

## THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

8:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 2, 1974

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: Before we proceed, I should like to direct the attention of the honourable members to my gallery, where we have 40 members of the Springfield constituency. They are the guests of the Honourable Minister of Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Affairs. On behalf of all the honourable members, I welcome you here today.

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MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Swan River.

MR. BILTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You recall at 5:30, Mr. Speaker, I was talking about the Canada Pension Plan. I'm not going to labour that point, but I feel quite concerned about it as an individual, that \$630 million has been borrowed by this province, and I don't think the people have been adequately told that this sort of thing is going on.

During my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I heard across the way that - what's a million? Well Mr. Speaker, I may be of the old school, I don't know, but somehow or other if we borrow a million we've got to pay it back. And as Manitobans I feel they are willing to pay it back, but they should know why it's being borrowed. What have we come to in this province, Mr. Speaker, when there are ways and means of raising millions of dollars between governments, between governments, Mr. Speaker, and the people are not informed of what's going on. I know we get the financial reports and the data and the figures are there, but the man on the street, in language that he can understand does not know. And surely, Mr. Speaker, when I hear remarks from across the way that, "what's a million?"; or maybe the day will come when all these things can be torn up and we start all over again. But I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that if we ever get down to that level we've got a depression of dimensions, that only blood will be running down the gutters . . .

A MEMBER: Hear, hear.

MR. BILTON: . . . because people will not stand for it.

I would remind this government, and I would remind those that said the things that they said during the moments I was talking about the Canada Pension Plan, that one of the greatest statesmen that was ever produced in Canada used the same terms - and I'm talking about C.D. Howe. He said: "What's a million?"

SOME MEMBERS: Hear hear. Hear hear.

MR. BILTON: "I'll build them a golden piano if they want it." Are you going to tell us that too?

A MEMBER: Yes, they will.

MR. BILTON: Out of \$834 million I think you've almost got to that stage; what can we expect in 1975?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. BILTON: Mr. Speaker, I would remind you that it was that great man's downfall, and it'll be the downfall of this government. I have no animosity toward the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker. We came into this House together in 1962, and I have some respect for him, as I am sure he has for me. And if I can reiterate as to what the Honourable Member for Fort Garry had to say this afternoon, that anything I've got to say, Mr. Speaker, I'm saying it as I feel it is my duty as a member of Her Majesty's loyal opposition. No other way. Nothing personal whatsoever.

When the Minister was speaking to us the other night in flowing terms as to the accomplishments of his government, and I would agree with the Honourable Member for St. Boniface that everything this government has done, Mr. Speaker, is not bad. Many of the things have been good. And in some instances I will give them credit for treading where angels would fear to tread; however, they have done it, and the people have benefited by it. But there comes a time, Mr. Speaker, when you've got to start looking at the figures. The Minister in all his glowing terms the other night didn't say a word about the capital debt, or what he intended to do about the capital debt. As I said a moment ago . . .

A MEMBER: No debts . . .

MR. BILTON: . . . that they'll say in the books - and I think it would have been to the Minister's credit to have spared a paragraph or two as to the capital debt of this province, and

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(MR. BILTON cont'd) . . . what he intended to do. All he said he was going to do was: \$10 million were provided to service the capital debt. Is that all you can offer out of \$834 million? What legacy are you going to leave for future generations (Applause) if you keep on going the way you're going? He took pride in telling us, Mr. Speaker, that there was a surplus, he anticipated a surplus of \$32 million. How can he be talking about surpluses when we have a capital debt in possibly hundreds of millions of dollars? Not only provincial debt, but capital debt as well.

It used to be, Mr. Speaker, that the province used to carry its general debt and pay its general debt.

A MEMBER: Right.

MR. BILTON: This government, by one means or another have got that capital debt over on to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. BILTON: . . . Hydro, the telephones, MDC, or what have you. That's where the debt is. But I would remind you, Mr. Minister, it's got to be paid regardless of where you put it, regardless of where you put it. And I would ask the Minister when he talks about \$32 million surplus would he seriously consider if that comes about, and we would all hope it will come about, Mr. Speaker, one way or the other, that they would place some of that money conscientiously against that debt. Mr. Speaker, he talks about 32 million dollars as a surplus opening. Why on earth, why on earth under the circumstances with conditions as they are today, that he wouldn't be giving a little relief somewhere in taxes as minutely as it may be. What an encouragement it would be to this province and I say to him it's nonsense talking about an anticipated \$32 million surplus, and I don't care from whatever source he gets it, he should be talking about reducing taxes. What right have they got to collect money and hand it out the way they're handing it out. Many things are agreed to and approved by Cabinet that this Legislative Assembly has nothing at all to do with. Millions of dollars are being spent in that manner, some good and some I question.

Mr. Speaker, I've said it before, and I say it again, the people of Manitoba are being overtaxed, and the First Minister knows it. In times like these, Mr. Minister, surely you could have found a way when those estimates were placed before you, because you're the man that had the last say on those estimates, surely you could have cut a million here and a million there and put it back in the hands of the people that earned it in the first place. Because after all Mr. Minister, Mr. First Minister, you hold the power in your hands, you hold the power in your hands, you hold the power in your hands that the people must obey the law, and you head up that government that makes the law and says, we'll take every damn last penny we can out of you. Because that's what you're doing, that's what you're doing. The Minister of Finance gleefully said the other day, we're going to increase the moneys we pay to the local businessmen that collect sales tax on our behalf.

A MEMBER: No.

MR. BILTON: You're going to reduce it? Yes, just a little bit. Mr. Minister, what are you doing? They are your collectors, your tax collectors, every businessman in Manitoba, and you're going to give him a little bit more. Will you for heaven's sake give them their postage stamps that mail the cheques in to you. Do you realize the bookkeeping that the small businessman has to do to meet your requests? And if he's five days late you penalize him. -- (Interjection) -- Yes, your tax collectors. You old Scrooge you. Jolly good excuse. I know, Mr. Speaker, because I've been through it. Fortunately I'm out of your clutches a few months past but I have sympathy with those boys that are collecting for you every day. They are the people that take the abuse from the man that buys it over the counter. That damn tax. As far as I'm concerned they ought to know your name, Mr. Scrooge. Mr. Scrooge.

Mr. Minister, when are you going to give the people of Manitoba a breather? You could have done it this year. You could have done it this year, because you knew, you knew the increases, or had an idea that things were going to be going up and up and up. But what did you do about it? The Ministers kept coming in with their estimates and you kept saying, can you build it up a little bit more? Our revenues are going to be this; we're going to have a \$32 million surplus; we're going to be able to do that - Oh, shame on you. You knew, Mr. Minister, that there were going to be increases in power, in heat, in gasoline, all of which have surfaced in recent days. But you didn't prepare for it; you're telling us now that we

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(MR. BILTON cont'd) . . . might consider some reduction in gasoline tax .

He boasts, he boasts, Mr. Minister, of \$834 million in this province this year. You should be ashamed of yourself to be taking that kind of money from the people on top, on top of the \$64 million I talked about going into the Canada Pension Plan. That's drawn off the economy of this province more than people realize. It doesn't provide the jobs; it doesn't do its work. It goes right back . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. Now I wonder if the two gentlemen that are having a private conversation would cease and desist and the honourable member who has the floor would address himself to the Chair.

MR. BILTON: Mr. Speaker, I should know better, I'm old enough that's for sure. But at the same time he says, it's going back in again. It's going back in because the government has its hands on it. They'll say where it goes and how it's going to be spent. Why shouldn't the people that earned it in the first place spend it as they wish to spend it and make the jobs, and keep the economy viable, instead of the handouts that we're given.

Mr. Speaker, what are we faced with? Birch River gets \$20,000 for their curling rink from the, you know, -- (Interjection) -- No, no, the lotteries. Benito, their skating rink and curling rink is falling apart, it's been condemned. They came in and asked for the same thing. They can't have it because \$20,000 grant was put into the area. And they've got one municipality working against the other municipality; they can't beat a track here fast enough, Mr. Speaker, to get a grant. And the good people in Benito they deserve some assistance. -- (Interjection) -- But to replace what they've got they need \$300,000, and those people, Mr. Speaker, in all sincerity they came in here, and I was with them, and all we could raise in the piling up of various grants was \$68,000. But, Mr. Speaker, \$68,000 the people could have in that community to take care of that situation. What I'm trying to say to you, Mr. Speaker, is, you've got dog eat dog on these government grants now, and you people started it all. You people started it all and you've got to live with it. -- (Interjection) -- Sit down, I'll answer your question later.

Mr. Speaker, this government, this government in my humble opinion do not have a mandate, and they have no license in my humble opinion, Mr. Speaker, or the right to go on hog wild in extracting money from our people, often spent in questionable projects; some of it wasteful spending. You heard the First Minister last night, Mr. Speaker, and I retorted -- and I regret it very much -- I referred to him as the bleeding heart. He went on to tell us last night, Mr. Speaker, that the Conservative party never did anything, we never cared about anyone when we were in government. And you know I sat in this House when the First Minister sat over here as a backbencher. He knows better than that. Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to thresh old straw, but he made a great deal, he made a great deal last night of many things that they've done since coming into office. What have they done, Mr. Speaker, on major projects in this province but build onto what we laid out for them? I remind the First Minister 1966, who started Kettle Rapids? This government did. -- (Interjection) -- That's not the point. You're going to say the same thing about Grand Rapids. We built that did we not? -- (Interjection) -- Fine. Where did I hear that echo? Hospital construction. Mr. Minister, we built hospitals, and we put hospitals on the planning board when -- they were already on the planning board when we went out in 1969; and you know I give you credit you carried through with those plans and -- (Interjection) -- I'm not going to take that away from you because after all. . .

