

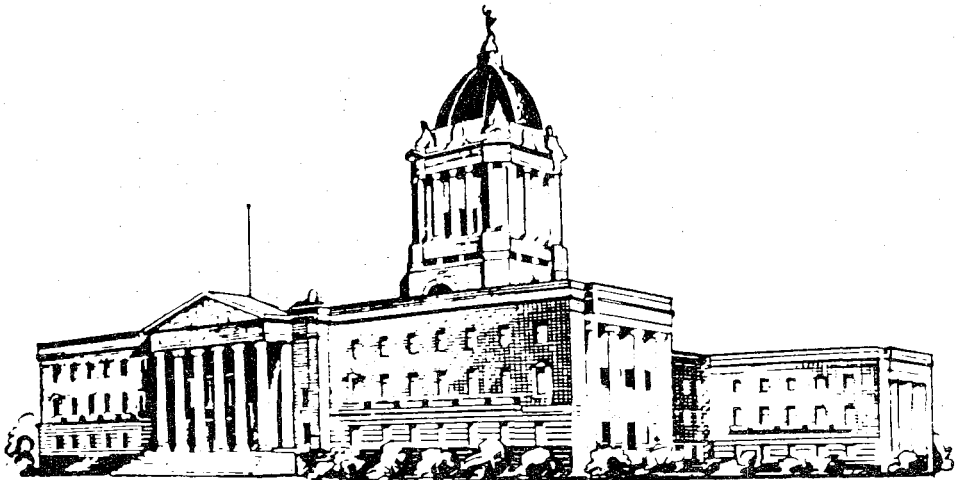


Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Speaker

The Honourable Ben Hanuschak



Vol. XVII No. 118 8:00 p.m., Thursday, June 18th, 1970. Second Session, 29th Legislature.

ELECTORAL DIVISION	NAME	ADDRESS
ARTHUR	J. Douglas Watt	Reston, Manitoba
ASSINIBOIA	Steve Patrick	10 Red Robin Place, Winnipeg 12
BIRTLE-RUSSELL	Harry E. Graham	Binscarth, Manitoba
BRANDON EAST	Hon. Leonard S. Evans	Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
BRANDON WEST	Edward McGill	2228 Princess Ave., Brandon, Man.
BURROWS	Hon. Ben Hanuschak	11 Aster Ave., Winnipeg 17
CHARLESWOOD	Arthur Moug	29 Willow Ridge Rd., Winnipeg 20
CHURCHILL	Gordon Wilbert Beard	148 Riverside Drive, Thompson, Man.
CRESCENTWOOD	Cy Gonick	115 Kingsway, Winnipeg 9
DAUPHIN	Hon. Peter Burtniak	Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
ELMWOOD	Russell J. Doern	705 - 33 Kennedy St., Winnipeg 1
EMERSON	Gabriel Girard	25 Lomond Blvd., St. Boniface 6
FLIN FLON	Thomas Barrow	Cranberry Portage, Manitoba
FORT GARRY	L. R. (Bud) Sherman	86 Niagara St., Winnipeg 9
FORT ROUGE	Mrs. Inez Trueman	179 Oxford St., Winnipeg 9
GIMLI	John C. Gottfried	44 - 3rd Ave., Gimli, Man.
GLADSTONE	James Robert Ferguson	Gladstone, Manitoba
INKSTER	Hon. Sidney Green, Q.C.	Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
KILDONAN	Peter Fox	627 Prince Rupert Ave., Winnipeg 15
LAC DU BONNET	Hon. Sam Uskiw	Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
LAKESIDE	Harry J. Enns	Woodlands, Manitoba
LA VERENDRYE	Leonard A. Barkman	Box 130, Steinbach, Man.
LOGAN	William Jenkins	1287 Alexander Ave., Winnipeg 3
MINNEDOSA	Walter Weir	Room 250, Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
MORRIS	Warner H. Jorgenson	Box 185, Morris, Man.
OSBORNE	Ian Turnbull	284 Wildwood Park, Winnipeg 19
PEMBINA	George Henderson	Manitou, Manitoba
POINT DOUGLAS	Donald Malinowski	361 Burrows Ave., Winnipeg 4
PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE	Gordon E. Johnston	Room 248, Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
RADISSON	Harry Shafransky	4 Maplehurst Rd., St. Boniface 6
RHINELAND	Jacob M. Froese	Box 40, Winkler, Manitoba
RIEL	Donald W. Craik	2 River Lane, Winnipeg 8
RIVER HEIGHTS	Sidney Spivak, Q.C.	1516 Mathers Bay, West, Winnipeg 9
ROBLIN	J. Wally McKenzie	Inglis, Manitoba
ROCK LAKE	Henry J. Einarson	Glenboro, Manitoba
ROSSMERE	Hon. Ed. Schreyer	Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
RUPERTSLAND	Jean Allard	602 - 245 Provencher Ave., St. Boniface 6
ST. BONIFACE	Laurent L. Desjardins	357 Des Meurons St., St. Boniface 6
ST. GEORGE	William Uruski	Box 629, Arborg, Manitoba
ST. JAMES	Hon. A. H. Mackling, Q.C.	Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
ST. JOHNS	Hon. Saul Cherniack, Q.C.	Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
ST. MATTHEWS	Wally Johannson	15 - 500 Burnell St., Winnipeg 10
ST. VITAL	J. A. Hardy	11 Glenlawn Ave., Winnipeg 8
STE. ROSE	Gildas Molgat	463 Kingston Crescent, Winnipeg 8
SELKIRK	Hon. Howard Pawley	Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
SEVEN OAKS	Hon. Saul A. Miller	Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
SOURIS-KILLARNEY	Earl McKellar	Nesbitt, Manitoba
SPRINGFIELD	Hon. Rene E. Toupin	Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
STURGEON CREEK	Frank Johnston	310 Overdale St., Winnipeg 12
SWAN RIVER	James H. Bilton	Swan River, Manitoba
THE PAS	Ron McBryde	531 Greenacres Blvd., Winnipeg 12
THOMPSON	Hon. Joseph P. Borowski	Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
TRANSCONA	Hon. Russell Paulley	Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
VIRDEN	Morris McGregor	Kenton, Manitoba
WELLINGTON	Hon. Philip Petursson	Legislative Bldg., Winnipeg 1
WINNIPEG CENTRE	J. R. (Bud) Boyce	777 Winnipeg Ave., Winnipeg 3
WOLSELEY	Leonard H. Claydon	116½ Sherbrook St., Winnipeg 1

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

8:00 o'clock, Thursday, June 18, 1970

GOVERNMENT BILLS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable House Leader.

MR. GREEN: Would you call Bill No. 56, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs. Bill No. 56. The proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Morris in amendment thereto. The Honourable Minister of Finance.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, I made a mistake last night obviously. I pointed out that I felt I was only addressing a few people in connection with what I had to say. I pointed out a few of the people that I thought I would like to get through to, and the fact is that in my naming of the persons whom I wished to get at, I left out just about all of the members of the Progressive Conservative caucus and they've obviously taken me at my word, and decided that if I'm not really talking to them they needn't be here, and I accept that. I'm now getting the usual flack from the Member for Swan River. Mr. Speaker, I am happy, however, that the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge is here because she wasn't here yesterday when I spoke and I did not want to lose the opportunity of saying something about her contribution on this debate in her absence, so I'm glad she's here. She knows, I warned her - if I might use the word "warned" - I mentioned to her that I would want to make some comment on what she had to say on this debate because she distorted so completely the picture that I was amazed that a former colleague of mine who worked in the interests of the people of Winnipeg and in the interests of the general welfare of people would be so unkind as to accuse this government of doing things which would be subject to criticism if they were true but which were so distorted by her as to make it, I think, shameful that she found it necessary to make the statements that she did. I see that she's hiding her eyes from me, but certainly she doesn't take me too seriously I would think.

However, Page 2314 of Hansard of May 25, 1970, the honourable member said, and I quote -- I don't want to quote at length because I don't have that much time, but I believe that it is not unfair to take a short part of what she said: "The people are paying premiums now and they know exactly what it cost," she's talking about auto insurance. And then what does she say: "That will no longer be true when this government takes over and starts hiding costs," and I remind the honourable member that at all times it was indicated that the auto insurance scheme would have to stand on its own feet, but obviously she doesn't believe that. And I quote again: "As we see the hidden taxes that they have used to cover the medicare costs."

I told the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge that I was going to refer to that statement. I told her that I thought it had no basis in fact. I told her, since I didn't know there would be an amendment, that if she didn't have another opportunity to speak, I would be quite prepared to during my speech give whatever comments she would like to make in this regard, but now that I know she has another opportunity to speak, I'll of course recognize that she can have another go at it.

On the following page, Page 2315, I quote: "And I do think that this proposed takeover is another vehicle for hidden taxes. We have already had myriad examples of this government's willingness to avoid its proper provincial responsibilities by placing them on municipal property tax." You note that distortion, Mr. Speaker; an absolute distortion to talk about hidden tax which is really something that cannot be attributed to costs of municipal taxation, and we've talked a great deal about that, but the honourable member accuses us of bringing in hidden taxation that has been used to cover medicare costs. I told her then it was not true; I say so now it is not true. In the interval she did not indicate that it was true to me except to say "well, you have not relieved the real property taxpayer." I never claimed that we did and I don't think on this side we did claim that. But this distorted statement about hidden costs on medicare is one - I see the honourable member is rising. . . .

MRS. TRUEMAN: Mr. Speaker, would the member entertain a question?

MR. CHERNIACK: Certainly, from you.

MRS. TRUEMAN: What amount of the medicare cost is covered out of consolidated revenue?

MR. CHERNIACK: Roughly \$28 million - not that's give or take a few; but roughly \$28 million.

MRS. TRUEMAN: I meant apart from what is covered by the premium that is paid, what is the remainder which is covered out of general revenue?

MR. CHERNIACK: Roughly \$28 million, give or take one or two. All right, I've answered that question. I don't know to what avail it is. I don't know to what use it is, and I don't even know what the honourable member is thinking about, but we . . .

