

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, 22 February, 1988.

Time — 8:00 p.m.

MADAM SPEAKER, Hon. M. Phillips: Before reconvening, I'd like to direct the attention of honourable members to the fact that we have Miss Janet Summers sitting at the table with us today for the first time and I'd like, on behalf of all the members, to welcome her to the Chamber. Miss Summers is one of our Committee Clerks who will be rotating with Miss Clive on a regular basis.

The Honourable Member for Brandon West has 18 minutes remaining.

MR. J. McCRAE: I'd like to say a word or two about the department which, up until a couple of years ago, was the closest department to my heart, that being the Department of Attorney-General. I'm shocked as a Manitoban to be told by an \$82,000 autocrat Deputy Minister that a 10-month wait for a trial in court is acceptable. That is absolutely not so. Manitobans are not prepared to put up with that, Madam Speaker. Can you imagine being a witness or an accused, or the family of a witness, or the family of a victim, or the family of an accused, waiting 10 months for a trial? This is unprecedented as far as I know in Manitoba's history and it is totally unacceptable. So are RCMP cutbacks in rural Manitoba.

Recently in Brandon, we've heard stories of violence being carried on by youngsters in our city. I have raised with the former Attorney-General many times, and I will be raising again in his present capacity as Minister responsible for the Constitutional Law Division of the Department of Attorney-General, the matter of Charter compliance of Manitoba's Laws. There are a number of cases which I have pointed out clearly to the Minister's attention. There are problems in that regard, not the least of which is the fact that religious minorities are being discriminated against when it comes to exemption from union dues payment.

It's shocking to me that the independent Law Reform Commission should be fired and replaced by public servants, the judges appointed by this government without the approval of the Manitoba Bar Association, in fact, with the expressed disapproval in the case of one of our judges.

As a former court reporter, Madam Speaker, I'm very concerned about the future of the industry, No. 1. I'm concerned about service provided to the bar and bench by court reporters in our province, which are being replaced by machines to the disadvantage of the bench, Bar and, of course, the court reporters involved.

I'm concerned as a Brandonite about the amalgamation of the Family Court with the Family Division of the Queen's Bench, and I encourage the new Minister to get on with that. I'm also concerned about changes that are urgently needed to the Brandon Court House. Madam Speaker, these kinds of responsibilities should not be carried on by a part-time Attorney-General. It's been suggested that our present Attorney-General is a part-time Attorney-General and

denied by himself. Then why is it so that our present Attorney-General told the Crown Attorneys' meeting in December, and I'll quote: "You won't be seeing too much of me for the next while. I'll be busy fighting free trade." I tell you, Madam Speaker, the position of the chief law enforcement officer of this province is too important to be regarded as a part-time job.

Many of my colleagues have discussed free trade, and I'm sure we'll be discussing it again later this week so I'll cut my remarks to something a little briefer than I had in mind originally. But I will quote something John Polanyi said. John Polanyi is a Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry. He said that free trade is the way of the future. John Polanyi is a scientist and he said: "In science, there is no duty levied on ideas and we can compete internationally and we compete internationally. It's a logical extension that business, which depends on ideas, compete internationally." Madam Speaker, Canada has come of age. Let's no longer be reactionary about this, let's not be hidebound. Let's not be bigoted like the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, or narrow. Let's not be afraid of the future.

We see paranoia in Mr. Broadbent, in our Premier, and of course in the Member for St. James about our sovereignty. That paranoia is evidence about their doubt, about Canada's present and future and potential strength. That, Madam Speaker, is what is at the base of this whole issue, the paranoia of honourable members opposite. Canadians from all political parties, Madam Speaker, are just too stubborn about being Canadian and they share too much of my national pride to allow our ability to govern ourselves to be threatened or compromised in any way, and free trade will of course not do that.

In addition, our public institutions are too strong and they enjoy too much public support to be put in danger by the trade deal. The New Democrats, certainly in Manitoba and probably across the country, have no integrity on this particular issue. If the Conservatives are for free trade and if the Liberals secretly are for free trade, then the NDP just has to be against it. People are tired of that kind of leadership in this country. This issue is too important for our Premier to turn his back on Manitobans and wallow in his socialist, protectionist partisanship.

I'd like to talk for just a moment, Madam Speaker, about trust, about the trust the people of this province put in honourable members opposite.

A MEMBER: They wouldn't know anything about that.

MR. J. McCRAE: Well, they don't, we know that. But honourable members opposite were trusted by Manitobans twice now. Manitobans have been let down badly.

The Honourable Member for Burrows, in his usual way, gave us three particular points for us to remember about trust and about integrity. First, he said public office is a position of public trust. Second, government exists for the benefit of the governed. Third, citizens

have a right to know the reasons for public decisions that affect them. Why then do we get silence from the Honourable Minister in charge of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation? Why do we not have proclamation of The Freedom of Information Act? Why is this government hiding when its own member speaks in these terms? That's exactly what we have been saying.