A MEMBER: They didn't cancel them.

MR. BILTON: . . . as a government for four years why wouldn't you do it. It was the most humane thing to do. Had you not of done it, we would have done it anyway, so what are you crowing about.

Senior Citizens Home Program. You took full credit the other evening, Mr. First Minister, for that program, and I would remind you too that when you came into office there was something like 63 of them in operation, put on by this government. We went into the plan cautiously, and I would remind you also you made a great deal last night, no medicare, no medicare programs, Mr. Speaker -- premiums I should say. He didn't give us credit for thinking it out and going into the plan reluctantly in the beginning, but we went into the plan and we were honest enough to put the bills on the people's table; they wanted it and they got it. It was \$40 million then, Mr. Speaker, what is it now? Two hundred and twelve million dollars, and

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(MR. BILTON cont'd) . . . where is it going to go from here?

Roads - and I'm not bragging for the Conservative Party. These are the things they did, Mr. Speaker. Everybody knows the road condition in this province when we took over from the Campbell government, everybody knows what Roblin did, and just this one instance, from Bowsman to Flin Flon we blacktopped it, and the Member for Flin Flon said, you'll never do it, I'll still be going in with snowshoes. We did it, Mr. Speaker, and it's being used today, so you didn't do everything in this province; don't you get any ideas.

Added to this, Mr. Speaker, we took over 4,500 miles provincial roads from the municipalities - they are still doing it. But we didn't do anything. You're anything but fair, Mr. Minister. You just got carried away. Who built Birds Hill Park? We did, and don't forget our flood prevention program; it may be a Godsend this spring, Mr. Speaker. But the Minister never talks of those things. We did our duty when we were in office in my humble opinion, and for Heaven's sake give us credit for having done so. And you know in no time at all we will be back in the saddle and we'll carry on where you left off. Some of the things we'll throw out, we've just got to because we can't live with them.

The Minister has \$2 million, Mr. Speaker, in the estimates for ambulance service. I'd like to know something about this, because I've inquired of the ambulance people and they know nothing about it. This is \$2 million just dropped in for ambulance service which we're expected to approve, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister of Finance didn't take us into his confidence and tell us what it was all about. But more importantly, he didn't tell the people that are concerned throughout the province.

A MEMBER: Well he never tells us anything, Jim, how do you expect them to know.

MR. BILTON: Mr. Speaker, I've had a great deal to do with this ambulance business over the years, and with a great deal of effort we prevailed upon a local man to go into the ambulance business, and the municipalities, Mr. Speaker, and the villages in the Swan River Valley are presently contributing \$4,000 a year in order to have a first class ambulance available at all times. Mr. Speaker, they didn't ask for it; they didn't ask for any assistance, and that ambulance service, Mr. Speaker, 310 miles from Winnipeg, is on 24 hour service. And, Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity of publicly paying tribute to not only that man but other men throughout rural Manitoba who have done a yeoman's task. Mr. Speaker, the patients in Swan River that have to be driven into Winnipeg, they have to pay \$160.00 a trip; the Welfare Department know about it, and this includes nurse service, and if two patients are brought in to Winnipeg it's \$100.00 per patient - \$15.00 is charged as a local basic charge, Mr. Speaker. The need is obvious, Mr. Speaker, very obvious, because a hundred emergency trips have been made in Winnipeg during the last year and five to six hundred local trips have been made.

But the Minister doesn't tell these people what his intentions are with regard to that \$2 million. Is it the government's intention to wipe that man out? Well I'm going to tell the Minister now that his contract comes up with the municipalities and I have no fear but what they'll renew it. But in the meantime this man is going to improve his equipment with \$3,000 to put in intercom - telephone service as he's travelling along. Is it the intention of the Minister to wipe out that local endeavour that hasn't asked for anything, has no intentions of asking for anything, but they're entitled to some of that \$2 million one way or the other, but the Minister hasn't done this House or the ambulance service people - I don't know what he's done in Winnipeg - but the ambulance service people in rural Manitoba doesn't know what his intentions are, nor has he dropped in and talked to them about it. Why? Is this the way this government's going to continue to operate even on a small matter like that even though it's \$2 million? -- (Interjection) -- Where? I've got to pay attention to the Speaker, Mr. Premier, as much as I admire you.

I should say something to the Minister of Labour - where is he? There used to be a day, Mr. Speaker, when he would speak in grudgingly terms to me in some of his tirades when I occupied your seat. I chose to ignore it, and I intend to ignore it. But now he's got on another vein, and he told me the other day, he says, "Get back into the Northwest Mounted Police where you belong." Well you know, Mr. Speaker, I am in northwest Manitoba but for his information the Northwest Mounted Police were inaugurated by Sir John Macdonald in 1874 -- (Interjection) -- Quiet. And in 1910 it was the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, and in 1920 it was the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and by God nothing you do or anybody else

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(MR. BILTON cont'd) . . . does must change that title one way or the other. -- (Interjection)  
 -- I was on a horse before you were born if that will help you, that was my long suit.

But in all sincerity I would ask the Minister - and one of the chief reasons of getting up and speaking in this debate was on this two million dollar item for ambulance operators in Manitoba - and I would ask the Minister without delay to take those people into his confidence and tell them what he intends to do about it, or how he intends to spend that money, or whether he wants their cooperation, or what is going on in the back of his mind. Because as I understand, the ambulance operators in Manitoba have had no discussions with the Minister or any official of his department in this regard. Now, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member has five minutes.

MR. BILTON: I want to again pay tribute to the Honourable Member for Fort Garry, and on both sides of the House, Mr. Speaker, we've had differences of opinion, and as you well know bitterness has erupted, as it will erupt amongst men of different political opinions, but we don't appreciate it on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, any more than the honourable members on that side of the House appreciate it. But nevertheless these conflicts of opinion will develop and I would appeal to all members, maybe those of us that have been in the House a few years longer than others have not done our duty in relaying to the backbenchers what it's all about.

But in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, I must say that I support my leader after no doubt a great deal of time and effort and study brought before this House in his opinion something that he felt should be opened up and cleaned up. Accusations were made, documentation was placed there, and he spent three hours in his own way to place this matter before the House. Surely, Mr. Speaker, at least the government of the day have an obligation, nay, Mr. Speaker, I think they have a trust, and a very very serious trust, to bring on a judicial inquiry into this whole mess, if it is a mess, let them prove it to be otherwise, but I believe they owe it to the people of Manitoba to lay on the table the details to do with the northern co-ops and the Wabowden activities. I say this with all sincerity, Mr. Speaker, and I think the sooner this is done the better it's going to be for us all, and the better it's going to be for this Legislative Assembly, and the better it's going to be for the people of Manitoba who, I say again, Mr. Speaker, have a right that the whole matter be properly investigated by an independent authority and the RCMP brought in if necessary to satisfy everybody, because I believe they have the confidence of the people and I'm sure they've got the confidence of this government.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. MCKENZIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry that the Minister of Labour can't have his will tonight and that the question can be voted on because until I get more information from him and the other members of the Treasury Bench regarding this bill and other matters that are before this House, I doubt very much if you'll find the day that we will stand up and give you that right on the question. Because, Mr. Speaker, the rights of the Opposition of this Legislature have been flouted by this government, flouted day after day after day. I spoke here Friday, and unfortunately the First Minister has left the Chamber because I said I would never rise to my feet again until the First Minister was in his seat - unfortunately he's gone. -- (Interjection) -- He was here I know and that's the reason that I decided I was going to speak tonight - unfortunately he has left the Chamber - because I don't see how a Premier can head this kind of a government that's not going to give the Opposition in this Chamber, nor the people, the answers to some of the questions they're asking.

And, Mr. Speaker, let's look at this bill that's before us, Bill No. 34 where this government wants money. And certainly all governments want money, and the Opposition have never denied the government's right for the money, but you've got to give us some answers, and you got to have an understanding that we are in Opposition, and that we're credible, and that we represent people; and that you're not all the saints that you say you were and the bloom is off the rose now, and you're not the government -- we give you four years to clean up your place and let's see what you can do.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen four years of this type of government, and these type of dictators, and these people that said all these good programs, stay option, looking after the poor; we're going to do for the little guy. My gosh, Mr. Speaker - and they're asking for more money for to do what? Do nothing, do nothing for the people in my constituency; do nothing for the people in the City of Winnipeg. What are you doing for the people in the

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(MR. McKENZIE cont'd) . . . City of Winnipeg in your government? Show me some of your programs? -- (Interjection) -- I come from a rural seat, and I'm not going to bleed all over this floor tonight, but I know you've done nothing in my constituency, and can I imagine what they've done for the people of the city. What have you done for education in the city? How many problems have they got in education? What have you done for transportation in this city? What have you done for pollution? Clean Environment Commission. What have you done for health? Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Labour wants us to vote tonight and asks for us to call the question - he called the question. Why don't you stand up and tell us some of the things, and give us some of the answers. Can you justify in this bill that's before us - \$196,940,950 - granted for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1975 - for what? He puts his hands up - pay the civil servants.