MRS. TRUEMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege. The Minister of Finance has informed me that apart from the money that comes from the premium which is collected through the new taxes, that a further four million comes out of the consolidated revenues.

MR. CHERNIACK: Oh, Mr. Speaker, if the honourable member calls that hidden taxes let's talk about that, but let's talk about it very briefly. We made it absolutely clear that we were making a massive shift of taxation, that we were relieving the premium taxpayer of the flat premium tax, the iniquitous, shameful, disgraceful tax imposed by the Conservative Party which was a flat rate applying to all people regardless of ability to pay, and we were imposing an increased income tax both corporate and personal, and that we called a massive shift. Now I know what she's talking about, because we never indicated that we were collecting the same amount in additional personal income tax as we were contributing to medicare. Now the differential is roughly \$4 million, 4 to 5 million dollars, which is coming out of revenues other than the additional income tax which was imposed by this government. If she calls that hidden, it was hidden to her but not to anybody who wanted to study the estimates.

MRS. TRUEMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a further point of privilege. . . .

A MEMBER: There's no point of privilege.

MRS. TRUEMAN: . . . the City of Winnipeg taxpayers. . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. I do not believe that the honourable member has a point of privilege.

MRS. TRUEMAN: Well, I simply wanted to ask about the \$650,000 in welfare costs that the City of Winnipeg is taking care of and which are properly a provincial responsibility. Wouldn't you say that money could have gone into the general revenue?

MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, it's not a point of privilege nor a point of order, but so as not to create a precedent, I think honourable members would agree to having the question received as a point of chivalry.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, the words of Ivanhoe live with me since my childhood. I remember so well how I marvelled at the feats that the knights of old performed on behalf of the lady fair, and of course I always like looking at and listening to the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, although I must report openly and clearly I've never received a handkerchief that I can carry of hers into combat. Nevertheless, there's always hope. -- (Interjection) -- No one warned me that my wife was within hearing. I don't recall receiving a handkerchief from her either, so you can start even.

Mr. Speaker, I have limitations of time. I can only say to the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge that the \$150,000 that seems -- (Interjection) -- Pardon? \$650,000 was a burden that had been imposed on the City of Winnipeg in the past and it is not one that is hidden by the Provincial Government in any way whatsoever. I think she should look at her words again and maybe she can give the correct picture which would be worth listening to no doubt.

Let me move on, however, Mr. Speaker, to what I was saying yesterday about the address made by the Honourable the Leader of the Official Opposition, who has now changed his occupation once more, or his avocation and his training to be an auto insurance salesman. He is now delivering a pitch on auto insurance benefits, costs, premiums, and do you know, Mr. Speaker, he's forgotten that we were debating a principle. Absolutely throughout his speech yesterday he forgot that we were debating a principle. He was talking about benefits and costs and premiums. Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry to say that I now believe that anything we've said in regard to the principle of government-operated auto insurance corporations has gone right past him and has not penetrated at all. As a matter of fact I understand now that he's not that expert - now this I'm only quoting third hand, but I was told that Mr. Vannam has stated that he questions very much that there would be the reductions that were indicated, reductions in premiums indicated by the Honourable the Leader of the Official Opposition -- but I don't know if that's true, I didn't hear it, nor did I see it in print, I was told that so it may not be true and I offer it just for the information, it may or may not be true.

But Mr. Speaker, assuming that the auto insurance salesman's calculation, and whether that is that of the Honourable the Leader or of his advisors is of no concern to mine, assuming that this reduction in cost which he envisages is correct, then it will be accomplished by a reduction in benefits, and certainly if you want to raise the minimums and decrease the

(MR. CHERNIACK cont'd.) maximums and eliminate various other features, you'd get an even greater reduction. -- (Interjection) -- Oh yes, there's some proposals that pay \$100.00 to the young people, out of -- I think he said out of consolidated revenue, but of course that would not be anything that the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge would attack, that couldn't be hidden taxation to cover this. Oh no, not at all -- because it was stated from her side of the House. May I suggest she better read what was said there. However, any savings. . . .

MR. CRAIK: You're waffley, Saul.

MR. CHERNIACK: I didn't -- was somebody. . . .

MR. CRAIK: I said you're waffley.

MR. CHERNIACK: The Honourable Member for Riel learnt a word. We teach him so much, we even taught him the word "waffle" which he now uses whether or not he knows what it means or whether or not it's applicable, but as long as he learnt the word he figures it's good to use because it was used by certain New Democratic Party people; so I'll pay no more attention to that than it deserves.

Mr. Speaker, to the extent that these reductions in benefits reduce the premiums, then isn't it absolutely obvious that if one would accept the concept of a public utility, then under a single government system there would be a greater reduction brought about, this is so obvious, a greater reduction brought about by (a) reducing the benefits, if advisable, and then incorporating a saving in administration and in agents' commission, because there you would have a double package. One is a reduction in benefits which you can calculate, which the auto insurance salesman across the way has promoted; and add on to that a further reduction, which is a real reduction in costs of administration and commission. He did suck in the Winnipeg Tribune which by editorial approved what they call Mr. Weir's plan, and pointed out that there's a great deal of similarity between what was proposed -- and let us remember, Mr. Speaker, we on our side have described the kind of insurance coverage that could be defined, certain areas that could be taken as the compulsory feature, and of course the auto insurance salesman across the way described his method, but the Winnipeg Tribune then says, Oh, there are two big differences. One, freedom of choice, the individual motorist can buy his insurance where he likes. And I say -- and I'm going to be speaking a little more about the public utility aspect -- but obviously the Leader of the Official Opposition also envisages that the competitive features that he involved will be reduced down so that the compulsory insurance becomes almost that of a one company insurance because of the controls he wishes to put. He used the word "regulate" yesterday; he really means "control". He played with the words "regulate, operate" -- the government should regulate, not operate -- but he's got controls built into his scheme which I intend to point out. He advocates a review board, which of course deals with controls on ratings and premiums, but of course it would not be involved in profits, and certainly any company that operates is entitled to profit and I think that the auto insurance salesmen would agree to that. There'd be no control on that.

And then the Tribune says something about a watchdog. The review board will be sort of a watch dog. I suppose what they really mean is a sort of an Ombudsman and frankly I don't see why an Ombudsman couldn't involve himself in discussions as to fair treatment. But what really bothered me when I read what the honourable member said -- I listened to it carefully, but then I read it, and read it more carefully, and I find that he is really threatening to control the operation completely, and when it comes to commissions, and apparently he didn't like what I had to say yesterday -- oh no, it was the Honourable Minister of Transport who asked a question about insurance agents getting the cream and asked whether he was talking about excessive commission rates, and the honourable member said that there should not be excessive profits being earned by insurance companies and/or their agents; and what excessive profits means it's something we have yet to hear from him, because he hasn't spelled out what is excessive. If people do nothing, then they should get paid nothing. If people are order takers, they should get paid for taking orders. And indeed that's what he said, and I quote now from Page 2931, "Agents' Commission: The fact, Mr. Speaker, that part of your plan is compulsory and part of it is optional, I think probably is an indication that it might be possible to have a different agents' commission for the compulsory than there would be for the optional." Oh, now by review, the honourable member and the Conservative Party for whom he spoke, is prepared to control agents' commissions; to create a differential in agents' commissions; and say to agents, you're not really earning a commission in connection with the compulsory feature, we will control it. Now, who said that -- my leader asked, who said that -- and I must tell him

(MR. CHERNIACK cont'd.). . . . that I am quoting the speech of the Honourable the Leader of the Official Opposition, Page 2931. And the Honourable the Member for Sturgeon Creek, the real upright, free enterpriser of all, is in agreement with it, so he too wants to control agents' commissions.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: You used the word "control", not us.

MR. CHERNIACK: Ah, he doesn't like my words. Well then, how does he like his Leader's words? I'll read them again to you. "The fact, Mr. Speaker, that part of your plan is compulsory and part of it is optional, I think probably is an indication that it might be possible to have a different agents' commission for the compulsory than there would be for the optional. Now that's something that could be established and I'm one who believes" - the intonation is mine, I don't remember his that well - "and I'm one who believes that the agency system should work, but if you'll pardon my English, Mr. Speaker," - and I'm quoting him not myself - "I don't believe the agents should have the cream test, I think that they should be paid for the work they are doing, for the function that they can make in terms of servicing their clients, but I don't think that there should be a gravy train and I think that one of the things that should very well be before the review board, and would be a part of our plan, is a review of agents' commissions." Now, did the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek listen to his Leader or indeed did the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek - who I would ask to sit down for another minute - did the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek review the document, the speech that was read and did he approve of it, and is this part of the speech or isn't it? These are questions that occur to me.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Will the honourable member permit a question?

MR. CHERNIACK: Yes.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Are you a commission agent or have you ever been a commission salesman, as I am, and I see nothing wrong with it.

MR. CHERNIACK: What was the question?

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Have you ever been involved as a commission salesman or commission agent, as I am, because I see nothing wrong with it.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, that's quite a question, quite a question, but he sees nothing wrong in controlling the commission. Now is this a control of commission or isn't it?

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Every company I represent controls my commission.

MR. CHERNIACK: That's right, Mr. Speaker. Every company he represents controls his commission, but when there's a discussion about government involvement and control of commission, oh that's not good, that's not free enterprise, but he's in the free enterprise system where he is under the thumb of the companies for whom he works and they control his commission. He can quit of course, of course he can quit.

Now the other words that I want to quote from the Honourable Leader of the Official Opposition is dealing with the claims rate. "The claims rate, Mr. Speaker, the claims ratio to the premium dollar, and, Mr. Speaker, as has been evidenced in other places, I think that it's fair to say that the claims ratio might not necessarily be the same between the compulsory plan and the optional plan. "Mr. Speaker, the Honourable the Leader of the Official Opposition, as I said last night, was giving the strongest case against insurance companies, against insurance agents in this auto insurance field, and in favour of a compulsory government operated scheme. Now of course the word "compulsory" he accepts, he used it, he believes in it.

