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Official Report of
DEBATES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
(Hansard)

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1974

Afternoon Sitting

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The House met at 2:03 p.m.

HON. E.E. DAILLY (Minister of Education): I would like the House to join me in welcoming a group of members from the Second Burnaby Mountain Venturer Company, Boy Scouts of Canada. They are accompanied by their adviser, Mr. Martin.

MS. R. BROWN (Vancouver-Burrard): I would like the House to join me in welcoming four very good friends of mine who are visiting the House today. They are my eight-year-old son, Jonathan, my 14-year-old son, Gary, and their two friends, Nathaniel and Vanessa.

Introduction of bills.

Orders of the day.

House in Committee of Supply; Mr. Dent in the chair.

ESTIMATES: DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

(continued)

On vote 98: Minister's office, \$110,176.

MR. G.S. WALLACE (Oak Bay): I was very interested in the opening statement by the Minister of Highways (Hon. Mr. Lea) yesterday and I would like to make some general comments before making some specific remarks.

The Minister made it plain that the general policy of the department at this time is to maintain extension of new highways. He mentioned that this would not be a blacktop government similar to the government which once existed in this province. This government is more interested in services to people.

I would suggest that the real challenge to government has to be an appropriate balance of both. In our modern society you just can't turn certain developments off and on like a tap, particularly something such as highways where, as many Members have pointed out, you just don't start a project this year and finish it this year.

I think we have to take cognizance of certain realities which neither the Minister can change nor we can change nor any government can change. I am talking particularly about the fact that we have a population increase at the rate of 3 per cent which is double the national average in Canada. We have had an increase of vehicles registered of 8 per cent. I would suggest that any basic policy on highways which pretends we can simply go on maintaining the highways we have in the face of these figures and utilization is a little bit like King Canute trying to hold back waves.

I am not suggesting that the Minister said he would stand still. But I do feel that in his opening statement, and I have listened carefully to his remarks yesterday and today, he certainly gives the impression that maintenance of highways is the primary goal of his department at the present time. There is no long-range planning in regard to the extension of existing highways or development of a new or a more extensive pattern of highways such as the Member for South Peace River (Mr. Phillips) was suggesting. When we drive in the summertime we certainly know what the Hope-Princeton Highway and the Fraser Canyon is like.

The subject of tourism has been raised and I don't think we need to rehash the points of view expressed and the fact that the Minister of Highways appeared to differ with the Minister of Travel Industry (Hon. Mr. Hall). I don't personally feel that particular difference of opinion was as deep a difference as reported. I think both Ministers are thinking in particular response to their own departments and, to a large measure, that's the way it should be. This Minister has to deal with the highway problem and the Hon. Minister of Travel Industry has to consider his immediate responsibility.

But the fact is, whether we like it or not, this province depends for a large part of its revenue on tourism. If you have tourists you have vehicles, and if you have vehicles you are going to have highways. If we are at all burying our head in the sand and saying, "All these vehicles are a menace. There are more accidents and more pollution and more this and more that," we could take the same attitude in a lot of areas. "We've got a lot of new pupils and it's a bit of a nuisance that we have to build new classrooms or we have to build new hospitals for the sick. It's just a pity that people are living to an older age and getting various problems so that we need to build hospitals."

The message coming through from the Minister is that we are trying to hold the situation in check rather than indulging in what I think we should be indulging, namely some long-term planning as to how we acknowledge and face the challenge of meeting an ever-increasing number of vehicles on our highways because we have more people and more vehicles.

I thought the statement was very interesting that was reported in the newspaper on March 14 this year by Mrs. Jean Dann, who is the public relations director of the B.C. Motels, Resorts and Trailer Parks Association, She said the tourist dollar is the finest dollar in the world.

"It does not deplete our natural resources such as lumber and minerals, and the only thing these people take away with them are bills and souvenirs. There isn't a person in this province who doesn't benefit from tourism, directly or indirectly, even the undertaker."

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That's a sad reflection on the fact that we do have many accidents.

But the main general theme I think we should be mentioning very clearly in this debate on highways is that there are certain facts of life we can't get away from: (1) the population is increasing and vehicles are increasing; (2) we have an ever-increasing wave of tourism whether or not we like it. I don't think it's the place in this debate to discuss the pros and cons of tourism, but I certainly feel it is vital that we don't hide ourselves from the fact that there is an ever-increasing demand on our highways. There's just no debate about that.

The question then arises: to what degree is the government looking far enough ahead in planning for this ever-increasing demand?

To be more specific, I think it is not our first responsibility per se to try and accommodate more tourists. In passing, I would say that from the limited amount of driving I do in the summertime, there is certainly room to introduce some kind of specific standard of driving which should be made by people pulling trailers. I don't care if they are from Oregon, Alberta or Newfoundland trailers. This is one area that certainly deserves some close scrutiny because the manner in which some of these trailers are towed on our main highways doesn't surprise me that they result in accidents.

I came across one particularly impressive accident last summer when a trailer had fish-tailed and overturned in the ditch. It was literally a mass of plywood, shattered into I don't know how many pieces. I don't know how many people were killed, but it was a most impressive sight. I'm not saying the trailers should not be on our highways. I don't think it matters where they come from; I hope our borders will always be free to anybody who lives within the law of this province and this country.

But again, I think we have to face the hard facts of life. There are more and more trailers on our highways, particularly in the summer, and from what I can see there is some questionable driving indulged in by those who pull trailers. I wonder if the Minister of Highways would perhaps discuss with the Minister of Transport and Communications (Hon. Mr. Strachan) and the Attorney-General (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) the validity or the wisdom or otherwise, of perhaps making it mandatory that people who pull trailers have some standard of a higher degree than just being able to drive an automobile.

One of the areas, to be a little more specific, which I think the Minister would comment upon relates not only

to highways but to the question of the northern part of the province. Any time I am contacted by people in the north, it doesn't matter whether it's hospitals or education or highways, they feel neglected.

They feel a lack of fair play in regard to the treatment granted to them as compared to the urban areas. This was particularly brought to my attention by the sad episode which occurred — and the Minister's well aware of it — when a child died in Kitimat village recently.

This was the case of a four-year-old child — and it isn't that I want to give the impression that the problem with the highways was the only factor in this child's death. I'm not suggesting that at all. The press reports and the letters I've received and the phone calls that I took part in made it quite plain that there were other factors: the particularly severe weather, and the fact that the child had been ill for some days before medical assistance was sought.

Nevertheless, this child died while attempts were being made to have the child brought to hospital. Incidentally, her brother on the same day was finally admitted to hospital in such a way that the ambulance had to be towed behind a highway grader.

This situation, because it resulted in death, received perhaps a great deal of scrutiny. To me the sad part in being asked to become involved was that this was by no means the first time that problems had arisen in this particular village, problems arising from the lack of access to the village in the wintertime.

Regardless of the risk to life, the statements which were subsequently made by the Kitimat teachers' association and by the Kitimat village chief councilor, Tom Robinson, showed that requests had been made over many years. I'm sure, Mr. Chairman, you know all about this, and I think it's fair to say that you worked very hard to get this situation corrected. But the fact of the matter is that efforts had been made over a period of many years to get this particular road upgraded.

Regardless of life the schooling of the children is frequently interrupted, I understand. I just quote from the January 24 *Sentinel* newspaper.

"Each winter the village, dependent on a single road, gets snowed in for varying lengths of time. The school buses are often unable to get in or out and residents who live in the village and work in Kitimat sometimes spend several hours getting home."

Last year there was an accident on the road involving a school bus and a cab which required that three children be taken to hospital for observation. I don't want to belabour this, but the interesting thing was that the Minister mentioned that this certainly was not an isolated problem. There had been another four-month-old child who died in the Babine reserve on January 14 — again because there was difficulty in having the child transported to hospital.

Now these happen both to be Indian children. It seems to me that all through this session of the House and almost every debate that I've taken part in there's very good reason to conclude that certainly the Indians in our society are getting something less than

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their fair share of our provincial affluence.

We talked about it in the Health debate and their rate of tuberculosis being six times the non-Indian. We talked about it in the debate on education. I mentioned in my throne speech which never even mentioned the fact that we do have Indian people living in this province.

I think this situation regarding the highways just points up again that if you happen to be an Indian and you live out of sight in a northern or in a remote region, people have to die or be killed before anything is done.

I understand that before the Kitimat village had any kind of road, not too long ago, six people were drowned

in a boating accident.

In fairness, I'll say to the Minister at this point that I recognize he has made the commitment to have the road upgraded. He has also made the commitment that winter clearance of snow will take place. But the point that certainly appears to me is that this kind of disaster or sad loss of life has to happen before we get action. I'm just throwing out the question: are there other similar areas in the province where we have to wait for the same kind of loss of life before there's action taken to correct the highway situation?

I am thinking, for example, of Mile 28 on Highway 16 on January 22, when seven people were killed in a snowslide. Here again, there's credit due to the Minister. He has taken action; he's set up a task force, and plans are underway to hopefully prevent the same kind of thing happening on either that part of the highway or other sections of highway which are subject to the same kind of disasters. I just wonder if the Minister would care to comment on the whole question of snowslides and avalanches and the other areas. I believe the Nelson-Creston area is subject to the same kind of dangers. And there are other areas in the province.

I don't want to talk at great length about the Hope-Princeton highway because my colleague from Saanich (Mr. Curtis) has some comments to make on that. But there again, at the site of the landslide that occurred some years ago, I wonder what the Minister's plans are for the congestion and the very narrow and twisting, snake-like road that goes around that slide site, and the fact that people slow down for sightseeing.... You can't blame them for that; this is a natural inclination. But for people who use the highway as a means simply of getting from Hope to Princeton, the hold-up and congestion that occurs in the summertime on that highway past the slide area, I think, is a very serious situation. I wonder if this isn't one particular location where a new highway.... Let's leave the scenic highway, if you want to call it that, and devise a through highway to get around the slide site.

I wonder if the Minister, in talking about the Hope-Princeton highway, could also tell me if anything has been done about the site eight miles east of Hope — as I asked the Minister in the oral question period earlier on, or at the last session of the House — where a number of people had fallen over a particular location. It's my information that nothing specific has been done. If it has been done, I would like to know what it is or what are in the plans. As we recall — and the Minister is aware of this — there have been several deaths for one reason or another through people at that site falling over or vehicles going over.

I think we should realize, in an unfortunate sort of way, that that particular Hope-Princeton highway provides a tremendous basis for research in motor-vehicle accidents. I think we should pay credit to one of the medical men in that area who lives in Hope, who has done a fair amount of research on his own regarding the accidents. He responds to many motor-vehicle accidents in that area. And he has contributed considerably to the knowledge of the technical aspects of what happens in side-swiping and head-on collisions, the value or otherwise of seat belts and some of the other findings as a result of research.

I know I've seen his programme of slides and his clinical discussion on this. As the Minister knows he's a member of the traffic and safety committee of the B.C. Medical Association. I know that the Minister of Health (Hon. Mr. Cocke) would be interested to know that Dr. Ransford, who has subsequently played a leading role in developing ambulance service, was also one of the pioneers, you might say, on the traffic and safety committee of the B.C. Medical Association.

People like Dr. Ransford and this other doctor in Hope, whose name just escapes me.... I think it is a name like Ash; is it Ash? I think that's the name. These men have taken a very deep interest in the study of these unfortunate accidents. I would hope that between the Minister of Health (Hon. Mr. Cocke) and the Minister of Highways we could use their experience and their participation, perhaps, in learning some of the preventive measures that might be developed, based on the experience of these accidents.

I'd like to mention briefly the Island Highway and to say that I would hope, even though the Minister is not indulging in any widespread programme to build a new highway or to make four-lane highways, that he could just find a little bit of paint to at least mark the centre line.

I drive up and down the Island quite frequently and often after dark. And really there are long stretches of

that Island Highway where in a driving rain it's impossible to see the centre of the highway. I presume that it's something that will likely be corrected soon.

Certainly approaching bends in the highway in driving rain at night, you are not sure how near you are to the centre until suddenly lights coming in the

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other direction come around the bend and you know very well that you are too near the centre for comfort.

I think some of the statistics the Minister provided for the House yesterday mention a high percentage of fatal accidents where one or other vehicle has their wheels over the centre line. It seems like a small point, but in terms of safe driving and prevention of accidents, it is a very important factor.

The Minister has also talked about preventing roadside development. He's unhappy or uneasy about the widespread development of shopping complexes right on busy highways. I would strongly agree with the Member for Shuswap (Mr. Lewis) that there are some very valid reasons for wishing to maintain our main highways free of any great degree of industrial or commercial development. I don't know how far back from the highway the Minister is planning to restrict this kind of development. In the newspaper on Sunday, January 16, the Minister is quoted as saying that he wants to ensure that people in general, not developers, plan the development of highways. And the transportation systems should define where communities are going to be.

He may not have been reported correctly, because it seems to me that is saying that transportation comes first, and transportation authorities will tell the people where to build their communities. That surely isn't what the Minister means. If that is what he means, I would suggest that's a kind of direction which really resides in the local level, in the municipalities and the regional districts.

As my colleague from Saanich (Mr. Curtis) pointed out, in the ultimate analysis the Department of Highways always does approve or disapprove any final planning for development of facilities which relate to a highway, or which relate to an application to alter or extend a highway. I think that this whole issue of roadside development has to be kept in perspective.

For example, the headline in *The Province* on February 14, "\$100 Million Projects Stalled by Government." Now even if this idea to restrict roadside development is very good, is the government liable to be sued for the damage that is caused by calling to a halt this amount of development that is already underway? I can see the sense in trying to stop it getting out of hand, but what about people who have already involved themselves in expense developing such projects, now to be told that this is no longer to be permitted by this government? I think there is a lot to be said for orderly growth.

If you build a highway which has to connect A and B, as you say, Mr. Minister, we don't want half of it cluttered up so that you go at 20 miles per hour for most of the journey. I couldn't agree more with that. At the same time, from our side of the House and from where I sit, it seems to me this again is a degree of central government direction towards communities and municipalities, which I think has to be approached very carefully and not in some gunshot or blanket fashion.

I just wonder in this particular case, what about this \$100 million worth of projects which are now being involved in your decision?

On the whole question of extension of roads and new roads, I'd like to quote a very well-known conservationist, Roderick Haig-Brown, who, I thought, made an excellent suggestion. I'm quoting from *The Vancouver Sun*, July 21, 1973, where he's suggesting that the provincial government should attempt to take over logging roads in north-central Vancouver Island instead of building a new highway. It seemed a very reasonable point of view. He said:

"If the government took over the Elk River Timber Company and Canadian Forest Products routes and brought them up to

standards, it would solve a lot of problems.

"Logging companies have all the best routes for a highway because they were there first, and it is their business to choose the most economical routes. Government always gets second best.

"These roads are used now except during logging hours, but they are open from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. on weekends. All you would have to do is improve them, and say, this is it. The logging companies would have to live with it. I know why the Socreds didn't do it. They weren't in this kind of business, but the NDP should be.

"Mr. Haig-Brown deplored the erratic development of the Island Highway. He cited the example of the highway between Courtenay and Campbell River. It runs along the waterfront for most of the way, slicing between the ocean and a beautiful recreation area. It should be put further back, with the oceanfront road left as a 30-mile an hour local access road."

This is another subject altogether, I realize, but it is important in the development of highways. I think the conservationist aspect should be well-remembered. These particular suggestions of Roderick Haig-Brown may have some obstacles or difficulties, or maybe he's simplifying the whole thing. But I would like the Minister to react to that suggestion.

I have one or two more just specific points on road safety, and then I'll be finished. I read that as far as issuing contracts for highway construction is concerned, in Alberta they have now decided that only contractors with offices in the province, or contractors who had previously done efficient work in the province, should be awarded new contracts. It seems that there were many contractors getting into the field where their performance was less than what

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was required, and this measure was taken to restrict the work to be done by contractors who either have an office in the province or are already active in the construction of highways.

First of all, I wonder if the Minister has any problems with contractors not meeting their obligations. Secondly, has this restrictive measure been given any consideration?

The report which the Minister circulated yesterday has a mass of information and figures in it. It makes very interesting reading, and there are many aspects that we could debate. But there are two which I would like to raise.

One is the question of property negotiation. The Minister mentions in the report that as of December, 1973, there were 492 negotiations being carried out, and the word "expropriation" is never mentioned. When I think back to all the bitter debates that we've had in this House at different times where expropriation is involved, I would just like to ask the Minister two questions. First of all, are there any properties at the present time in the province the subject of expropriation proceedings in relation to highway construction? Secondly: is the Minister playing any part at the present time in the developing of a statute which would cover expropriation on its own, without having separate expropriation powers scattered through different statutes?

That might be a question which is asking you to talk about policy. It might be more appropriate to ask if the Minister feels there is very good reason to try and expedite the tabling of one single statute covering all departments on the subject of expropriation.

The last point I would like to touch upon, Mr. Chairman, is the extremely enlightening and rather staggering part of this report which deals with fatal traffic accidents. When you read this and realize that it is only dealing with the fatal accidents, which are a percentage of the total accidents, and that many people are badly maimed and disabled for life, but not killed, just this one aspect of the report, I think, must be looked at very seriously.

