries, are we to assume that that is one staff man year that is missing, and I may have missed it but I don't recall being said if it was. Could the Minister refresh my memory. What position is now vacant, or what position has now been eliminated and was it vacant or filled at the time of its elimination?

MR. RANSOM: It was a Biologist position which was vacant.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1) —pass; (2)—pass; (c) pass; (d)(1) salaries—pass — the Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I am wondering if the Minister can indicate to us what changes have been made in staff. I see that there is a slight increase in both Salaries and the Expenditures item. I wonder if he could detail those out for us please, over last year?

MR. RANSOM: Those would seem, Mr. Chairman, just to be inflationary increases and regular salary increases, etc.

MR. COWAN: So, there is no change in staffing. I'm wondering if this would be the proper item under which to discuss the Polar Gas Technical Assessment Group. The Minister is shaking his head "yes" so I will continue.

During the Estimates of last year, we began to discuss the environmental impact that the proposed Polar Gas route would be having on the areas that it passed through in northern Manitoba, Mr. Chairperson. I say "we began" because at that time, as it is now, we were not certain what particular route it would take, or indeed if it would take a route through northern Manitoba, and if it did, when it would, and those questions are still very pertinent questions today.

I would like to continue on with the discussion and again, I imagine we will have to do so in generalities rather than specific details, because of the ambiguity of the situation. But last year the Minister informed us that there was a technical group that was being put together to assess data that was presented by the proponents in the Polar Gas issue. I am wondering if the Minister can inform us now as to the status of the technical assessment group?

MR. RANSOM: The whole issue, Mr. Chairman, has been delayed, we really don't know for how long. Since the Estimates review last year, you will recall, at that time it appeared as though there would be public hearings held in the fall of 1978 and those subsequently were cancelled and did not take place. At this stage it is uncertain, of course, which route is even to be followed. The Federal Environmental Assessment and Review group or agency is the lead agency here and Manitoba has a member on that board. But at this stage, it is somewhat less active than it was even a year ago.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Does this technical group exist today? Does it exist today, and if so, how many meetings has it held? I understand that it is not going to be a terribly

active group because of the problem in determining exactly what, when and where Polar Gas is going to put a pipeline in, but I would ask the Minister if it exists today, if it is being held in a whole position in preparation for possible application, and if so, is it meeting on any sort of a regular or irregular basis and how many meetings it has had over the past year?

MR. RANSOM: There may be some misunderstanding on just which group the honourable member is referring to but we at this stage only have our Environmental Assessment and Review group which is fairly small. Because of the uncertainty as to where the pipeline might go now, we haven't moved to assess the specific recommendations because really there are no specific recommendations at this stage.

MR. COWAN: So we are to assume that there is not a specific group, an individual group called a Technical Assessment Group or whatever name — I don't believe a name was given last year during the Estimates — but there was mention made of a technical group that was being put together to assess the data presented by the proponents. The Minister said, "I just hesitate to say, Mr. Chairman," and I'm reading from the Hansard of Tuesday, April 25, 1978, Page 1301: "I just hesitate to say, Mr. Chairman, who the actual members of the technical committee are. They are drawn from various departments of government. I certainly can find out who the members are but I simply assure that when my administrative people undertake to appoint someone with particular technical competence to serve on a committee like that, I frankly have not concerned myself with the names of the individuals involved." I have to say that that was in response to a question by myself asking who was on this specific group.

From what I understand the Minister is saying now, this group never really did jell, that when the issue seemed pertinent, that plans were made to put this sort of technical assessment group together, but as we got further and further along the road and got further and further away from the imminent building of a pipeline the plans sort of petered out and we never did get a jelled technical assessment group.

MR. RANSOM: Oh, that group is the one that we have representation on, Mr. Chairman. It's the federal PEL, (?) and that one has met perhaps three times. I thought first of all that the honourable member was referring to capacity within the province to react to a specific proposal and, as I had feared, there was some misunderstanding as to which group we were talking with.

MR. COWAN: So, to set the record straight, that is a federally funded group that is calling upon people from out of the Minister's department to sit on it — one person — to assess the environmental impact of the Polar Gas route, and it has met three times in the past year. Has there been any progress made in the past number of months in determining which route the Polar Gas pipeline will follow if it is built through Manitoba?

MR. RANSOM: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the department or the Minister meeting with the Polar Gas people to try to convince them of the advisability of one specific route over another route, at this time?