And now I want to describe why I feel that he is really talking, if you take him to a logical conclusion, about a government operated scheme. I'll bet, Mr. Speaker, if he didn't have some of the members behind him that he does have, he'd have been supporting us from the very beginning.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address myself to the simple proposition of public utility, and in that sense I did want to address those people that I thought did not have completely blocked minds on this issue. That's why I accepted the fact last night that I would not be addressing the majority of people on the other side but a minority of them I believe, and I must say in all honesty that I believe that only a minority amongst them are prepared to look at something like this, but I have now included in that group the Honourable the Leader of the Official Opposition.

I've done my own personal soul searching on this issue and I don't think it's the most important issue that we're dealing with this session. There are many more important issues, and this has been blown completely out of perspective in relation to the meaningful things that we are doing. This is a mechanical thing we are doing and the members from the other side,

(MR. CHERNIACK cont'd.) especially the insurance agents, have been screaming and yelling, but where is there in this paper, this document of the Leader of the Official Opposition, where he talks about the poor agent whose commission he wants to cut down obviously, he wants to create a differential, he wants to control it. Where is there anything here that guarantees compensation for these people for whom they've all been clamouring? Where is there a recognition that people will be out of work because of the reduction which he envisaged here when he talks about a differential in agents' commission?

Mr. Speaker, I don't care how they spell it out, from here on in, whatever they say they will be married to these words which recognize a real differential and which say that a person who is selling compulsory insurance should have a different rate of pay than one who is selling the voluntary aspect. And that's exactly what we're saying. Once we recognize that, then whatever they say, they are recognizing that the agents today, not today, but the agents under a compulsory scheme, which they endorse, are not going to be earning their commission. -- (Interjection) -- I'm quite prepared to entertain more interruptions providing it's charged to that side, not to this side, Mr. Speaker. -- (Interjection) -- And now the Honourable the former Speaker keeps forgetting all that he tried to enforce in his days and I'm sure we don't help him, but still please take it out of your time not mine.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have done my own soul searching about this. I have felt that we have to consider and resolve the role of government in this field of auto insurance and why auto insurance. Well, Mr. Speaker, we have to consider just what insurance is, what it was, what it will be and what is the role of government, and I've enjoyed myself so much that I'm afraid I'm going to be running out of time so let me try to speed it up. -- (Interjection) -- Did somebody ask me to sit? Well, whatever the time I'll do my best.

Mr. Speaker, insurance started at a time when a group of people realized that sharing the risk amongst themselves was a very good, sensible way of insuring oneself against catastrophe. A group of people of similar, let's say income groups, of similar financial stability, of similar social habits, felt that by combining their risks together, by combining sharing the risk, then the damage to one or the other would be something that he could handle, and they guaranteed amongst each other that any damage that would occur to any one of them would be shared equally or shared amongst the others so as to create the least hurt or harm to the person who does suffer the loss, and that developed. The whole insurance industry grew up on that concept of protecting one's own assets or protecting one's own life from injury or otherwise in the field of life insurance.

And gradually there has been a substantial change; created by whom, Mr. Speaker? By government, because the original concept of insuring of auto insurance was to protect the owner and driver of a vehicle from substantial damage which he might cause and for which he will have to pay and which may create bankruptcy for him. That was the concept; the owner and the driver who didn't need insurance but who felt it advisable to have it, because if he were involved in an accident for which he was at fault he would have to pay out the possibility of so much money that it would be very harmful to him, so he, together with many others, agreed, since we are all driving cars and any one of us may have to pay substantial damages, we'll share the risk by paying premiums into a common pot.

But this has been changed. It's been changed over so many years that maybe people haven't kept up with it and realized what the change is, because the change today is that we are no longer concerned about the protection of the financial stability of the driver or of the owner, we are concerned about the person who is hurt, the person who is damaged, the person who suffers loss and may not be able to recover because the one at fault is unable to pay. That's the concept which has changed and which makes the whole talk about insurance a completely different one, because now by our legislation through the years, and why go back, by the insistence of compulsory insurance, we are not doing that to protect the owner and the driver, the original person involved, we are doing it to protect the person hurt, and once we bring in that compulsory aspect to protect the person who is going to be hurt, be it the pedestrian or be it the innocent driver or owner of a vehicle that is damaged, once that happens there's the obligation, as I see it, to make sure that if somebody is forced to buy insurance as a privilege, as a licence given to him because of the privilege to drive or own a vehicle on the road, then that person must be protected so that he gets the minimum cost and the greatest efficiency, and how that. . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I would inform the Honourable Minister he has five minutes remaining.

MR. CHERNIACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to lend this to somebody else. When we have compulsion brought about by government, and that's not regulation - and I don't care how many words the Honourable Leader of the Official Opposition played with yesterday - it is not regulation, it is compulsion and that's acceptable, and I believe every member in this House spoke in favour of compulsion, although I've learned now to exclude the Honourable Member for Rhineland because he's often of a different wavelength and I certainly have learned to exclude the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek because I find he's often on a different wavelength than the rest of his party, and the Member for Swan River asked to be recognized in the same case -- (Interjection) -- Does the Honourable Member for Swan River agreed with compulsory auto insurance or not, because he asked to be excluded.

All right, his Leader has certainly spoken for him and they want compulsory insurance, so let's forget about the government regulation because government, by the opinion of the Conservative Party, by the opinion of the New Democratic Party, by the opinion of the Liberal Party, all agree that there shall be control by compulsion for people to drive, to purchase insurance of a minimum type, and once we have agreed on that, then, Mr. Speaker, there isn't the slightest doubt in my mind that we are in the business, we are operating, whether we want to lend out or lease out our jurisdiction or whether we do it ourselves - and I wouldn't be surprised that the Wawanesa Insurance or the Portage la Prairie Insurance would be quite prepared to operate a government scheme on a commission basis. -- (Interjection) -- Oh, I hear that they've offered to do that. I didn't know that but it doesn't surprise me, and then they would act as servants of the government and why does that justify it.

So, Mr. Speaker, if we accept the fact that compulsion is necessary, that we are not protecting the original owners and drivers as they were formerly protected but really the persons that they injure, once we bring in that concept, then, Mr. Speaker, we must deliver that service which we make compulsory to buy, we must deliver it as efficiently and as cheaply as possible and no one can do it better than one company.

Now if the honourable members on the other side said, let's let it out - I don't know - let's create one company that isn't owned by government and won't be a Crown corporation and it shall handle it all, and if it is forced to operate at cost then that's fine with me, because I don't see any difference between that and a government owned corporation, but in the end this is exactly the direction in which the Honourable the Leader of the Official Opposition is going to go. He won't admit it, he will be dragged into it kicking and stamping his feet the way he was dragged into medicare, which he disliked and said so openly, he'll be dragged into this thing because he himself is forcing us to go along those lines and I think that it was a revelation to us to hear the tacit acceptance of so much in what he said.

The Liberal Party has also agreed, the Liberal Party has said: Well, give it a try, give it a whirl; we know that what Wootton said about compulsory insurance not operated by government but give it a try, once it proves itself not operable we'll go along. I think I'm paraphrasing them correctly. Mr. Speaker - oh I'm getting a shake of the head - but I still think I'm paraphrasing him correctly and I'll let him speak on his time.

MR. G. JOHNSTON: Would the Minister permit a question?

MR. CHERNIACK: On your time not mine, because I'm just about out of time.

Mr. Speaker, this is coming - it happened in Saskatchewan; it's going to happen in British Columbia - it may even happen before it's going to happen in Manitoba but that's only because it's taking us so long to deal with second reading of this bill. It's the natural, the logical trend. People will be hurt, people should not be hurt but people are being hurt all the time, and when that happens there should be an adequate look at the extent to which people are hurt, but in the end this is the only logical way to deliver a service at a minimum cost, at a maximum of service and efficiency on a scheme which is compulsory, forced on the drivers and owners by government - and we all agree to that, that it should be forced on them - and once that's done we have that one obligation, and that is to make it efficient and economical and that we can only do through a Crown corporation.

Now if I were convinced that we could do it any other way I'd be happy to see that we are relieved of that responsibility, but we will not shirk the responsibility, Mr. Speaker, because we feel it is a proper responsibility.

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

MR. G. JOHNSTON: Would the prophet permit a question?

MR. CHERNIACK: I don't believe really in the profit motive but . . .

MR. G. JOHNSTON: Does the Minister not recall that we tried to move an amendment which would ask, or the House would, by legislation, permit competition between the Crown Corporation and private industry?

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable the Leader is no more hung up than is his party on this very problem. They accepted a phrase about competition and laissez faire and freedom of choice and they are almost as far behind as - well, why compare to others, they are back in the 1910 Liberal era and they just haven't caught up. Where they were on the pension plan issue is something I still don't quite understand. These same people who participated, through their party I assume, in the bringing in of the Canada Pension Plan, removing it from competition; denying to the agents a livelihood and a great livelihood that they must have had, and either they sat back and accepted it or they were willing to stay in the Liberal Party. . . .

MR. G. JOHNSTON: Would you answer the question?

MR. CHERNIACK: I did answer the question by saying that you said, by all means let's go by competition, but I heard the Honourable the Leader of the Liberal Party - no I think it was the Honourable House Leader of the Liberal Party, I have to look in Hansard, who said, "we think that you should try the competitive system, compulsory but competitive, and if it doesn't work, then we'll be ready to look at it." Now I believe that's what he said and I'm subject to correction, but that's my recollection.

MR. G. JOHNSTON: Would the Minister permit another question? I don't know what answer but would he permit the question? Does not the Minister recall my saying when I spoke on this, that if the First Minister and his responsible people would make a sincere attempt to meet with the industry and spell out some guidelines and suggest some legislation that this House could pass, and if this failed, I gave the commitment that our group would support you in a monopolistic compulsory plan. Does the Minister not recall that?

MR. CHERNIACK: Yes, I do.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: . . . did you want to ask a question of the Minister?

MR. CRAIK: I wonder if the Minister could just state frankly - he's named jurisdictions. Can he tell us what jurisdictions in the world have a government-run -- whether they're a national jurisdiction or a regional jurisdiction -- can he tell us what jurisdictions of the world run a government-operated automobile insurance scheme?