The Member for Chilliwack (Mr. Schroeder) has already made reference to it, but the very staggering thing is.... This, I should say, Mr. Chairman, represented also a very desirable degree of cooperation between the Motor Vehicle Branch, the RCMP, and members of the Minister's department. Between November 1, 1972, and October 31, 1973, there was an increase of 29 per cent in fatal accidents, and an increase of about the same number, about 29 per

cent more people killed in these accidents.

At a time when vehicles increased by 8 per cent, the fatal accidents increased by 29 per cent, and the deaths increased by 29 per cent. And not surprisingly, it points out that the worst day in the week is Saturday when about 25 per cent of the fatal accidents occur.

The other eye-opening thing to me is that 80 per cent of these fatal accidents occurred in absolutely clear, good weather. So often we get the impression that accidents are caused by icy roads or blinding rain — weather, in other words. But of the 522 fatal accidents, almost 80 per cent occurred in clear weather. I don't know whether it was dry; it said, when road conditions were normal.

There's another fascinating statistic: less than 3 per cent were attributed to mechanical failure. I don't mean to be negative, but it seems to me that we are spending a pile of money and time and energy going through testing stations trying to make... I shouldn't say, trying to make it look as though mechanical failure was important — it is important. But it seems to me, Mr. Chairman, we are kind of losing sight of the more pertinent areas of accidents, particularly fatal accidents. When I think of all the money, the personnel and the energy that is used putting vehicles through testing stations, when less than 3 per cent of the fatal accidents have anything to do with mechanical failure.... I'm not suggesting that we shouldn't try testing vehicles, but I wonder, again, if our priorities aren't a little out of kilter. Maybe there's a need to spend some of the money that is spent on the testing situation on other areas which I will mention briefly in a moment.

HON. L. NICOLSON (Minister of Housing): Do you want to try that argument down in Mexico?

MR. WALLACE: Well, I don't know what you mean by Mexico; I've never been to Mexico.

Anyway, Mr. Chairman, I think this study must be given the widest publicity in this province, not just for politicians' sake. For the widest dissemination, I hope the Minister will publish it as a separate pamphlet for public dissemination because it is right on the bone in pointing out just where the Department of Highways has its responsibilities.

"...responsibility for the vast majority of fatal motor vehicle accidents must be placed on the shoulders of the careless drivers and pedestrians involved. Analysis of available data indicated that the 'human factor' was the probably major cause in the following areas..."

Then it's the old story: 47 per cent of fatal accidents involved alcohol or drugs, but mainly alcohol. Of the ones involving alcohol, 39 per cent had a blood-alcohol in excess of .08. The conclusion is that in all of the fatal accidents, at least 18 per cent of the drivers involved in fatal accidents were driving beyond the .08 level. In other words they were conclusively impaired by alcohol. Excessive speed contributed in 20 per cent.

Here is the other point that I mentioned just a moment ago: In 58 per cent of the fatal accidents,

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one car was on the wrong side of the line. There may be reasons — one car tried to avoid another car. It seems to me not too much of an exaggeration to emphasize that if maintenance and upgrading of the highways is an important element in the programme this year, I hope such highways as the Island Highway can have its middle line painted.

These are just some of the very disturbing statistics. The last one that I would mention is: 24 per cent of the people died in vehicles not equipped with seatbelts.

We've had the Minister of Transport and Communications (Hon. Mr. Strachan) ask us to react. I don't need to go into all the details, but there was a tremendous, at least I thought it was a tremendous, article in *The Province* Saturday, February 23 of this year, which looks at other countries. One of the most interesting findings is that in Australia, where the use of seatbelts is mandatory, the severity of car injuries dropped greatly and the fatalities dropped by 17 per cent. So far as I am concerned, much as I rebel at compulsion by governments or politicians, I do feel, Mr. Chairman, that here is one area where I would favour the compulsive use of seatbelts. Certainly the very

least we should do is to make it mandatory that every vehicle be equipped with seatbelts.

Finally, I think it is not enough to stand aghast of these statistics. The question we should be asking is: how do we prevent these deaths occurring on the highways? I have mentioned the kind of research information which has certainly been accumulated in the Hope area.

I think the Minister of Education...and I seem to be telling her to do everything these days, from drug education to driving education and family life, and so on. But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, that is where so much of it has to begin and I would hope that the Minister of Highways would cooperate with the Minister of Education in trying to publicize this kind of information. I don't think there could be too stiff a penalty for a person who is driving while impaired. The figures are there; the results are there for all to see. If you're drinking, nobody asks you to drive. If you're stupid enough to drive and possibly kill somebody, and you're found impaired, then I don't think there can be too stiff a penalty.

I have very little sympathy with the outcries of chagrin because Autoplan has chosen to make people pay more because they break the driving rules. Well, I say, "tough bananas." When you read these statistics on highways, how anybody can in any way mitigate against a heavy sentence when these people are seriously disabling their friends in the car or vehicle, or killing people in the other vehicle.... Then you say that it's not fair that they should be penalized in various ways. I wonder if the penalty can ever be severe enough, certainly, in terms of removing their driving licence.

I know penalties have become somewhat more severe in recent years, but it would seem that these statistics speak for themselves. When 47 per cent of fatal accidents are in some way associated with alcohol, I'm sorry, but I just can't feel the least bit sorry for anybody who gets nailed — either impaired or drinking short of any degree of impairment.

The question is often raised that anybody who is impaired has to drive because of his work or because of his occupation. Again I say, "tough bananas." If your whole livelihood depends on driving a car or a truck, and you get yourself in an accident and kill somebody because you were impaired and you were over the centre line, then you plead that you can't go to work because you've lost your licence — I suggest you should have thought about that before you got behind the wheel when you were drunk.

I would just hope that with this very lucid, clear, undeniable list of statistics which the Minister produced at a very useful time.... I would be interested to hear what he feels about the need for stiffer penalties.

HON. G.R. LEA (Minister of Highways): Mr. Chairman, there have been a number of Members speak, make comments and ask questions. I will begin by trying to answer some of the questions and some of the comments made by the Hon. Member for Oak Bay.

At the outset, Mr. Member, when I said that there was going to be a greater emphasis on maintenance of the roads in this province, I didn't mean that we are not going to go ahead with a programme of building new roads and improving roads that we have. I just want to change the emphasis and say that it is as important to maintain those roads that are already in existence before we go on building new roads.

Interjection.

HON. MR. LEA: I'm not backtracking, Mr. Member. All you have to do is to look at your estimate book and you will see \$110 million in there for the building and improving new roads. I don't think that's backtracking.

I will say that over the years there has been an emphasis on building roads all over the province without taking due consideration for those roads that are already there and maintaining those roads for the usage of British Columbians.

I think we have probably canvassed my views on tourism quite a bit in these debates over my estimates, but I would like to put the record clear. When I made my statement in Prince George, and since then I have been talking

about campers.... You know, some of the vehicles that I see travelling

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on our roads are unimaginable. I saw one vehicle — I guess you could call it a camping vehicle — it had a piano in it and a swimming pool on the roof. Now to me, that's not summer camping.

MRS. P.J. JORDAN (North Okanagan): You only saw one.

HON. MR. LEA: I only saw one! I see, Madam Member, camper after camper after camper in this province, where they bring everything but the kitchen sink with them. It seems to me that if people are going to go camping they don't have to take that equipment.

Interjections.

HON. MR. LEA: Now, I have at no time said it would be my preference to curb people coming in here in vehicles that are not campers and it seems to me that when a British Columbian or a Canadian goes to a campground to get in and he can't get in, and it's full of non-nationals....

MRS. JORDAN: Seventy-eight per cent of the people in there are Canadians, dumb-dumb!

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh, oh! Withdraw.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please!

HON. MR. LEA: Mr. Chairman, I would ask you not to withdraw. I don't want her to withdraw.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please!

HON. MR. LEA: Every time she opens her mouth we get more votes. (Laughter.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! I'm asking the Hon. Member for North Okanagan (Mrs. Jordan) to withdraw an unparliamentary remark.

MRS. JORDAN: I replied that he was a dumb-dumb because he keeps talking about all the American tourists and the foreigners that are using our campgrounds, but 78 per cent of the users are Canadians and British Columbians and I withdraw.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! I accept the withdrawal of the Hon. Member of the unparliamentary term. I would also just caution the Members that we have begun to use unparliamentary terms in addressing other Members, and I would ask them to refer to each other as "Hon. Member" only.

HON. MR. LEA: The Member for Oak Bay (Mr. Wallace) also brought up, I think justifiably, the situation in regard to snow ploughing to remote communities within the Province of British Columbia. There was the unfortunate fatality that happened to the Indian child at Babine Lake. My information is that even if there had been at that time an extensive snow ploughing programme, it would not have solved the problem, but that's not what we're talking about.

I should also mention that that road was being maintained in the winter through snow ploughing by federal funds, and they arbitrarily cut it off and said they didn't have the money to do it. Since that time I've ordered my department to clear every road wherever there is a community, whether it's in the north or the Interior, or wherever where there are people living. If there's a cost-sharing benefit, because it's Indian communities under the federal government, we'll worry about that cost-sharing later. If they don't pay, that's up to their conscience and not ours, so we're ploughing every road in British Columbia right at the moment.

You also mentioned snow slides, There were seven fatalities outside of Terrace. I would like to point out at

this time that that didn't happen on a highway. It's an unfortunate incident but it didn't happen on a highway and the snow didn't plug the highway. It happened at the side of the road where there was a gas station and the residential quarters of the people who owned that gas station and cafe. I should mention that they built on an alluvial fan.

There's a coroner's report out now that would indicate that there had been logging by the people that resided there, which also was a contributing factor. But the fact remains that there hasn't been a programme in the Province of British Columbia over all these years in regard to snow slides and the potential hazards that exist from snow slides. I must admit that I was ignorant. I thought the Rogers Pass was done by the Province of British Columbia before I became Minister. Not one cent of provincial money went in there. That is done by the federal government and there hasn't been any programme in this province over all these years.

AN HON. MEMBER: Dead on.

HON. MR. LEA: And now we're going to initiate a programme after the task force brings in recommendations.

I apologize to this House and to the people of British Columbia that I didn't grasp that situation as soon as I was Minister, but it's one of those things. It's unfortunate that a tragedy does have to happen before it was brought to my attention, but I can guarantee that if it's at all possible with funds and manpower facilities that we will try to ensure that this never happens again within this province if we can stop it in any way through human efforts and money.

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Regarding the Hope slide that you mentioned, you had another good suggestion. I should mention that the department right now has under design a road such as you mention. It's under design and it won't be started this year.

You also mentioned the headline where it said the provincial government, particularly myself, had stopped \$100 million of developments within the Province of British Columbia. That is not really accurate, Mr. Member. Those projects that had been okayed are still going ahead and the other project has never had approval, and they're all lumped into that some \$100 million. Even those projects that haven't had approval are still being reviewed and being put through the process by the department, but I will tell you that I've asked my department, my senior approving officer to take careful scrutiny of every application that comes in and to apply the letter of the law when dealing with those projects. I feel that that's my responsibility because as I mentioned before we are trying to keep a free flow on the arterial highways.

Also, the Member for Oak Bay asked if we, as they do in the Province of Alberta, only let contracts to in-resident companies. We have insisted that the company involved be registered in British Columbia and I have written to the Attorney-General and I have asked him to come back to me with some recommendations. I've also mentioned it to the Provincial Secretary (Hon. Mr. Hall), so we are actively working on possibly a new method of dealing with letting of contracts.

Personally I don't believe it's enough that they only register in this province. I think they should be stationed here and have a business here and provide jobs for British Columbians, and keep that money circulating within this province. At the same time we have to consider, I suppose, quality of the work and how much money it's going to cost us. We have to take all these things into consideration. If an Alberta company bids and is the low bidder and we're satisfied with the quality of work, it's another consideration that we have to think about.

Also, the expropriation of property. I have been in touch with the Attorney-General. As I mentioned before, he's now considering that question of expropriation. As I mentioned here earlier today, I believe that we have to consider relocation by way of compensation as opposed to value of property.

Interjection.

HON. MR. LEA: Right now we have something like 500 property negotiations going on. I should point out

also the difference between expropriation and arbitration. Expropriation, whether we go to arbitration or not, is still expropriation. If we negotiate with the landowner on a price, that's still expropriation. Most often we do come up with an agreement between the department and the property owner. As a matter of fact, the property acquisition branch of the Department of Highways has convinced me that normally we go over in our offer of the market value because we have even, in an ad hoc manner, considered relocation. We usually offer over that. Should people dispute that then they do have the option of going to arbitration. They get to appoint an arbitrator, we appoint an arbitrator, and if the two arbitrators cannot decide on a chairman, then it's done by the court. So I do believe that there's a great deal of flexibility for fairness when it gets to the arbitration stage.

One other thing that I should mention is that even though the official opposition oftentimes refer to us as bad administrators and bad business people, we found a boar's nest in land acquisition and in land registration. It's even to the point where we found in the past where one department has been bidding against another department or a Crown agency on property and putting the price up. That's absolutely ridiculous - and no central agency to find out who owns what within the province. We have under review right now to see whether we shouldn't go to a central land acquisition branch so that there can be some semblance of order.

If you ran a hardware store like that where would you be?

Interjection.

HON. MR. LEA: Be nice, Alex. You're still in British Columbia.

MR. A.V. FRASER (Cariboo): Not for long.

HON. MR. LEA: Well then, cancel those roads.

The Member for Chilliwack (Mr. Schroeder) also asked some questions, but I think they pertain to his riding and he's not here at the moment.

Interjection. h equipment to do all the centre lines that should be and we're looking into that. Believe it or not, one of the sillier things that happened was that the soya bean shortage affected our painting programme. It's a base used in the paint. It's just one of those crazy things — we couldn't get the paint.

The Member for Fort George (Mr. Nunweiler) I think described to us a typical example when he was speaking of the kind of ribbon development that I think shouldn't be going on within the provi **HON. MR. LEA:** The centre line, yes. We know of it; we just don't have enougnce and has created problems with the arterial highways, both to the east and to the north of Prince George. Now

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we're looking for bypasses in those areas for the simple reason that we've allowed development to go on to such an extent that....

Interjection.

HON. MR. LEA: Maybe he voted against it, Mr. Member. Who knows?

The Member for Fort George (Mr. Nunweiler) also talked about schools out along that ribbon development. I've had talks with the Minister of Education (Hon. Mrs. Dailly) and asked her to try and get in touch with school boards and ask them, prior to choosing a school site, to deal with those jurisdictions that have transportation under their wing. Only too often they'll pick a property because of its cost. Before we build the school we should look at those transportation problems of school children coming from an area surrounding the school and converging on it. Too often schools have been built and then they come to either the municipal or provincial government transportation section and say, "Solve the problem." I say we shouldn't allow that problem to begin in the first place if we can help it; it hasn't been going on in the past. Another bad way to run a store — hardware that is.

The Member for Fort George asked about the Stellako railway crossing. That was well underway, Mr. Member, when the CPR came to us and said they'd like to change their plans for a double track, which made us change our plans. But it's in for this year.

The Hon. Member for North Vancouver–Capilano (Mr. Gibson) asked some. Except for a couple of general questions, the others pertain to his riding. He asked about bike paths along highways. I know the Hon. Minister of Recreation and Conservation (Hon. Mr. Radford) is very concerned about bike paths throughout the province. I'm not averse to them. I don't know whether it would fall under my jurisdiction; I don't see where bicycle paths would come under Highways. We at least have an extensive shoulder-paving programme on for those people who do ride bicycles on highways, hoping for some degree of safety.

Also the Hon. Member for North Vancouver–Capilano mentioned gasoline tax and earmarking. He said he didn't agree with earmarking funds either. I'm glad to hear that. He also asked to have a breakdown of the gasoline tax for electoral districts. Well, if we don't agree with it, I don't know why we should, except for an academic exercise, find out how much is broken down. We could do it and I wouldn't mind speaking with him privately about that.

The low level road and Westview interchange. I'll make sure I speak with him privately about those two.

He also talked about the First and Second Narrows Bridges and the amount of inter-regional traffic travelling across these bridges, and also the ratio of commuter traffic. He has pointed out my argument really. Those inter-regional carriers are handling approximately a total volume that is 10 per cent inter-regional. I think he's asking if I think those two crossings are fast coming to their saturation point. Yes, they are, in my opinion — if we continue to use the traditional method of transport getting back and forth across that stretch of water.

Whether or not we continue to deal with trying to facilitate traffic in the conventional method is one I think society as a whole is going to have to deal with. I believe these are matters which aren't partisan in nature. We're dealing with transportation and, more particularly, the gigantic problem we face in urban transport. I'm glad to say this government has set aside a special department to deal with urban transportation.

I forgot to bring up a point when the Hon. Member for Oak Bay (Mr. Wallace) asked about testing stations, saying that only 3 per cent of the accidents occur because of mechanical failure. I would suggest that figure would be a great deal higher if we didn't have those testing stations; the testing stations bring down that percentage to 3 per cent. If we didn't have the testing stations it would be a great deal higher. That argument doesn't hold much water with me. I must say that also is not in my jurisdiction; it's under the Minister of Transport and Communications (Hon. Mr. Strachan).

I see the Member for Chilliwack (Mr. Schroeder) is back. He talked about highway fatality and safety programmes. As I mentioned earlier in my estimates, I'm very much concerned with highway safety and the number of fatalities. The Member for Oak Bay also raised the matter of highway safety.

I should mention, though, to the Hon. Member for Chilliwack that, even though there have been a number of fatalities east of Chilliwack, there have been more accidents west. I don't think one excuses the other.