I say this to the Member for Burrows, it's exactly what Manitobans have been saying. Those three points are vitally important. But you know the Member for Burrows is a real wonderment, Madam Speaker. He says all the right things in his usual Alice-in-Wonderland way. He's consistent to a fault. He always comes to the wrong conclusions. He always lends his support to the wrong causes. He's always supporting the wrong people and the wrong government.

In the 1981 election, Manitobans were told certain things and I could give you chapter and verse about how many ways they were let down by the government. In the next election, in 1986, the people gave them another mandate. Before that mandate was conferred upon them or bestowed upon them by the people of Manitoba, did honourable members opposite tell us they would bring in final offer selection, that piece of labour legislation almost unanimously opposed by the business community, if not totally, and caused a whole lot of trouble in the labour movement as well? Did they tell Manitobans that they would impose the biggest tax grab in history? Did they tell us it would take months, 10 months for a trial in this province? Did they tell us that they would be cutting hospital beds all across this province, firing members of the Law Reform Commission, hiring judges against the wishes of the Bar Association? Well, the answer to all those questions being no, there can be but one conclusion, Madam Speaker, and that is that it's time to replace this government.

Did they tell Manitobans that they would support causes which result in picket line violence, abusiveness, spitting on people, intimidation? The language and demeanour of honourable members in this place is indicative of this government's bullying type of activity and bullying type of attitude towards government.

Madam Speaker, trust is gone. The people have been betrayed too many times and, in addition, the government is broke. The people . . .

A MEMBER: Flat broke.

MR. J. McCRAE: . . . the government is broke in more ways than one, Madam Speaker. The people of Manitoba aren't going to put up with this anymore and, to protect themselves, they're going to get rid of the New Democratic Party, and it'll be for a very long time and probably for good.

The Honourable Member for Burrows talks about trust. Madam Speaker, I'd like to read something written in the Brandon Sun by a journalist well-reknowned in this province, who is certainly very well known in western Manitoba. He suggests in an article he wrote on, I think it was, the 9th day of February that I, as the Member for Brandon West, should read a piece of his poetry into the record of this Legislature, so I will do that.

It says: "My bank account is minus, the kids are short of milk, I curse those faceless bureaucrats whose

function is to bilk. The Hydro's going to cut me off, last week I lost the phone, the dog's upset, today I dined on soup made from his bone." The chorus according to Mr. McGuinness is that I've got the Autopac blues. Well I wouldn't like this government's miserable record with respect to Autopac to reflect on all the people involved at the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

Mr. McGuinness also writes: "I want to offer a salute to the Autopac staff at the local level. My memory says that they've been in business 12 or 13 years, and twice I have needed their services. The paperwork was not overly onerous. The drive-through damage assessment system worked well. In both cases, it was a pleasure to work with old friend, Jim Crisp, although I'd prefer to visit with him in a different setting." But Mr. McGuinness says: "The Autopac blues have now developed into an issue of the type which causes governments to lose elections."

Madam Speaker, I really wonder. I have a copy of a letter in my hand, written to the Premier of this province by one of my constituents. My constituent was kind enough to share it with me, and I think it sums up a lot of the feelings of Manitobans today. It says: "Mr. Pawley, my family is fed up with your government's insensitivity to the people of Manitoba. Many insulting situations come to mind: increased provincial sales tax, increased payroll tax, medical cutbacks with bed closures, discredited justice system, pat judicial placements for NDP supporters, and now the final straw is the outrageous Autopac increases.

"Do you believe we are all blind, deaf, and dumb? My family income is shrinking every month. Yet your intolerance to the workingman's predicament is typically predictable. Ignore the whole mess and it will go away. Not this time, Bucko! I am certainly not political, but you will not be in power after the next election if I have any say." The letter is signed, "Disgusted to be a Manitoban."

What a proud record, Mr. Premier, what a proud record. Well, this constituent says this government won't be in power if he has, or she has, any say. Well, I'm here to tell you, Madam Speaker and honourable members opposite and my constituent, yes, you do have a say. I dare say, you and tens of thousands of other Manitobans will have your say sooner, we hope, rather than later.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ellice.

MR. H. SMITH: Madam Speaker, first of all, I'd like to congratulate you. I think you are doing a tremendous job as Speaker, and I think the Opposition even appreciates that secretly. They won't want to share it but I think, in their minds and hearts, they believe you're doing a good job. I'd like to congratulate you for holding so good a position in the Chair over the last couple of terms.

I'd also like to, at this point, talk about Workers Compensation largely, because I'm sick and tired of the Opposition always talking about the dollar line, how much we've lost, in the red with Workers Compensation.

I do not see the Opposition really fighting on behalf of workers to get justice, to get rehabilitation, in effect, when they're hurt on the job to be able to have adequate help to recover, to be retrained, and to go back to work. I don't hear them pressuring on those types of things.

Now, much of my speech, I'll be dealing with things across the country, because Workers Compensation is something that, in most provinces of Canada, there are problems with, because the workers are getting taken, time and time again. I'd like to deal with a few of these cases to give you an example of what occurs with Workers Compensation.

For example, the Opposition always talks about the unfunded liability . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. H. SMITH: Okay. Sorry, sorry, the funded. But Ontario has incurred an unfunded liability of \$6.2 billion. Quebec has an estimated \$2.3 billion.