MR. CHERNIACK: New South Wales, New Zealand, Puerto Rico - and how many more points west? - Saskatchewan - I mentioned New South Wales. Let me tell the honourable member that I have not -- (Interjection) -- somebody else is yelling now. I'll be glad to answer every question, if I hear them, one at a time but I do want to answer the Honourable Member for Riel. I confess to him that the details of the auto insurance problem are not that vivid to me because I've not studied them to that extent, but I have in the past studied carefully the effect of compulsory insurance with free competition and I have found that the rates went up tremendously. And I recall Massachusetts as being an outstanding example of a very high cost area which had compulsory insurance for many years but did not have a state-operated single system.

MR. CRAIK: I take it from that that Sweden, the Scandinavian countries, nor any other European countries run a state-operated automobile insurance scheme?

MR. CHERNIACK: I appreciate the fact that the honourable member considers me so great an authority that if I did not mention another jurisdiction then obviously it's not covered. The fact is I do not know, Mr. Speaker. I indicated names of those that I am informed do have it. That was a direct answer to a direct question. Now any assumption the honourable member makes is one I do not associate myself with. I'm told Sweden is studying it now and maybe they'll get it before we do because of the delay.

MR. HENRY J. EINARSON (Rock Lake): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister would permit another question. I was dealing, was going to deal with the subject that my colleague the Member for Riel dealt with, but I would like to know if the Minister knows whether in England they have a Crown monopolistic corporation to run automobile insurance?

MR. CHERNIACK: No, I'm sure they have many Crown monopolistic operations, but I don't know . . . just the answer.

Is the Honourable Member for Swan River asking me a question? I can never tell whether he's sitting or standing, his voice sounds so loud either way.

MR. BILTON: You know when I rise to my full height that I'll have something to say.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well if the honourable member did direct a question to me, the answer is that every time he rises to his full height does not mean he has something to say.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, even before Bill 56 was introduced it was suggested here in the House that I would take my time before deciding and I guess I was playing to the gallery because I enjoyed it. So I thought that I would place on record my position as soon as possible, and I think I spoke the day after Bill 56 was introduced. I tried to explain as clearly and honestly as I knew how, how I felt. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that actually under normal conditions there wouldn't be any reason for me to speak again on this because I feel exactly the same way as I did then, and I place the same conditions in supporting the Bill. And I've heard so much during this debate, so much that seemed to be so far away from the subject that we should be discussing; great wars between Socialism, and Fascism I might say, you might call it. And there's been so much concern for me expressed by the members of the Conservative Party that I felt it would be very cruel for me not to reassure them because they are so worried for my welfare.

Now I might say from the outset that I certainly wasn't insulted, or even hurt, when the Leader of the Official Opposition called me his fat friend -- anybody that looks at me knows that it's true, and anybody that saw me running the bases yesterday, knows that it's true. I think that it's perfectly all right. Mind you, if it would have been the Minister of Education and Youth that would have said that, I would have said "You little son-of-a-gun." But from a member that weighs about five pounds less than I do . . . I thought it was real good. So anyone knows that in the heat of debate and so on you call people names, and I suppose he hates being fat and he says, I'm going to hurt him, I'm going to call him fat. That's fine. I know how you feel, because I feel the same. And normally you know we have to be careful. For instance if I had have followed my honourable friend, the Honourable Member for Morris when he spoke, I'd have said "You little phoney member from Morris." But it was a good thing I had a couple of days to think about it and I would restrain from doing that. I would call him something nice now. I would say something like, "The Walter Mitty of the Conservative Party or the poor man's Diefenbaker" but something like that. But that - and I'm so sorry he's not here. Anytime I want to talk to him, he's gone. Mind you, last time I counted there were 11 out of 22 I think. They probably have a shift and then we come to try to speed this up, they'll say you're rushing things. We're interested.

But anyway, my honourable friend from Morris the other day was ready for his big moment. He had practised his speech, and I don't know who all his speech writers were but he had something terrific. He stood up, he coughed, took off his glasses, put them back on, took them off again. He smiled at his fan in the gallery; looked around behind him and smiled, and then he started shaking his jowls like a la Diefenbaker, and then he uttered the terrific words of wisdom: "The House should study the nationalization of funeral homes." And he looked at me and he laughed. And the people behind him looked at me, and they laughed. Mind you that was real clever, they had hit a nerve, a very sore spot. Well, Mr. Speaker, I already said but I can play the game the way they want, I can be as gentlemanly as they are; I can hit below the belt, or I can swing it out in the gutter with or without gloves, it doesn't matter to me. But I want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, and the members, that the little arrogant chipmunk from Morris did not bother me, he missed, he had a complete miss. Some of the members of this House, and maybe from both sides, seemed to think that you've got to be for one side and one side only - you know in this great battle of classes. And if you're all for business or for the rich, or you're for the working stiff -- and after all as the owner of a small business I guess I had - my directive was clear what I should have been. I should be ashamed of myself to mention anything else. If it didn't help me and maybe my kind of people, I should say to hell with labour, to hell with white collar, or blue collar workers. I guess it would only serve to embarrass me if I tried to work for the people of Manitoba. I should follow I suppose the example of the Honourable Member from River Heights, whom I'm told has his finger in many pies, and look after my kind of people.

Then maybe the Honourable Member from Roblin who keeps complaining about the minimum wages and having to spend so much time collecting sales tax, you know something that concerns me, this is what I should be doing. Or maybe I should follow the example of the Honourable Member of the Opposition himself, who is by his own account a retired capitalist - at one time he was a rich funeral director also - and now he's a professional politician - mind

(MR. DESJARDINS cont'd.) . . . you on shaky grounds, but he's still a professional politician. Maybe I should have done the same thing, followed him a few years ago when on the dying days of the session he was one of them that tried to sneak in this most unfair pension geared to help the Cabinet Ministers -- and boy I hope you challenge me on that because I can tell a story on that one. That was just a plain daylight robbery. Maybe I should have done that.

But I think before I've stated that the only way to work for our province and for our country was to see that we did not cater to any privileged class in society -- and this is what I have been trying to do for eleven years. And I hope that as long as I will continue to sit in this House, I will work for the same things. And when I am in my office in St. Boniface in the Funeral Home, then I'll work for Desjardins Funeral Chapel. This is the time to do it. In the meantime I hope I have the guts to keep on working the way I have been doing.

Now I am just wasting time in talking. We've talked about the funeral homes you know and you smile a bit and they said, what about the funeral homes? Well dammit I said so myself, and I was a lot rougher on myself and any vested interests that I might have than they were. I spoke about this the same thing, and I'm going to quote Hansard, before there was any thought in my mind that there would be an auto insurance plan brought in -- and this is on page 1256 of Hansard, October 2, 1969. Mind you, it's very hard to read, I'll try to give you the meaning anyway. I say, "I favour the free enterprise system but not necessarily at all costs. I think when the free enterprise system is not serving the best interests of people of Manitoba, when it is not going on right for Manitoba or Canada, I say that then the government not only has the right but the duty to do something about it. And I've changed my mind at times. I remember voting against a government-owned ambulance and a few years after when it was brought in by the members of the NDP Party, I supported it, because I felt that after trying so hard the free enterprises was not made to work in this field."

And here's what I said, Mr. Speaker, it's very plain. "Now as you know, Mr. Chairman, I am in the funeral business and I think that it could be said that there are a lot of funeral directors, a lot of funeral homes that have abused the public." Can I be any plainer than that? "It's a business that lends itself to that. You meet people that are filled with emotion, and if you want to take advantage of them, it's an easy thing to do. This has been done more in the States. I'm happy to say that this is not done too much here in Manitoba and I ask myself, if after working, being a third generation member in this business, after being on call for 24 hours a day for many days without a holiday, borrowing money to build a place, I would ask myself if all of a sudden the government decided all right, they should do something about it, well maybe we'll nationalize the funeral homes -- and maybe they would have a reason, maybe I would be one of them that was rooking the public. Now the government comes in and builds a funeral home right across the street, competes on even terms, if I go under, I have accepted this when I set up this business. But if the government says to me, well you cannot buy any caskets unless you buy from the government, and you cannot charge so much unless you get the approval from us -- pretty much as they are telling the industry."

And this is when we were talking about the fishermen and so on. "This is where I see that there is a difference between" -- no this is talking about the super market -- this is something strictly -- and I say now, "We have heard all kinds of things that these people want to go under" -- that's talking about the fishermen. "Let's define redundancy. Now we have been told that they have been losing money, that they were going to have their door closed. Well an accountant will find out these things. I am saying, let them have a chance to come in and say all right, because of this corporation, because of this new bill, this is what you have done to me, now give me a chance to explain my loss. Give me a chance and then we should weigh this on its own merits. I'm not suggesting that we should give them carte blanche and say, 'you send your bill, you'll get paid tomorrow'. I'm not worrying only about the fishing industry, I'm worrying about the future. These things, if we allow something to do this, if we close the door and say all right, from now on, if we ever nationalize anything, all we are thinking about is your assets, your property and whatever you have, but nothing else, we won't worry about the time that you spent in business and so on, this does not count, then I think that this is unfair."

So you see, Mr. Speaker, I could read the whole speech. I made it clear that I thought about that so the honourable members can talk all they want about nationalizing funeral homes and so on, I'm not here to look after myself. I'm here to look after all the people of Manitoba, and that doesn't worry me a darn bit.

I guess they consider me to be a real odd ball, the members on the other side. My

(MR. DESJARDINS cont'd.). . . . friends from across cannot understand how anyone could be interested in anything that doesn't serve his own personal vested interests it would seem. They are quite concerned about me and keep warning me of what's going to happen to me when Schreyer is finished with me, when he no longer needs me. They are always looking for some sinister plot and they say he must be getting a payoff somewhere. Well, I say to them today that I am getting a payoff, I'm getting a payoff every day, and I feel that for having sat with members of the government that I've been a better man for it, that I've seen what goes on on the other side of the fence also. And I say that they can throw me out any time they want but they'll never rob me of the experience that I have gained and the lessons that I have learned.