This year we will begin an interchange at the junction of No. 9 Road and 401, and eliminate the fork road intersection by building a service road westerly to Annis Road. When our design is finished, we'll be calling a contract to eliminate the very poor level railway crossing just east of the Sardis interchange. We are beginning to work on those this year.

I'd just like to finish my comments now by saying that I've spoken to the Premier about the lack of safety programmes I found. I have a commitment from him that I'll have full backing of his office for any area I want to go into. He feels it will help and I feel it will help bring about a greater degree of safety on our highways.

MR. FRASER: Never mind the Premier; what does the Minister of Finance say?

HON. MR. LEA: Well, he's one and the same man, Mr. Member.

MR. L.A. WILLIAMS (West Vancouver–Howe Sound): It's all very well for the Minister to tell us that the Premier's going to back him up, but the Minister has now been in charge of this department for 10 months and what programme has he got for highway safety? He's got none. To come here asking for his estimates, saying that he's concerned about the number of deaths on the highways and that he's going to start looking at things, is just not good enough. When are you going to take some positive steps to get on with the job that is your responsibility, as submitted by you, to concern yourself with highway safety?

I'd like to suggest to the Minister that there is one simple, expedient thing his department can do which will help to curb the carnage that takes place on our highway system. Reduce the speed limit to 55 miles an hour. As a matter of fact, he will do something else besides cutting down the number of deaths and serious accidents on our highway by reducing the speed; he'll also be making a major contribution towards the conservation of energy resources which we in this country haven't yet apparently recognized.

The headlines in the paper this morning indicated that, as a result of the discussions that took place in Ottawa yesterday, the citizens of British Columbia are going to pay 10 cents a gallon more for gas. For the Minister's information, if he doesn't know — and I suspect his staff can certainly tell him — if you reduce the speed limit from 70 to 55 and you enforce it, you increase the efficiency of gasoline consumption by 50 per cent. This has been clearly established in even the few short weeks the mandatory speed limits have been reduced in the United States.

Not only does it increase the performance of your automobile and reduce damage, but it also eases the strains upon the drivers of the vehicles and makes driving more of a pleasure than it is today. You get on our arterial highways at 70 miles an hour and you're in a constant battle all the time, motor vehicle against motor vehicle. At 55 miles an hour, the pressure is removed to a very great extent and people can begin to enjoy driving in the countryside through which they pass. That's a step this Minister could take. Reduce the speed limit to 55 miles per hour and enforce that speed limit.

Strangely enough, in spite of all the predictions that were made at the time the mandatory speed reduction in the United States took place that it wasn't going to work, it has worked. People have recognized their problem and have obeyed the law. I think we in British Columbia can also recognize the problem, one of safety and one of energy conservation, and obey the law.

We have another penalty, however, if the law is not to be obeyed, and this government has provided that. If you get caught speeding now, it's worth three points. Once you get over five, you've got a perpetual fine which you pay through the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia.

I would also like to address some remarks to the Minister concerning policy that he enunciated this year for his department, one of concerning himself more with maintenance than of highway construction. He expressed concern about what is happening along the arterial highways in a province such as ours where most of the transportation corridors are found in valleys. I agree with what the Minister says in that respect.

What the Minister is admitting now is that the administration of subdivision control inside and outside municipal boundaries in the Department of Highways has not been effective. I think the time has come to break up the Department of Highways and take that responsibility away from that department.

The Department of Highways has as its essential role the planning, the development and the maintenance of highways. It's only one aspect of life in British Columbia but unfortunately, over the past few decades, it has assumed a role in British Columbia far in excess of what was justified. In fact, there is reason to suspect that the Department of Highways has become sort of its own little government and every other department of government and every other activity in our communities have been obliged to dance to the tune of the Department of Highways. And their principal method of control has been through their approving officer.

I think it's time that it came to an end, because while the Minister may be concerned about the tendency for communities to expand along the routes of arterial highways, let me point out to the Minister that the Department of Highways, in locating its arterial highways, has taken unto itself the best land — the land best suited for the development of our communities. To come along now in 1974 and say, "Oh, well, this is all wrong because you are clogging up inter-regional traffic corridors with community expansion," is not to criticize what the communities have done but to criticize the way in which the Department of Highways has carried out its planning responsibilities.

Therefore, I think that we should take away this subdivision approval responsibility from the Department of Highways. I would like to see it placed in the Department of Municipal Affairs, which has the responsibility both for municipalities and for the unorganized areas. Then, when the Department of

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Highways wants to expand the highway network, let it go and get approval from a department which has some other concerns besides the development of a highway system.

The Highways department has always been king. Wherever Highways wanted to go, no one dared stand in their way. They come first, whether they are crossing rivers, going through cities, towns, farmlands; wherever in this province the Department of Highways wants to build a road, it comes first. That's got to end.

The Minister may be concerned about how inter-regional highways are affected by municipal growth, but I would just like to ask the Minister if he would pause for a moment and consider the effect which his department has upon already existing municipalities when his department decides that they want to drive a transportation corridor through that particular municipal region.

The Minister would complain about the Port Mann freeway. The Port Mann freeway was built through an already existing municipal community — a number of them. The Upper Levels Highway was built and is presently being expanded through two already existing communities.

The Minister of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce (Hon. Mr. Lauk) is going to see that Tilbury Island is going to become a major industrial area. But that's going to result in the Department of Highways being called upon to drive more highways through the already existing communities of Richmond and Delta. And they'll come first unless the rules have changed, Mr. Chairman.

So it hasn't always worked against the interests of Highways. Highways, themselves, have worked against the interests of the communities of this province. This is only going to be changed when the Department of Highways is obliged to conform with principles which are conducive to proper community development in the Province of British Columbia; and it must start soon.

Mention has been made of the congestion on the two bridges across Burrard Inlet. Well, one of those bridges was purely an urban transportation corridor before the Government of British Columbia purchased it in 1955 and turned it into an inter-regional transportation corridor. This is a bridge that the Minister and his department are going to spend something like \$12 million on over the next three or four years to bring it up to a standard which is just below anything acceptable for highway traffic safety.

It will be a vast improvement over what we have today — no question about that. But even the staff in the Minister's office will admit that it does not come up to modern standards. You have therefore moved in, Mr. Minister — not you, but the government has moved in — through the Department of Highways and taken away what was purely an urban transportation route and turned it into an inter-regional one.

The Second Narrows Bridge was built as an inter-regional traffic artery. But, here again, if you want to complain about what communities do, having built that bridge and having upped it to a highway system on the North Shore.... It dumped all the traffic onto the streets of the City of Vancouver without making any concessions whatsoever to the impact that that inter-regional traffic was going to have upon those city streets.

Therefore, I would hope, Mr. Chairman, that if the Minister would care to enunciate somewhat more the policy that he sees for highway development and the role of his department in British Columbia, he might indicate in this changed outlook that there is going to be some give and take with respect to the demands that his department will make upon communities in this province, and also the concessions that his department will make to those communities whenever the highway system needs to be expanded.

I didn't take from what the Minister said yesterday that he was stopping all planning and that he was going to spend the rest of his term in office filling potholes, because I happen to know, Mr. Chairman, a number of the senior officials in his department very well as a result of some experiences I have had, and I know that they wouldn't allow the Minister to make such a blunder.

As a matter of fact, if I might pause for a moment, I would like to say to the Minister that his senior staff, with whom I have had, as I say, very close contact over the past two years in connection with work being done in my constituency, are to be very highly commended for the job they have done with respect to the work on the Upper Levels Highway and the two flooding incidents which we had in West Vancouver.

They were difficult times for the members of your staff. I commend them for the way in which they fulfilled their responsibilities and the way in which they met with the community in an attempt to do everything they could to ameliorate the effect of the floods and of the disruption which the highway construction was bringing to that community. I wish you would extend to those members of your staff, who aren't in the House today, my expression of appreciation in that regard.

However, there are some lessons to be learned from what took place with respect to the Upper Levels Highway, and this is no reflection on your staff. Mr. Chairman, we have found during the course of the construction of the Upper Levels Highway expansion that while the government has been very careful in the contracts it entered into with general contractors for doing the work, and ensuring that those contractors have an obligation to pay any damage that may result from the work that they

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carry on, nevertheless, the experience has been that in attempting to enforce that right against the contractors, the citizen finds himself almost powerless.

I think, Mr. Chairman, whenever the Department of Highways again involves itself in work within an existing community where there will be construction taking place through built-up areas, that in addition to obliging the contractor to be responsible for damage, the department should ensure that an organization is established to which the individual citizen can report damage and have speedy, fair resolution of that problem.

The experience in West Vancouver has been that when the Department of Highways learns of a situation, they say — as they are entitled to say — that the contractor has the responsibility. Then you go after the contractor, Mr. Minister; eventually you end up with the contractor's insurance company; eventually someone will come and look at your property, and eventually you'll get a letter saying: "We don't think the damage was caused by the contractor." There the citizen is after weeks and sometimes months of procrastination and delay, faced with a denial of responsibility.

By this time the opportunity that the citizen had to establish any connecting link between activities taking place on the highway and the damage that that person had sustained to their property is virtually lost. Only if they have from the outset taken the time and the money to engage the professional people required to make the connection between the event in the construction and the damage, then and then only, have they got any chance of fighting the contractor.

I think it is not fair to the citizens to be placed in this position because, after all, they had nothing to do with the contract. As well, Mr. Chairman, it gives the Department of Highways a bad name that the Department of Highways doesn't deserve. I speak, as I say, from two years of close connection with these problems.

There is one other matter of principle. I hope to deal with some specific highway problems a little later, but there is one matter of principle that concerns me, and I mentioned it to the Minister last year. It arises out of the approval responsibility that the department has. The Minister will recall my raising with him the question of the stability of what is known as the Barrier at Garibaldi.

The Department of Highways took the position, because of engineering advice they had, that the geological structure of the Barrier was unstable, and therefore a subdivision shouldn't be approved. This was then tested in the Supreme Court of British Columbia and the Hon. Mr. Justice Berger supported the position of the Department of Highways. Since that time, nothing has been done.

My concern is this, Mr. Chairman: if the Barrier is so unstable — and I don't argue whether it is or not — as to prevent any further subdivision of land in that area, then what is the department going to do with respect to those citizens who already live in that particular area? What is it going to do for the safety of those who pass along Highway 99 through that same area of instability — those people who use the PGE, which travels through that same area? And what does the government intend to do with respect to the safety of the major hydro-electric transmission lines which pass through that same area of instability?

It's of serious consequence to those people who live at Garibaldi. They have the Department of Highways officials making a decision. They have that decision confirmed following a trial of the matter before a supreme court judge, and they wonder what sort of peril faces them.

I would like to know from the Minister whether or not the department proposes to take steps to cure the instability, or will it relocate the people who live at Garibaldi, or, alternatively, is the Department of Highways prepared to undertake a further technical geological examination of the Barrier to establish once and for all whether the conflicting opinions which were voiced in the supreme court trial are still to be found to support instability?

It seems to me we can't leave this sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of the people who live in Garibaldi. Either the government has to assume that the decision of its own engineer is right and move the people out of Garibaldi, or take steps to correct the fault.

HON. MR. LEA: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'll deal with the points as they were brought up by the Hon. Member for West Vancouver–Howe Sound (Mr. L.A. Williams). He first of all dealt with highway safety and made a suggestion that it would be a good measure of highway safety to drop the speed limit to 55. Also he pointed out that might be a conservation step in terms of non-replenishable resources.

I dispute his figure of 50 per cent saving in fuel.

Interjection.

HON. MR. LEA: Oh, I see. Oh, I misunderstood you. In most parts of the province the speed limit is 60; it's only 70 in one or two areas on the freeway. So we would, in effect, be dropping the greater percentage of the province down five miles an hour. I don't know whether that would be that great a saving in fuel. I don't think it would be very much.

He pointed out that in areas where it had been tried, like in the United States, people had accepted their responsibility and dropped down. It's been suggested to me that possibly when the fuel shortage was on, they became very responsible in those terms.

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But once the fuel is allowed to go out again in a free flow, again they will go over that speed limit. I tend to agree with that.

I think there are other measures that could be taken that would be more effective. I mentioned on a television programme that I thought we should be probably going to smaller cars, less horsepower, as a more effective way of

cutting down.

I mentioned at that time that I'd been told by federal people from MOT that the only car manufacturer who had met all the pollution control requirements and standards and hadn't lost horsepower, or the efficiency of fuel burning, had been Datsun. At that time I said that if they are the only ones who have met it, and obviously other car manufacturers can meet it, maybe people should be saying to the manufacturers, "Unless you meet those requirements we're going to buy Datsuns." Let the other car manufacturers take up their responsibility.

I'm looking in my department to see whether it would be feasible from now on to order smaller vehicles for a great many of the employees that use vehicles in their daily work, because sometimes I think we do waste. We become traditionalized and follow the conventional wisdom without questioning what we're doing. Some Member said, "Well, you drive a big car." I drive a Chev.

But the fact of the matter is I didn't suggest that people should cast their present cars to one side and go out and buy a small one. I'm suggesting that when the time comes to choose another car — if they're going to trade in — or when people who haven't a car are going to buy one, maybe they should be thinking of cars with less horsepower and therefore less consumption of fuel.

Also you might look at other ways. This isn't in my department, but I know other areas have done it: they have licence by horsepower. Where you have more horsepower, it costs more money. I'm not saying it should be done. I think it should be examined to see how it works out in other areas. They did it in England for a while, I know, and are maybe still doing it.

Also the Hon. Member for West Vancouver–Howe Sound talked about subdivision: who the subdivision jurisdiction should come under — Department of Highways or Municipal Affairs. Believe me, if there's a headache within my department it is in dealing with subdivision. But at the same time, if the Municipal Affairs department were handling all the subdivisions in the province, then I suggest to you that the same thing may happen as you have said did happen in the Highways department.

I admit that our main concern when looking at subdivision is the highway system — no doubt about that. At the same time, I'm also a little concerned, if it were done by Municipal Affairs department, that there wouldn't be enough consideration given to the

Highways department. Believe me, I've talked with the Minister of Municipal Affairs about it, and we haven't come to a conclusion. But it is a real problem of trying to keep a balance of priorities between the highways system and those areas where people want to set up their residences along highways.

To me, one of the biggest problems we face in British Columbia today is transportation in all its ramifications, both in the rural areas and in the urban areas. It's enlightening to hear the difference of opinion in regard to highways between those Members who represent city ridings and those who represent rural. They are completely opposed, most often. But I do think people know that it's a situation that is out of hand in British Columbia and one that we're going to have to come to grips with, especially in urban transportation areas.

Also he talked about contractor claims and about the approving officer when dealing with subdivisions. As he pointed out to me one day, he has never in his career had a complaint from anybody he approved — and he approved lots.

But you know, if you go to the approving officer and say, "I want this subdivision approved. I want this shopping centre approved," and he says, "No," he can give you all sorts of good reasons in the world, and you still don't buy it because you want it. It is pretty hard to convince someone who is emotionally caught up in this project that possibly for the benefit of public good it shouldn't go ahead.

I've recently sent a letter out from the department to all the regional districts and all the municipal bodies reminding them of the procedure that should be followed under the law when making zoning changes, or allowing building permits, if they are within a half-mile either side of an arterial highway.

What has happened in the past is sometimes because people don't know — that's most the case often, I suppose. But sometimes it's a ploy; they'll go ahead, they'll do the project. They will go to the community, say to get a rise going in the community by saying that we need this project. And all of a sudden there it is — before my department even finds out about it. Then they come and say, "How about approval?" and it puts the senior approving officer in a very difficult position. Is he going to say no to a project that is a fait accompli? Sometimes he's had to. Not very often.

As I said, I sent out a letter reminding them of what the orderly process should be in terms of building projects, building permits and that sort of thing, because this happens all the time.

There's a great deal of pressure on regional district officials, and on municipal officials, from developers to get their projects done. I'm not saying it's wrong or it's right. It's their project; they want to push it through. They're going and pressuring their elected officials. And that's right. I'm not saying there's

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anything wrong with it, but they are under that pressure at all times when these developers are trying to get their project approved.

On the other hand, the municipal people are looking at the tax base. I don't blame them for that either. They're saying they have to get a bigger tax base. They want money to supply amenities of their citizens within the municipal boundaries.

On contractor claims: I meant that it's probably a lengthier process than people like. I don't have any ready ideas on how to cut that process down. It has to be adjudicated. There has to be an adjudicator. Again I point out that not always are the people who make the claims correct. If you turn one down, they're angry, and they are going to come to you, Mr. Member, and you're going to have to take another look at it; see whether you feel it's just, follow it through, and see the procedures.... But they are not always proper claims that should be paid.

Rubble Creek: I agree with you. I make a commitment to you right now that I will devote a lot of my time in the immediate future to dealing with this problem and getting an answer for those people. I agree they must be under some strain not knowing what the outcome is going to be. My department recommended, as you know, that there be no more development there because of some possible danger. They didn't feel there was an imminent danger. Wherever you live in a valley in B.C., there is a danger. Nobody from my geo-technical department has been able to convince me that can be remedied, whatever danger is there. But I make a commitment to you now that I will give it my immediate and full attention, and get back to you on that. I feel that they do deserve an answer.