A MEMBER: Somebody's worse! It must be alright!

MR. H. SMITH: Well, because they are trying to do something for workers. Now, let me tell you this. Ontario has a great deal of problems with Workers Compensation. The workers are experiencing many situations and cases — (Interjection) — Thank you, Harry.

For example, let me tell you about Mike O'Conner who worked for DeHavilland Aircraft Company outside Toronto. He started having coughing fits, bringing up phlegm and really not being able to go ahead and work and live in good health. Now, he was working in the paint shop of the plant. The fact is, he could not get his medical records from the employer. He'd go to see the medical doctor at the company plant, and they would just keep putting him off until he fought to get his records. The Labour Department of Ontario finally agreed with the union. It was proven by the medical records from the doctor of that plant that they knew, from his medical records, that having this job in the paint shop was hurting his health, and they did nothing about it.

Now I know, myself, from the people I've come across in my lifetime - when I lived in British Columbia, I can remember my neighbour having injured himself at MacMillan-Blodel. He was working on the green chain, and he got seriously hurt with a back problem. The foreman went ahead and convinced him not to file a Workers Compensation report, but instead to go ahead and take another job at the plant that he could handle. He didn't take him to a medical doctor, no examination, just hoped that he would not file a report. Now the reason why is, the more reports filed, the higher the claims and the higher the assessment comes into being for the employers. So they do everything in their power to cut down the number of claims.

For example, Canada Packers came out with a neat plan. They divided their plant into sections . . .

A MEMBER: Yeah, they closed it in Manitoba.

MR. H. SMITH: Just listen. What Canada Packers did was they — (Interjection) — Well, if the Member for

wherever the hell he's from, Arthur, would remain a little bit quieter, I could speak.

What they did was they divided the plant into a number of sections and they had a contest. They said it was for safety, to make people safety conscious. Really what it was is that, if there was an injury that was not reported, they had no injuries that month. They got free Kentucky Fried Chicken or some other small gift. In other words, they encouraged the employee not to report an injury. They did this with the idea that they were telling the employees that they were trying to cut down the number of accidents and they wanted to make them safety conscious, but what they were really doing is encouraging the employees not to report accidents.

Now, they have done all types of things of this nature. There have been doctors working for company plants who have not forwarded information, etc., etc. For example, in Ontario, Lloyd Goodsell, working for a Stelco plant, in 1973, he noticed his hearing was deteriorating. So he went to the plant doctor and the plant doctor said to him, look, you're doing okay, but he didn't explain exactly what was happening with his hearing. Nine years later, the doctor suggested that he should have hearing protection for his ears. Then it turned out, when he went to a doctor, it was found out that he had a ringing in his head that gave him a great deal of pain. Now Mr. Storie, the Member for Flin Flon, has had that. But the fact is: Why for all those years was there no encouragement for him to file a claim, or to go ahead and to do something about the hearing loss that deteriorated further over the years?

Now, let me tell you this. In most provinces, they operate by what they call a meat chart. Let me tell you an example of one person, he's a person whom I know. He's 28 years of age. He was working up at the Nelson River Diversion for Septor (phonetic) Dillingham on a hoist, and he lost four fingers of his hand. Now how the Compensation Board handles it, they handle it by saying that someone who has lost a hand or they've allocated so much money for that, decided ahead of time, but it's hardly fair because, for example, if a violinist lost four fingers and had trouble performing, he would get the same compensation benefits as someone who lost four fingers but who was a salesman and didn't need to use his four fingers. So relying on the meat chart, saying you have so much for arms, so much per leg, resting on that is not worthwhile, because it does incredible harm to people who need to use that part of their body that has been lost.

Now this person, by the way, was making \$35,000 to \$40,000 up North on the Nelson River Diversion. They are now working — (Interjection) — thank you, the Member for Pembina - for \$18,000 a year. They are receiving \$9,000 from the Workers Compensation Board. Now, you can see with making a difference between \$35,000 and \$40,000 a year is tremendous. There is a severe loss of earnings because the person has lost four fingers and because the Compensation Board just goes by the meat chart.

Now one of the problems with Workers Compensation is, once you are feeling better, to go ahead and get another job. I find employers, in effect, disagree and do not like to hire people who have had medical problems at one time or another. That's a serious problem with Workers Compensation.

Now, let me talk about the Conservative Government in Ontario, the last Conservative Government. They

commissioned - they're good at commissioning for reports - a report that was completed in 1982 by a Dr. Yassi, which was a comprehensive report on industrial diseases. You know, the Liberals at least revealed that report this year, in '87. Like, for all these years, in '82, five years, it was completely hidden by the Conservatives. Now this report has created a storm in Ontario. One of the things, by the way, I should point out is this report stated that, of 6,000 people who died from occupational hazards, only 200 of the deceased workers' families got any compensation whatsoever. And I think that is indicative throughout the country.

Other provinces - you know, when you Conservatives talk about getting the Workers Compensation system in order, you're really talking about cutting benefits, just like British Columbia did. They slashed and slashed and thus the worker, who's worked for many years, is suddenly tossed aside once he has an injury.