And I have achieved this, Mr. Speaker, without losing my self-respect, without losing the respect of my friends, without selling myself to anyone and without being muzzled, and I feel just as free today to - and I should say also without being a bloody hypocrite, I feel just as free today to criticize the Minister of Mines and Natural Resources for some of the things he says in this House. When he makes blanket statements about the Liberals I disagree with him, and when he says that some of the things that I have said or that the Liberals said in medicare, I stand behind every word that I said for myself or for the members of the Liberal Party then on medicare, and I'm not ashamed of that. I don't have to agree with it and he knows it, he knows it and I know it too, so he doesn't have to agree with me and I don't have to agree with many of the other members either. So I'm not selling myself and I'm not afraid to speak for what I believe in, Mr. Speaker.

Maybe this is the time to tell the honourable member also that I don't believe that this is - tell all the members of this House that this province is a socialist province, and I say that the members of the government, that they need us, and they are in power now because they had many liberal minded people that supported them, that believed in them, and if they want to stay in power those same people will have to believe in them. And I say, Sir, that I feel more than ever that I am a Liberal, a true Liberal.

At one time I agreed with the present policy of the Free Press, that is -- (Interjection) -- no, I'm not trying to be funny, I'm saying the present policy of the Free Press that said that you have to unite to fight - well I used to say to fight socialism, meaning a certain kind of socialism - the Free Press is saying now you must unite at all costs to fight the NDP. I would say that this would be taking care - even if I followed the Free Press - that would be taking care of one extreme. But there's some members on this side that I would find just as difficult getting in bed with than I do with some of the members on this side - and I don't mean because of size either. So I don't think that you achieve anything. I think that there's greater need now for people that won't be doctrinaire on either side, that'll look at certain aspects and look at everything, treat everything the way it comes. So, as I say, there's nothing difficult in what I'm doing. -- (Interjection) -- I wouldn't trust any Frenchman either.

You know, Mr. Speaker, at night when I get home I do a little bit of reading to try and forget this insurance business, and these days I'm reading a biography of the late President Theodore Roosevelt. Some of the things -- good afternoon, I mean good evening -- and some of the things that I read struck me and makes me realize what I'm talking about now, that there's extreme on both sides, that nobody has a monopoly in trying to help people or in being right. Here there was a fight between - a battle between unions and management again, and there was a Mr. George Baer who was talking to the press and this is what he said: "In July a citizen of Wilke's Bar wrote to Baer telling him it was his religious duty to end the strike. Baer's arrogant reply helped gain public sympathy for the strikers. The interests of the labouring man will be protected and cared for, not by the labour agitators but by the Christian man to whom God in his infinite wisdom has given control of the property interest of this country."

A MEMBER: He sounds like the Honourable Member from River Heights.

MR. DESJARDINS: And there's another one here. "The press then congratulated the superintendent of the union, Mr. Mitchell. Baer jumped up and he said: 'It makes me ill,' he shouted, 'when I hear the President of the United States complimenting a damned anarchist. You're completely wrong, which is what I expect from a damned busybody...' - he's talking to the President now - "... Baer shouted, shocking everyone. He pointed a finger at Theodore, saying, 'You're responsible for this travesty. Instead of ordering these swine jailed and deported, you've honoured them by inviting them here. If you want to destroy the confidence of the American people in our government I'm afraid I can't stop you, but I refuse to deal with a band of outlaws'."

(MR. DESJARDINS cont'd.)

Mr. Speaker, isn't that what we've been hearing for the last few months on the other side, people that say that they're working for Manitoba, working for the people of Manitoba, and they're yelling constantly, exaggerating -- (Interjection) -- you said that, I don't talk like that -- exaggerating and misrepresenting to scare the people of Manitoba. It seems to me that this is what they want to do.

Now the Honourable Member from Morris, who I'm pleased to see is back in his seat, made a wonderful speech, as I say, yesterday, and he talked against the famous monopoly and compulsory plan. Now when I wanted to ask him a question, oh no - you know, this is his style - he wants to close all the debates and he doesn't want anybody to interfere and he's talking about his own little private motions and so on. He's all ready to ask questions - and now he's pretending not to listen. You know what he did? You know what he did, Mr. Speaker? I think I'll give you the date here. On December 8, 1966, he voted in favour of a compulsory, monopolistic medical plan in Ottawa. Not only that, but he wanted it so fast that he chastised the government of the day and he supported an amendment that said don't wait till next year, do it now this year.

MR. GREEN: He's a socialist in a hurry.

MR. DESJARDINS: Now what was the difference? A government was saying you will buy your insurance from us, nobody else - no choice, no choice - one was dealing with health insurance, the other one with car insurance. And they say yes, we can go to whatever doctor we want. Well get your car fixed wherever you want to. It doesn't mean a thing. Now this is it. Now they're worrying, you know, about this big thing. You're either a capitalist or you're a socialist and that's it, there's no in-between, and if you or somebody else does something, you call it a different name; if you do the same thing on this side, call it a different name. And then just tell the people, the people of Manitoba and so on, "watch these people; you know, this is communism."

Well darn it, what are we getting now - and I said I was a Liberal - look at all the plans, the monopolistic plans the Liberals brought in. I want to repeat again some of the things that was said by Mr. Lang, who's a Minister presently in the Federal Government, in the Cabinet, and this is what he said, it's very clear: "There would be some increase in adjustment expense if several companies were involved in insuring, but the greatest cost increase would be in writing up the insurance. It is this that leads to the conclusion that automobile insurance like the post office should be a natural state monopoly." It's not an NDP, a Social Democrat, not even a Liberal Democrat that's saying that, it's a Minister in the Federal Government. And this is the summary that he gave: "The Saskatchewan insurance plan has been an extremely successful experiment. All of its basic ideas have not been completely implemented, but even so the savings have fully measured up to all logical expectations. Fully developed with all the kinks and defects removed, it would be immensely valuable in other jurisdictions in North America." Maybe he was anticipating the questions on the other side. "The saving" - listen to this, Mr. Speaker - "The saving from the monopoly and the compulsory approach are great enough to make automobile insurance a desirable monopoly. That is, those savings more than offset the losses resulting from bureaucracy and government control." -- (Interjection) -- I think it's a fellow named Lang, a Cabinet Minister.

Well, I'm not saying this, I'm not changing my ideas on that. I normally do not like monopoly. I said that and I'm not going to repeat the same speech I made, and as I said, normally one speech was enough. But there's been so much concern on the other side about me - you know, about the funeral business, my business and about being kicked out from these people and so on - and please, fellows, don't worry about me because I'm not a bit worried myself, and get down to the business of working for Manitoba. Forget me and work for the interests of Manitoba.

Mind you, I want to compliment the Leader of the Opposition, not for his first hour and a half but for his last twenty minutes of his speech. I want to look at this again, and if he lets me I'd like to probably discuss it with him. I hope that the rest of the debate will be in that kind of a thing and that once and for all stop calling each other all kinds of names and we'll start thinking of the people of Manitoba. -- (Interjection) -- No, no, I told you, you can call me fatty, I'm not worried about that.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I'm sorry if I lost the time of the members of this House by saying these few words, but I felt it would be cruel if I did not let the people know that I'm not

(MR. DESJARDINS cont'd.), too worried and I thank them for their concern anyway.

MR. WEIR: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member would permit a discussion. In his discussion on the principles of the bill, I just kind of missed what approach he was going to take to the amendment and I wondered if he would clarify that.

MR. DESJARDINS: Well, you know, I was shaky there for awhile. I didn't know exactly how I was going to consider your plan, but when I wanted to question, you said, no no, I can speak more than forty minutes because this motion means kaput, finished, go on. So you have no alternative, you're just trying to kill the bill. What do you think I'm going to do?

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MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, one of the tantalizing things about this debate is that one prepares to address himself to a specific part of the question, a specific issue before us, and then other legislators, other members of the Chamber participate and say things, provocative and intriguing things that demand the attention of the person next on his feet and it seems that one becomes sidetracked and finds himself devoting much of his time to commenting on statements that have gone before rather than addressing himself to the issue at hand, and I probably am inclined to fall into that trap as severely as anyone here. Certainly tonight I can't resist a reference to the foregoing performance by the Honourable Member for St. Boniface. My colleague the Member for Lakeside is always a difficult act to follow, Sir, but how much more difficult is the Member for St. Boniface, particularly when he's in fine verbal and histrionic fettle. -- (Interjection) -- Well, I'll have a briefing with you afterwards. No, I wish he'd stay, Mr. Speaker, because I wanted to say one or two more things.

I find really that the most nerve-racking thing about the speeches of the Honourable Member for St. Boniface is that one never knows when Ed Norton is going to pop up out of the sewers and participate in the routine. I don't know how familiar you are, Sir, with the television program The Honeymooners, but I submit that the Honourable member for St. Boniface certainly ranks as Manitoba's answer to Ralph Cramdon and does an excellent job of imitation - his bluster and . . .

MR. BOROWSKI: Who's Cramdon?

MR. SHERMAN: . . . his bluster, and for that we're very reminiscent of that excellent comic character. But he is a lovable fellow all the same, and despite the difficulties that I had with him last night on the base pass to which he referred in the stadium, Sir, I do hope that if he is not "my fat friend" in the words of the Leader of my party, I do hope that he is at least my substantial friend.

I was intrigued by his references to the fact that he was in the funeral business, and I don't share or feel any sense of criticism for the position that he may have taken with respect to nationalization or socialization of other industries or with any views he may have on that subject in relation to the funeral business itself, nor do I have any feelings one way or the other about the funeral business except that I'd like to have as little to do with it as possible and for as long a time as possible. But it's one thing for a man to be in the funeral business, Mr. Speaker, and another for him to be in a funereal business, and the danger in my view is that in the alignment into which the Member for St. Boniface has entered at the present time in this House and in this province, that he is in a funereal business and he's engaged in laying private enterprise to rest.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance had some interesting comments this evening. One of the most provocative ones was his challenge to the House Leader of the Liberal Party when he said that the Liberals are back in the 1910 era. Well, they may be, I don't know whether they are or not, but I know that this is an amusing comment, amusing to both Liberals and Conservatives in this House, Sir, because many of us have often remarked to each other in recent weeks and months on the extent to which the members of the government are fighting the battles, or fighting the socialist battles, the street battles of fifty to a hundred years ago, fighting enemies that long since were defeated and laid to rest and vanished from the scene, fighting images and visions, bad visions of haunted revolutionaries of a century ago, and as I think I said a week or two ago during a debate that involved the Attorney-General, the attitude that many of the front benchers on the government side and many of their colleagues take in the issues facing the province and being debated today in this House, is an attitude of a party that is rushing headlong into the nineteenth century.