Let's move on. Limitation on expenditures for items. -- (Interjection) -- I'm not denying it. When I get finished speaking I'll say that maybe you're . . . And I want you to give me some answers to this; the transfer of expenditures from one department back to another; the transfer to several departments for certain funds, and that's where the quarrel is in this debate over the co-ops and the Wabowden thing, where you've been transferring money all over the place. I go through those Estimates as a private citizen and people in my constituency - I have some accountants out there - are trying to find out where you guys are hiding all the money. And, Mr. Speaker, even the auditor, the Provincial Auditor of the people and the Legislature, he doesn't know where the money's going. And you think, Mr. Speaker, that we shouldn't be up tight about this government at the way they're bungling with the taxpayers' dollars, and that we refuse to pass this Bill 34. Mr. Speaker, I say we are credible in Opposition, the Liberals and Conservatives of this province. And we're honest with ourselves, but how can we be honest with that government when they're not going to give us no answers; they're not going to talk about the co-op thing; they're not going to talk about the Wabowden thing; they're not going to talk about all the things they've bungled, the Development Corporation and all these things, and I'll get to that later on in my speech and tell them where they're going, Mr. Speaker, and that will come later.

But, Mr. Speaker, expenditures authorized in anticipation of matching recoveries, and that's the one that brings me to my feet - in matching recoveries. And, Mr. Speaker, I wish the First Minister was in his Chair tonight because in the last election - I'll never repeat the allegations and the kind of a citizen that he told my people that I was. Mr. Speaker, I would never repeat that to my worst friend what the things the First Minister of this province called me. I would never tell it to my worst friend what he called me in the last election. But nevertheless, and I doubt very much, Mr. Speaker, if he'll ever sit in his Chair and let me challenge him on those remarks because I know he must have suspected I was going to speak tonight so he chickened out the side door. -- (Interjection) -- Well we'll have the day of that debate at a later date.

But, Mr. Speaker, I just ask - I come from a constituency that shares the border of Saskatchewan, our friends in Saskatchewan. He went down to Ottawa, and he's been in Calgary with all these tri-level conferences, and I asked on Friday what are you going to set your price for gas? What are you going to do for heating oil? You've co-oped up the Hydro thing now so we got no levers to go there. Why can't you stand up and like the Premier of Saskatchewan said and gas is going to be that kind of price, heating oil is going to be that price. Why doesn't the Minister of Finance and the Premier give us some answers. Do we have to wait till the first of May. You know what, seeding is coming on. Are we all going to have to go over to Saskatchewan and buy our gas and oil in Saskatchewan, because it's going to be eight or ten cents cheaper there? And likely when we all start doing that the Premier of Saskatchewan's going to set up a sort of a barrier and we're going to have to pay that eight cents. But this government, Mr. Speaker, have never had the time to sit down and think that one out. But I tell the First Minister, and I tell the Minister of Finance, the Province of Saskatchewan has thought it out, the Province of Alberta has thought it out, the Province of British Columbia has thought it out, and the Province of Ontario has thought it out, and all the Maritime provinces.

But, Mr. Speaker, tonight -- (Interjection) -- what has this government done? What has this First Minister said, or what has he told the people of this province? He's been at many conferences. Are we going to pass these kind of expenditures when they can't tell the Province

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(MR. McKENZIE cont'd) . . . of Manitoba today what you're going to have to pay for your gas 30 days from now. No way. No way are we going to have to tell the people that's on a fixed income that your heating oil is going to go up five cents a gallon, and they can't justify or put it on the table what's going to happen. What are you scared about? The Premier of Saskatchewan puts his cards on the table. He happens to belong to the same party as the members opposite. He's laid it on the line. But this government, Mr. Speaker, they haven't got the people to handle that kind of a problem.

The First Minister went into Trudeau's office, and of course when he got in there Lewis and Trudeau were in bed - that was the first problem; then he was handed a peppered steak and then choked up on the steak and he forgot they were talking about oil. Well what else happened? I just asked the Finance Minister all the other provinces of this Canada in this debate about the energy have come out not that bad. But I suspect like the Member for Riel said today, the bill is going to cost us, it's a \$50 million bill, not the \$12 million that the First Minister suggested, it's going to be a 50, and you know with the 10 or 11 percent inflation, plus the 20 percent on Hydro, plus the 10 percent - you know what it's going to climb next year to 75 or 80. 75, and you mean to tell me, Mr. Speaker, that this governments wants us to pass this Bill No. 34 when they haven't got no answers for us, nor can they stand up and tell us what's going to happen to the people in my constituency or to the people in this metropolitan area of Winnipeg. Mr. Speaker, no wonder the Minister of Health or Tourism and Recreation took his NDP Executive out of the gallery in haste tonight. Because if those people, those people that came from that Minister heard what kind of a government or seen what kind of a government, and I know why he . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please.

MR. McKENZIE: . . . I know, Mr. Speaker, why he got them out of the building at the earliest possible date. Because they couldn't under-- I'm sure they wouldn't understand, but that's the way that they're blindfolding the people of this province just like the Minister of Tourism and Recreation done tonight. Once you talk about gut issues and talk about real things for real people, for little people, for people that work for a living, the Minister of Tourism and Recreation he packed his crowd from Lac du Bonnet, he says let's get out of here, boy we can't stand the heat.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I know we're not going to - we've questioned, we're not going to get the gas prices for the people. We're going to get it the 1st or the 15th of May. What's it going to cost the farmers of this province who use thousands of gallons of gas, thousands of gallons of diesel fuel? They haven't got a clue, so they don't know what this government's going to do. What about the people that have to have some heat, or use diesel fuel, the transportation people? Mr. Speaker, I ask the First Minister of this province what reflection is this going to have on the truckers who are now going to have to pay more money for diesel fuel? Are the Federal Government in fact going to take off some of the taxation, the federal taxes on diesel fuel? And I asked the government, what's some of the answers? They're the government; they have the access into those offices in the Federal Government. What is going on? What's it going to cost the truckers of this province that are transporting our goods from here to where I live out in the Roblin constituency? Mr. Speaker, it falls on deaf ears. The Minister of Labour sits there looking like a bump on a log. He doesn't even know what I'm talking about.

MR. PAULLEY: But you don't either so that makes two of us.

MR. McKENZIE: Well I think I know and, Mr. Speaker, while he may have his bad days I know that it's going to cost the people in my constituency a lot more to transport their goods from the City of Winnipeg to Roblin constituency than it did six months ago because they're going to have to pay for the fuel, and that's an increase. And you know what, that's going to put more cost on the goods and services that go across the counter in the stores and in the services to the people, and the Minister of Labour doesn't even know what I'm talking about. What about the transportation of people that's riding on buses, that's riding on trains, that's riding on airplanes? They got no answers, Mr. Speaker. They don't know; they've never told us what's going to happen to the people. Well, Mr. Speaker . . .

A MEMBER: Haven't you heard we want them decreased.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. McKENZIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, usually the Minister of Labour if he exhausts all

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(MR. McKENZIE cont'd) . . . that oxygen from his lungs once then he goes to sleep, so I want to let him get all that oxygen out of his lungs and I know he'll quietly bow out and let me finish my speech.

But, Mr. Speaker, the honeymoon is over. Mr. Speaker, the honeymoon is over for the NDP, and I'm sure the people of this province, and we in opposition, have sat back and let you have four years of government to see what you could do, and see what kind of way you could manage the affairs of the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, but four years of it and now we've found many many many things are wanting.

We have the Women's Institute of this province screaming blue murder at the Minister of Agriculture. Now he's blaming the Minister of Finance - at least this is what the home economists tell me, that the Minister of Finance was the guy that cooked that up in the Cabinet. You can't blame the Minister of Agriculture because the Minister of Finance is the guy that was responsible for it, and it's come out now at three or four meetings in the area because it was a sort of an executive council meeting in Cabinet and the Minister of Finance had to have his say so he said, let's dump those rural because the Minister of Agriculture was supposed to deliver a whole bunch of seeds in rural Manitoba. He couldn't deliver them so let's get with it to these people so we'll dump the home economists and get rid of Mrs. Parker. So that one's gone down the . . . , Mr. Speaker.

A MEMBER: He just delivered a bunch of hayseed, that's all.

MR. McKENZIE: Now the Mineral Tax, you know, a simple little thing, and this is what the Minister of Labour doesn't understand, these little things. It's a small living, only ten cents an acre, but it hurt a lot of people. And we come here to plead with you to pull it back and we want you to repeal it, and the Minister of Finance says he's going to repeal it, but these are mistakes that this government has made, and simple, these are little mistakes.

I ask you what you've done for education in Roblin Constituency? Duck Mountain? I'll ask the Minister of Labour, he sits around the Cabinet table, he must know. I just ask him, have you ever been out to see what the problems that they have in Duck Mountain School Division in this province?

A MEMBER: That's a problem they had under your jurisdiction.

MR. McKENZIE: No way, Mr. Speaker. They didn't have 11 percent inflation to fight when we were government.

A MEMBER: No, they didn't.