MR. W.R. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Chairman, I was very pleased to hear the Minister mention that he wasn't cutting off all new highway construction, because I believe what we need is a balance of maintenance, planning and construction. From the impression that was created by his earlier remarks, I think it set a lot of minds at ease.

I would like to discuss some of the major highway links in British Columbia, and some of the projects that have been suggested — some of them even suggested by this Minister. First of all, the major inland routes we've got now are the Hope-Princeton Highway and the Fraser Canyon, the Trans-Canada Highway. One route that we've talked about as alternative or supplemental to those two routes is the Coquihalla Pass.

We've got the Hope-Princeton Highway, and it was mentioned earlier by the Member for Oak Bay (Mr. Wallace) that certain sections of the Hope-Princeton, particularly the slide areas, need reconstruction. But there are many areas on that Hope-Princeton that need to be re-engineered. It's a 1940s highway and although there has been upgrading, it still needs re-engineering in many areas, and it's not to highway standards.

I think the high amount of traffic that we have going from the lower mainland through into the Interior, through the Okanagan and possibly on to the north, up into the Cariboo, or on to the Rogers Pass, the Yellowhead.... I find that a very difficult highway to travel, and in the summer it is clogged. It is a very slow and a very dangerous

highway, and I think upgrading and re-engineering in many sections is important.

I'd like to remind the Minister of his commitment of last year, and it is a quote out of the paper. It says: "Highways Minister Graham Lea announced last month that plans for the route which runs through the Coquihalla Pass from Hope to Merritt and up Highway 5 to Kamloops are underway."

This route has been discussed for some years as an extra route to the Interior to relieve the pressure on the Fraser Canyon and on the Hope-Princeton. Particularly if the Hope-Princeton is going to undergo some massive rebuilding, a major route should be there to ease the pressure while the rebuilding is going on.

As you know, Mr. Minister, the Coquihalla Pass would save about 60 miles on the trip from Hope to Merritt. Then it would have a chance of branching off to Kamloops, or being an alternate route to the Okanagan, which I'll deal with later because we have some very specific highway problems on Highway 97. It is a fairly easy route to build because it is on a high plateau.

If I could just look at some of the articles that have been written about the many caravans that have gone year after year through the Coquihalla, they describe very well the type of terrain and what is needed to construct this highway and what preliminary engineering your department has put into it.

Preliminary surveys show that the highway should not be built along the last 15 miles of the Coquihalla, but should take the next valley to the north which parallels Boston Bar Creek to Hope. And the Boston Bar Creek route has a flat valley bottom with a gradual incline, and there would be only one difficult area at the summit.

This appears to be a fairly easy route to build and also by moving it over one valley, we wouldn't run into the problem of disturbing the steelhead fishing in the Coquihalla River, which has had some difficulty for many years and major highway construction could interfere with it.

With the surveys that your department has done, and the fact that this is existing now as a driveable route, I believe that the public should be told if indeed there is a timetable for bringing this up to highway standards — whether they are going to

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remove it from the private road status; whether we will have this third alternative route into the Interior; and whether it will be built compatibly with the major rebuilding of the Hope-Princeton Highway.

That traffic which funnels into the Okanagan is particularly hazardous. And in the summer when that famous tourist traffic, which the Minister talks about, is prevalent in B.C. we have many trouble spots on Highway 97. I believe that the development of the Coquihalla Pass, along with an alternate Okanagan Valley bypass, would eventually eliminate all of the problems that are happening in the Okanagan now. I'm sure the Minister is aware of them because the complaints I get all say "copy to the Minister," or the hundreds of letters I get are copies of letters that the Minister has received. They're from my constituents and they are from the communities within the Okanagan, and all of them have trouble spots on 97.

I think the government, Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, should take a look at utilizing some of the studies that have already been made about a high-level west side route, consider a complete Okanagan bypass, and perhaps in conjunction with Coquihalla, as a tie-in to the Coquihalla for solving some of the major Interior traffic problems that we now face.

I would just like to point out that the Okanagan and Highway 97, which is I guess the only Pan-American route there is running right from South America on up through California and up to Alaska connecting with the Cariboo Highway, carries a large amount of traffic most times of the year, particularly in those summer periods.

They've got problems in the Penticton area, and I know the bypass. I would like to ask the Minister the situation on the Penticton bypass as it exists now. I know there's a problem with negotiations with the Indian band

there. But right now there's a tremendous bottleneck in the City of Penticton where all traffic is diverted right through the heart of the city. It's hazardous; it is inconvenient for the traveler, and it is not good highway management.

Further on as we get down through the valley this very narrow highway is going through a densely populated valley. We have problems in Summerland. We have particular problems in the Westbank area where the highway runs through the centre of what is a commercial area, and through the major school zones in a population area of about 10,000 people.

I think in conjunction with the long-term planning I'm asking the Minister to make on an Okanagan bypass, that we are going to have to look at bypassing these communities. And I agree with him in his suggestion that all these bypasses and new highways should be no-access. They should be travel routes only.

The history of the Okanagan was that the communities built up along the only trail that went through the narrow valley. The only route in created a lot of the problems. That's how our cities grew. The only possible way in and out was through Highway 97. In rectifying the problem we don't have to run into the same sort of conditions that have made it hazardous: multiple accesses and farm vehicles coming right out of the farms onto the highway. That's part of our problem.

We are trying to maintain the Okanagan as an agriculturally-based area because of the need for agricultural products, but also to maintain the aesthetics. Yet, in conjunction with this, we have a lot of farm vehicles which all use this highway as they have for years traditionally. One of the major sources of traffic accidents are these farm vehicles coming on using the highway for two or three miles and turning off into another area. We have to find some way to get these vehicles off the major route through until we solve the major bypass problem.

We have a problem through the City of Kelowna right now where the city is negotiating with the department. The traffic runs right through the centre of the city, and they're dealing with outlets and one-way streets. I'd like the Minister to bring me up to date on what's happening in that area and what we're doing to solve the congestion through the heart of the City of Kelowna.

Going further on Highway 97 north, we have a major problem in the Winfield area where, again, the highway runs right through the built-up area, right near schools. In the last years there have been traffic fatalities concerning small children. It is of concern to the residents. I'm sure we have to consider a bypass around that community.

Highway 97 problems go all the way up. This road happens to run through a series of valleys as it goes beyond the Okanagan. I feel we have to find a major diversion route to take the through traffic out of the Okanagan and divert it past for trucks and for vehicles which do not necessarily have to go through every community. It's a major problem the people feel strongly about because it's hazardous and there have been traffic fatalities.

I'd like to mention the problems we're having with Highway 33, the highway that runs through Beaverdale and Rock Creek and over to the Kootenays from the Okanagan. This is a good secondary highway, but there's a problem with two extremely dangerous bridges. This problem has existed for quite a few years but it has been accelerated now due to a major winter accident. One of the bridges has been completely wiped out by a soft-drink truck and now we have even more hazardous conditions.

This route is being travelled more and more not only by recreational people going to the ski mountains in the winter but by commercial traffic through to the Kootenays. It has also become a very

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scenic tourist route, a route of unspoiled country through miles of no buildings, no habitation, beautiful scenery and many pleasant places for the tourists and citizens of B.C. to stop and get back to nature.

I feel there's been a lot of difficulty with those two bridges. I would ask the Minister if he could give me some assurance this is being looked into.

Highways are there not just for communities or for political purposes, as the Minister said. They are there to serve people; they are there to move people; they are there to move goods to and from people. I feel we must have this type of planning, even if it's long-term, showing the possibilities of where these routes can go to solve these problems today, along with making the immediate decisions on these particularly hazardous areas. I would like to hear your response to this.

MR. D.E. SMITH (North Peace River): I sat and listened to the debate of the estimates of the Minister of Highways. For a while I thought perhaps it was going to take me as long to get involved in saying a few words in these estimates as it has sometimes taken the Department of Highways to solve some of my problems in the North Peace. But it is interesting to get involved.

Earlier today, the Member for South Peace (Mr. Phillips) in his address said something to the Minister of Highways about him being unimaginative, I believe: no new programmes, no new ideas, and so on. I think that was a little unkind and a little unjust because I can think of one programme the Minister has introduced since his appointment that is imaginative and certainly an improvement on some of the things in the past.

If we reflect back prior to his tenure, we can recall a certain Minister of Highways who used to like to test the roads with a car. He sometimes tested out the curves at 80 miles an hour, I was told, just to see if the car could perform properly at that speed. That was before the Lear jet, of course. After the advent of the Lear jet we had for a period of time a Highways Minister who flew rapidly into every constituency in the province. As a matter of fact, he invented the "flit in, flit out and fly past," process into almost every constituency throughout the Province of British Columbia. The only problem was that he was trying to review highways at about 450 knots at 20,000 feet. And really, it's not the best way to look at a highway problem in British Columbia.

I'd like to suggest that the new Minister of Highways didn't take long to refine that programme. Just a short time in office and he came up with the idea of an elevated overview of the highway. An elevated overview if I may explain it to you, is to rent a Sikorsky helicopter. You don't fly at 450 knots; you fly at 150 knots at 1,500 feet. It still doesn't solve the highway problem. Unfortunately, it doesn't matter whether you're 1,500 feet above the ground or 20,000; it still is a little difficult to analyse the road problems.

Perhaps he decided by doing that he was going to save a lot of wear and tear on himself. Some of the highways in the province do have a few potholes in them. Some of them, although the Minister may not believe this, are still gravel.

Anyway, I welcome the fact that the Minister did visit the North Peace and for a few hours viewed from 1,500 feet the wide expanse of road in that particular part of the country. I think he probably realized for the first time after visiting the Peace that it is a very large country and we have a great number of miles of road — as a matter of fact, second only to the constituency of Cariboo with respect to the number of miles of road which happen to be maintained in the Province of British Columbia.

We have problems which are peculiar to our area as compared to other areas of the province. Soil conditions are different; road construction conditions are quite different from the lower mainland or from the areas where we have a lot of mountain terrain and rock that we have to contend with.

[Mr. Gabelmann in the chair.]

I'd like to spend a few moments talking about the Minister's policy concerning the funds in his budget. He has indicated that most of the money will go towards maintenance and very little towards new construction.

I'd like to suggest that that policy is really unworkable, I'd like to say why. I don't deny that we need a tremendous amount of construction and reconstruction throughout every constituency in the province — mine more than any others perhaps and to a great extent — because the roads do wear out. But remember, Mr. Minister, that the roads there were built to service people. If it wasn't for the fact that the roads were being used to a greater extent than ever before, they wouldn't wear out. But they are wearing out; the grade 1s getting worn down; the gravel is disappearing.

Some years ago we worked out a plan for the North Peace area to not only maintain and upgrade the existing road system but to specify on a priority basis those roads which would have to be paved. That programme was started and it's been continued each year to the great benefit of the people who live there and have to use roads on a day-to-day basis.

I would suggest to the Minister that in setting up any road programme, there are roads that can be maintained as a gravel road indefinitely if they're kept in good shape. But there are many roads, because of the density in traffic and an increasing density, that will never be maintained regardless how much equipment you put on those roads if they are

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to stay as gravel roads. These roads must be paved in order to maintain the traffic. For instance, there are roads in my area which we call main market roads, that you could put maintenance equipment on seven days a week, 24 hours a day. They're gravel roads, fortunately some of them are paved now. But you would never be able to maintain those roads in a gravel condition, in a good condition, regardless of the amount of equipment you put on them. The gravel washes out too fast; the soil conditions are such that you just can't maintain them.

I think your problem is two-fold, Mr. Minister. Certainly, you need funds and money to increase the maintenance vote for each of the constituencies to allow the district engineers to do a better job of maintaining the roads under their jurisdiction. But we also have to look at many areas of the province, including the central Interior sections, the northwest and the northeast, and determine what roads will be the main market roads in the area and what roads will be the main arterial highways. These must be paved because it's the only way that you'll be able to maintain those roads in decent shape for the public to travel on for any length of time.

I'd like to know, as the Member for South Peace River (Mr. Phillips) wanted to know, something about the reasons for reducing the number of homes and farms that you service with snowplough during the winter months. In referring to 1972-73 report, and looking at it by region, I see that the greatest expense by far, of course, occurred in region 4, and I think that's reasonable when you look at the topography of the area and the amount of snowfall in those areas.

The total cost of snow removal in region 4 amounted that year to \$5.5 million. Then we get to such places as region 1 and the total cost of snow removal was less than \$1 million. This is natural when you consider the terrain and the amount of snowfall we have in some parts of the province.

I do not disagree with the idea that the Minister should spend most of the funds available to maintain the road system in every constituency in a good condition during the winter months. And to the credit of the Department of Highways, I think this has been done in the last number of years. Very, very seldom, even in most trying conditions, do I receive a phone call from somebody saying that the main roads have not been ploughed within a reasonable length of time.

But unfortunately, ploughing the main roads, and making it possible for a farmer to get to the main road if he lives a quarter of a mile from it, is something quite different. In conditions of heavy snowfall, or blizzard conditions, it doesn't matter if it's only a few hundred feet or a quarter of a mile or a mile that he lives from the main travelled road that is being maintained. If he can't get to it with his vehicle, he just can't get in and out.

I'd like to suggest to the Minister that the people who work in the oil industry in the north have solved this problem to a great degree for the roads which they maintain separately from the highway system. There are hundreds of miles of these roads maintained out to battery and well locations scattered throughout the North Peace area. They hire local equipment — mainly local farmers who have large tractors with snowploughs on them to maintain and plough the roads that are not part of the British Columbia highway system.

It does two things. It provides employment for those farmers who do have the equipment available in the wintertime and give them some extra cash. And it maintains the roads in a usable condition.

I don't suggest that the Minister of Highways should divert the equipment that he presently has in any given constituency to plough driveways because if they're ploughing driveways, they can't maintain and open up the main highways. But I do believe he should investigate the manner in which this problem has been solved by a number of the service companies in the Fort St. John area. When I say service companies, I mean those companies servicing the oil patch, particularly. They maintain their roads, as I understand it, at quite a reasonable cost through an arrangement in different strategic areas with farmers who have large tractors available and are prepared to keep them in running order throughout the winter months.

I'd also like to bring to the attention of the Minister of Highways the fact that the oil industry seems to be able to maintain and build new roads for a great deal less money than we seem to pay through the Department of Highways for the same type of construction and the same type of work.

I realize that the standards they use are sometimes not the standards that the Department of Highways would approve. The right-of-way may not be wide enough, the amount of brushing and clearing that's done may not be exactly what the Department of Highways would approve. But I would think it would be a good idea for the Minister of Highways and his staff to consult with the people who are building roads other than roads under the jurisdiction of the Department of Highways because when I checked with them and then asked our district engineer what he has to pay out to build a like piece of road, his cost seems to run 25 to 30 per cent higher, if not more.

I know the oil industry make great use of the local construction firms. I know most of that work is done on an hourly basis. It's not contract work as a rule. They hire men and put their own supervisory crew on and send their Cats, equipment and dozers to build roads for them. And they seem to have done a pretty good job, considering the fact that the weather conditions are the same whether the Department of

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Highways builds the road or somebody working on a contract for Texaco or Union Oil built the road. I do think that's an area that bears investigation by the Department of Highways.

I'd also like to know what happened to the highway programme initiated by the previous government to construct the road from Fort Nelson to Fort Simpson. After many years and a lot of negotiations, we finally got the programme off the rails and built that section of highway from the Alaska Highway and immediately north of Fort Nelson to the river, a distance of about 35 miles, It was built under contract and supervised by the Department of Highways. The road, as I understand, is good. Surprisingly, the construction encountered in that area was not nearly as tough as the Department of Highways first assumed it would be. It made good progress as far as the river.

Then unfortunately, we ran out of funds. Since that time, there's just been nothing available to advance that programme beyond where it stopped last year. I know the provincial government would like to see some federal participation, probably through DREE or something of this nature. Let's get back on the rails again, Mr. Minister, and continue that road because it is important in the overall development of not only northeastern British Columbia but that area that lies beyond our border, right from Fort Simpson through to Inuvik.

In the next few years, regardless of whether a pipeline is built or not, there will be a tremendous amount of interest and commerce conducted in that particular part of the country. And as has been mentioned by other MLAs in this House, the material will either go through Alberta and that direction up to Fort Simpson and then by boat or by road to the Arctic, or it will come through British Columbia by B.C. Railway as far as Fort Nelson, and then on to the Arctic.

I would hope that road will not be used as a political football and now that we have a start on the construction it will be continued on a regular basis until we get to the border between ourselves and the Territories.

I'd like the Minister also to comment on the plans for the Alaska Highway. At the present time, the jurisdiction and maintenance of the Alaska Highway from Mile 0 at Dawson Creek to Mile 83 is under the jurisdiction of the provincial government. Beyond that point it's a federal jurisdiction and a federal responsibility.

There are two things that trouble me concerning both the portion that the provincial government is responsible for and the portion of road beyond Mile 83. Between Dawson Creek and Mile 83, the federal government some years ago paid the entire costs of paving that section of the highway, but the pavement is beginning to wear out. In many places we have failures now starting to show up, particularly in the section between Dawson Creek and Fort St. John. And discounting the hills, which have a habit of sliding out on us, something still must be done on the remainder of that section particularly. Otherwise we are going to lose the benefit of the paved highway before long.

Now, some work was done on that particular section and there was a sort of recapping process — not a recapping but a flush coat — and some gravel put on top. It really didn't work out too well. I think now is the time we must consider a programme of recapping of that particular section of highway in order to maintain it anywhere near a reasonable standard.