Mr. Speaker, I want to support the amendment moved by my colleague the Minister for Morris. I would assume that goes pretty much without saying. I want also to add my support to the program revealed in this House Tuesday night by the leader of my party, and I want to speak specifically for a minute or two about the compulsory aspect of automobile insurance and our position in this party philosophically on the question of insistence of compulsory legislation of the kind that's discussed in this debate. We have no objection to compulsory automobile insurance in the Conservative Party. In fact we have taken a fairly definitive stand, individually and collectively, on the critical need, the critical requirement of and for compulsory automobile insurance in the Province of Manitoba, in our society, because of the absolutely vital requirement for the protection and the safety of society at large, Sir.

(MR. SHERMAN cont'd.)

So we don't find it difficult to endorse and accept the concept of compulsion and we have no hesitation in saying that, in our view, automobile insurance should be compulsory, that public liability and property damage insurance should be mandatory, but we don't believe that compulsory collision insurance is either desirable or defensible - either desirable or defensible. We don't see why collision insurance should be necessary and mandatory and compulsory any more so than is insurance against fire or against theft.

Mr. Speaker, my friend the Honourable Member for Crescentwood had some interesting things to say last Thursday afternoon and evening when he entered the debate, and there was something in particular in fact that he said that I think had extreme relevance to, and significance for, the debate and for every member of this House. On Page 2792 of Hansard for June 11th, the 2:30 p. m. Session, Sir, he said with reference to this debate, he said: "I believe that most people who have taken part in this debate have reflected long and hard on the substance and intent of Bill 56. A bill like this is one that does encourage members to expose their mental and spiritual state and I think that's what's happened." Well, this is extremely meaningful I think Mr. Speaker, when measured in the context of many comments that have been made and many performances and remarks that have been made in this debate both inside and outside the Chamber - both inside and outside the Chamber - by, among others, the Attorney-General who has admitted reference to what he sees as the dishonest practices of an entire industry; by the Minister of Agriculture who has spoken on the racial discrimination which he feels is practiced in an industry; by the Minister of Transport . . .

MR. CHERNIACK: Would the honourable member not agree that the Minister of Agriculture said that it was practised by "a" company?

MR. SHERMAN: He never to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, identified the company but . . .

MR. CHERNIACK: He also said it "was", he did not say that he knew that it is being practised.

MR. SHERMAN: In any event I don't see that that alters the intent or the meaning of my remarks.

MR. CHERNIACK: . . . correct the statement.

MR. SHERMAN: That is or was practised in the industry.

MR. CHERNIACK: He did not say "is", that's the point.

MR. SHERMAN: He did not say it was not now practised in the industry, he did not say it was not now practised in the industry.

MR. CHERNIACK: He didn't imply that it was. -- (Interjection) -- That's right. Well do you think it is?

MR. SHERMAN: He did not say, Mr. Speaker, that the industry has done anything that he knows of to eliminate this abhorrent practice to which he referred, therefore he left a clear implication - and it was certainly clear in the newspaper reports and I would hope we don't have to go into that debate again - that racial discrimination has been, in his view, practised in the automobile insurance industry. All right, this is what I said.

Other remarks, Mr. Speaker, such as those made by the Minister of Transport with respect to certain Chambers of Commerce and the role that they played vis-a-vis the automobile insurance industry and individual automobile insurance agents; and the comments that have been made by the Minister of Mines and Resources himself, who was probably the most articulate spokesman for the forces of revolution and the forces hostile to the private enterprise system on the Treasury benches.

Mr. Speaker, there was one remark in particular that was made, I believe, on Monday evening by the Minister of Mines and Resources that I think bears reference to at the present time. It was on page 2899 of Hansard for the evening session of Monday, June 15th. The Minister of Mines and Resources said, Sir, in an exchange with the Member for Sturgeon Creek, "We are not here to satisfy the objections of the honourable members, we are here to satisfy the aspirations of the people of the Province of Manitoba."

Now I'm quoting the full sentence so that the full thrust of his remark is taken in context, unlike some remarks of mine that have been taken out of context and thrown back at me by, among others, members like the Member for Osborne who believes in taking a phrase out of a sentence and hurling that back in the face of the speaker and challenging him with the implications, deriving from three or four or perhaps half a dozen words out of a paragraph of remarks. But in this case I'm taking the Minister of Mines and Resources full sentence even though I

(MR. SHERMAN cont'd.) appreciate that the second clause in the sentence, to a certain degree, minimizes the impact of the intention of the opening clause and therefore weakens my argument slightly, but to be honest and to be fair, as the Minister of Mines and Resources I believe has been in this debate, I confront him with the full sentence, the full remark that he made: "We are not here to satisfy the objections of the honourable members, we are here to satisfy the aspirations of the people of the Province of Manitoba."

Well, I wonder how he makes the differentiation, Mr. Speaker, between the objections of the honourable members so-called, such as my colleague from Sturgeon Creek, and the aspirations of the people of Manitoba. He talks, and the Minister for Crescentwood has talked at some length about the people and what the people want and what is good for the people, and they have never yet answered us or anybody else satisfactorily when we have raised the question about their mandate and about their right to speak as authoritatively as they attempt to do for those people.

I would remind him that although indeed he sits on the treasury benches of this Legislature and I sit far removed in the opposition, I would remind him, if he needs it, that in the election of a year ago his party I think accumulated something in the nature of 39 percent of the popular vote and the party to which I belong I think accumulated something in the nature of 36 percent of the popular vote. So there is a pretty slim difference in terms of the expression of the electorate at that time, Mr. Speaker, and I wonder when he makes a statement which I suggest borders on arrogance, such as this one on Monday evening last, "We are not here to satisfy the objections of the honourable members, we are here to satisfy the aspirations of the people of the Province of Manitoba," I wonder how he justifies that kind of phraseology when he's challenging or challenged by the Member for Sturgeon Creek or the Member for Arthur or any member on this side of the House, does he not think that he is being confronted in that situation with the wishes and the intentions of some of the people of Manitoba, perhaps almost as many people of Manitoba who subscribe to the position that he took and takes. So I find this a rather unsatisfactory and, as I've said, a rather arrogant position. I think it's really out of character for the Minister of Mines and Resources to have made a statement like that.

MR. GREEN: I wonder if the honourable member would permit a question at this time.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, yes.

MR. GREEN: He's referred to my statement. Would he not agree that it would be impossible for any government to satisfy the objections of opposition members in proceeding with legislation, and that if one tried to do that, one could never pass any legislation which was contentious.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, I would agree with it up to a point but I don't think that a kind of declamatory repudiation of an opposition member's challenge reflects the kind of democratic procedure that the Minister is now talking about.

MR. GREEN: I merely said satisfy the objections, I didn't say we shouldn't listen to them.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, there were one or two other things that the Minister said on Monday night that also disturbed me and they had reference specifically to some of the comments that have been made about a Minister, or a former Minister in Saskatchewan, Mr. Boldt, by people on this side and other people within and without these halls, and the Minister made reference at that time to the fact that an individual which he described, Sir, as the grey eminence of the automobile insurance companies sitting in the gallery watching our proceedings, had said to one of his colleagues, or two of his colleagues at one point in this session, and I quote from page 2902 of Hansard, "I am here to get your job or to put you out of your job." And the Minister went on to say, "and that's what they are here for, Mr. Speaker, that's what they are here for and that really is what is being decided in this House. Are the Ministers of the Crown going to be chosen by the people of the Province of Manitoba or are they going to be chosen by the private automobile insurance industry?"

I then asked the Minister - and I don't know that I rose from my seat to ask the question but it was caught by the recording system and by the Hansard reporters so I would assume that the Minister heard it too - I asked him: "Are you not there to get 1400 agents jobs?" And the Minister didn't answer that question.

MR. GREEN: I didn't hear it.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, I file this question with the Minister for consideration and perusal this evening. Not at this particular point but perhaps during the latter stages of the sitting

(MR. SHERMAN cont'd.) tonight or overnight he'll think about that question. Is he not there really to get 1400 agents jobs, because to make the saving that he and his colleagues have talked about in this program, in this plan, it's been conceded, I submit, by many members of the government - perhaps the Minister isn't one of them, but by many of them, Mr. Speaker, that the only way they can do it is to eliminate the commission for the individual agents, ergo the agent himself, the private agent himself, so he is really there to get 1400 agents jobs.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, will the honourable member permit another question? Mr. Speaker, I just want to know whether the honourable member will accept the fact that I did not hear his question. Had I heard it, I would have dealt with it.

MR. SHERMAN: I accept that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Then we have the Member for Crescentwood, Mr. Speaker, who, as I said, had made that very interesting comment last Thursday to the effect that this is the kind of debate that reveals the mental and spiritual state of those taking part in it. Well, the comments of the Member for Crescentwood in both the afternoon and evening sittings, Sir, for Thursday, June 11th as recorded in Hansard, contain some interesting dissertations and observations on the subject of freedom or what he sees as freedom, and on my hearing of his remarks - and I was here for the entire duration of his address - and on my re-reading them in Hansard, I am forced to the conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that the Member for Crescentwood sees no freedom in our present system and no good in it whatever, that he really sees only slavery in it, and if members disagree I challenge them to check Page 2794 of Hansard for June 11th, the 2:30 p. m. sitting, and I think they will find substantiation for that observation in the member's remarks.