MR. McKENZIE: No they sure didn't. And isn't that a big burden? Can you visualize that the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, today have to face an annual, that's this year, 10 to 11 percent increase on the cost of living all due to one factor, inflation. And the Premier stands up and the Minister of Finance stands up and said, it's not a problem. It's not a problem? No, because they're bulging with money. Sales tax, gasoline tax, tobacco tax, all these taxes. It used to be, and when they took over in 1968 . . . say \$1.00, they're five to six now. But, Mr. Speaker, in this bill - and let's get back to the bill - I wonder, Mr. Speaker, in some of the allegations and in some of the statements and, Mr. Speaker, I didn't have that much time but I picked up a little document when I was coming out of the caucus room and I looked at the capital supply bills and the Provincial Government's borrowings over the years, and I just look at one item, it is general purposes. In the year 1968 there was no borrowing for general purposes, Mr. Speaker.

A MEMBER: That can't be.

MR. McKENZIE: No there was not . . .

A MEMBER: Look at that again, that can't be.

MR. McKENZIE: Not one cent was borrowed by the government of 1968 for general purposes.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. McKENZIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, this government came on the scene and so in 1969 they quietly borrowed about 7 million. In '70 they got their courage up because we weren't attacking them then like we are now, so they went for 30.

A MEMBER: Thirty?

MR. McKENZIE: They went for 30 million for a slush fund for general purposes. 1971, Mr. Speaker, they went for 21.5 for general purposes. 1972 they got their courage up again, Mr. Speaker, they went for 45 million. Could you believe that? General purposes



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(MR. McKENZIE cont'd) . . . slush fund elections you know, in '72. Then comes '73, Mr. Speaker, and of course we were attacking them at that session if you read it, so they dropped down to 24. But, Mr. Speaker, in 1974, 1974, this year, they want us to pass some \$33,650,000 . . .

A MEMBER: For general purposes.

MR. McKENZIE: . . . general purposes.

A MEMBER: Pencils, papers, balloons.

MR. McKENZIE: No. Nothing on the paper, nothing that's credible, just 33 million. Well there are the figures. And, Mr. Speaker, this government wants us to stand up and pass that kind of expenditures, plus the expenditures in this bill. And, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't care if the government could run this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. McKENZIE: If in fact I could leaf those estimates over and say that here this government will spend 798,570 . . . There were governments in those days that were credible and honest to the people. But not this day and age, Mr. Speaker. That's - you see they'll come in with an interim bill, then they'll come in with another bill, and a capital bill, so basically the people of this province and the federal people use the same scene, the same financial thing. You know, I spoke on it on Friday on that same, and I'll not go back into the history of that thing. For governments today why can't you look . . . by with 798,000 -- (Interjection) -- or million rather. And why do we have to have the interim supply, and why have to have the capital supply? Can't you manage on those kind of moneys? Well the Minister of Finance shakes his head and he says he can't get by. I know the reason -- (Interjection) -- I know. No, Mr. Speaker, I can well understand the problems of this government because we've let them run this province for four years -- (Interjection) -- the honeymoon is over and their mistakes and their credibility is starting to shine. (Applause) Of course -- (Interjection) -- one of the things -- (Interjection) -- Mr. Speaker, I didn't say what kind of a light it was trying to shine with. Now let me further my remarks now because they start . . . It shines with a red light like we've seen flashing over those doors.

And, Mr. Speaker, let that be. In those days they called themselves social democrats. Was that the word when the First Minister - he says, no we're not socialists, no way. So now they'll accept socialists. You know you don't see them standing up and screaming like they did in those days when we talk about them being socialists. But, Mr. Speaker, they were socialists in those days, so they haven't changed that much. But, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting about this government. They've never avoided controversy and that's one thing that makes it a great place to stand up and debate and talk, and I may be not the best debater in this province, Mr. Speaker, but I like the thrust of debate. And so they introduced Autopac. . .

A MEMBER: You're one of the best, Wally.

MR. McKENZIE: . . . and they'll regret that; I'm sure the Attorney-General will carry that one to his grave. That no-fault features, and I'm going to put a couple on his grave the day that we bury him. That no-fault principle that he sold the people - and we still haven't got no-fault insurance in this - but read some of his speeches in those days but - it was controversial. They dumped all the insurance agents of this province; they brought in Autopac - a new NDP dream - but unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it didn't work in this province like it did in Saskatchewan. Why? Due to inflation. Ten to eleven percent and they forgot the inflationary factor and that's why they got themselves in trouble.

Let's move on, Mr. Speaker, on the hydro. Now, now, let's just - and they say inflation. Let's look at the hydro fiasco. Sure old Cass-Beggs was dragged in here to give us a smoke job, and we got all kinds of smoke and steam but we didn't get much hydro. But they very skillfully - due to political reasons couldn't buy the diversion of the Southern Indian Lake that we did -- (Interjection) --

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, for their regulation of Lake Winnipeg.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please.

MR. McKENZIE: Controversial, Mr. Speaker, it was a controversial issue, and it was a vital issue of the people of the day.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

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MR. McKENZIE: But there it was and, Mr. Speaker, now we have the Chairman of Hydro standing up in the Public Utilities Committee trying to justify the regulation of Lake Winnipeg -- (Interjection) --

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Minister of Mines state his point of order?

MR. GREEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The point of order is that the Member for Lakeside will not let the Honourable Member for Roblin continue with his speech.

MR. SPEAKER: The point is well taken.

MR. HARRY J. ENNS (Lakeside): On the same point of order, it's with consternation and complete regret that I in any way have inhibited the Member from Roblin from continuing with his speech.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. On the point of order there was no inhibition but there was certainly interruption. The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, as you well know when I speak in the House I address you all the time and I never turn around and look at the members because we're supposed to speak through you.

But, Mr. Speaker, the hydro thing, and it's all over now, the plans are designed and we're regulating Lake Winnipeg. But again, Mr. Speaker, this government forgot the fact that in 1974 they're going to have to face 10 to 11 percent inflationary factor. So here we're stuck with a \$300 million bill. It may be four, it may be 500 million, nobody knows. We're talking about a 20 percent increase in hydro and 10 percent. Let's let that go on the . . .

Let's talk about our income tax, Mr. Speaker. We are paying the highest income tax in Manitoba of any province in Canada. We are paying - remember this, Mr. Speaker - we are paying the highest income tax in this province of any jurisdiction in Manitoba -- (Interjection) -- in Canada. Now, Mr. Speaker, let that lie, but again I congratulate this government for being controversial and raising controversial issues. They took on, and I believe the . . . known baby food of those days. They were going to nationalize one baby food, I remember those days, and let that . . .

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, after Cass-Beggs leaves the scene, but after Cass-Beggs left the scene we got Eric Kierans come on the scene. And, Mr. Speaker, he left a fairly decent document, a White Paper on our desks that made some sense. But Mr. Kierans said, Mr. Speaker, that we should tax the mining companies, and I have no quarrel with that, and neither does our caucus have any quarrel, but he met with the mining companies, and this government has met with the mining companies, Mr. Speaker, and they promised the mining companies that if you're going to tax us you put the money back into the industry. But, Mr. Speaker, they didn't do that this government. -- (Interjection) -- They did not. They're not going to put that money back and help develop the mining industry in this province which will create more jobs and pay for better wages and provide better working conditions for the mining people. And, Mr. Speaker, we support all those in the Conservative Party and so does the Liberal, but this government, no, Mr. Speaker, they're going to rip off like they do from inflation. They're going to rip off from those mining companies; they're going to take millions and millions of dollars, and what are they going to do with it. They'll put it in their slush funds for election campaigns, Wabowden, and all over the bloody place, Mr. Speaker, and you know what -- (Interjection) -- I'll talk to the Member for Flin Flon some day, I know he's just come back from his big fiasco in Nova Scotia and he won Cape Breton, let's give him credit, they won all three seats. But, Mr. Speaker, -- (Interjection) -- Cape Breton Island is not Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and they haven't got a Bill No. 34 on their desks tonight like I have on mine so I must be . . . But, Mr. Speaker, can I in any way, Mr. Speaker, after you have listened to me, Mr. Speaker, for the better part of 40 minutes, can you give me any justification, Mr. Speaker, or any sentiments that in fact that I should stand up and support this bill before this government gives me some of the answers to some of the many questions. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that I'm like a lot of people in Roblin Constituency, living in this Metropolitan City of Winnipeg, living in Swan River, we don't buy it. We've given you guys four years to try you out for size and see how you could run this province, and man, I'd sure like to go to the people tomorrow with this government. Man would I ever. I would just love the First Minister to call an election tomorrow in this province and see how we'd clean your clocks. The last time, Mr. Speaker - you know the Minister of Labour, and he made a lot of speeches before

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(MR. McKENZIE cont'd) . . . we went to the polls and he said I'd never be back. Of course the First Minister believed, and he said the Member for Swan River wouldn't be back. We're going to come back to haunt you guys for a long long time, Mr. Speaker, unless they start giving us some answers for some of the many many questions that we have on our minds.

Mr. Speaker, let's move on. Mr. Speaker, I very quietly plucked a little editorial from the Winnipeg Free Press yesterday which I thought -- (Interjection) -- Mr. Speaker, you've never heard me stand up and criticize the press ever. But, Mr. Speaker - and I suggest to the members opposite to read this little item under the quotation from Richard Needham, the widely read columnist who usually wears a jester's mask in the Toronto Globe and Mail. But, Mr. Speaker, on this day he is a serious caller of economics and he agrees with Mr. Henderson, who is the Auditor-General which we're talking about with Mr. Ziprick and he said. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Needham said, "Elected governments," Mr. Needham writes, "need inflation so they can collect more money, spend more money, give away more money in hopes of buying votes, or keeping order, or both." And you know . . .