Madam Speaker, there are many problems in other jurisdictions. For example, in Ontario, an owner of a construction firm, Doug Witlock, actually went ahead and did not order safety shoes and hats for his workers. This owner of the construction firm had formerly been chastised and been slapped on the wrist for hiring children on the construction site. Now he was charged, but good old Doug Witlock, what he did was he contacted his friend, the Agriculture Minister, Lorne Henderson, and was able to go ahead when the charges were dropped in early '85 as he was about to be taken to court. That is one of the problems in other jurisdictions, Conservative ones, has been political interference.

Now, B.C. has been the only one to slash the benefits so severely that they got into the black. That's the sort of thing that is suggested here in Manitoba.

I'd like to take the Liberal Leader, the Member for River Heights, to task because, last week in a statement, she said that one of the reasons for the rate increases in Workers Compensation was the fact that we are doing so much with rehabilitation. She suggests that this should not come out of the Workers Compensation assessment but should come from the general revenue of the province.

Let me tell you this. When workers are hurt and maimed, they deserve to have help to be able to get back on their feet and have a job where they make a decent income for themselves. They shouldn't be tossed aside. Why should not the employers who create the unsafe working conditions be the ones held responsible for such actions? It's obvious to me that this should be.

The rate here in Manitoba of \$2.37 for '88 per hundred dollars in wages is rather reasonable. In the United States - we have an example from '84 figures. Let me tell you, this compares California on Ontario rates. Auto truck service in California is \$6.02 compared to Ontario's \$2.11. This has all gone up since. As I say, this is 1984 rates. You have some categories even higher. A boilermaker, in Ontario, the rate is \$5.64 per hundred dollars; in California it's \$9.58, and it's comparable figures. You need to go ahead and have adequate revenue to, in effect, deal with the costs that Workers Compensation has. It's important to have rates that are fair.

The industry has been consulted. The rates are not as high as we would have liked to have seen them be

so that we would be in the black. We're going to, in effect, lose \$10 million and be in debt by \$10 million in '88, but that is because of the fear of too great a raise in Workers Compensation assessment which, in effect, hurt our competitiveness with other provinces. I find that I don't think the Conservative attitude is worthwhile in the sense that they believe in slashing and not helping the workers.

What have we done about all this? In '85, we set up the Review Committee. They've come down with a report. If you read that report, you'll see some of the directions that are recommended. One of the things is they said, believe the workers a little more. A worker tells you about a condition. Have some faith that the worker is telling you accurately, along with the supporting evidence of medical reports. A lot more attention should be given to that.

I believe that this government is attempting, because of commitment to this Session, to come forward with legislative changes, that we're going to get improvements in Workers Compensation. They're improvements by dealing with the rehab and improving the opportunities for workers to be fit to go back to work. We're also going to go ahead and do things to encourage employers to take back employees who have been hurt on the job and this, I think, is worthwhile.

I congratulate my government for appointing the Review Committee and for especially going ahead and appointing Lissa Donner and Mr. Ching to the actual positions they hold today because, if you've met Mr. Ching or dealt with the Workers Compensation Board, you'll notice there's a more open attitude, a more helpful attitude now than we've ever had before. They are starting to go ahead and review procedures and to make things a lot better for workers.

One of the things, for example, is the time delay. There have been really unreasonable time delays at Workers Compensation. These are going to be attended to, and I think that is worthwhile. This government is doing something for the average worker, and it's not just rhetoric. It's happening today.

Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MRS. C. OLESON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is a privilege to once again stand in my place and represent the constituents of Gladstone by responding to the Speech from the Throne which was read in this House on Thursday, February 11. More particularly, Madam Speaker, I will be addressing of course the amendment brought forth by my Leader on the following Monday.

Before I discuss the Throne Speech however, Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate once again the MacGregor School Band from my constituency who attended at the Olympics last week to play at a youth festival. I believe they were to play twice at the Olympics, and also to play in a couple of high schools, one in Regina and one in another city on the way to Calgary. I haven't been talking to them since they returned, but I'm sure they had an excellent trip. If their performance is anything like the performance that they gave on the afternoon of the Olympic Torch Rally in MacGregor in

January, then the people in the Olympics in Calgary were certainly in for a great treat.

The Pine Creek School Division has an excellent band program, and I just hope they will be able to maintain it. Unfortunately, some school divisions in our province are having to face cuts in programming and, unfortunately, sometimes that's one of the programs that gets cut all too often. But we'll hope that the Pine Creek School Board will still see fit - because as I say they have an excellent band program, and it's really great for the young people to be able to take part.

Now, Madam Speaker, I had some notes prepared, of course, for this speech. But the other day when the Member for River Heights was asking the Minister of Health about pharmacists, I kind of got my dander up when I heard the Minister of Health. In his reply to her and also in his reply to the pharmacists, he was suggesting that if people didn't get a good price from the pharmacy they went to, they should shop around.