What the Member for Crescentwood really means when he talks about freedom, what he really means by freedom, his kind of freedom, is conformity - conformity. What he really means by it is the cult of mediocrity. What he really means by it is Mr. Average Man produced en masse - Mr. Average Man produced en masse. I asked the Member for Crescentwood, as a consequence of his declamatory statements to the effect that there was no competition in the industry as it exists at the present time, I asked him, Sir, if this industry is totally devoid of competition, I wonder if he can account for the situation that I placed on the record and which is in Hansard, whereby I advised the House that I had found that by approaching five different companies I was able to make a choice between five different rates and the discrepancies were rather substantial.

The Member for Crescentwood said, Sir, that he could not account for my particular experience but he went on to suggest that he doubted that it was a very common one. Well, I did make reference - the date escapes me at the moment but it was during the month of May in the earlier stages of this debate - precisely to the five different rates available to me, as a consequence of investigating through an insurance broker, the opportunities available. I think I told members at that time that the rates for the car that I was discussing, which is a 1968 Meteor Rideau, 2 door hardtop, ranged from a high offered by one company of \$153 - a high from one company of \$153 to a low, Sir, of \$104.40 and the range was as follows: \$153, \$147, \$136, \$133 and \$104.40.

I told the House at that time that I had not taken the cheapest rate, as a matter of fact I took the one in the middle because the agent that I dealt with gave me deferred payment privileges which I find very convenient and I'm prepared to pay the high rate to have that convenience, but I could have a rate ranging anywhere from \$104 to \$153 on that car that I'm driving at the present time, precisely the same coverage, depending on the company I went to, and those rates varied as a consequence of the commercial situations that the individual companies find themselves in - their rent, their staff, their overhead, their taxes, the claims against them, and I challenge the assertion by the Member for Crescentwood that there is no competition in this industry. My experience is that there is substantial, wide-ranging competition which gives me very wide-ranging freedom of choice.

Having said that though, Mr. Speaker, and with an eye on the clock because I see I've used approximately three-quarters of my time, I want to say, I want to reiterate again that we have no hesitation in the Progressive Conservative Party in supporting the compulsory aspect of automobile insurance except in the area of collision. We say that nobody should be permitted to operate a lethal weapon - and that's what an automobile is, a ton or more of speeding steel - without taking out protection for all those citizens who come in contact with it, either in mobile terms or on foot, for all with whom his vehicle may come in contact. The other way is tantamount of course to turning a man out on the street with a gun in his hand and giving him license

(MR. SHERMAN cont'd.) to fire it off in any and all directions.

So we insist compulsory coverage on public liability and property damage, and in fact on the 3-D aspect, the Death, Dismemberment and Disability, because if I do not cover myself, in the eventuality of a fatal accident, and I lose my life in a fatal accident, then there is no justification for saddling society and the state with support of my survivors. But when it comes to collision, fire and theft, and those particular aspects of the problem and program that are personal and that are directly the result of individual choice and directly the prerogative of the individual and his right to choose, we say we want no part of compulsory insurance and we reject it and repudiate it without argument, Sir. Compulsory public liability and property damage; compulsory death, dismemberment and disability coverage; but that does not mean, in our concept of a productive society, monopoly coverage. It doesn't mean monopoly coverage either in favour of a government or monopoly coverage in favour of an individual private enterprise.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs in discussions with me outside the Chamber following the presentation of our program by the Leader of my Party Tuesday evening, Sir, said to me that our PC plan, the People and Car plan proposed by the Leader of our Party, was in essence proposed by the Insurance Bureau of Canada in British Columbia recently and rejected. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is not so. The Minister of Municipal Affairs did not say this in the Chamber. He and I were discussing it outside, and I'm sorry he's not here at the moment because I have investigated that contention and I've found that it's not so.

The essential and the absolutely inviolable ingredient of difference, Sir, is this, that our plan calls for a \$300 immunity and voluntary optional deductible down to \$25.00. Their plan, the plan advanced by the Insurance Bureau of Canada in British Columbia, imposed a \$250 deductible limitation and that first \$250, Sir, was not insurable. That first \$250 was not insurable. The injured party in an accident would have to recover his first \$250 damages from the other party by taking him into Small Debts Court - that's the only way he could get it. Let's say there were five cars involved in the accident, his and four others, and let's say, take the hypothetical case that each one of them had \$250 damage done. Mr. Speaker, under the plan considered and rejected in British Columbia, the driver at fault would have wound up having to pay \$1,250 out of his own pocket, \$250 for each of the four who suffered as a consequence of his actions and his own \$250.00. Now this is the essential difference. That was a 250-dollar deductible not insurable; ours, Sir, is a 300-dollar immunity with voluntary optional deductible down to \$25.00; and I submit that there is a substantial difference in principle.

The whole rationale, the whole search in British Columbia, Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba and elsewhere in North America in recent years, has been to find a program that could avoid the heavy litigation and subrogation costs that accrue from those 86 percent of all accidents that produce damages amounting to less than \$300.00, and the PC plan hopefully provides that answer; hopefully it'll serve as a guideline for other jurisdictions. Potentially, it could solve the problem in jurisdictions across North America and throughout the world in those areas where officials have been wrestling with this precise problem, how to bring those costs under control and still guarantee the protection of society against the lethal weapon, the automobile, and still preserve the vital element of freedom and individual choice.

So it could, Sir, set the guidelines for jurisdictions all over the western world to follow. We believe that it could be a revolutionary breakthrough in the whole controversial area of automobile insurance. And an indispensable ingredient of that plan, Mr. Speaker, is the element of compulsory coverage in the areas of liability and public damage to protect society, but total freedom as to whether an automobile owner needs to protect his own property.

There is nothing evil or immoral or difficult for us to swallow as Conservatives about compulsory participation in a program when the protection of society or of the general public is involved, Sir. There is nothing difficult for us to swallow in that concept. If there were, we would not be able to contribute logically and reasonably in times of national emergency, and I suggest that my friend the Minister of Mines and Resources would concede that the Conservative Party has contributed as much as his party or any other party in this country in times of national emergency and we would not be able to do that if we found this such a despicable and indigestible philosophy.

But we don't believe in evoking compulsion where it is not necessary, Sir. We don't believe in evoking it where it's not necessary and there are areas, and I've referred to them, in the field of automobile insurance where it is not necessary and if imposed would be onerous.

(MR. SHERMAN cont'd.) It is in fact - and I risk using strong language now - it is in fact a form of enslavement, Mr. Speaker, to say that all operators must have collision coverage on all their vehicles, and my good and smiling friend the Member for St. George who is nodding his head in agreement over there, surely, surely must have concerned himself about his farm vehicles.

MR. BILL URUSKI (St. George): Ask the people.

MR. SHERMAN: Surely he must have concerned himself - surely he must have concerned himself, Sir, about the three or four vehicles that he operates on his farm. I don't care whether he has collision insurance on them or not, but I'll tell you this, that I think in his moments of total political honesty he would agree that there is no reason why he should have to have collision coverage on them, on the vehicles on his farm, on the trucks that he drives on his farm property only or on country roads linking part of his property with another part of his property and never coming into contact with what could be described as highway traffic or urban traffic. Why should he have to carry collision on those farm trucks and farm vehicles of his? -- (Interjection) -- Well, perhaps he hasn't got a farm.

But this is one of the most onerous aspects of compulsory collision coverage, the effect that it has on people who are engaged in enterprises such as farming who have three, four and five vehicles. Why should they not have the freedom to choose for themselves whether they want collision coverage or not. Of course they've got to have public liability and property damage, but why do they have to have collision? So I say, Sir, that it is a form of enslavement to impose it. And the Member for Crescentwood, who purports to be much interested in freedom, I think seems to have brought himself to a strange distortion of values when he talks on one hand about freedom and on the other hand about a system that imposes on people a mandatory regulation saying they have to do something which they don't really need. Where, Mr. Speaker, is the people's freedom there?

Some people have said to us in the Conservative Party that we would have a very strong case in this debate if we had not bothered to go into the technicalities of trying to improve the situation within the industry at all, if we had just said: "Ladies and gentlemen, we're free enterprisers, we believe in free enterprise, we believe free enterprise can do it better and that's all there is to the case, that's all there is to our position; we believe free enterprise can do it better." But we haven't said that, we haven't said that in those restricted terms. We have, through our Leader, proposed a plan, a program, a policy that could eliminate some of the weaknesses that currently exist within the industry, that could improve, that could eliminate some of the deficiencies, and yet this could still preserve the things that we hold dear in terms of our philosophy and our view on what makes society productive and progressive.

This is the whole rationale for the program advanced by the Leader of my Party, and in it he has, I submit, solved many of these questions that have nagged at the public and at officials, at drivers and operators and insurers in jurisdictions the length and breadth of the western world for the last 25 years, and still preserve what we believe to be the one vital, undeniable and inviolable ingredient of a productive and progressive society, and that is the free enterprise principle of freedom to choose, of freedom to make one's decision for oneself and not have it imposed on him from without.

So this is why we haven't restricted our argument along the lines that some people have suggested. We have attempted to produce a constructive and a productive program that would solve the problems which we concede exist for many automobile owners, for many vehicle operators, and still retain that essential quality of freedom which we at least, Sir, hold dearly important.

The government program specifically in its insistence on across-the-board compulsory coverage is really a kind of soft sell enslavement, a kind of soft sell enslavement, Mr. Speaker, . . .

MR. SPEAKER: May I remind the honourable member he has five minutes remaining.

MR. SHERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. . . . because it embodies a rigid regulation of the individual in this area of collision insurance particularly, which says to him that he has to have something he neither wants nor needs. It's not an obvious, open, frank or vivid invasion of individual privacy or individual rights or individual freedom, but it is an insidious one, it is an insidious one and therefore it's all the more unacceptable to us. It's really, Mr. Speaker, the principle of the compulsory unioncheck-off carried across fresh borders, superimposed on society in new shape and form. It's the kind of concept, Sir, that underlines for

(MR. SHERMAN cont'd.) me the truth of that old time-honoured saw which holds that if you were never a Socialist you've got no heart, and if you're forever a Socialist you've got no brains.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. HOWARD R. PAWLEY (Minister of Municipal Affairs) (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the honourable member would permit a question or two. I believe the honourable member in my absence referred to a private discussion we had just the other evening in respect to the B. C. plan. Do I understand the Member from Fort Garry to have denied that the provisions of the British Columbia insurance bill contained provisions allowing for a 250-dollar deductible on the public liability and property damage?