The federal government is presently upgrading a part of the highway and straightening out a lot of that section of the Alaska Highway between Mile 83 and Fort Nelson. They are embarking upon a programme of replacing all the bridges — or most of the bridges — and gravelling that section of the highway.

I would like the Minister to indicate, if he would, what the plans are between the Department of Highways in this province and the federal government regarding the takeover of that section or sections of highway — whatever might be going on between Mile 83 and Fort Nelson. Certainly you should request and demand that the federal government pay the costs of bringing that up to a good standard before it's taken over by the Province of British Columbia. This has been in the mill for some time now and I would like to know if we are closer to a solution of that problem than we were a year ago.

I suggested to the Minister that his programme of maintenance is a good idea but that we still need money to upgrade and improve the main market roads in many areas of the province, including the Peace River area.

There are a number of matters I would like to comment on further when we get into specific votes, but I would ask the Minister if he would comment on one specific programme that has been in the mill now for some time, and that is the two arterial highways that bisect the Town of Fort St. John. I know the Minister is well aware of the programme that I am talking about in respect to a cooperative programme between the Town of Fort St. John and the Department of Highways for reconstruction of those two particular roads. Will that programme get off the ground this year and will it be called all in one tender, so that even though the work may be spread over more than one year, the complete tender for a complete programme can be called all at one time? I would like the Minister to comment on that, if he would, when he again gets to his feet.

There are many other matters that I would like to discuss with the Minister but I believe some of these

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can be taken up, Mr. Chairman, in the individual votes as we come to them.

HON. MR. LEA: I would like to deal with some of the specific items that have been raised by both the Member for South Okanagan (Mr. Bennett) and North Peace River (Mr. Smith).

The Member for North Peace River asked about the access roads — both the north and south access roads — into the Town of Fort St. John from Alaska Highway. We have approved both of those for this year and we have written to the city asking if they are ready to put up their share. As you know, they are secondary roads and if the city is willing, we are going ahead this year on both of those roads.

The Alaska Highway. We are not dealing with the Alaska Highway in isolation from the rest of the northern package. We are at present negotiating with the federal government for the upgrading of the entire northern highway system, which includes the Alaska Highway system. We are in negotiations now and at this point I don't think it would be opportune for me to say what those negotiations are doing right at this moment because they are delicate. It will be out soon and as a northern MLA you will be one of the first to know.

MR. SMITH: Is this all part of it?

HON. MR. LEA: All part of it. The Fort Simpson–Fort Nelson road is part of it but I can't tell you where we are on that road. I have made abundantly clear what the provincial stand on that road is. We are willing to put money, time, anything to bring that road in as soon as we can get an agreement from the federal government when they are going to reach their part of the border.

It's ironic that you should mention that you don't want us to use it as a political football because the federal government sometime ago had already committed moneys to going in to build their share of that road down to the border. They pulled that money out again when they couldn't reach an agreement with the former administration. I think you know that, Mr. Member.

I have gone to see the Hon. Jean Chretien and we have come to an agreement. He's asked me for a year to switch his priorities back to that road. I think that because it was the province's bungling in the first place that caused him to shift his money out that it's only fair at this time, even though it wasn't our administration, that we do give him a year to shift his spending priorities back there, which he has said that he is willing to do. I think we set a four-year target date for that road — a year to allow the federal government to get back in with their money....

Interjection.

HON. MR. LEA: We will meet that at any time that they can get there. We've given that commitment.

Oil company roads. It's rather difficult to compare apples and lemons. What standard do they build their roads to? Do they build them cheaper? I would suggest that probably they use those roads as part of their business expenses when they are filling out their income tax.

Interjection.

HON. MR. LEA: No? Well maybe we should use that price to find out how much they pay for the building of those roads. I think it's a rather nebulous area we are dealing with. I am sure that you, Mr. Member, through you, Mr. Chairman, wouldn't want to see us building roads within the province that were not up to the standards set for other areas of the province. So we want to build them to standard. I think there is some discrepancy between their standards and the standards the Department of Highway has set for British Columbia.

Twice during my estimates I've gotten up, as the Member for South Okanagan (Mr. Bennett) has acknowledged — maybe you weren't in the House. I didn't say we were going to discontinue improving roads and building new roads. I said there had been a change in emphasis — a better ratio. I feel that we have to put a different ratio on that part that's called maintenance. I think that especially in the North Peace River they would welcome that. The farmers do welcome that.

In closing my remarks on the comments made by the Member for North Peace River (Mr. Smith), he said that when I was there on the helicopter trip, on which you accompanied me, Mr. Member.... I was glad to have you, Mr. Member.

MR. SMITH: I was only on part of it.

HON. MR. LEA: Glad to have you along. Did we go fishing, by the way?

MR. SMITH: No.

HON. MR. LEA: Would you tell the Member for South Peace River (Mr. Phillips) and the Member for North Okanagan (Mrs. Jordan) we didn't go? Bad research. Caught a few snags.

The Member for South Okanagan (Mr. Bennett) has raised the matter of new inland routes into the Interior. I thought it would be raised again, so I have left it to this point in the estimates. Yes, we have been searching out new routes. The Coquihalla, as the Member mentioned, at this point looks like the most favourable. No matter where you

go trying to get a route through there, you are going to run into snow

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and run into problems. To assume that you are going to find a route in the Province of British Columbia to take you from the coast to the Interior that doesn't have problems with snow I think is fallacy. You can't do it. It will save mileage into the Okanagan and into the Interior of British Columbia.

Again you're right. The time has come when we have to seriously look at simply not choosing a route but beginning construction. As I said, at this point looking over all of the routes available to us, the Coquihalla does look to be the best at this point. We will be making a decision soon, after we have all the information gathered and the data analyzed.

Also, Mr. Chairman, the Member for South Okanagan asked about the two bridges that he has concern for on Highway 33. Both those bridges will be done this year.

Interjection.

HON. MR. LEA: Well, it'll be done.

You asked about the Winfield road. We can't come to an agreement with the regional district on that but we're still negotiating with them.

Now, the Kelowna Couplet. Again we can't come to an agreement with the municipal council on the Kelowna Couplet. We want the Couplet. If I did hear your view on it, I can't recall.

The council feels that we should enlarge Harvey Avenue. It seems to me there would be an awful lot of social dislocation and an awful lot of expense. You did mention that probably some of that problem would be alleviated by going to the west-side route by a bypass route through the Okanagan.

We are currently studying the different routes that would be available up the west side. Those studies are not completed yet. We agree that when the studies are complete as to routings, we have to go to work on that, although I wouldn't want to build up too much hope that it's going to alleviate all of the problems that are being experienced along the present Highway 97.

Although, as I mentioned earlier, it is one of the problem areas through the Okanagan — the Highway 97 in the province — most of that traffic, as I believe you agree with me, is locally generated. I'm not blaming anyone; it's always nice...20/20 hindsight is nice, but we've done a lot of things in this province that today don't look that well. If we knew then what we know now we wouldn't do it that way in terms of access and in terms of highway building.

So we have a problem there. Let's look at the future. We have to solve it, and we're looking at bypass areas. I appreciate your remarks about keeping new highways, new bypass routes, new alternative routes, clear for through traffic. I believe it's the only way we can maintain an interior carrier system throughout the province. I appreciate your support on that.

MRS. JORDAN: I have problems with my voice, but it's not that bad.

I might just as well carry on with the North Okanagan, or the Okanagan Highway, since the Minister has made reference to it. I think he is beginning to become aware of the problems there. He's quite right when I speak in terms of the area that I represent, which is from within the City of Kelowna, Reid's Comer, south of Swan Lake towards Armstrong.

I would just point out to the Minister that he'll find very little strip development, or ribbon development, along that area. We've kept the area from Oyama to Vernon virtually clear of any type of development. So I just don't want him to get his halo on too tight. There have been a lot of people concerned and we've exhibited sound planning in that respect.

Also there's not much ribbon development along the north area to Armstrong. The Highways department has been very helpful in this and it hasn't always been easy — certainly for our regional engineer who was tarred with being anti-development and anti-everything. But he was quite right and he certainly had the support of the MLAs.

But the problem in that highway between Reid's Corner and Vernon is, as the Minister says, largely internally generated. It's not even really a matter of volume on a year-round basis but it's the conflicts of interest that are using that highway. You have little old ladies in tennis shoes; you have farmers; you have young people: Sunday drivers; you have internal trucking; you have airport transportation; and then you have commercial transportation between the two areas.

I hope the Minister is listening...

HON. MR. LEA: Oh, yes.

MRS. JORDAN: ...because I want a public hearing, and that's what I'm leading up to.

Mr. Minister, whatever you do in the way of a bypass, it isn't going to solve that internal problem. I recognize that some of the people are reluctant to accept the fact that it is largely an internal problem, and there are going to have to be some changes made.

I have always made my position clear in the former administration, to the former Minister and to you, Mr. Minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, that I recognize that not everybody can be happy with the solution. But I do insist in meeting the commitment that I gave to the people long before the last election, and which my government, or our government, was going to adhere to: that when the alternate route was sited and there were reasonable discussions and points in favour and against each one, these would be brought to public hearing within this small area.

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Mr. Minister, I believe that that must be done. I would like a commitment from you today — and you've had ample time to think about it — that this will be done. This is an area that is agriculture and some tourism. Their land is frozen. They've had the tooth whipped out of their mouth in the extension of the City of Kelowna, with the new boundaries.

Now the department, with all due respect, is talking about putting a lovely Douglas Street in the middle of the community of Winfield and, Mr. Minister, they don't want a Douglas Street. You talk about social disruption. That whole community, good, bad or indifferent, revolves around that main section of what is now the highway; everything is plugged into that area.

There's no way that I can offer you support, Mr. Minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, if you make an arbitrary decision. I acknowledge that the major centres have very strong views on this and it was a long time before they would even support our efforts to have a representative from that area in the discussions. But thanks to Mayor Bennett of Kelowna, this was done and, if nothing else, at least the people are having a feeling that they have some say and some understanding of what's going on.

But there must be feedback. In being aware of the three possible sites, none of them is ideal for various reasons: one, because we're going to have to go through agricultural land, and the other because it's going to split the heart out of the community.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, if it really isn't possible to consider going further up on the side of the mountain on the east side of Winfield — I am just trying to think of my directions, anyway, it's the first site that bypasses Winfield on the upper side — instead of going halfway up the mountainside. If they went right to the top, perhaps this would lead to less disruption of the agricultural land.

There's a large area in there of relatively unused land. It's lovely land. It's very picturesque. In recognizing

that there has to be an internal problem — which the people don't want to accept, quite frankly, as the Minister is aware — I just feel that the least disruptive of all the alternatives would be if it could be moved up higher and disrupt less orchard land.

I would fully concur that there should be absolutely no access to that highway at all. It's strictly a high-speed traffic area. There would, of course, have to be turn-offs, allowing the people to get to the centre and down into Winfield — and the same at Oyama — and then develop Highway 97, as it is now, as a scenic route.

Just on the subject, Mr. Minister, it's long been my dream that over the years we develop the whole area along Woods Lake as a pedestrian area. We have done some tree planting, and in spite of the fact that some of the people steal the trees, we've maintained several.

There should be a plan drawn up. I believe this was under discussion at the change of administration — a long-range plan. It can involve a lot of people. It can be a memorial area if people have relatives they want to remember who are deceased — birth dates to celebrate. Why not let them do it not by sending flowers, but by making a contribution in the form of a tree, or a rock, or a picnic bench, to what would eventually be a pedestrian-cyclist picnic area along that beautiful lake? I hope the Minister will comment on that.

Regarding the highway itself, Mr. Minister, I would like you to look at the possibility of moving one alternative higher up the side of the mountain, and I would like from you a commitment of a public meeting in which all the facts can be put before the people so that, while you may not win all around the bush, at least they've had their chance to have their say.

The other thing that I would just bring up in reference to any alternate route of the coast is that the North Okanagan is in the throes of establishing itself as a stable community, and we hope that any Westside cut-off that takes place would give consideration to proper access and signing to the North Okanagan area so that we maintain our hub position as a distribution centre in the area of commerce.

I asked this last year of the other Minister. And I understand he's going to enter into dialogue with the native Indian bands of British Columbia regarding commercial signs on Indian property. We have a very stringent rule, brought into British Columbia by the former administration, which prohibits commercial signs on highways. It certainly is a regulation I adhere to and which I think has much public support, but it does put a discriminatory aspect on it, and also it defeats its purpose in unsightliness. You're driving along a lovely scenic highway and suddenly you're smack-bang into a reserve area and there are highway advertising signs "Nickel Nielton Need a Knuckle."

I think there are many things that the native people want to involve themselves in in relation to government, and one of your bargaining points, Mr. Minister, is that those signs come down.

The Hon. Member for West Vancouver–Howe Sound (Mr. L.A. Williams) made the comment that the Minister should reduce speed limits in British Columbia and I would like to oppose this. There are very few areas in British Columbia where the speed limit is 70 miles an hour, and certainly the Port Mann freeway is one. There are few areas in the north...and to my knowledge that's the only place in British Columbia.

The rest of the areas in British Columbia are 60 miles an hour or lower, and 55 miles an hour at night. If we are seriously concerned about saving fuel, I

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suggest the Minister join Mayor Art Phillips in a concentrated effort to get the people in West Vancouver, and other parts of Vancouver, who drive one monster to work with one person in it, to cut down.

It is far easier for them in terms of time and energy to hop a transit bus than it is for people who live in Prince George or Fort St. John or the Okanagan or the Kootenays or the east Kootenays to cut their time considerably, especially in the months when traffic is light, as they would have to with a five-miles-an-hour reduction. So I would

urge the Minister to use restraint in that area. I've no objection in the summertime, when the roads are crowded.

But I've been led to believe, if I understand correctly, by many of the safety engineers that inhibiting the speed limit is not necessarily a safety factor. Frequently it backs up traffic and people become impatient and they break the new speed limit, and they also cause accidents.

The other thing I think should be said, Mr. Minister — and I would have thought with all your outspoken statements that you might have said it — that is, we have this schizophrenic attitude right across Canada. We're talking about a new lifestyle; getting the most out of life; a new approach to life; slowing down. Where are we going in such a hurry?

But, my gosh, when it comes to taking half-an-hour more to get to Vancouver, or 10 minutes more to get from Vernon to Kelowna, or half-an-hour more to get from Terrace to Prince George, then everybody gets up in arms. Surely it's time we, as a society in British Columbia, put our efforts where our mouths are and recognize that there are only certain times in the year when our highways are crowded. It's a time of high accident rates, and a good deal of those accidents are not caused by speed limits but by impatient drivers.

We, as drivers in British Columbia, have got the attitude that because we've had good roads and we haven't had too much traffic, it's our God-given right to step in our car and become demons and streak to the next community at our speed without considering anyone else.

I don't mean to slam the people of British Columbia. I really think that when most of us stop and think about it, if we're serious about wanting new lifestyles and not getting our coronaries at young ages, certainly allotting our time in terms of transportation and where we're going is part of it. If we want to enjoy the monetary benefits of the tourist industry, then let's not blast them off the road just because they happen to be doing a little sightseeing. I would hope the Minister's term of not building new roads but maintaining roads includes a very steady progressive programme of passing lanes, and expanding lanes where necessary throughout the province.

We should have scenic lanes and we should have through-traffic lanes so that visitors who come to our province, or families who are travelling on their holidays, can enjoy what they came to see, if they are visitors, and what they should see if they are British Columbians, and that is the scenery. They should have the right to pull off the road and examine certain spots where they can enjoy natural beauty.

I would also, because it comes in part under the Minister of Highways and the Minister of Recreation and Conservation (Hon. Mr. Radford), suggest that I recognize the problem of tourists and their lack of consideration, in many instances, of the preservation of our environment when it comes to disposing of garbage. Probably nobody's had a more sad experience than we have in the Okanagan. But nonetheless, I hope that we wouldn't get like the Province of Ontario where there is almost virtually nowhere that people can pull off the road unless it is a public campground or a commercial campground.

We've been blessed in British Columbia because of our terrain and because of former Highways policies — and it might be by design or fluke — that we have many areas in our province where you can pull off, you can have a picnic lunch without benefit of a park or a table. You can just sit on a rock and enjoy the view and take pictures. I think it would be a shame if we ever restricted this type of movement.

Another area where I wonder what the Minister's view is...and we've talked a lot of new lifestyles and a new view to building roads and what-have-you, and it all sounds very good. Why, Mr. Minister, have we never heard you speak out in terms of utilizing railroad tracks in British Columbia? And it isn't solely confined to British Columbia.

We had the opportunity, which we haven't had before, of driving across Canada last year. While I'd thought about it before, it just came home to roost so broadly how stupid it is, as you travel the Trans-Canada Highway, there's one railway going one side of the highway and the other railway is going the other side of the highway. Neither of them is economic, and they're duplicating over-serviced areas and under-servicing needy areas.

In British Columbia, Mr. Minister, right in the Okanagan Valley, there is an opportunity to really put some of

your imaginative ideas into effect because we have a railway that runs right through the northern part of the Okanagan down to Kelowna and it could link up to Penticton, and it is idle about 60 per cent of the time. It's heavily used through the fruit season and the rest of the time, except for lumber, they put trains over it in order to keep their franchise.