MR. RANSOM: No, I haven't, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COWAN: Does the Minister know if representatives of his government have attempted to intervene in this situation and to encourage Polar Gas to choose a specific route over another route that they may have had in mind?

MR. RANSOM: I'm really not aware of anything that might be termed an intervention, Mr. Chairman. There have been discussions take place. I was not a part of the most recent one because I happened to be unavailable at the time. But any exchange, to my knowledge, has largely been of an informational nature, at this stage.

MR. COWAN: An informational nature, Mr. Chairperson, in what regard? Has Polar Gas been presenting information to the government or is the government presenting information to Polar Gas, or is there a flow between the two parties?

MR. RANSOM: Basically, descriptions to the government of the the sorts of technical work that would be involved in putting in a line of that nature.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I recall a year ago or so that there . quite a bit of information that was coming out of the Polar Gas was Consortium in regard to environmental impact and that they had at that time promised a report would be coming out shortly on socio-economic impact of the pipeline. At that time I think they were considering a pipeline that ran through the north-eastern section of the province, down by Churchill, outside of Gillam and down across by Shamattawa into Ontario, and I'm wondering if the Minister can indicate if he has received that socio-economic impact of that route or any other proposed route from the Polar Gas Consortium.

MR. RANSOM: I have not seen that study yet, Mr. Chairman. I don't believe that it's in our hands.

MR. COWAN: Perhaps I could ask the Minister to clarify. To his knowledge, has it been completed?

MR. RANSOM: Not to my knowledge, but I would have to inquire specifically.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I will look forward to that information from the Minister in this regard. It's an important issue, of course, and because of the ambiguity of the situation I don't want to belabour it. I don't feel as if much can be accomplished right at this moment, except to ask the Minister if he has met with any antagonists to the Polar Gas pipeline. In other words, in the last Estimates session we talked about a Polar Gas pipeline committee of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, who — well, not to refer to them as antagonists — who were at least questioning the advisability of putting a pipeline that close to many Reserve communities in northern Manitoba, questioning it from an environmental perspective and questioning it also from an economic perspective, and I'm wondering if the Minister has had opportunity to meet with that group as of yet.

MR. RANSOM: I have had no such meeting and no such request, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COWAN: I'm wondering, then, if the Minister has met with either representatives — and I'm not talking about this specific group; I'm talking about other individuals who may or may not be a part of the this specific group, individuals from either the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood or the Manitoba Metis Federation — in regard to the proposed Polar Gas pipeline, over the past year.

MR. RANSOM: No.

MR. COWAN: I'm wondering if the Minister, to his knowledge, can tell us of any meetings that might have occurred between other Ministers and the government and the MIB and the MMF in this regard.

MR. RANSOM: I have no knowledge of such meetings, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (2)—pass; (d)—pass; (e)(1)—pass; (2)—pass — the Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, just looking at the Estimates briefly here, Mr. Chairperson, we note that there is again a slight increase. I'm wondering if the Minister can confirm that this increase is of an inflationary nature and being used to cover those costs that would accrue because of the 8 to 9 or 10 percent inflation over the past few months.

MR. RANSOM: That's basically just a stand pat budget there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (2)—pass; (e)—pass; Resolution No. 83, Item 3. Mineral Resources \$3,094,100, (a) Administration: (1) Salaries—pass; (2)—pass — the Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, can we back up to (1)? I believe I was standing and escaped your attention at the moment. I am wondering if the Minister can detail out — there is a decrease here, a substantial decrease, — if the Minister can detail out the changes in personnel that have occurred over the previous year.

MR. RANSOM: There were 25.2 staff man years in the 1978-79 Budget, and there are 22.2 in

the Estimates before us. All three of these positions were in the Head Office. Two were vacant and one was filled. They were administrative-type clerk positions.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, the one that was filled, and I assume that there was only one filled position, so what we're looking at is a loss of one particular person in this regard, was in the Head Office, of an administrative nature. I wonder if the Minister could detail out a bit more what that one actual person that was let go, what that person's responsibility was.