Well, Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Minister has ventured across the Perimeter Highway lately into rural Manitoba. Most towns in rural Manitoba, if they have one at all, have only one pharmacy. Now, can you feature the miles that they would drive shopping around to get better prices at a pharmacy? That is totally ridiculous. Can you see a young mother with several small children, with someone in the family obviously ill or they wouldn't be going to the pharmacy to get a prescription, having to leave home and drive to this town and to that town to see which pharmacy had the best price? For instance, if she happened to live at Plumas where there is no pharmacy, and then she first went to Gladstone, and perhaps she'd have to backtrack to Neepawa, and then drive down to Minnedosa or perhaps to Brandon. Now, let's not be ridiculous.

The Minister has totally ignored the realities of rural living if he thinks that people can easily shop around because most people when they go to a pharmacy go for a reason, because they are ill, or they wouldn't be getting prescriptions at all, Madam Speaker. So I think we need to enter into this with some amount of common sense and think of the realities, not just in the City of Winnipeg or the City of Brandon but in the rural areas as well.

Now, there are many other subjects of course which are raised as concerns by people in my constituency, and probably of course too many to include in the time that's allocated to me. I don't think I need to dwell on the economic times in the rural areas. I think perhaps we have dealt with that. We have pleaded with this government to help the people in the agricultural sector. They haven't paid much attention. As a result, agriculture is still having problems. Rural and small towns are facing decline because of the agricultural situation. Small town businesses are suffering. People are at a loss to know which way to turn. They have found that they cannot turn to this government. The feds have treated them very well.

A week or so ago, I sent out a brochure or questionnaire to my constituency, Madam Speaker. I wanted at the beginning of the Session to ask a few questions about what they were thinking on various subjects. It helps me to represent them better if I find out exactly what they're thinking. Madam Speaker, the results have been enormous.

I have sent out brochures before and I've got many letters back and answers back, but nothing to equal

the volume of mail that's coming in from this questionnaire. Not only did they fill out the questionnaire, Madam Speaker, but they sent along three-page and five-page letters with their answers, a veritable flood of letters, telling me what they think of this government, what they think of what is happening to them and asking for some answers from their government of what they have done with the money that they keep sending them continually in their taxes and in the license fees and everything else that this government taxes, of course.

It's difficult to tell you, Madam Speaker, from all these replies, just what is the most pressing thing on their mind. One subject which comes up in most of them, of course, is Autopac. We have dealt with that; many of the members have spoken on the subject of Autopac. I'll just say a few words on that, Madam Speaker.

I don't think, when the Minister contemplated raising the Autopac rates, he sat down with pen in hand and figured out how much it would cost an average family in Manitoba to license their vehicles and license the family drivers. I don't think he sat down and thought of the realities of it. He didn't realize that on many farms, for instance, it takes several vehicles to operate a farm - trucks, cars and large trucks, etc., etc. He didn't think about those. He didn't consider that it all adds to the input cost of agriculture when you have heavy Autopac rates. He didn't realize of course that, on most farms, one or both of the couple on the farm have to go off the farm to seek an income in order to be able to afford to stay on the farm. If they're both working off the farm, each have to have a vehicle to go to that job. It's essential, it isn't a luxury; it is absolutely essential. Now you're adding to that farm family's burden by raising the Autopac rates. Of course we have other businesses, not only farming, that use a great number of vehicles. They have told the Minister in no uncertain terms what they think of that.

Madam Speaker, another input cost that I should mention, and it concerns a great many people in my constituency, regards school taxes. We've mentioned this, of course, to the government many times. We mentioned it a great deal last election that school taxes on farm land are a heavy burden to farmers. How did this government react to all this pressure? They put in a program called the School Tax Assistance Program or plan, a sort of a last minute hurried up deal with the last Budget, very ill-conceived, not planned out at all. They hadn't organized it. They didn't know how they were going to operate it. They just announced it and then started to think of it later.

Now, they thought they were helping the farm community by this, and I won't take it away from them completely. There are some people who would be helped by it. But \$500 school tax to a great many farmers is not a huge amount, but really the whole purpose of this program was not to help the farmers but to convince the urban supporters that they were helping the farmers.

Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, one of the problems that has come to my attention many, many times with this program. The government, in their wisdom, decided that only people who actually operate the land could realize anything from the tax program. So many, many people who contacted me were complaining that they had no way that they could collect this because they rented out their land. Now, they rented their land out

for many reasons. Some of them wanted to retire from farming, and of course in today's land market it isn't a good idea to sell your farm at this time, if you could even sell it. One call I had was from a fellow who was disabled and couldn't operate his farm himself, so he had to have someone else operate it for him, so they were unable to claim.

Now, this government often tells us how much they care for and how much they help pensioners. Well this farm, Madam Speaker, in many cases is that farmer's pension plan. That is what he and his family are going to live on in their retiring years, the proceeds from that piece of land. Here they pay, in many cases, a third of the expenses of the crop, all the school tax, but the person who operates the land is the only one who can collect the school tax so, as I said, a poorly thought-out plan, Madam Speaker, without too much direction, and then what did they do? Who did they get to administer it? They dumped it on the municipal people at the last minute and said, here, you can handle this program for us.