Mr. Minister, I think it's time in British Columbia that we awoke to the fact that pedestrian transportation is going to be a major thrust in the use of rail in the future, and that the Okanagan would be an excellent place to start. If you want to restrict it,

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start it in the summertime.

We've got an internal traffic problem; let's utilize the rails on a basis of practicality. You've got a lot of negotiations going on with the federal government. They want that port in Prince Rupert very badly, and they want a few other things around this area of the province, Mr. Minister. I suggest to you that you dig your heels in, and as one little side issue, other than the fruit industry, you say: "We want the use of those tracks on a pilot project in the Okanagan for \$1 a year." B.C. Rail can provide the little budcars. Then let's start a pilot project there and see if we can encourage our tourists and our local people to commute between Kelowna and the north part of the Okanagan by rail.

The airport. I wanted to qualify this. There's a small businessman who runs the limousine service to the airport, and there's no way I want to see him put out of business, and this would be something that would have to be considered. But it is utterly goofy that everybody in Vernon and Armstrong can get down to the hotel, get in a car or bus, and they drive to the airport, putting more traffic load on the highway, adding to the problems in the summertime, when in fact just one block away is the railway station, and the railway runs right by the airport. Wouldn't it be practical, in cooperation with this small businessman, to try a pilot project in the summer where, in fact, he would have his business operating on the railway rather than on the highway?

A lot of people go to Kelowna for business reasons; one person takes a car. I'm not suggesting we bulldoze people, but I think if it was carefully thought out there would be an opportunity for this type of programme to succeed. And if it took some subsidization in the first year, what does it matter? It's going to be a good deal less expensive than some of the road programmes that are going to have to come if we don't start using rails again instead of roads.

When you look at the shipping of freight across Canada — you have trains running, trucks running. I realize there are problems in terms of volume, but surely on a national basis, and in many parts of British Columbia we shouldn't be building roads for more trucks. We should be streamlining the rails to get the freight on the rails and off the roads, so that the people aspect of roads in terms of practical use takes a more important role. I hope the Minister will comment on that.

Another matter, Mr. Minister, that bugs the people of the Interior is the matter of an information centre for highways at Hope or in the lower mainland. Time after time you're driving out of Vancouver, the weather's terrible, everybody slows down, and the only reports you ever get on the radio are all about the roads out to Langley. With all due respect, I'm sure the weatherman and the announcers and the Highways people forget that the province goes well beyond Langley.

I can cite three examples this year. One was the Armistice weekend on the Friday night, driving out of Vancouver it took 2½ hours to get to Hope. I stopped at Hope: which is the best route, the Hope-Princeton or the Canyon? Nobody knew. Finally I met a lady in the washroom and she said, "Well, we've just come down through the Canyon and it's terrible." And I met a gentleman at the pop bar and he, said, "Don't go the Hope-Princeton." So I went the Canyon.

I have two points of criticism, Mr. Minister. One is: there should be regular bulletins guiding people as to what the road conditions are on both the Hope-Princeton and the Canyon, and offering advice. One night we went

over the Hope-Princeton — half-way three times because of road conditions.

The second thing: on that particular weekend, Mr. Minister, the black ice between Hope and Yale was such that I have never seen in my life before. It had been that way for many, many hours, and there hadn't been a Highways truck out, and no one seemed to know about it. I did notify them.

I would also say, with all due respect, I have a message to deliver to you from the transport truckers in the Interior of this province. They feel that last fall, right up until well after Christmas, the roads in British Columbia had never been more poorly tended. There were many, many nights when there were falling rocks and black ice up in the Revelstoke area, around the Shuswap–Mara Lake area, over in the Kamloops area. Mr. Minister, one weekend I spent about six hours trying to track you down, through you, Mr. Chairman, and you had disappeared from the face of the earth. It was impossible to get your Deputy and I didn't want to make a big issue out of it.

All we wanted was your department and the word to go out to get on those roads. In the end we just had to fan out with different phone calls to the various districts. With all respect they did try and get out and do something about it.

But, Mr. Minister, it is the shoulder seasons that are the dangerous seasons on the roads in British Columbia. When it's heavy snow, people know it and your equipment is out. But the high cost area really is in the fall and the spring when you get rains, quick freezes and light flurries of snow.

To compound the inadequate care of the highways this year in those areas, Mr. Minister, one night I was going up through the canyon, and around Jackass Mountain we had about a four-mile backup. With all due respect, it was very poorly handled. We had an RCMP officer who must have come from Phoenix, Arizona. I don't think he had ever seen a snowfall and I certainly don't think he had ever seen a hill. It would have been much more efficient if they had

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allowed the cars that had their studs and chains on to go up that hill rather than backing people up. Then you get the road creepers who come along and we had a traffic three lanes abreast and it was a terrible mess. Only one highway truck came along two hours later. When we went up the road there was no reason for that backup for cars that were equipped with winter equipment at all.

So I would urge you to have some courses, if we've got new people in the Highways, and get in contact with the Attorney-General (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) in regard to the RCMP, if there are inexperienced people, on how to handle this traffic in the wintertime and to increase your vigilance in terms of safety conditions of the road during the odd months of the year when the unexpected snowfall comes or the unexpected rainfall.

There are a number of issues that I would like to bring up with the Minister but they basically tend to be of a local nature. I will do that under the estimates.

One other subject that has been touched upon is in relation to municipalities and people who wish to build on their property and need to have access. Mr. Minister, without going into the details, you simply must do something about this. People who are not massive developers but just want to build a home and want access get a continual run-around between the regional district and Highways and the municipalities. I've tried it myself. First this department says "It's that department" and that department says "It's that department."

It's not a contentious issue; it's just simply that somewhere or other where they started out in a cooperative venture it has broken down. I'm certainly not pointing the finger at anyone. I have always found the Highways department most cooperative. I have the highest regard for them. I complained on behalf of the transport truckers, who are a really reliable gauge of highway conditions, about certain months of the year during which I think it should not happen again.

I also think, Mr. Minister, that you should leave a publicly known phone number or a public number in

various regions of the province where, if there is this problem again, MLAs are not spending a whole weekend trying to contact you and various regional districts. Surely we shouldn't be phoning the regional engineers. It should be somebody in authority who can give them the money that they need, or the okay they need, to get their equipment out.

I would also like to speak very highly of the majority of the men on the highway crews in British Columbia — certainly in the Okanagan. We're most fortunate. I know for myself that any reasonable request that I have ever made in terms of time or helping people they've never turned down. They are out there ploughing the roads at 4 in the morning in 20 below weather and they are cheery. They always share a cup of coffee with you and they are just great guys. They deserve a great deal of credit.

HON. MR. LEA: It's good to hear that the Hon. Member for North Okanagan (Mrs. Jordan) met the lady in the bathroom and the man in the pop bar. It could have been embarrassing!

MRS. JORDAN: You may think it's funny but the people didn't think it was funny.

HON. MR. LEA: It's a very roundabout way of getting my phone number.

I believe that when MLAs get in touch with local highway officials matters that are to be dealt with will be dealt with and they will contact people higher up the line if it's not within their authority to deal with the problem. But there are very few times that local highway authorities aren't able to deal with problems.

I will say, though, that many of the points brought up by the Hon. Member in her speech that she just finished are points that I think should be well taken in regard to dealing with transportation as a utility and integration of transportation — rail, roads and all the other areas. I've said for a long time that transportation is a utility to serve people. It has been treated in this province as a private enterprise to make money. I think that that probably is the wrong approach to take when dealing with transportation. I am glad to hear that the Member agrees with me.

She mentioned not being able to get road reports. I admit it is a problem. As the Hon. Member for Langley (Mr. McClelland) knows, having been in the media — and the Hon. Member for Saanich and the Islands (Mr. Curtis) — the radio stations get the complete radio report and tend to deal with that area that affects the listening audience. More than often that is the case.

What we are doing now is designing a system of remotely operated, electrically operated signs along the highway, especially going towards the Interior, to let people know immediately the conditions, wherever it's needed. We're designing that kind of a system so that people driving along the road will be able to pull over or whatever. We haven't finished the design or the studies. It will be beside the road what the road conditions are as quickly as we can get them there, once we have finished our designs and our plans for that kind of system.

I should mention that although I agree in principle and in theory about transportation, some of the areas that you have touched upon are not within my jurisdiction; they are within the jurisdiction of the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Hon. Mr. Lorimer). I agree that we should be experimenting today, especially in areas like the Okanagan with rail linkages

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that are there. That's a good suggestion.

I'm sure the Member didn't mean it that way, but I thought maybe she had implied that people who think today of changing our lifestyle are schizophrenics. I'm sure you didn't mean it that way. I think that we have come to a point in time where a great many people are questioning the lifestyle that we have been leading over the years and are trying to evaluate a new lifestyle and set a new pattern. By saying that, I don't mean we get rid of all our material things. I'm not willing to do it and I don't know of anybody else who is willing to do it, but I think we have to look towards a new lifestyle and to maybe not put so much emphasis on those material things.

Interjection.

HON. MR. LEA: I am trying to answer the questions, Mr. Member, as they come up. You want an open government — now you are getting it — then you say "don't talk." Please.

You talked about signs on highways and the legislation was passed under your government banning them. I agree with that legislation but there isn't a thing we can do about signs on Indian reserves.

MRS. JORDAN: Well, have you tried to negotiate?

HON. MR. LEA: Well, no, not really. I haven't. But I know that the department has taken it up with various bands in different locations.

Interjection.

HON. MR. LEA: They've made up their own minds.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! Before the Hon. Minister proceeds I would request that Hon. Members not speak from their seats and the Hon. Minister not answer them, because it's not recorded in *Hansard* when the Members speak from their seats. If a Member wishes to speak, he should rise in his place. I recognize the Hon. Minister of Highways.

HON. MR. LEA: Also you mentioned the problems that are present along Highway 97 through the Okanagan Valley. I would be the first to agree that they are there. She also knows that I met at her request with a person from her regional district along with the Member in my office and members of my staff. At that time I did promise that there would be hearings and meetings.

MRS. JORDAN: You didn't give us a commitment.

HON. MR. LEA: Well, I gave you a commitment that you'd have the public hearings. You are asking me not to act in an arbitrary manner before having public hearings and I gave you that commitment that we will do that.

As the Hon. Member knows, there's not even a consensus within the regional district. They have to come to a consensus before my department can deal with them in a meaningful way.

MRS. JORDAN: What about the possibility of making another...?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the Hon. Members to abide by the rules of the House and not to speak unless they stand in their place with their microphone on.

HON. MR. LEA: I should also mention before sitting down that many of the problems that we face on Highway 97 through the Okanagan Valley, as I am sure many Members in the official opposition know, wouldn't be present, would have been solved, but every time that the previous Member for South Okanagan (Hon. Mr. Bennett) was approached for alternate routes in the Okanagan he turned them down flatly.

The previous Member for South Okanagan had more influence in government than the present Member for South Okanagan (Mr. Bennett). But I'm glad to see that the Member for South Okanagan is on the right track, that he's not genetically involved in roads.

MRS. JORDAN: He'll be the one carrying it out, too.

MR. H.A. CURTIS (Saanich and the Islands): Last night the Second Member for Victoria (Mr. D.A. Anderson) touched briefly on the question of the Blanshard Street extension, and according to the *Hansard Blues* the Minister replied equally briefly.

I want to quote, as I have it, the Member for Victoria. In speaking about the Blanshard Street extension, he

called it "a ridiculous problem created by ridiculous bureaucratic decisions at the city level mostly."

Frankly, Mr. Chairman, I think the Member should be in trouble for some pretty casual research on a matter which has occupied the attention of the City of Victoria and the municipality of Saanich and the Department of Highways for a long time. I'm sorry that he dismissed it in that way, that he attached blame to whatever he means by the "city level." I'm also sorry that the Minister fell into the trap because I think the record would show that in virtually every instance over the past 15 years, from 1959, perhaps a little earlier than that, the municipality and the city,

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with the provincial government, with the Department of Highways, specifically with the Minister of the day, tried to find a way in which the highway could be extended, and extended as quickly and as reasonably and as sensibly as possible.

I said the Minister fell into the trap, Mr. Chairman, and he did. He said that Saanich went ahead and allowed a library to be built on one of the proposed routes. That reference is obviously to a Centennial Branch Library on Seymour Avenue. Surely, the Minister knows very well, as we discussed this morning, that the department he now heads — but did not at that time, I admit — has the right of veto over rezoning.

The property on which the library was constructed was formerly zoned residentially, and it had to have a rezoning in order to permit the construction of the library. That application, that proposed rezoning, Mr. Chairman, through you, to the Minister in this committee, came to the provincial Department of Highways in order to receive approval or rejection. It was approved.

It received Department of Highways approval in July of 1971. July 19 of that year the Department of Highways said, with respect to an alignment or a proposed route for the Blanshard Extension: "Go ahead; you can construct the Centennial Library on that very site."

So, let's clear away some of these cobwebs and half-truths that still linger around, not necessarily in this chamber, but certainly in the community with respect to the extension of Blanshard Street.

I indicated, Mr. Chairman, that it was 15 years ago. I have several pounds of Xerox copies of newspaper clippings from the *Victoria Times* — the *Victoria Colonist* in most instances — going back to January of 1959, 15 years ago, on the subject of getting a highway out to ease the pressure on Douglas Street and the Patricia Bay Highway. A mountain of clippings.

The present Minister knows; I know; the Second Member for Victoria should know; everyone who has been involved should know and admit that this was stopped, stalled, tossed to one side time and time again by the former Government of the Province of British Columbia, and former Ministers. So let's get back on track with respect to the Blanshard Street extension.

I'm sorry that the Second Member for Victoria had to skirt through some clippings and say "...ridiculous bureaucratic decisions at the city level mostly." What nonsense! What absolute nonsense! If someone on the other side said, let's table these — they came from the Provincial Library — I'll table every one of them from 1959, showing indecision and doubt.

I don't know how the senior staff of the provincial Department of Highways stood it, Mr. Chairman, sometimes when they were trying to get a road out to the Patricia Bay Highway and they were faced with Ministerial interference and indifference.

Enough of the past. The present Minister moved quickly, in my view, up to a point, Mr. Chairman. He had been in office about two months. He held meetings with the other jurisdictions. He met with the City of Victoria, I believe. He certainly met with the District of Saanich. He had his key people on the job and in July of last year he announced that he would, because of all the provincial bungling of the past, finally have to go underground in the

vicinity of the Town and Country Shopping Centre.

Most of us, I think, who watched this thing over the years applauded that decision. He had very little room in which to manoeuvre, but he got all the input he could. He researched it; he made his decision.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I have to ask the Minister, as he should have been asked last night really, with respect: Okay, you've made your decision. The tunnel is to be the route to extend Blanshard Street and traffic which demands another outlet in the southern Vancouver Island area. Could the Minister give us very simply a general timetable? Is the design partially complete, or complete? When does he think construction will start? We don't need to know the precise week or the precise month, but a general indication as to when the work will start. Approximately how long will it take? And as far as he and his department are concerned, when are we likely to see traffic moving through that very congested area to help people move in and out on the Saanich peninsula and in and out on the Trans-Canada Highway?

That's the only set of questions I have on the Blanshard Street extension. Last July you determined that it would be a tunnel. When will it start?

HON. MR. LEA: I'll just answer that....

Interjection.

HON. MR. LEA: Oh, don't do that to him; he's unbearable.

Mr. Chairman, to the Member for Saanich and the Islands. The programme is under design at this moment. We hope by this fall to have the design completed and hopefully, this winter, conditions being good, let a contract out on it. It should probably be finished within a year-and-a-half to two years, probably closer to two. It will take two years of work.

MR. CURTIS: 1977?

HON. MR. LEA: Well, whatever two years from this winter is, if that's 1977. (Laughter.)

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MR. D.A. ANDERSON (Victoria): I'd just like to ask the Minister a question on this. His predecessor has been accused, correctly, of stalling, stopping this, bungling it, indecision, interference, indifference and a number of things, all of which are dead true. The problem described by the Member for Saanich and the Islands with respect to the provincial government....

Interjection.

MR. D.A. ANDERSON: Well, there were a large number of them, as was mentioned. It goes back to 1959.

Interjection.

MR. D.A. ANDERSON: Yes, I'll tell you all what their names were. I'm sorry if this is the question, it certainly was not the Minister occupying the position of Transport and Communications, it was the predecessors to him. There were a large number, Mr. Minister. I can't identify them all. But as you forgot earlier today....

Interjection.

MR. D.A. ANDERSON: Yes, but you have trouble with names. You forgot earlier today who your campaign manager was, and I'll provide you with that by written note later in the day.

Back to the Minister of Highways. All these descriptions were given of the inefficiency and the ineffectual behaviour of previous Ministers of Transport. I must say that all this was true. In my view it's true. But it's time that

we had the documentation on this released because it has cost the City of Victoria, and it's cost the municipality of Saanich and the residents of both areas substantial sums of money. It's enormously delayed progress in that area in terms of proper civic planning. It led to considerable frustration, which the Member for Saanich well expressed, which led, I believe, to mistakes being made at the municipal level, and I will identify them. I believe that the library was a mistake. I believe the warehouse on Cloverdale was a mistake.

I just think that although it's true that the government was being extremely difficult, the municipalities in question knew full well they were dealing with a government that was not taking this matter up as it should. And they should have been willing, at least, to maintain the options of at least one route so that there could have been some future development when a change of government took place, which of course it did in 1972.