MR. SHERMAN: No, and I'm sorry that the Minister wasn't in the House. I said that the Minister and I, Sir, had had a conversation outside the Chamber and the Minister had suggested to me that our program was really pretty much a duplication or an imitation of a program that the Insurance Bureau of Canada proposed in British Columbia recently and that was rejected. What I said was that at the time that we talked I wasn't aware of the fine differences and nuances between the two proposals but I checked them out, and I've discovered that there is a very fundamental difference between the two, because our program calls for a 300-dollar immunity with a voluntary optional deductible down to 25, and the B. C. program was a program that called for a 250-dollar deductible. But, Mr. Speaker, that \$250.00 was not insurable, you paid that \$250.00 regardless, and you paid the other fellow if he dragged you into court over it.

MR. PAWLEY: Is the honourable member suggesting that that is the provision that is in the B. C. bill at the present time, that a B. C. motorist would not have been able to have obtained the additional insurance?

MR. SHERMAN: No, what I said, Mr. Speaker, was the the Minister had said to me that our plan was the same as the plan proposed by the Insurance Bureau of Canada in B. C. and rejected. The one that the IBC proposed and rejected, which I wasn't that familiar with at the time of our conversation, so I went and checked it out and I found there was this fundamental difference, that the IBC plan proposed and rejected in B. C. had a 250-dollar deductible not insurable. There was no way you could be covered on that first \$250.00.

MR. PAWLEY: Has the honourable member, has he had opportunity to have read the brief submitted by the Insurance Agents Association of Manitoba referring to the plan in B. C. and what in fact is in the present B. C. insurance bill but was never proclaimed by the B. C. government because of public outcry. I would request the honourable member if he's read Page 6 of the agents' brief dealing with this area submitted last fall to the Manitoba Insurance Committee.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to do that. I assure the Minister of Municipal Affairs I've read as much material on it as I could possibly absorb and I am sure that I have read the Insurance Agents of Manitoba report in full, but the point is - I will check it again - but the point is that the plan that he and I were discussing was rejected in B. C. , and I'm saying to him the reason it was rejected was because the 250 deductible was not insurable. Our program is a 300-dollar immunity which leaves a 300-dollar area that is insurable.

MR. PAWLEY: Is the honourable member not aware that the plan in B. C. did permit the lowering of the deductible to 25 from the 250, that it in fact is the very same plan that you're proposing in this House with the exception that your plan is 300 rather than 250.

MR. SHERMAN: No, I don't accept that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George.

MR. PAWLEY: Will the honourable member permit another question? Is the honourable member aware that the agents' submission to the committee last fall indicated that actuary studies had been undertaken by the Insurance Bureau of Canada and that those studies showed that the formula would be at least as expensive and possibly more expensive than the existing plan with full property damage liability insurance. And I could define formula, as described by the agents' agreement, that property damage insurance up to \$250.00 would be available on a voluntary basis and that collision deductibles of less than 250.00 would be available. Excuse me, I'm prepared to file the agents' submission.

MR. SHERMAN: Well no, that's all right. Mr. Speaker, what B. C. has got now is apparently acceptable in B. C. Nobody's arguing that point, although it's been suggested in this Chamber that there may be changes in B. C. , but my information is that the British Columbia program is working out fairly satisfactorily and so far is acceptable, but the Minister and I,

(MR. SHERMAN cont'd.) Sir, in our conversations outside this Chamber were talking about a program that was proposed and rejected in B. C. and it is that one he said we were imitating, and I am saying we are not imitating it, there is a glaring fundamental difference.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, a subsequent question. Then why was the provision in the B. C. insurance bill incorporating your provisions not proclaimed in the Province of B. C. ?

MR. SHERMAN: I do not know. Our plan was devised on our own. We had no consultation, to my knowledge, with B. C. officials.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Would the member permit a question? I'd like to know how do you stand behind your leader's comments when he stated that he would impose in fact rate schedules, or rate controls on the agents' commission?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, I don't really want to go into any more detail than to say -- (Interjection) -- Well, Mr. Speaker, that aspect of course would be subject to review. What I want to say essentially is that -- the member has asked me where I stand with respect to my leader and the program that he proposed, and all I'd like the member to know is that I support it 101 percent, and when it comes down to regulation of agents' commissions or regulations of anything else, or ceilings on any aspect of it, it'll be worked out fairly and subject to continual review, but that doesn't eliminate the private operator, the private entrepreneur. I find the question a rather specious one, Mr. Speaker, because I think really that what the member is trying to get at is whether I support my leader's position on this subject or not, and I wish to assure him that I unequivocally do.

A MEMBER: Do you get more for good turkeys or bad turkeys?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: If the member doesn't know what I'm getting at, is what he stated that . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Has the honourable member a question? The Honourable Minister of Finance.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the honourable member, to ask him whether he does not recognize the danger to a part of a livelihood of an agent whose commission would be controlled or reduced because of the fact that there is a compulsory feature involved in the policy he sells.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, all I can say to that is that that does not threaten an agent's livelihood or his profession or his income to the extent that it's threatened under the proposal put forward by the government.

MR. CHERNIACK: So it's a matter of degree then, is that it?

MR. URUSKI: . . . ask the honourable member a further question?

MR. SPEAKER: I'm wondering whether this cross-examination may not end at this point. There is a purpose to asking questions after a member takes his seat and it's for clarification purposes of the statement which the honourable member may have made and someone may have misunderstood, but not as a device which I suspect on occasion has become extending one's own time for debate. Are you ready for the question? The Honourable Minister of Transportation.

MR. BOROWSKI: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Member for River Heights spends half an hour every day cross-examining. I see no reason why . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I do not believe the Honourable Minister has a point of order at this time. The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. WATT: Mr. Speaker, it's now ten minutes to ten and I wondered probably if the House Leader might submit to the possibility of adjourning so that I could adjourn the debate now and start it -- (Interjection) -- Well I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for River Heights, that debate be adjourned.

MR. SPEAKER presented the motion and after a voice vote declared the motion carried.

MR. GREEN: How about Bill No. 80, Mr. Speaker - Page 2, an Act to amend The Social Allowances Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Bill No. 80. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MRS. INEZ TRUEMAN (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, there are a few comments which I feel should be made concerning Bill 80, and some of the new amendments to the Social Assistance Act are quite noteworthy changes in principle. A shortening of the period of time before a person qualifies for provincial assistance from one year to ninety days should correct the

(MRS. TRUEMAN cont'd.) rather uneven practices that exist throughout the province and the various municipalities, if in fact the province does pick up those who are eligible for transfer after that three months. We might note in passing that the City of Winnipeg has not been that fortunate, however we went over that a little earlier in the evening, the 700 cases who have been left on the City of Winnipeg welfare responsibility. Now with unemployment and welfare rolls growing to the extent that they are these days, with the welfare caseload up 26 percent over last year for the City of Winnipeg's caseload alone, this could be quite a relief to the municipalities.

The assistance to undergraduates, academic and technical-vocational students is a change in policy in that the age of 18 years no longer means discontinuance of allowance, that this provision appears wide open, not just for those whose families are unable to provide for them without social assistance but open to anyone whose parents say that they can no longer afford to keep them. Now hopefully there will be some sort of adequate needs test applied, and yet with the sum of \$600,000 set aside for this program according to the Honourable Minister of Mines and Natural Resources, it looks to me as if quite generous use is going to be made of this provision. I think we mustn't forget, too, the effect of the changing of the age of majority to 18 years. This means that although the young man's assistance might be cut off, at the same time he would be eligible to sign for a loan. He would be considered an adult and could handle his financial problems independently in that way.

I think, too, that we would like to know, in view of this provision in this bill, what will happen to the present bursary program. We would wonder how abuse of this section could be prevented and this is a question which I think we must have answered. We don't know of no instance of a deserving student who did not receive help from the previous Progressive Conservative government under the legislation which we have at the present time, and we can still point with pride to the Social Assistance Act which was brought in by the Roblin Government. This Act served as a model that's copied by the other provinces and by the Federal Government in the Canada Assistance Plan.

It's not clear to us whether this amendment is a measure in the direction of universal free education, and so perhaps this should more properly be under the Department of Education. I think we would all like to see easier access to higher education as well as many other opportunities, and yet . . .

MR. TOUPIN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry but I can't hear the honourable member and I'd like to hear her contribution.

MRS. TRUEMAN: Thank you. I was saying that we might all like to see easier access to higher education and other similar opportunities but that there is a difference between what we would like to do and what we are able to do.

This bill, in trying to strengthen appeal procedures by requiring all changes in social allowances to be put in writing, in a large department such as that in the City of Winnipeg, would keep one staff person busy full time. There's a constant turnover in clients, and even within a particular family the monthly report of additional income by that family would have a number of possible changes. It might be that one of the children had left home or perhaps a husband has returned home, perhaps someone managed to earn just a little bit more money that month and all these changes would have to be placed in writing. Now with over 6,000 people on welfare, perhaps around 1,400 families, this is a lot of paper work. The City of Winnipeg for instance refers transient men to the Salvation Army hostels at the rate of 300 per night, and if they had to fill in a form for every admission and every discharge, I think you can see that this would be a veritable blizzard of papers.

There is the implication behind this provision that perhaps some cruel and valid decisions may be being made by social welfare departments that would justify such an increased burden of paper work, and yet no such case has been made. The right of appeal is also worded in such a way that if a municipality didn't comply then there would be no cost sharing, so it is mandatory in effect. When this bill comes before the Law Amendments Committee, I think we will want to talk some more about this particular section regarding the appeal procedures.

I believe that's all the comments that I have to make at the present time, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: It is now 10:00 o'clock.

MR. GEORGE HENDERSON (Pembina): Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move that debate be adjourned, seconded by the Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MR. SPEAKER presented the motion and after a voice vote declared the motion carried.

MR. SPEAKER: It is now 10:00 o'clock; the House is adjourned and will stand adjourned until 10:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.