Now, the municipal people have quite enough to do, thank you very much, and were not exactly very thrilled to receive this at the last minute. Then, Madam Speaker, what they did was - we discovered late in the year, early this year that many of the people who had to apply directly to the government for one reason or another, in some cases it was because they farmed land that was in two different municipalities and they had to apply directly to the government for their rebate. They hadn't received it yet. Now this was January at that time. I don't know that they've received it yet. Some of them had applied as early as June of '87.

This program was supposed to be a great aid and assistance to the farmers. How was it an aid and assistance if you don't get the money? They had to pay the taxes before the end of the year or they would be in tax arrears with their municipality. Christmas had come and gone. If they thought they were going to help them that way, that was out of the question.

So here we have a program, which is typical in a great many budgets, where the government responds to a little bit of pressure and they put in a program but they don't think about it too much before they do it. So I hope this year - I understand from the Throne Speech that they're going to continue with this program - that they think it through a little more and administer it far more efficiently than they did last time. They would have some sense for these people who are, for one reason or another, having to rent out the land and, under their rules before, couldn't collect it.

I'll read to you one letter from one person in my constituency. This was a letter that was directed to the Minister of Finance, and he sent me a copy of it. I'll just read to you part of it. He says: "Last year, I retired from farming after 38 years of operation. During those years, I had my share of success and failure, as all farmers are prone to have. Even though I am no longer doing the actual field and other operations required to run a farm, I am very much concerned with its operation. My land is rented to tenants on a crop-share basis. I receive a third of the crop and am responsible for a third of the cost of the fertilizer, spray and crop insurance. All taxes are my responsibility. Last year, the school tax portion was in excess of \$2,300.00. This year, in all probability, they will be higher. Your bill plans

to give up to \$500 to the tenants in rebate of taxes, that I am responsible to pay. This is a very unjust treatment to all owners of farmland.

The land is still my chief source of income, and it is my feeling that I should receive any benefit of a relief of taxes that is forthcoming. Raising of monies to finance education by levying against property is a practice that came in with the horse and buggy. Those days are long gone and so should the tax system." And that was most of the gist of his letter.

Now, another constituent was upset with this program. He wrote a letter to the Editor of the MacGregor Herald, and I'll quote also from that letter, Madam Speaker. The headline over it is: "Farmers still pay school taxes."

"Since the Provincial Government brought down their Budget, we hear a lot about the fact that they are going to relieve each farmer of paying \$500 in school taxes. The government and their supporters are making much about this and saying that two-thirds of Manitoba farmers will pay no school tax. This is not true, and I would like to give you some figures to prove it. By today's standards, I am a small farmer. I have parts of six quarter-sections of land for a total of 890 acres, and one-third of this is stony and has a lot of bush on it. This is used mainly for pasture. This land is carved up by a railway right-of-way, numerous ditches and a new road that the government thinks it needs to accommodate the tourists.

"My 1986 tax bill amounted to \$4,717.20. Almost two-thirds or \$2,978.70 was school taxes. My 1987 school taxes have jumped another \$76.76 to a total of \$3,054.43. As you can see, \$500 will not relieve me of school taxes nor, in fact, make much impression on my tax bill. Three of these parcels of land carry more than \$500 in school taxes, and one is over \$700.00.

"It is time someone told this like it is. Government propaganda would have you believe that a huge majority of farmers will now pay no school taxes. Farmers have always paid their share and more for the upkeep of our schools, and will continue to do so under our present system.

"Thank you for giving this matter your attention, and I hope it will merit some space in your paper."

Well there, Madam Speaker, that person said it all. The program and the government propaganda, as he calls it, about it would try to convince people that farmers don't pay school tax or a great many of them don't, which is just simply not true.

Now, Madam Speaker, I want to speak for a few minutes about health care. The Throne Speech said, on page 2, and I quote: "Our health care, education and social programs are among the best in the country, if not the world." Now, Madam Speaker, how can this government have the gall to put in the Throne Speech a statement like that?

Hospital beds are closing in our major hospitals in the province, and this is touted as the best health care in the world. When hospital beds closed in Brandon, 31 permanent beds in '86 and 49 temporary in '87, and 111 in Winnipeg in 1987, this has an impact on the rural areas, as well as the City of Winnipeg and the City of Brandon. Our citizens must travel to these major centres for most surgery and major tests. We become part of that long waiting list for surgery and for diagnostic testing. What kind of a government will

tell you that we have the greatest health care in the world, when its people must go to North Dakota for CAT scans and its cancer patients must wait seven to eight weeks for radiation treatment?

They say they're a caring government, Madam Speaker. It seems to me that their major care is to make sure they're re-elected. They have forgotten the people they claim to care about, and they seem hell-bent on their own re-election agenda, but the people won't be fooled again.

The former Minister of Health, now relaxing in less nerve-wracking climes, told us he was closing hospital beds to reorganize the system and save money. The new Minister announced he was going to undertake a new emphasis in health care, more prevention and less hospital care. In making his announcement, he indicated that, if the doctors didn't like this, they could leave. Now, Madam Speaker, I ask you, is that the way to treat the health care professionals that you have to work with in order to make a change? If you're going to change the way in which you deliver health care, then the major and key players in that will be the medical profession and the nursing profession. They are the ones you should be making aware at the outset, consulting with them, and finding out how best to implement this. But this is the way this government usually consults. They announce what they are going to do and then they consult afterwards, when they've no intention of making any changes.