That is the reason I mentioned the mistake at the present time. It certainly cannot be attributable entirely to the provincial government. The province knew full well the type of government and the type of Ministers of Highways they were dealing with prior to 1972. I think they had a responsibility not to close off the options, as was indicated by the Minister of Highways last night with respect to the library, as is true again with the warehouse. That, I think, is something which well might be made public.

I would request him at this time to consider releasing the documents in question because the government in 1961 gave an agreement in principle to the proposed extension. They then backed off it. They stated then that the land was going to be too expensive to purchase. After the announcement was made of the decision to extend they raised the value of land, and then declared it to be too expensive and didn't proceed.

I admit there have been frustrations at the municipal level. But it's a great pity that we seem to have had a solution — which perhaps the Minister had no alternative but to choose — but a solution which is enormously expensive, which is inferior to the routes which could have been chosen had a decision been made earlier, and is inferior to a decision that he himself could have made had the municipalities in question and the municipal politicians in question not closed off options by permitting construction on properties as they did in the case of both the warehouse and the library.

MR. J.R. CHABOT (Columbia River): Mr. Chairman, it's difficult, and there are lengthy intervals between opportunities of speaking here. I don't know if it's because of the Minister's popularity, the popularity of his department or of his statements. Nevertheless, I've been attempting for several hours again to pursue a particular subject, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank the Minister as well for being straightforward and frank about the expenditures on the helicopter of \$18,000 for his joy trip to the northern part of British Columbia. He got a good deal, although it was extravagant: \$2,250 a day using a helicopter in examining the highways in the north.

I looked at his estimates here and I find that for his expenses he has the sum of \$7,000 a year over and above his salary which has been allocated. I'm wondering whether he'll declare this \$18,000 against his expenses, whether there'll be an honest accounting of the travelling expenses of the Minister, or whether this particular charge of \$18,000 will be buried. And if it will be buried, in what vote will it be buried, Mr. Minister?

You suggested to me that I should examine the public accounts; we now have the chairman of the public accounts committee, who is a member of our party. If it's not in your travelling expense vouchers, Mr. Minister, I'd like to know where it will be so that

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I can examine the thing in detail at the appropriate time in 1975.

Now regarding the allocation of dollars in respect to the percentage of the budget, there has been a decrease. I'm wondering wither that self-restraint has been shown by the various regions of British Columbia. They prepare their projections for the fiscal year, which are in turn submitted to your department, and then are examined on a priority basis. They specify to you, Mr. Minister, what their priorities are relative to highway maintenance and new

construction within their regions.

I'm wondering whether that self-restraint which we see relative to the amount of dollars that are shown in your estimates is to be attributed to the regions, or is it to be attributed to someone within your department, or is it to be attributed to you, Mr. Minister? Has there been some blue pencil markings across some of the requests made by the various regions? Or have officials in your department presented their budget to little Treasury, and is that where the hopes and aspirations of the various regions were knocked down?

If there was a reduction, when the projections were submitted to little Treasury, did you, Mr. Minister, on behalf of your department and on behalf of the regions of British Columbia, appeal to the Treasury Board to attempt to rectify some of the cutbacks that they no doubt made in your estimations for the next fiscal year? It's very important we know who made these cutbacks, if there are cutbacks; and I strongly suspect that there are.

Now I have received correspondence from people in the northern part of the island and they suggested to me that I raise the matter in the House because they didn't think that their Member would speak on the subject. What I do want to know is just what kind of progress there is and what your projection is on the proposed Kelsey Bay–Sayward to Beaver Cove highway. What is the programme of your department? Is there a hope?

I know your emphasis is on maintenance, but this is a new road that is proposed. I was wondering whether there is going to be a commencement. I understand that the surveying has been going on for some considerable time. In fact, there is almost a forest developed from all the staking of the delineation of the proposed route. I'm wondering whether construction will start during the current fiscal year. If not during the current fiscal year, when will it start?

Also I've received communication from people in the Lillooet area and they're wondering what kind of a programme.... They've expressed to me the deplorable situation on their road between Lillooet and Cache Creek. They want to know whether there'll be improvements on this road and whether it will take place this year.

Now I want to speak very briefly and I become, probably, a little parochial, because I want to speak about the hopes and aspirations of the people I represent regarding highway improvements in my riding.

The principal highway within my riding is Highway 95. It's a fairly good highway for the southern half of the constituency; it's a good highway. But there's a need for improvement in the northern part of the constituency from Golden south, a distance of approximately 15 miles, which was reconstructed a few years ago.

The road is breaking up now. There's a need for improvement, and the kind of improvement that is required, of course, is the hot-mix coating over the top of the highway. I'm wondering if the Minister has that within his estimates and within his programme for the current year, and also whether there's been given any consideration to paving the shoulders of the Highway 95.

I know that we've very grateful today for that portion of Highway 95 which does have paved shoulders. That's that section from Skookumchuck up to Windermere. It's an excellent highway, and it would be nice to see the rest of the highway reconstructed and brought to the same standards as exist in the southern half of the constituency.

I don't know just what kind of traffic will be generated by the World's Fair at Spokane, but I would assume that people moving from Alberta will either move down through the Field-Golden area or down through Eisenhower Junction and through Radium Hot Springs down 95 to Spokane. Whether it will generate the type of traffic which some people expect it will, I don't know. Nevertheless, I think that it's a very safe situation to have shoulders paved, and the people in the constituency would like to see your department undertake this kind of programme from Golden south.

One other small highway — it's a secondary road — Westside road, has received some attention in recent years. It's about a 20-mile length between Invermere and Fairmont Hot Springs. It has about 12 miles of the highway presently paved and there's a need for reconstruction and paving of the balance — about eight miles. I don't know what kind of dollars were spent in the fiscal year 1973-74. When I look at 1972-73 there was \$1,133.49 spent on that highway.

Mr. Chairman, I wish that we could get the \$18,000 or the equivalent — we can't get that money; it has already been spent, I realize — but I'd like to get the equivalent of the \$18,000 spent on your helicopter trip, Mr. Minister, for Westside Road. You'd finish the road and I wouldn't bother you any more about this road. That's all I ask. Give me \$18,000 for Westside Road.

So I'd like to know what your plans are. There's a

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need for this road to be completed.

One other situation which I have raised on numerous occasions with the previous government, with the former Minister who sits just in front of you, and now with you, is the necessity for examination of the construction of an overpass in Athalmer, B.C. There's an increasing delay created by this level crossing because of the tremendous increase in rail traffic moving through the Windermere Valley, caused primarily by the traffic of coal from Kaiser, coal from the Fording River, and coal from Coleman, Alberta, as well.

There are lengthy delays at the crossing and there's a need for examination. I know that you have to deal through the Department of Transport in Ottawa as well. And in order for the province to share in the financial formula that exists, there must be justification by the Department of Transport.

I'm not suggesting that you start building the thing tomorrow. I understand it's all surveyed. But I would like, Mr. Minister, if you would take the matter up with the Department of Transport and see if they wouldn't re-examine again whether there is justification for the establishment or the construction of an overpass at Athalmer.

Now, one other little section of Highway 95 which I want to speak about is a little chunk of highway near Skookumchuck, which is just on the outskirts of my constituency in the riding of Kootenay, but does affect traffic on Highway 95. Within the distance, I would say, of less than half a mile, there are two level railway crossings and one single lane bridge. It is an old wooden bridge, I understand that the surveys have all been made for alternate routes and for a bridge to cross the Kootenay River. You eliminate that old bridge and completely eliminate the two level railway crossings. I'm not suggesting for a moment that you go on the east side of the valley, because you would build a highway through. You could eliminate a bridge by doing that, but you would destroy a lot of very valuable farmland in that part of the country, I think there is a need, with increasing traffic and the increasing growth of the east Kootenays, that consideration be given to the construction of a new link, which is a fairly short link, which would involve a new bridge, would eliminate the old bridge and the two dangerous level railway crossings there. With that, Mr. Minister, I hope you'll give serious consideration because it's important to the people I represent.

MR. L.A. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman, in line with the Minister's concern about the clogging of inter-regional highways, may I ask him, with respect to the road constructed to Cypress Bowl, if that is to be a controlled-access highway and if the residential development of the property opened up by that highway will be permitted to have access to the Cypress Bowl Road or will it be reserved for the recreational use of Cypress Bowl? It seems to me that if that road is to be used as the primary access to an extensive area above the Upper Levels Highway for residential construction, then that highway is bound to increase traffic on that road and on the Upper Levels itself, which would seem to compound the Minister's particular view with regard to the way in which inter-regional corridors should be utilized.

The Member for South Okanagan (Mr. Bennett) mentioned the Coquihalla route from Hope to Merritt. I can readily understand the desire of the chambers of commerce of Hope and Merritt to have their two communities assisted by the construction of a new major highway route. I can also understand the desire of those people who live east of Merritt to want an alternative route to use rather than the Fraser Canyon or the Hope-Princeton.

Last evening the Minister indicated in his remarks that in the planning of new highway construction his department would be taking into account other disciplines — and I believe those were the words the Minister used.

Now, it's all very well to plan a highway from Hope to Merritt, but that alone, Mr. Chairman, is of little

consequence except to those people who are in Merritt. Before such a route can become part of a major east-west arterial corridor in this province, it's got to go beyond Merritt.

I'm gravely concerned, Mr. Chairman, that the department may find it convenient from a construction point of view to carry that highway through the Nicola Valley to Kamloops. I would just like to be assured by the Minister, if such a proposal is under consideration, that before any decision is made, the matter will be considered by the Department of Recreation and Conservation and also by the Department of Agriculture.

The Nicola Valley remains today one of the exciting areas, reasonably close to the lower mainland for purposes of recreation. Most certainly the Nicola Valley is an important factor in the beef production in British Columbia. While it is possible to design highway routes, which can take into account interference with recreation, conservation and agriculture, nonetheless, the establishment of major arterial highways always brings other development, which has very serious implications for areas such as the Nicola. The Nicola, regardless of how it may be viewed, can be destroyed. I would think that the advantage of this route, as far as provincial transportation is concerned, would pale in significance if we were to lose the major grassland areas and the recreational opportunities that the Nicola Valley produces.

It would perhaps come as no surprise to the Minister of Highways to know that the people in the Nicola Valley, who themselves would like to have

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improved transportation, have nonetheless engaged the services of an environmental engineer, Mr. Howard Paish, and his associates, to consider what the implications of highway construction in the valley might be. I would like to have the Minister indicate quite clearly whether or not any decision on his part would involve the Nicola Valley as a possible corridor. Would he also indicate whether or not he will postpone a decision until the Minister of Recreation and Conservation, the Minister of Agriculture and those people who depend upon the Nicola for their livelihood are consulted?

MR. G.B. GARDOM (Vancouver-Point Grey): I'd like to bring to the attention of the Hon. Minister some very startling statistics. We've got about 1.3 million cars in the province. We're averaging close to \$35 million property damage alone a year. The social damage resulting from death and injury is somewhat incalculable, but I would assume that it would be at least twice or three times the property damage. We would be facing in social damage between \$70 million and \$ 100 million per year. About 40 per cent of the vehicles that are tested are rejected, and assuming that we did have province-wide motor-vehicle testing, which we still do not have, that would boil down to about 520,000 cars on the roads in British Columbia today that are not considered roadworthy. I think, Mr. Chairman, that's indeed like looking down the barrel of a gun.

Thirty-three per cent of the accidents in British Columbia happen on Fridays and Saturdays; of the offences under the *Motor-vehicle Act*, over 50 per cent of them result from speeding; 75 per cent of the *Criminal Code* offences result from alcohol. Mr. Chairman, through you to the Hon. Minister, I've always pleaded and pleaded in this House for safer and better driving laws in our province. I have asked for tougher penalties and longer suspensions for the drinking driver. I've advocated breathalyser tests and blood tests and urine tests long before they ever became the law of Canada. I've certainly advocated for lower blood alcohol levels for impaired driving, again long before the amendments that we have now seen that come to our *Criminal Code*. I've asked and asked and I reiterate my plea to the Hon. Minister, because it seems that no one else in the cabinet has responded at all, that proper warnings be published of the alcohol levels and the penalties for impaired driving. Let's have those in every liquor outlet in the province, every liquor store, beer parlour, bar, club and in every gas pump in every gas station in B.C. There's no reason why this Hon. Minister could not really get with it and insist upon these kinds of measures.

We've all heard of the expression "Russian roulette." In fact, holiday driving in the Province of British Columbia almost boils down to roadway roulette by virtue of the drunken driver. We've just got to get him off the road and work to that effect can never ever be finished. We all appreciate that it's a continuing problem. Recognizing it as such, it needs continuing programmes of prevention, stiffer penalties, increased suspensions and certainly a much fuller generation of a public awareness. I'd like to hear from the Minister just what he intends to do.

I'd also like to hear the Minister's views on some of the criticisms that were raised during the Wooten commission. That was a commission that was utilized at great expense in the Province of British Columbia, dealing with insurance, and it came up with some very, very genuine and well-recorded and documented evidence concerning the shortcomings in our driver safety programmes and in our highway construction processes in B.C.

It was constantly recommended throughout the Wooten report that there be an improved liaison between the Department of Highways and the department of the superintendent of motor vehicles. I would ask the Hon. Minister what has occasioned in that regard.

The commission constantly requested more divided one-way routes. It argued for improved frictionalization of the road surfaces.

Once again, Mr. Minister, I'm going to repeat this request to you. We have got to have province-wide motor-vehicle testing in the Province of B.C. The statistics that we have today are just too startling and too shocking not to see that that comes in immediately. I cannot see for the life of me why this has to involve the construction of expensive buildings. I cannot see why we cannot have more mobile testing units throughout British Columbia, or utilize some of the public structures that we now have such as firehalls and gas stations and so forth and so on.

Once again, the plea to you. You're a member of this cabinet and you've avoided this thing like the devil avoids the holy water.

HON. MR. LEA: Point of order, Mr. Chairman. I haven't avoided anything. If the Member would check he'd find out it isn't under my jurisdiction.

MR. GARDOM: Well, when the Minister of Highways assumes no jurisdiction for seeing that we have safe driving in the Province of British Columbia, it's high time we had a new Minister of Highways.

HON. MR. LEA: Speaking on the point of order, it does not come under my jurisdiction, it comes under the Motor Vehicle Branch, which is under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Transport and Communications (Hon. Mr. Strachan). I don't want to see the House, Mr. Chairman, have to go through it again with another Minister.

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MR. GARDOM: This Minister has recommended that it come under his jurisdiction and I intend to talk about it, Mr. Chairman. It's just as simple as that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! I would request that the Hon. Second Member for Vancouver–Point Grey relate his remarks to the specific responsibilities of the Minister with regard to safety — that would be highway safety.

MR. GARDOM: That flows from it and I'm glad that you made that observation for the interest of the Minister. Perhaps he can see his way clear to his responsibility and duties and all of these things should certainly be under his aegis and that's where it belongs. This Minister should be insisting upon province-wide compulsory driver education, and this Minister as a Minister....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please!

MR. GARDOM: Now, just let me make my point here, Mr. Chairman. The Minister is a member of cabinet. We all agree on that. It's also the responsibility of cabinet to see that bills are proclaimed. He has that responsibility and I'm going to read to him a section of an Act that has not been proclaimed and ask him why he has not fought for its proclamation in the Province of B.C.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please, on two points. First of all, the matter of driver training is under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Transport and Communications. Also, this is a matter evidently of a proposal which would be a matter of legislation, and therefore would be out of order under these estimates. I would ask him to confine his remarks to safe highways, which apparently is....

MR. GARDOM: I'm confining myself to safety on the highways and there's no better way to have safety on highways, Mr. Chairman, than to have people trained to drive on them. I'm sure you'll agree with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! The proper time to bring it up is during the estimates of the Minister of Transportation and Communications, who has the clear responsibility for that kind of a programme. Therefore I would rule it out of order at this time.

MR. GARDOM: Mr. Chairman, you're not ruling out of order something you've not yet heard. Wait till you hear it. It may not be in order, and then you'll certainly have the privilege to rule it out, but I really think it's somewhat unfair of you to anticipate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Hon. Member has indicated that he's going to make a proposal for driver training for safety. This is not under the jurisdiction of the present estimates we are considering.

MR. GARDOM: I'd like to read this to you, Mr. Chairman, and then I'd like you to express your ruling upon the point. I'd like to read something to you. It's very short and I'm sure you would welcome having it read into the records, because it increases your life and my life, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'll trust the Hon. Member to be brief, but I would ask him to obey the rules of the House.

MR. GARDOM: Oh, yes. I always am brief, Mr. Chairman. I always endeavour to obey the rules as much as I possibly can, as well.

Now, I'm going to refer to an amendment, Mr. Chairman, which would be of great interest to you and to all Members of the House. It came into the Legislature in 1969. It was an amendment to the *Motor-vehicle Act*, and it certainly does involve safety on our highways.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! I would rule prima facie, on the grounds of what he's already said, this matter out of order under these estimates. We could be into all sorts of things if we start to discuss responsibilities for the Minister.

MR. GARDOM: Mr. Chairman, this man was talking about philosophy and lifestyle two months ago! I'm just trying to talk about saying lives on the highways of British Columbia.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! A point of order was made and I'm ruling on the point of order. The matter the Member is raising is out of order.

MR. GARDOM: In what respect?