A MEMBER: He must have been out here, Wally.

MR. McKENZIE: . . . Mr. Needham and I are right down the same slot, Mr. Speaker, right on the same target. We can't get the Provincial Auditor to go out and audit any books in this province because I suspect that he's my auditor; I suspect he's the Member for Swan River's auditor; I suspect he's the Member for Wellington's auditor.

A MEMBER: Who?

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Ziprick. He's the people's auditor of this province. But, Mr. Speaker, we can't get him to go out and do some of these audits about some of these things, these allegations that have been laid on the table which the Attorney-General's away tonight trying to sweep in the corner in his office. He tried it on Friday to get it under that carpet but the carpet wasn't big enough because my friend the Clerk had to move while he was sweeping all those documents under that my leader laid on the . . .

And again, Mr. Speaker, can I not as a member for Roblin constituency again appeal to this House - well I can't appeal to the First Minister tonight, Mr. Speaker, who has left the Chamber - ask you again, can you not be credible to the people of Roblin constituency, can you not be credible to me, can you not be credible to the people of this city, and let's have a judicial inquiry or let's have the RCMP check some of these things out like my colleague says from Swan River -- (Interjection) -- Some of the allegations.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR - BILL 22

MR. SPEAKER: Order. The hour of 9:00 o'clock having arrived, we are now going to Private Members' Hour. The first item, third reading Private Members' Bill No. 22. The Honourable Member for Emerson.

MR. STEVE DEREWIANCHUK (Emerson): May I have that stand please?

MR. SPEAKER: No, I'm sorry, I picked on the wrong one. Private Bill No. 35. The Honourable Member for St. Matthews.

MR. WALLY JOHANNSON (St. Matthews): Stand please.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 23, the Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. SHAFRANSKY: Stand, please.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 31. The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek. -- (Interjection) -- Resolution No. 22. The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie. The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

RESOLUTION 22

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are just one or two points that I would like to make in connection with the resolution by the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie. I'm sure that he had many more remarks to make but unfortunately he's not in the Chamber this evening. We can support this resolution, Mr. Speaker, in view of the comments we have made in the past on the Autopac situation, shall I call it. We're in favor of some better examination of corporations such as this, especially when we have a Minister of the Crown responsible for the corporation, and we don't really have estimates for it so we would like some better method of examining the operation of this particular corporation.

We would probably like to see some type of budget presented to the House, line by line

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(MR. BLAKE cont'd) . . . budgeting of some type in order that we may have some forewarning of what the corporation is planning for the current year, because we know what has happened in the past. We faced a \$10 million loss last year, some \$2 million more than was indicated to us at the earlier stages when the preliminary statements came down, and it was rather astonishing to us to find that the estimates had been that far out and that we had lost \$10 million instead of \$8 million, not to say anything about the starting-up costs or the original losses which now put us in a deficit position of many million dollars in excess of 10 million. I think the experience to date, the auto claims are -- I don't know what would be a fair estimate, they're up 20 to 30 percent, I suppose, so there is no doubt in my mind in spite of the fact that rates increased some 20 percent last year that we are going to be faced with another substantial loss -- for a percentage, 20 percent give or take a few dollars, depends on whether you're talking to a businessman or a farmer, I suppose.

But the rates increased substantially last year and I know that the claims are accelerating at an astonishing pace, Mr. Speaker, and it seems odd to me that this should happen just in a matter of a couple of years since we got the government involved in auto insurance. We've had an auto insurance in the province for many years and it doesn't seem logical to me that the accident rate increased at such a phenomenal percentage rate since we have government auto insurance. It seems to me that there are many many answers that we have to have. Either there is loose management, loose estimating or the automobile drivers are taking advantage of the generosity of the government insurance fund, and we suspected that was the case probably last year when we knew that we were going to be faced with a provincial election in June, that maybe claims were being settled in a rather generous fashion to probably curry favor or invite friendship and do a little PR work for the fund. But the election's over, the opposition -- or the government benches are entrenched for some couple of years anyway, depending on the outcome of a few by-elections I suppose or whatever may be before the courts, but their position would seem secure and I think now would be a good time to tighten up and let's see some good responsible management in the fund and let's see that fund operate as the other insurance companies have done in the past.

I don't know what all the answers might be. I know that we are going to have an opportunity to question the officials of the fund and the Minister at some given time in the early future, we hope, when they'll appear before a committee and answer some of the questions as to how we incurred a \$10 million loss last year. But I know we're going to be faced with a similar loss in the current year the way auto accident claims are increasing. It's an alarming rate. If we're going to be faced with this year after year I think it only proper that the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation present before the House some type of a picture at the outset of the year, and saying, "This is what we're faced with. We're going to have to increase rates 15 percent this year because these are our expenses, this is how much costs in the body shops are going up," and so on and so forth. These are the reasons, Mr. Speaker, that we find we can support a motion or a resolution such as this, that an estimate for the Public Insurance Corporation be brought for examination before the House as are the estimates of the Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, Public Works, and the various other departments, that present their Estimates to us and we have a chance to question the Minister responsible in the House and in committee when we're approving the Estimates.

So for those reasons, Mr. Speaker, we support this resolution and hopefully we'll have some comment from the government benches as to why they would object to a resolution such as this, and at that time possibly we may get some of the answers that we're seeking on the questions pertaining to the ten million dollar loss last year, the \$6 million the year before, and possibly another 10 to 20 million dollar loss this year.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to belabour the point. I think it's pretty obvious why we would support the motion in view of our other statements and our remarks on Autopac, and I just invite further discussion from my colleagues and possibly some response from the government benches.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question? The Honourable Member for Wolseley the Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, my contribution tonight is occasioned by the unavoidable absence from the House of the mover of the motion, my colleague from Portage la Prairie.

Mr. Speaker, the position the Liberal Party's advancing with this resolution is that

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(MR. ASPER cont'd) . . . symbolically and in a practical way, both, we must find ways to express to this House and to have this House express itself on the issue of more disclosure, more openness, and more legislative scrutiny of public spending. Mr. Speaker, basically what the resolution is saying is that we have a corporation, a Crown corporation, whether it's the Manitoba Development Corporation or whether it's the Auto Insurance Corporation, that has tremendous impact in the economy, has tremendous influence on the lives of ordinary people, on their day to day lives, and yet is not the subject of full legislative debate, full legislative scrutiny. And, Mr. Speaker, we say that's wrong.

You may recall earlier in the Session we brought forward the concepts of political reform and we intend to bring it forward again through another resolution, and one of the things that we said in that political reform concept, resolution, and we say again through this resolution, is that there is too much occurring in this province under our political structure as it stands today, where the people who are elected to make decisions, to pass judgments and to express their views on those aspects of government activity, are being deprived of that activity by the simple device of incorporating that activity under a corporation. Mr. Speaker, if Autopac were run as a division of government, just as I hope the highway road building program, we would scrutinize, we would have in estimates, we would have debate on the auto insurance operation, simply because they were part of government. But by that simple gimmick, in other words . . . the government of the gimmick because all governments of all political stripe have done this. But by the simple gimmick of incorporating a company to carry on a public service, we deprived the Legislature of the right of scrutiny through the estimates. For example, and I'm sure my honourable friend the Minister of Labour wouldn't want to see this happen, but for example, suppose we incorporated the Department of Finance, we said Manitoba Finances Limited is now a corporation which will collect all the tax revenue as the agent for the government. Mr. Speaker, under those circumstances the Legislature would be deprived of the right to scrutinize the entire action of the most powerful division of government, the power to tax. Mr. Speaker, that's what we've done with Autopac and we've done it . . .

MR. PAULLEY: Nonsense.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour says, "nonsense." It is sheer categorical truth, it is not nonsense.

MR. PAULLEY: Of course it is.

MR. ASPER: The simple act -- well I invite the Honourable Minister to join in the debate and explain to this House the difference between carrying on an activity in government department or carrying it on through a separate corporation. The difference, he will disclose, is that it is segregated from legislative estimate scrutiny. And that's the only difference, and that's why we have so much of it, Mr. Speaker. We've now arrived at this point, and this is why we don't like separate corporations which are not accountable in detail to this House.

It all began on November 3, 1971, I believe, and it began in Erickson, Manitoba, when we saw the beginning of the political gimmickry on the Autopac Corporation segregation away from the Public Accounts and away from the Estimates' scrutiny through debate. The First Minister stood up in the heat of a by-election, and Autopac was an issue to the farmers of the area in which he was speaking, and we all know the direct words he said. The point is . . . Oh yes, yes, Mr. Speaker, we all know the direct words, but the point is that he conveyed an impression to the people who were listening to him and to all the people of this province to whom he was reported rather - that the Autopac rates would not go up before 1975 or 76. Mr. Speaker, that's what he said. I know because I was there.

MR. PAULLEY: He said it several times.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, it's incredible -- he was right, the First Minister was right - for a time - because something very strange happened. As we marched along toward the date of an election, suddenly the First Minister found that his November 3, 1971 prediction was a pessimistic statement; in fact he could lower the rates. What a strange event, immediately before an election the Autopac rates were able to drop. And, Mr. Speaker, if that's strange then it only falls into the category of astounding, a few months later, after the election we find in that storehouse of information the government segregates to itself that we have to raise Autopac rates and that we haven't got this surplus that caused the original drop in rates, that in fact the music is faced and we've got a ten million dollar loss.