Madam Speaker, it seems to me that, if you're going to make a major change in the way you're going to deliver health care and you're going to change the system so that we don't use as many hospital beds, first you put in place the programs that will deliver the care and the preventative medicine. Then when the hospital beds are no longer needed, then you close them. That seems to have escaped this Minister and his government. They haven't seemed to consider that.

You have to have a great commitment to change in order to make something like that work. You have to do some long-term planning, some long-term organizing, and encourage the people that you need to put in place to go along with you. You don't antagonize the people, the very people who you will depend on in order to make that work. Instead, now they're closing beds and wondering what they're going to do with all the sick people.

So it takes a long-term commitment to change to make a thing like this work. You can't suddenly decide, we're going to change the whole health care system, close down beds and then wonder what to do about it. I believe, Madam Speaker, that they have the staff to implement change. We hear all the time about all the people they have, the platoons of people churning out information. Perhaps they could turn the energies of those people into planning some constructive plans for delivery of health care and encourage doctors to stay in Manitoba instead of driving them out.

Now, Madam Speaker, while I'm on that subject, I would also like to remind the Minister of Health to increase his efforts to attract doctors to small rural communities. It is very difficult for many of these communities to get doctors. The Seven Regions Health Care Centre was fortunate in just acquiring a second doctor, but unfortunately that doctor came from another area in rural Manitoba so those people will be without

a doctor. So I am wondering what is being done by the Minister of Health to encourage young doctors to live in rural areas.

I am sure that many of them who perhaps have never lived in a rural area, never contemplated it, once they got into practice in a rural area, would be very happy there. One of the problems is, of course, that if there are too few of them, then they're always on call. That makes it very difficult for them because their family life is affected. There is a great deal of burnout with rural doctors because of the hours and the pressure they're under because of the few numbers.

It seems to me, a few years ago, we heard the former Minister of Health telling us we had too many doctors in Manitoba. First of all, I really don't think that is the case, but what is he doing about getting some of those doctors into the rural areas if there are too many of them in the City of Winnipeg. We would like to know.

Madam Speaker, another subject that a constituent of mine brought to my attention just recently and was very annoyed about has to do with the payroll tax. Now, we have discussed the payroll tax in this House a great deal. We have discussed it and the effect it has on businesses in Manitoba, and the fact that it is a deterrent to people who want to set up business in this province. We've often spoken of this. So, Madam Speaker, that is not really the thrust of what I am going to say.

What I want to talk about is the annual declaration that businesses must make to do with their payroll tax. Now, I have a constituent who runs a small business, and she found this form or something on it very offensive, Madam Speaker. I'm sure most people would if they really took the time to look at it. Now, I am referring to the bottom of the page of the 1987 Annual Declaration of Salaries Paid form, and it's Part 3, Declaration of Exemption. On the original form - I don't have the original - she sent me a copy - but on the original, it's highlighted in red and it reads this, and I quote: "Caution: Inaccurate estimates may be subject to penalties and interest."

Now, Madam Speaker, this form asks you to make an estimate of what your payroll will be in the coming year. You fill out one section that says what it was last year and you estimate what it will be in the coming year. Now, estimate is just that, an estimate. It's an educated guess perhaps or it's an estimate of what your payroll is going to be for the coming year. Now, are we to take, Madam Speaker, from this form that, if you happen to increase your business during the year and happen to have to hire a few more people and your payroll goes up, it says: "Inaccurate estimates may be subject to penalties and interest." Now, what is the penalty for doing more business in Manitoba?

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: You have to pay payroll tax.

MRS. C. OLESON: Part of it is to pay more payroll tax, but I would gather from this that it's more than that - penalty and interest. Interest, well, you know I can understand interest. It makes you wonder what incentive there is for anyone to go into business in Manitoba.

This constituent said: "You know, this makes me feel that the government doesn't want me to be in business. They don't want me." We have a government

that penalizes people for increasing their business and hiring more people. This is the same government that talks ad nauseam, Madam Speaker, on how they like to improve employment in the province. Now, I fail to understand this.

We have the government doing this sort of thing, and then we have them hiring platoons of communicators to prop up their image and tell us how good they are and that they really do love business. Well, how will it be if you get rid of the communicators, then treat the business people as if you really did want them and prove that you care about them?

A constituent also raised with me the matter of sales tax in certain areas. He tells me - and I've had complaints about this before - that he thinks that the exemption, the farm exemptions, for sales tax is getting shorter, and he has good reason to think so, Madam Speaker. He says, and I quote: "The provincial tax people are getting so tough that some businesses will no longer allow a farmer to sign a tax exemption declaration." He claims that items which used to qualify for exemption no longer do.