MR. CHAIRMAN: On two grounds. It's not under the present Minister's jurisdiction and it's a matter of legislation.

MR. GARDOM: Mr. Chairman, it is within this Minister's jurisdiction to this extent. Let me tell you how. Let me explain how. It's within his jurisdiction to the extent that he is a member of cabinet. Surely to goodness when bills are proclaimed that emanates from a step taken by cabinet. I'm just asking whether or not he is in favour of having this section of this statute proclaimed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! The Hon. Member knows the rules of the House. Any matter

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pertaining to legislation cannot be raised in estimates. Also, it is not permissible to ask one Minister to advise another.

MR. GARDOM: Well, I think it's a pretty darned sad day in the Province of British Columbia. I think, quite

frankly, that it's a dereliction of the duties of every Member of this assembly when we cannot talk about driver safety during the estimates of the Department of Highways when we're having the numbers of people killed on our roads every year. To try to stifle debate upon this point I think is a poor thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! There is ample opportunity to discuss safety under these estimates providing they are concerned with safe highways and not with some other matter which is the concern of the Minister of Transport and Communications.

MR. GARDOM: I would tend to think that it would not be unfair to suggest, Mr. Chairman, that people if they are on roads in the Province of British Columbia, should be trained to drive. Would any Member in the House like to raise his hand in opposition to that statement? I don't see one single solitary hand, even yours.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! I'm ruling any discussion of driver safety training out of order. I would ask the Hon. Member to move to another subject.

MR. GARDOM: Okay, Mr. Chairman. You can rule it out of order and I'm going to comply with your ruling, but I still have to say it's a tragic ruling. I think it's a short-sighted ruling and you have indeed my every sympathy, Mr. Chairman. I'll say prayers for you tomorrow as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! You have ample opportunity to discuss it at another time.

MR. GARDOM: Now, I'd like to mention to the Hon. Minister....

HON. D.G. COCKE (Minister of Health): Point of order. We have sat on this particular estimate now for a number of sittings, and the fact of the matter is you have been most lenient with almost every Member of the House on this whole question. There have been transgressions into the Ministry of Transport and Communications any number of times, but it is getting rather repetitive, Mr. Chairman, and I'm very pleased with your ruling.

MR. GARDOM: It sounds as though the Minister of Health has just come back from a secret meeting to depose the Premier, Mr. Chairman.

MR. D.A. ANDERSON: What was the point of order, Mr. Chairman? He raised a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The point of order of the Minister of Health was.... While the comment was a valid one it was not a point of order. Would the Hon. Second Member for Vancouver-Point Grey continue, please, on a new matter?

MR. GARDOM: Thank you very much. In Ontario, Mr. Chairman, which is another province in Canada, they have driver testing and they also have driver training programmes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! I would ask the Hon. Member whether he's intending to discuss the subject which was just ruled out of order.

MR. GARDOM: Oh, certainly not. Heavens, no!

MR. CHAIRMAN: We can trust your word? Would you continue?

MR. GARDOM: Oh, I've indicated that already. The lady Member mentioned that this responsibility should be transferred to the Department of Highways. We know that. You know that, but you'll still probably rule it out of order, Mr. Chairman. I do hope that the point is made. As I say, it's a very unfortunate thing. It's too bad that we have to have such rather shallow contributions to the debate from the Minister of Health. I would tend to think that he's be one of the first people to support driver education.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! Would the Hon. Member proceed with some of the responsibilities of the Minister of Highways?

MR. GARDOM: Now, in Ontario, Mr. Chairman, we find the Government of Ontario providing assistance...

MR. CHAIRMAN: We are not in Ontario, Hon. Member. I would ask him to relate his remarks to the Minister of Highways.

MR. GARDOM: ...which the Province of British Columbia does not provide.

We find in the Province of Ontario that the government provides assistance for the building of roads in Indian reserves and the building of bridges in Indian reserves. We find in the Province of Ontario that the support is to the extent of about 50 per cent. We find no contribution at all from this government for the construction of roads or bridges in Indian

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reserves in the Province of British Columbia. I think that is a sad commentary upon this government purportedly of and for the people.

We find in the Province of Manitoba just about the same kind of formula. Again, a credit to them and a credit to Ontario but no credit to this Minister and no credit to this government.

We also find that in the Province of British Columbia we have been criticized for having the most arbitrary expropriation laws of probably any area in the western world. One of the fiercest forms of expropriation is under the *Highways Act*. He's a new Minister but he has had the benefit, surely to goodness, of reading a few things. I wonder why this Minister has not spent some time with the Clyne commission and why he has not spent some time with the report of the Law Reform Commission dealing with expropriation laws in the Province of B.C...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please!

MR. GARDOM: ...and see that we have something fair and reasonable, which to this point we do not have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. The Hon. Member for South Peace River. I would make a point before he begins, and this is for the guidance of all members. I am quoting from *May*, page 739, section M. "The administrative actions of the department is open to debate, but the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in Committee of Supply." This is the ruling I was making previously.

I would now recognize the Member for South Peace River.

MR. GARDOM: Your observation is really not directed to the Hon. Member for South Peace River who will be speaking in about a second.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. GARDOM: I think they are primarily directed to me, and I would like to say this. Your ruling is completely valid; but there is no reason why any Member cannot advocate reform, whether it comes by legislation or government process of any form or description. That is exactly what I was doing, Mr. Chairman, and I am glad you appreciate the distinction.

MR. D.M. PHILLIPS (South Peace River): I have been listening to this recent debate with a great deal of interest because I understood this morning that the Minister of Highways was greatly concerned about safety on the highways. That's why the Minister wants the campers off the roads — safety on the highways. If the Minister is not concerned about safety on the highway, I wonder why he advocates that we only drive one type of automobile on the highway. That is what the Minister has advocated, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to refer you to an article dated February 8, 1974. This article is from the *Vancouver Province*. One would think when reading this article that one was in a totalitarian state. It is hard to realize when reading this

article that one is actually living in British Columbia. The Minister wants to direct what type of automobile will be driven on the British Columbia highways.

This is datelined Victoria: "Minister Raps Big Autos and Foreign Tourists." We have already covered the foreign tourists, and they are a matter of safety on the highway.

"The government should consider buying compact horsepower vehicles for its own fleet of cars, says Highways Minister Graham Lea."

I want the Minister to tell me if it is the policy of the provincial government to buy these compact, low horsepower vehicles for its own fleet. Or is this just more double talk; more "do as I say but not as I do"? Government by direction and not by example.

I wonder if the Minister of Highways has got together with the Minister of Consumer Affairs (Hon. Ms. Young) and given a calculated direction to the motorists of this province.

Interjection.

MR. PHILLIPS: Oh, if looks could kill, Mr. Chairman, I'd drop dead. (Laughter.) The Minister goes on and says that would be a step towards cutting down on gasoline use. He says he may suggest smaller cars to the cabinet.

I want to know if the Minister is against young families? If you have five to seven teenagers there is no possible way you could get them and take a vacation in British Columbia with one of these small cars. Maybe you buy two and put them in tandem. Sometimes you pull one; sometimes you push one.

AN HON. MEMBER: Call a cab.

MR. PHILLIPS: That's right, maybe you have to call a cab to follow you along. You put the groceries in the car and then you call a cab to carry your family.

MR. CHABOT: We'll use the Premier's Cadillac.

MR. PHILLIPS: The Minister mentioned specifically a particular automobile. It wasn't even the make of automobile that's going to build the Premier's factory here in British Columbia; it wasn't

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even a Toyota. It wasn't even the type of automobile the Premier drives for his family car, a Volvo. What was it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. I would point out to the Hon. Member that this matter has been canvassed at some length already. I would ask him to keep his remarks brief.

MR. PHILLIPS: He suggests a Datsun, which, he said, "federal officials had told him meets the pollution control requirements without losing horsepower." I want to know specifically from the Minister if he is against Volkswagens and Volkswagen dealers in British Columbia whose families rely on the livelihood of selling Volkswagens. Money tied up in premises and in parts and in service departments. Does he want them to go out of business?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR. PHILLIPS: Is he against the Renault dealers? This is a very serious subject, Mr. Chairman. What would the Renault dealers in your area say if the Minister of Highways says there can be no Renaults driving on the highways. Is he against Cortina dealers? What about Colts? What about Pintos, Vegas, Austins? Small Mercedes? This bothers me because I think it is a deliberate, calculated attack against many of the automobile dealers in this province. A deliberate, calculated attack. It's an irresponsible statement, or is it? I don't know.

Interjection.

MR. PHILLIPS: Edsels? (Laughter.)

Is this another case of the government saying, "Don't live in a rented house; don't buy waterfront property," and then going off and doing exactly the opposite? What does the Minister of Highways do, Mr. Chairman? He says "Drive a Toyota" and then goes and buys a brand new 1974 Chev, complete with radio and everything else. I would expect that the Minister, having made this statement that people should buy the low horsepower, compact automobiles, would have immediately gone out and bought himself a Datsun. But as late as last night I saw him still driving a 1974 Chev — I won't say they are gas guzzlers, but one of those great big cars.

Oh, I know the government runs around the country making these off-hand, flippant and irresponsible statements. But when somebody asks them to explain them, they want you to shut up, don't say anything, glad when you sit down. I want the Minister to tell me that he is going out tomorrow morning....

Interjection.

MR. PHILLIPS: No, he doesn't have to trade it in; he can give it to one of his other cabinet colleagues. The other cabinet colleagues didn't say "Drive Datsuns" but he did, and he must be an example. We must have government by example. Then if he drives one himself, he can go out and say what a good car it is. But I bet the Minister hasn't even driven in a Datsun.

Interjection.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, they could take out the rear seat. (Laughter.)

MR. D.A. ANDERSON: Yesterday I asked a few questions of the Minister but he stated that he had answered. "I think I've answered all the questions that you asked me." Unfortunately he didn't and I'd like to repeat some of them this evening, perhaps in a different way so we're not being repetitious, Mr. Chairman. Nevertheless, I'd like to repeat one or two.

The first question is, of course, the cost of the department, the cost of the Minister's office. It's the very first thing. I mean, many Members of the opposition have been accused of straying from the estimates. I want to know about the first eight or nine lines of the estimates of the Department of Highways, vote 98.

Where we had two years ago \$8,000, it went up last year to \$64,592, and went from there to \$110,176. It's up from \$8,000 to \$110,176 in a couple of years — within the span of two of these estimate books.

I added up last time, Mr. Chairman, a few figures. I gave the indication of the Minister's office and, of course, the office of the Minister of Transportation and Communications because previously we didn't have the Minister of Transport and Communications, and many functions of that new department were handled by the Department of Highways.

So when you start adding up the total amount of money spent on the Ministerial offices, of Highways and Transport and Communications, two years ago, you find that the total, Mr. Chairman, was \$8,000 — total, \$8,000! You add up the total now and you find \$210,892 — up from under \$10,000 to over \$210,000, which is perhaps a twenty-five-fold increase.

I asked the Minister why we have had this enormous jump in the amount of money going to the actual administration of the office: the Minister, his salary, his aides, his assistants, his secretary — things like that. I didn't get a reply then and no doubt he overlooked it when he said yesterday that he thought he'd answered all the questions.

So I'd like him to write down a note or two on that, and I'm glad he's indicated he will because there are one or two other questions he failed to answer.

I'll mention them all at once or one by one, depending on the Minister's wishes. He would like one or two more. Fine.

I would like to know, Mr. Chairman, why there has been this tremendous increase, which is really a non-productive expenditure in terms of the fact that the Minister's office itself doesn't increase the highways in the province or the bridges in the province by one inch of blacktop or one inch of steel on the bridges. It just does not increase the physical assets of the province under the Department of Highways, and it is simply expenditure.

I've stated frequently that the government departments are going to have to be looked at very carefully for fat, extra administrative costs which are not shown up later on in increased services or increase goods. This is a pretty flagrant example.

It went up last year to this year from \$64,592 to \$110,176, but the previous year was only \$8,000. So in two years, within the span of two of these books, it goes from \$8,000 to \$110,176. It's just an enormous increase.

You add in the Minister of Transport and Communications and you get about a twenty-five-fold increase from \$8,000 up to \$210,892. There's only one other figure I'll throw in there. Last year the total for the two departments, Highways and Transport and Communications was \$74,092; this year it was \$210,892 — a threefold increase in one year, a twenty-five-fold increase in two years. We're really hitting the exponential graph, Mr. Minister — which you know all about — whereby costs start going out of sight, right up to the roof. I'd like to know why, because this does not increase highways in B.C. by one square inch of pavement; it doesn't increase one little bridge in any part of the province. So that's the first question: why this enormous increase?

The second question is: why the enormous increase, in relative terms, in the staff of the Minister's office? We had an increase in staff in the department last year, overall, of less than 3 per cent, according to my calculations, We have an increase this year of 0.2 per cent — an increase indeed of only one person — other than the increase in the Minister's office, where the increase was not 0.2 per cent, but 50 per cent. That's 50 per cent, while in all the rest of the department, which totaled 509 people, there was an increase of only 0.2 per cent.

Now these figures are pretty startling and they indicate pretty clearly that there is an enormous growth in the non-productive end of the Highways department, which, I think, is the Minister's office. Now I will agree that he needs a certain increase, but he's certainly made no effort to justify this and answer those questions which I gave him at that time. Mr. Chairman, that's one question I'd like him to consider at this time.

The next one is his replies which were thoroughly unsatisfactory with respect to safety devices. Now this is not driver training, Mr. Chairman; this is an actual device, like a stop light. I think stop lights and other devices similar to that are under this Minister rather than Transport and Communications, but I, of course, defer to your judgment.

The device I mentioned was, of course, the Delta Warning System. To refresh your memory, it's the thing that flashes when the car going by is in excess of the set figure, namely the speed limit. It is a device which is an automatic monitor of traffic numbers. Furthermore, it has another application. I understand that the same device can indicate whether or not cars are following too close together, whether the spacing between the cars is too jammed up relative to the speed at which they're travelling. It's got tremendous potential for being the automatic policeman — a flashing light, eight times per second, subliminal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! Both of these points were made yesterday. If the Member is intending to repeat....

MR. D.A. ANDERSON: That's right, they were made yesterday, but, Mr. Chairman, yesterday....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please! If the Member is intending to repeat the same question, I would ask him to do that quickly.

MR. D.A. ANDERSON: Not at all, not at all. I'm going to read new information into the record, because last night I glossed over this. I thought that such an excellent device would intrigue the Minister. When I read out that absurd letter of July 18, 1973, from a member of his department, which I thought contained many flaws, and which I described to him, I thought I wouldn't have to go any further. But in actual fact he didn't seem to understand precisely the point I was getting across. I'm going to have to add new information this afternoon, Mr. Chairman.

It was said that the opportunity of evaluation had not indicated that these people slowed down for more than 50 feet. Well, I phoned Prince George and I'm told that that's not so, because there's a sharp angle bend down the road and, indeed, they were slowing down for a great deal more than that. I would indicate that from the Minister's reply he simply didn't understand why the RCMP people concerned, Corporal Sandy Fraser, Corporal Ed Nicholson and Inspector J. Fream of the RCMP traffic control in Ottawa, apparently all think that does have beneficial effects upon the activities of motorists who are speeding.

It was indicated in the letter that the RCMP had not had an opportunity to look at it, and yet, here's item 5: "The use of this device should also be

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approved by the British Columbia headquarters of RCMP as they would be quite concerned with certain aspects of this operation." There are three members of the RCMP, two of whom have practical experience with this device and one of whom was quoted by me yesterday... I won't repeat it, but I quoted him to the effect that it was an excellent device and he, himself, had been skeptical at first, just as the Minister's department had been skeptical at first.

So I'd like to know why the replies of the Minister were so inadequate.

The new information, Mr. Chairman: as I mentioned yesterday I glossed over the fact that the city engineer in the area, a man by the name of E.D. Bridgeman, P. Eng, assistant city engineer, was in favour of it. He's responsible for roads, things of that nature, and he talked about the device, and he talks about it showing favourable result.

He has no doubt that the device will be used elsewhere in the city, wherever its unique features are warranted. He goes on to say, "After the head" — that's the visual unit — "was installed, the percentage of violations dropped to 18.5 per cent. Using the same speed setting of 37 miles per hour, this would represent virtually a 50 per cent reduction in people exceeding the pre-set speed."

Well Corrigan, and I mentioned this yesterday, said the actual figure was 44 per cent, but the engineer thinks it's virtually 50, and he's just about right.

Now he sent a letter on November 21, 1973, to a Miss Andrea Cameron of the Readers' Digest Association, who was interested in information on this. He thinks that it's never been really tried before. This again was a statement which I'd like to dispute with the Minister because the Minister indicated that this was a fairly routine and regular thing and that it's been tried before — that they're trying something which is virtually the same.

MR. CURTIS: Mr. Chairman, I draw your attention to the clock.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Speaker, the committee reports progress, and asks leave to sit again.

Leave granted.

MR. CHABOT: The Member for Atlin (Mr. Calder) has been absent for some considerable time. I was wondering if by any chance he might be ill, and if he is, we would like to know where to send flowers.

MR. SPEAKER: I don't think that's a point of order. It may be a point of curiosity, but certainly not of order.

Interjection.

MR. CHABOT: Well, should we send him flowers? — a card or something?

AN HON. MEMBER: He's in very good health.

Hon. Mrs. Dailly moves adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

The House adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

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