MR. RANSOM: Well, I think that we substantially, as is evident in the Estimates, have reduced the number of staff generally and we have gotten out of the compulsory participation agreements, of which at one time they numbered some 90, and so the administrative load is substantially less than it was, Mr. Chairman, leading to the ability to make that sort of reduction.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister can tell me whether there are now laws with regard to safety regulations at Hudson's Bay Mining and Smelting Corporation in Flin Flon.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: The situation is still unresolved, Mr. Chairman, from what has existed for the past couple of years.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I know that the Minister has had the facility to say on several occasions that this is a problem that my predecessor had and was unable to resolve, and I have resolved it, or this is a problem that my predecessor had and didn't resolve it, and I, too, have not yet been able to resolve it. But I really think, Mr. Chairman, that if one will look at the record with regard to the safety regulations in Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting that the Minister is not able to deal with that question in such a way as to pass it off. The fact is, Mr. Chairman, that in the fall and winter of 1976-77 there was a charge against the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Corporation, that that charge was dismissed on the grounds that the laws of the Province of Manitoba, with regard to safety regulations, were not applicable to Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting because that company and its facilities at Flin Flon were under the jurisdiction of the federal government by virtue of an Act, which was passed in the late '40s as part of an agreement between Mr. Douglas, then the Premier of Saskatchewan, and I think it was Mr. Campbell — perhaps Mr. Garson, the Premier of the Province of Manitoba, perhaps even Mr. Bracken, although I think it was Mr. Garson or Mr. Campbell.

Mr. Chairman, I think it was generally understood that that statute went into effect for the purpose of making sure that labour relations governing Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Corporation were under the federal legislation, because prior to the Act the only labour legislation in effect was PC-1003, which was a federal regulation governing the entire country and Mr. Douglas, the then Premier of Manitoba, said that it would be unheard of or unacceptable for labour relations at the Flin Flon mine to be divided into two jurisdictions, and they agreed with the passing of this legislation. But I think, Mr. Chairman, and now I'm giving you my opinion, that both governments, and I believe the federal government, as confirmed by the existing Prime Minister, never expected that the laws of Manitoba in other respects would not apply to Hudson Bay Mining

And I believe that the first time when this came into issue was when there was an accident at Hudson Bay Mines. The accident was alleged to have occurred, and I believe it occurred, because a worker was asked to work under conditions which were unsafe. The foreman was charged with permitting a worker to work under unsafe conditions. The matter went to the magistrate's court. The company raised the question that Manitoba laws and safety regulations did not apply to the company at Flin Flon. That case was fought by the Government of Manitoba. It was lost. An appeal went to the Court of Appeal to the Province of Manitoba and they upheld the company's position.

Now, Mr. Chairman, that would not be a disaster if indeed there were laws and regulations and enforcement of regulations by the Government of Canada, but I am unaware, Mr. Chairman, and I think that the Minister will not be able to fault me, that there was any laws on the basis of that Court of Appeal decision at Hudson's Bay Mining and Smelting Corporation between 1948 and that decision. Now, as inconceivable as that may seem, that could appear to be the situation, that the laws that were regulations of the Province of Manitoba were not valid and there were no federal

laws or inspection with regard to that mine.

Now, Mr. Chairman, at that time we asked the federal government to immediately pass a statute to say that the existing federal statute did not intend to remove the safety laws of the Province of Manitoba. But are we now, Mr. Chairman, in a position of complete void or hiatus? Are the workers in Flin Flon . . . Is the Minister able to say to me that there are safety regulations in Flin Flon which are enforceable by some government with some safety inspectors and that charges can be laid against that company validly for breaches of safety regulations? Because if he can't, Mr. Chairman, I say that it is unsatisfactory that this has been unresolved for that length of time. I don't think that he can accuse us of not having acted expeditiously at the time. I believe that I asked him about this in the House last year, and I am repeating my request this year, and it's just not satisfactory for him to reply that the situation remains unresolved. Does any member in the House consider it to be a satisfactory situation that the Hudson Bay mine at Flin Flon is not governed by any laws with regard to safety regulations?

Now, I think at one time they said that the federal laws apply. Can the Minister then tell me, if that is the case, that there is inspection, that there are regulations in existence which he is satisfied with that protect the employee at Flin Flon and that there are mining inspectors having jurisdiction, going in and dealing with these laws? Because if not, Mr. Chairman — and I want the Minister to correct me if I'm wrong as to what the assessment is — then are we to assume that the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Corporation proceeds on the basis that it is doing the right thing, that it need not have any supervision, that the other mines require safety regulations, the other mines require inspectors, the other mines can be charged with a violation? Although I note, and I don't blame the Minister, that somehow INCO, even though the laws do apply, they are charged with a breach of a safety regulation and, through the interpretation of our laws by the judges, they are also acquitted — not this time because there are no laws but because it is suggested that a charge is not properly laid.