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(MR. ASPER cont'd)

Mr. Speaker, no one will convince me outside of telling me that the Minister, whoever he may have been at the time, or the First Minister is inept, and I don't believe that, so therefore no one will convince me that at the time of the election --The government knew, it knew that there was a deficit in Autopac of several million dollars, perhaps not fully realized, perhaps not ten million, but certainly, Mr. Speaker, at the time of the election the government knew or ought to have known, and if they didn't know then it's not ignorance, it's incompetence. So, Mr. Speaker, they knew, because they're not ignorant and they're not incompetent, not when it comes to looking at the books and juggling the books. So they knew.

Mr. Speaker, it is precisely because of this that we in the Liberal Party in 1969, 1970, objected to the form of Autopac being segregated and object to it again tonight. And it isn't only Autopac. Mr. Speaker, it's the act of incorporation and the denial of the House of the scrutiny through estimates that we're speaking of, and that's all we're speaking of tonight. Mr. Speaker, that is not contentious; that ought not to be contentious. Now, Mr. Speaker -- the Minister of Labour is in fine voice tonight and I'll try to answer his assertions later. -- (Interjection) --

Mr. Speaker, we oppose, because we don't believe that government instrumentalities should be made into yo-yo's. Run by yo-yo's, yes, but made into yo-yo's, no. And this is what we've got. We've got government instrumentalities which are barometers; they can go up, down, east, west, north, south, sideways, forward, at the whim of political action as opposed to policy judgment, because they are not answerable in this House. They do not come under our scrutiny; we do not get debate in the traditional sense through Estimates. That's all we're asking for, Mr. Speaker, more disclosure, more opportunity for scrutiny, more analysis, more opportunity for the opposition parties whoever they may be, and I would wish my friends opposite to remember "whoever they may be" because that phrase will apply to them in due course as it applies to all people who are in government.

Mr. Speaker, we simply say that opposition, in order to do its job, must have detailed disclosure and not glossy-covered financial statements with six lines saying: income - \$3.00; outgo - \$2.00; profit - \$1.00, and that's the information we get. And if you take a look at the bundle of papers called the Autopac Report and tell me that that is a substitute for estimates, then, Mr. Speaker, we are in different worlds.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder what the people of Manitoba would have done on June 28, for example, had they known that Autopac was going to suffer the ten million dollar loss. I don't know, I can't even estimate, Mr. Speaker, but I can say this. They didn't know, and to that extent government went to the people without coming clean, making full disclosure, and, Mr. Speaker, it's only through estimates--(Interjection)--Mr. Speaker, I hear the Honourable Minister of Agriculture say they didn't know anything about Hydro rates either. Quite true, except, Mr. Speaker, the government knew and the corporation, Hydro. He has just made my case, Mr. Speaker. The corporation Hydro which also doesn't come into our estimates, does not come into our estimates, we do not have the estimates on Hydro. We have a Minister who answers for Hydro. Mr. Speaker, had Hydro been through estimates we could have said in March last year, in the two months preceding the election, we could have said to the people, "You are facing a 10, 15 or 20 percent Hydro rate hike." Mr. Speaker, that's precisely the point, that the segregation of Crown activity away from the normal division of government which comes into estimate, allows government to conceal and they do conceal. Mr. Speaker, ask anybody. I don't ask my honourable friends to take my word for it, but go out on the streets and ask the people of Manitoba if they knew that Autopac was going to lose \$10 million, during the elections. Did they know that they were facing an Autopac rate increase within a not even respectable period following the election? Answer, no. How could they have known? If we would have had it in the House last year through estimates, we could have discerned that information, if we did our job.

MR. USKIW: Would the honourable member submit to a question?

MR. ASPER: In a minute. I haven't very much longer to . . . Mr. Speaker, I can hear the government's defence for its position of refusing to bring estimates in on Autopac by saying, well, you can get this in committee; you can take the statement, you can inquire of the chairman. Mr. Speaker, I've said it several times in this Session and I probably will say it several times more, and I say it with utmost sincerity. You know, I know, honourable members

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(MR. ASPER cont'd) . . . . opposite know, everyone on this side of the House knows, anyone in the Gallery knows, anyone who goes to the committees knows, and anybody who reads the newspapers in this province knows that the committee system as operated by the NDP is a fraud. We know that. Public Accounts Committee. "You can ask the Auditor-General about the back-dating and the retroactive Ted Tulchinsky pay raise," the Minister of Health thundered at me one day. Well, Mr. Speaker . . .

. . . . continued on next page

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MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside state his matter of privilege.

MR. ENNS: My point of privilege is that I have been assumed to recognize a fraud. I don't recognize a fraud. The NDP operates their committee on a democratic basis, the basis that they have a majority to which they're entitled to as being a recognized government in this province, and they as such exercise that right - they, as such, exercise that right. I may not agree with the decisions that are reached by that body, by the group that now exercises that majority, but to describe that as a fraud is simply not correct and one that I won't accept.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the observations of the Honourable Member from Lakeside and I wouldn't have expected him to say anything but what he just said, because we all remember when he was in government how he ran committees.

MR. ENNS: The same way . . .

MR. ASPER: That's right, that's right. Mr. Speaker, he ran them the same way and he had to wind up with injunctions and he had to wind up being dragged into court the way he ran his committees. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Conservative democracy, as you ran it, was why this government was welcomed by the people. Mr. Speaker, I say that the committee system is a fraud because it does not accomplish what it says it does, and that to me is fraud, what it holds itself out to accomplish, because, Mr. Speaker -- the Honourable Minister of Agriculture says let's abolish the committees. He would like that, I'm sure he would like that. Certainly that's the way the government treats the committee system. But we say no; we say let's not abolish them, let's make them meaningful, and since the government is not willing to make them meaningful then we are saying, then we're saying, those things that would go through committee as a substitute for estimates, is not an acceptable estimate, is not an acceptable substitute.

Mr. Speaker, if you go into Committee of Public Accounts, as I started to say, as an example of how effective the committee system is, the Public Accounts Committee I think has met for perhaps four hours - twice perhaps, this session, Mr. Speaker, that is after February or March, two full months of Session, we've had four hours to look at a billion and some dollars of spending, and if you suggest -- (Interjection) -- Yes, Mr. Speaker, and last year's at that, which is an obsolete exercise, it's an exercise in mathematical hocus pocus. Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept as any kind of a substitute for legislative scrutiny of the operations of Crown corporations the committee system, and I'm sure honourable members know that themselves, even the government.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution deals with Autopac, calling for government to come clean in this House every year as they are required to come clean on everything else. Now there's nothing unusual about that request and if the government prides itself on any kind of openness, it'll consider the resolution. After all, Mr. Speaker, the resolution as has been pointed out on many occasions, simply calls for the government to consider it. Now, Mr. Speaker, if it were only Autopac that was being swept under the rug or made unavailable to honourable members of this House for scrutiny through estimates, it might be not that serious, but we know that this is only one of many. We also know, Mr. Speaker, that more than 50 percent of the spending of the tax dollars of this province occurs in Crown corporations, which means, Mr. Speaker, that 50 percent or more of the taxpayers' dollars are spent by people who never account to this Legislature. And, Mr. Speaker, that is not the tax system, that is not a healthy system. The only way, the only way that you can actually remedy that situation is to bring the Crown corporations into accountability in this House through estimates, and this would be symbolic of that kind of a move.

Mr. Speaker, if the government believes in openness - which I don't think it does, and if it does believe in it, Mr. Speaker, the demonstrations of the last several months indicate that the belief in openness is simply a belief that is not practised or is not implemented - but if it does have any members opposite who still believe in the 1969 creed that brought this government to office, the promise of fresh air, of open windows, the open government, all of which has been downgraded, particularly in the past two years, then, Mr. Speaker, this resolution commends itself to members opposite. But the vote on this resolution is simply a barometer itself as to how this government feels about disclosure.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can't be optimistic because of how we've seen committees handled.



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(MR. ASPER cont'd) . . . . I can't be optimistic because I've seen the lack of disclosure, I've seen the evasion of questions in this House. Mr. Speaker, I address my observation to the new members of this House. They know, they know on all sides the shock and the disgust and the amazement that they felt as they came into this House and saw the dancing game each day, where opposition questions and government evades and sidesteps. They all feel that - they may not say it publicly. I know how they feel. Mr. Speaker, that's the beginning of the destruction of respect for our process, when the people who come to see the proceedings of this House are staggered by somebody getting up and saying, "Yes or no did you do such and such?" And you get a seven minute speech.

Mr. Speaker, the government has been practising evasion and avoidance and sidestepping, anything but openness. The resolution before them tonight gives them the chance to reaffirm their commitment to open government and they can do that by bringing the estimates of Autopac in this year or starting next year, as a gesture toward the openness which they've abandoned.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. RUSSELL PAULLEY (Minister of Labour) (Transcona): I wonder if my honourable friend would permit a question. Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend referred to the new members in the back benches of government as to their lack of appreciation as to the process of government, I may be taking my friend out of context; I don't want to do that. But his reference to the newness of members in this Legislature, would he ascribe that to he also, who is one of the most juvenile of members of this new Legislature?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Liberal Party agreed to answer a question or two when he was through and I simply want to put to him the question, knowing of his business abilities, Mr. Speaker, whether he appreciates the insurance principle and whether he can differentiate in his mind between an actuarial miscalculation versus a loss, and isn't it true that any so-called alleged loss in an insurance corporation, public or private, is really interpreted in benefits to the insured by way of repairs to fenders, bodily injury, compensation and so on, and in essence is not a loss but a payment for damages occurred?