I'm not going to at length deal with some of the decisions that are made by the courts in cases of this kind and the kind of interpretations that we get from the judges in that regard, but I do ask the Minister can he say to a worker in the Flin Flon mine that there are safety regulations which protect you, there are inspectors that enforce them, and if the regulations are violated the company can be prosecuted? Can he say that those things will happen?

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, those items are most appropriately dealt with under the Mining Engineering and Inspection item, which is 3(c).

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I believe that they are appropriate under the Administration of the department. Does the Minister not have an answer to that question? Can he answer it now, or does he wish me to wait on the basis that he wishes to get some information? That would be a different answer. But if he's telling me it's not applicable under Administration I would say, Mr. Chairman, that the Administration would cover the salaries for the inspectors. It would also cover the passing of regulations, the making of regulations, the taking of court proceedings. Would those things not come under Administration?

MR. RANSOM: The inspectors, Mr. Chairman, are under Mining, Engineering and Inspection, that's where their salaries are.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I will concede the Minister that. Does Administration not deal with the drafting of regulations, the enactment of regulations; the upholding of regulations?

MR. RANSOM: Well certainly, Mr. Chairman. I'm suggesting that's the most appropriate place to discuss it. If you wish that we respond to it at this stage, then that's fine with me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would advise the Honourable Minister that if he cares to answer and respond to the question we will not be allowing any repetition on questions and if he would care to answer at this point there won't be a repetition on the question later under Item (c).

MR. RANSOM: I can respond to it, and my response is not detailed in that I can only say that at this stage the situation has not been resolved and it is uncertain just what the situation is right now. The Department of Labour is more involved in this problem at the moment than my department is and I expect that there will be some further discussion of it under the Labour estimates. But the situation has not been resolved and the negotiations with the federal government haven't moved to the point where the federal government has moved to change the legislation that would clarify this situation, and so I am advised that we don't know to what extent the regulations apply, whether

there is one specific type of case, whether that's the only one that doesn't apply or whether generally they don't apply. At this point, we are proceeding with our inspections and the company has been, I guess, responding as the other companies have been. What would happen, again, we can't say for certain, if the situation or a slightly different situation were to arise.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to deal with the subject. It's a quarter after ten; may I suggest that Committee rise? We have completed the Department of Environmental Management.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSEN: I think it was the Minister's intention to complete this item and then have the Committee rise, if that's okay with the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, the only thing that I would indicate is that I'm not sure that this will be an item that will be dealt with summarily, and therefore I would prefer that Committee rise at this stage.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, I didn't realize that the Minister of Labour was here with us. Perhaps he has something to add at this point, and maybe we can resolve it or maybe we will look for more information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, the points that the Member for Inkster raised are, in my opinion, valid points. I wasn't really familiar with the entire situation up to a few months ago.

Our department has been reviewing the situation going back to — and I could stand corrected — I think 1947, when this first took place, and there has been a variety of correspondence back and forth and it doesn't resolve the situation today or help what has taken place in the past, but I would like to assure the Member for Inkster and the members opposite that our department is thoroughly reviewing it at the moment. We will be working towards establishing a committee because there are all kinds of concerns. You know there are Saskatchewan concerns and our concerns. There are the federal concerns. There is mine legislation. There is safety legislation. There is labour relations. There are a great number of concerns. But I'd like to assure the Member for Inkster that we are concerned about it; we are working on it, and I don't think, as impregnable as the situation may appear, I don't think it's impossible to resolve and we intend to resolve that particular situation.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Chairman, there is under this item this very subject matter which I intend to raise, and other items with respect to the participation in mining programs, and I do not anticipate it would be an item that is going to be cleared up very soon and therefore I would suggest that the Committee rise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSEN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm always happy to accommodate my honourable friend.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

The Chairman reported upon the Committees' deliberations to Mr. Speaker and requested leave to sit again.

IN SESSION

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson. **8MR. KOVNATS:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Springfield, that the reports of the Committees be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

Monday, March 5, 1979

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Inkster, that the House do now adjourn.

MOTION presented and carried, and the House accordingly adjourned until 2:30 Tuesday afternoon.