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, that I must say is the most entertaining logic I've ever heard, but let's apply the logic that the Honourable Minister of Agriculture suggests. Autopac will not be a success then until it loses everything we've got, because a loss is not a loss. Didn't you know that a loss was a benefit because it meant we fixed things and we did wonderful . . . ? Well, Mr. Speaker, I call on the people of Manitoba to join the NDP in driving over cliffs - of course the NDP will go with a chauffeur-driven car . . .

MR. ENNS: We haven't got too many cliffs in Manitoba.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, he says there are no cliffs. Let him drive into the holes in the treasury created by the MDC; that's the biggest cliff we've got. Mr. Speaker, the logic of the Honourable Minister does not make sense nor does it deal with the issue, which is scrutiny. I'm not interested in hearing the Minister tell us that we're talking about actuarial losses or present value losses or whatever kind of loss he's talking about. I'm talking about disclosure, I'm talking about scrutiny; I'm talking about the ability to debate, in Estimates, who the government is hiring, what they're paying, how many people have joined, how many people have left. The same thing we do on every other division. Mr. Speaker, that's what I referred to, not profit and losses.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. J. R. (BUD) BOYCE (Winnipeg Centre): Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the Member for Lakeside drew to the attention of the Leader of the Liberal Party once again some of the responsibilities of responsible government. You know, the gentleman is so prone to responding that every time some of us over here draw it to his attention that he really doesn't understand the mechanics of government, we're always accused of being picked on.

But, Mr. Speaker, just to make a brief contribution to this debate, with reference to what the Leader of the Liberal Party had to say. He first made, or tried to make three points. One was the falaciousness of the Premier's prognosis back in 1971, allegations against Crown corporations generally, and a brief reference to hydro rates. Mr. Speaker, the policy of this government since they have been in power has been to use the instrumentality of the province to assist in development. I'm not speaking specifically about the Autopac Corporation itself,

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(MR. BOYCE cont'd) . . . . but even the Member, the former Member for Crescentwood, when he was a member of this Legislature, said that it was the business of business to maximize profits. And no one can really fault them for that because that is what business is about is to make money, is to maximize profits. And of course when the Leader of the Liberal Party says that the Crown Corporations should reveal all in this House, I think this government has moved far in this direction in opening up the books of the Manitoba Development Corporation and laying them before the Legislature and the people of the province of Manitoba. They have brought the managers of the various corporations before committees of the Legislature to answer questions pertaining to the up-to-date affairs of those corporations. And, Mr. Speaker, really this government has gone far beyond anything that is done in the private sector. I know the Minister of Mines and Resources and other people on this side of the House have said that they own stock in several companies and all they get is a financial statement, that it is very sketchy information that they get. The Leader of the Liberal Party keeps confusing himself with a member of the director of a company. He thinks because he's a member of the Legislature that he is therefore a member of the executive or the government of the Province of Manitoba and should have access to all the books and records of the administration of the province, which even I as a backbencher of the government side don't have access to.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that the Leader of the Liberal Party keeps forgetting is that when some of us on this side say that the instrumentality of the Crown should be used in establishing Crown corporations where other sources of capital are not available, it's very simple, Mr. Speaker. If someone invested \$100,000 - and I'm sure the Member for Minnedosa would bear me out - if I put \$100,000 into his bank and at the end of the year I came to him and I said, "How much money did you make for me this year?" he would have tried to maximize my return, and if he came to me and he said, "Well, you know, Bud, I'm sorry. I saw a good spot to put this in that I could help some people out but I could only get you five percent return on your investment," I'm afraid, as most investors, I'd be looking for somewhere else to invest my money. We had a very good example of that, on a larger scale perhaps, down with Morden Fine Foods, when Canadian Cannery - and I really don't fault Canadian Cannery for making the corporate decision that they had to make - that they could perhaps tidy up their affairs and maximize their profit for their shareholders by closing that particular plant. But nevertheless, from a provincial standpoint, it was to our advantage to keep that plant open and to show a profit, which perhaps the Canadian Cannery couldn't absorb or didn't want to absorb, a profit at that level.

But, Mr. Speaker, when the Leader of the Liberal Party says to try and confuse people that the Premier of the Province of Manitoba said that there would be no rate increase three years hence, you know, it's hard for me to understand why a person of this stature and with this purported reputation within the community as a tax consultant and being involved in the legal profession and others, in accounting and in business and the rest of this, would chide the First Minister for trying to project what the costs would be. Who in 1971 would have accepted a 10 percent inflationary figure? Who in their right mind would have said that by December, 1973 over 1972, the inflationary rate in fact was 9.1 percent? I wouldn't, and I don't think any other members opposite who are more responsible than the Leader of the Liberal Party would have suggested that either. So when somebody offers their best advice or opinion in any point in time and three years later they're proved wrong, I don't think that that proves very much.

But before the Leader of the Liberal Party leaves the room, I just wanted to point out to him that in 1969 the Public Utility Board recommended - not only recommended but ordered; in fact the Conservative Party chided us for not implementing a 17 percent increase in the hydro rates in 1969-70 as a result of the hearings held by the Public Utility Board in 1969. But because of the rearrangement of the loads and the rest of the program that Cass-Beggs was able to implement, and other factors, it was felt that we would not need an increase until this year. We were ordered by the board, as members opposite who were here in 1969 will recall, that it was a 17 percent increase that was recommended by the Public Utility Board. So really, even if it's a 20 percent increase listed this year, I would suggest that that is only three percent higher than the recommended 17 percent of that particular year. And I would just like to draw this to the attention of the Leader of the Liberal Party. --(Interjection)-- Question?

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(MR. BOYCE Cont'd) . . . . . certainly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for yielding to a question. It's just that it's germane at this time. Would he draw any conclusion from the fact that although the rate increase was authorized some time ago and talked about it, it did not occur until after the election?

MR. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, how foolish. How foolish. What political party in their right mind would raise the rates before an election? Mr. Speaker, we said in 1969, 1970, 1971 1972, many people said that the hydro rates would probably have to go up in this particular year. If the opposition failed to take this in their case, we shouldn't be elected; that's their, you know, that's their problem not ours.

But, Mr. Speaker, if we consider from 1969 to 1974, some five years with an average inflationary rate of I think it's 5.2 percent, something like that, really the increase expressed in 1969 dollars is really no increase at all. I'd just like to draw that to the Leader of the Liberal Party's attention.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister in Charge of Autopac.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First, Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to this resolution there are several comments that I'd like to make directly to it, and to point out the fallacy or the misconception that is construed by this resolution that the Honourable Member for Portage has presented insofar as the estimates of Autopac. He indicates that there's a Minister in this House who is not required to present his departmental estimates for approval by the Legislature.

A MEMBER: Who's that?

MR. URUSKI: This is in effect totally false. Every Minister who is responsible for a department of government presents a full set of estimates to the House, and they are reviewed by Committee of Supply in this way. Now my estimates insofar as the Minister responsible for Autopac, if the members would look at their Estimates book, in their Main Estimates Book, they would see that there are estimates under Executive Council dealing with my salary. And then they can discuss whatever issues they wish under the estimates. Secondly, there are also estimates under the Department of Highways for a portion of the Motor Vehicle Branch for which I am responsible. Then they can make their remarks appropriately in that area with respect to some of my responsibilities.

The Honourable Member from Portage, although he's not in the House tonight, he implied that the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation is a department of the government and it should submit estimates to the Assembly in the same way as any department - the Department of Health or Department of Agriculture. And, you know, he's leaving a totally wrong impression to the House. You know that Autopac is a Crown corporation, whose functions and administrative matters are totally autonomous from the regular governmental activity and, you know, you can compare Autopac to the Manitoba Telephone System, to the Manitoba Hydro, and if Autopac in this case wanted or was in a position or needed capital funds and was in the borrowing position, then there would be a bill brought to the Legislature and the honourable members would have another avenue in which to debate Autopac, under a motion of Capital Supply. They would be able to do it then. But right now Autopac has not borrowed any funds or is not borrowing or in need of capital estimates. It is self-sustaining, so that avenue's closed, but the other avenues are still open to the members.

Now, not only that, there was a resolution presented by the Member for Minnedosa some weeks ago concerning almost an identical situation that is being presented now by the Liberal Party. The Honourable Member from Minnedosa's resolution was to the effect that the estimates of Autopac should be reviewed by a committee of this House. An amendment was presented in effect agreeing to this motion, and the House unanimously passed such a motion that the estimates and the spending and the annual report of Autopac be reviewed by the Public Utilities Committee of this House.

Mr. Speaker, in the last little while the members of the Opposition and the insurance industry have been subjecting the people of Manitoba into the rhetoric of insurance industry statements and making in effect very absurd public statements, statements that they privately know are untrue. Mr. Speaker, what are their motives? What prompts their deliberate

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(MR. URUSKI cont'd) . . . distortion of the facts? Are these tactical moves intended to sway public opinion from the government's proposed entry into the general insurance business? Or perhaps the statements are not really intended for the consumption of the people of Manitoba but for people of other provinces, province like Ontario, Alberta, and the Maritimes where the insurance industry is supporting an antiquated system and is desperately striving for survival. Well fighting for survival.

When you consider, Mr. Speaker, that there are hundred of millions of dollars of premiums spent by motorists in Canada every year - and I believe the figure is close to a billion dollars a year - one can readily understand their desperate fight to retail control of this massive amount of money. I certainly can understand their motives, but what, Mr. Speaker, is so incomprehensible to me is the reason for some of the members of the opposition repeating their statements about Autopac without any consideration of the facts. One wonders whether some of the members opposite are so blinded by their ideology of preservation of private industry at any cost, that they really ignore the mandate of the people in 1969 and 1973. The member doesn't know that there was an election in June of '73 and also of '69. Mr. Speaker, loyalty is an admirable quality, but blind loyalty? Or are we to assume that they are merely puppets who will jump to the defense of the insurance industry whenever the strings are pulled?

I think the Honourable Member from Souris-Killarney and the Honourable Member from Riel really know what I am talking about. Without fear of being contradicted even by the insurance industry spokesman, I can state that private insurance have year in and year out increased their automobile insurance premiums not only in Manitoba but all across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba alone there was an increase of approximately 15 percent in 1969, an increase of 12 percent in 1970, and a further increase of approximately 15 percent in 1971 - all prior to the introduction of Autopac. This means, Mr. Speaker, that a motorist who paid approximately \$121.00 of insurance in 1968, would have paid anywhere from \$160.00 to 177.00 in 1971 to a private insurer, a whopping increase, Mr. Speaker, of between 35 and 45 percent in three years. Mr. Speaker, in three years of operation of Autopac there's been an increase of basic insurance of 9-1/2 percent. Mr. Speaker, comments made by the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Honourable Member from Minnedosa who said, he also said he has no doubts that Autopac rates were deliberately kept down in the past and claims settlements were made deliberately generous in order to create a more favourable image for the province's NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member from Minnedosa really has any integrity and any honesty in being able to analyse the situation, would he not realize that for the first two years of operation Autopac showed a profit, Mr. Speaker, a profit? That means that the rates set in 1969, Mr. Speaker, were adequate, and if the honourable member says that the rates were very low, then let him tell the insurance industry who, for the last 10 or 15 years complained that they were losing money, that it was a losing proposition. Then if we made money in it two years what did the insurance industry cream off in the last 15 years with those increases that they had?

Mr. Speaker, these figures that I mentioned for the motorist, are for the motorist who had the good fortune of being accident-free and had an average-size car. If the motorist happened to be under 25 years of age or had an accident a year or two before, then, Mr. Speaker, his costs were astronomical. When the government introduced Autopac in 1971, we promised a saving in premiums. Mr. Speaker, we delivered that promise, despite all the high-priced and distorted propaganda put out by the private insurance from their bastions in Toronto where they used an advertising agency from Toronto to advertise in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and in Montreal.

Mr. Speaker, 95 percent of the motoring public in Manitoba showed a saving from Autopac when it was introduced, Mr. Speaker. The saving varied from 12 to 35 percent. Mr. Speaker, we know that there were motorists who mistakenly thought that they were paying more under Autopac until an examination of their insurance policy disclosed that in some instances they previously carried only third party liability insurance. Under Autopac, they have now basic collision coverage. Others were comparing their '68 premiums against Autopac's 1971 premiums, and there were some who had previously purchased insurance for six months and were comparing their premiums to annual premiums under Autopac. And also, Mr. Speaker,

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(MR. URUSKI cont'd) . . . many many people insisted in including their insurance comparison with their annual fee payable for the registration of their motor vehicle. Mr. Speaker, despite all the public statements made by the spokesmen of the insurance industry in private, they fully realize and they acknowledge freely that Autopac premiums are far lower than any private insurance company could ever offer. Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, Autopac premiums in Manitoba are the lowest in Canada.

Let me give you one example. Mr. Speaker, I could of course give you many examples of different differential between Manitoba rates and those paid elsewhere in Canada. However, I think as one, this one example will really hit home, Mr. Speaker. Let's take a late model standard North American passenger car such as a BelAir Chev, and let's assume that the driver is 25 years of age, is over the age of 25, and uses his car for pleasure and also driving to and from work. Let's say he has 100,000 third party coverage, medical and no fault-accident benefits, a hundred deductible for collision and 25 deductible comprehensive. Let's also assume that the private insurer premiums are based on the owner having at least three years driving accident-free, also that the Autopac premiums include the insurance fees assessed on the driver's license. As I've mentioned before, in Winnipeg the premium in 1971 would have been, under private insurance, between \$164.00 and \$177.00 depending on which carrier the motorist was insured with. Autopac rates in 1972 were \$126.00 and in 1973 the rates dropped to \$121.00. Mr. Speaker, somewhere along the line the members of the Opposition and the spokesmen for the insurance industry have ignored the fact that we did reduce insurance rates in 1973 by some four to five percent, and yet we made a profit, Mr. Speaker, we made a profit in those two years.

Mr. Speaker, the private companies and I think the honourable -- (Interjection)-- I think one of the criticisms that were levelled at us by the private insurance industry and members opposite, and the media, and I think, you know, some of the media, there's one reporter who was so unbiased, so statistically in favor of Autopac, and I think I have to name him. Of course I'm being facetious, Mr. Speaker, Fred Cleverley of the Free Press is such a friend of Autopac that who needs enemies? --(Interjection)-- Yes, he has said that many times, that he is ideologically opposed to this government

Mr. Speaker, I want to relate to you how the news media points out deficits or financial situations of insurance companies vis-a-vis the financial situation of Autopac. In bold headlines, "Autopac Deficit \$10.1 Million." But, Mr. Speaker, when you read the paper about a private insurance company, it says, "Wawanesa's investment income up \$104 million." But in the fine print it goes on to show that Wawanesa showed an operating deficit, underwriting deficit, of 4.6 or some figure like that, in small print about three or four paragraphs down. Is that unbiased reporting, Mr. Speaker? Is that unbiased reporting? I want the honourable members to also point out to me as to how the private insurance company is going to resolve their minimum hundred million dollar deficit in Canada this year on their underwriting losses of Autopac or private insurance, automobile insurance premiums. How are they going to resolve it? They're going to raise the premiums, Mr. Speaker, they're going to raise the premiums. They've lost over a hundred million dollars this year and they are saying, "We lost money." You know, the honourable members opposite and the Honourable Member from Souris-Killarney sits on the board of directors of Portage Mutual. His company and other private insurance companies said, "Doesn't that turkey farmer Minister know, Mr. Speaker, that there are hail storms in this province, that they could expect losses in hail storms." Well what did that general manager put in his annual report? He put in his annual report, Mr. Speaker, that their heaviest losses this year occurred because of hail. Hail storms, Mr. Speaker.

And how, Mr. Speaker, is the Portage Mutual Company going to resolve their deficit, Mr. Speaker? I can predict to you that with another loss or two years without raising premiums, Mr. Speaker, they will go down. But they will raise premiums, Mr. Speaker. -- (Interjection) -- Mr. Speaker, what a phony comment! That the taxpayers won't pay it. Who pays the premiums, Mr. Speaker? The motoring public. And the motoring public knows, Mr. Speaker, that the company that they own now, it's their company. The money that is used by their company, the money that is invested by their company, Mr. Speaker, is used in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, for hospitals and debentures and invested in Manitoba. And, Mr. Speaker, the

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(MR. URUSKI cont'd) . . . . . operating expenses are less, or approximately 15 percent of every dollar that Autopac has taken in, where previous to Autopac the operating costs were roughly 35 cents out of every dollar, Mr. Speaker. Now they call that inefficiency? Let them tell that to the motoring public, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I was speaking about rates, about rates in Manitoba and other provinces of Canada, and I'd like to go on, Mr. Speaker. The premium in Calgary, as I mentioned before, and Edmonton, would have been \$185.00, \$48.00 more than Autopac. In Hamilton \$213.00 - \$76.00 more than Autopac. In Moncton, New Brunswick, \$223.00 - \$86.00 more than Autopac. In Halifax \$182.00 - \$45.00 more than Autopac; in P.E.I. . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, in every instance I have compared our new 1974 rates with last year's '73 rates of private insurance companies, and those are the differences. Mr. Speaker, the insurance companies by their very nature of useless duplication of administrative procedures, required - and I have said this before - required approximately 35 percent of the premium dollar for administration taxes and profit. And the system can only return 65 percent in claims, including claims, adjustment expenses to policy holders. Mr. Speaker, this must be a totally inefficient system. But there's one thing I must mention. In this last year that the private companies in Manitoba that they sustained a loss under underwriting in insurance premiums, they did not have to pay for adjusting fees because these were borne by Autopac, so we saved them money, Mr. Speaker, and yet they lost money. And yet they lost money.

Mr. Speaker, I have many more statements to make but I gather my time is almost up.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister has one minute.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, let's just recapitulate the record. In 1972 the premiums were not raised, were unaltered; in 1973 there was a reduction of between four and five percent; in 1974 an over-all increase in vehicles and drivers' licenses of approximately 11 percent was made on basic insurance, and if you compare the 1974 Autopac premiums with the Autopac 1971 premium, an over-all increase of nine percent exists. Nine percent, Mr. Speaker, in three years. And during the four-year period of 1968-71 prior to Autopac, there was an increase of approximately 45 percent under private insurance premiums, Mr. Speaker - 45 percent.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable member's time is up and the hour being 10:00 o'clock, the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:30 Thursday afternoon.