This constituent was purchasing a straw spreader extension for his combine. The retailer would not allow him to sign a declaration and suggested he go to the tax office in Brandon for a refund. I'll quote to you from his letter what he said about that exercise, Madam Speaker. "I can't see anyone ever going through that hassle a second time. By the time you pay for parking and waste time explaining the situation to three or four individuals, the refund looks mighty small, if you get it. They refused mine, a straw spreader extension for a combine." Now, Madam Speaker, how many people in this world are going to use a straw spreader extension for a combine for anything but farming? Now, let's get reasonable with people.

Perhaps the Minister of Finance can tell us if there have been changes to this list and why, because this constituent's complaint, I believe, is valid. Why should he be denied the tax exemption on a piece of farm equipment that is definitely going to be used on the farm and would be of little use to anyone else? I certainly wouldn't be using it in my garden, you know, if that's the sort of thing he's worried about.

Now centres in my constituency, Madam Speaker, are very concerned about the cost of policing and policing services in general. Under the present system, towns can get policing under the provincial umbrella if they have fewer than 750 residents. Now several towns in my constituency are nearing that magic number, and the difference in a few numbers in population can mean a drastic change in the tax dollars levied for policing.

In fact, in one town in my constituency - I did raise this with the Minister last Session in Estimates, I believe - it means 17 mills on that town's tax bill because I believe 12 more people appeared on the census. It gets to the point where the Mayor and the council almost feel like standing out on the highway and say, don't move here, we'll have to pay more taxes for policing. Now that shouldn't be, Madam Speaker. I think the Minister responsible will have to look at a better and fairer way to deal with police expenses in rural Manitoba.

Now another concern of course, in connection with policing, is the policing staff numbers. We continually hear rumors that they are to be reduced. We hear that highway patrols will be reduced. The Minister, a former

Attorney-General, scoffed at us and said, oh well, we were just spreading rumors, but we continue to hear that, Madam Speaker. With break and enters and drug problems, which plague the rural areas as well as the city areas, it is a great concern to the people of rural Manitoba, the rural businesses. Many of them have been broken into time and time again.

One particular store in the town where I live has been broken into several times a year and this continues to happen. If we cut down on police numbers, then we will have more problems. The people in the rural areas don't want to be second-class citizens. They want the same type of protection as their city cousins receive.

Now, Madam Speaker, I think I will conclude my remarks by saying — (Interjection) — I have completed my notes, Madam Speaker. No, I think I will conclude my remarks by saying that, when I think of this government, I think of "bankrupt." The word "bankrupt" comes to mind. Madam Speaker, this government is financially bankrupt, morally bankrupt, and it's bankrupt of ideas. It is bankrupt in initiative and it no longer has the right to govern this province.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MADAM SPEAKER: May I direct the attention of honourable members to the loge to my left, where we have with us this evening Mr. Bob Banman, who was the former Progressive Conservative member for the constituency of La Verendrye.

On behalf of all the members, we welcome you to the Chamber this evening.

The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, it is an honour again for me to participate in the Throne Speech for this year.

It is the first opportunity that I have had to again discuss the record of the government and the issues that are concerning all Manitobans with members opposite. I have sometimes questioned the wisdom of doing it, I have to tell you, because there doesn't seem to be any recognition, any improvement, in the positions that the members opposite take year after year. It seems that they are not able to hear, let alone listen and react, in a positive way to the kinds of things that we're saying on this side of the House, in recognition of the kinds of things that we're doing on behalf of Manitobans.

I have, Madam Speaker, had the privilege over the last six-and-one-half years of representing the constituency of Dauphin, and I'm very proud of the work that we have accomplished in the Dauphin constituency right across Manitoba over those years.

We have had, with the cooperation of my colleagues, tremendous development in the Dauphin constituency, in the Parkland region of Manitoba, and across this province. But I speak for the people of the Dauphin constituency, and I can tell you that, working together as a partnership, we have accomplished a great deal in health care, in education, in housing and community development, in highways, and a number of other major areas, Madam Speaker. We're looking forward to continuing that program of accomplishment and development with the people of the Dauphin constituency and the people of Manitoba for many years to come in this province.

I look back to those years when I first considered running, in 1980 and 1981, and remember the climate and the environment of the Province of Manitoba at that time. If the rookies on the other side - and I say that with respect, I have to remind them that they've only been here a year-and-a-half or so - would keep in mind to reflect back to 1980 and '81, and 1979 when Sterling Lyon was in government in this province, then they would really have something to complain about, Madam Speaker. They would know what despair really is on behalf of the people of Manitoba, because I remember that. I remember, Madam Speaker, that the Member for Portage said that the reason he ran was to put these people out on this side, to get rid of them. I want to tell that member that the reason I ran in 1981 was because of what I saw. Many of the people on that side and the Government of Manitoba at that time, under Sterling Lyon, what they were doing to the people of Manitoba and the darkness that befell this province.

A MEMBER: They had stopped the economy of this province.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: People everywhere in this province in 1981, 1980, after three years of Lyon Government, had seen enough. They wanted to get rid of that Lyon Government as fast as they could. They fled the province in record numbers the previous years, because there was nothing for them. There was no hope in this province for them.

That Leader of the Opposition, that Member for Minnedosa and the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for Sturgeon Creek, were part of that mess in this province at that time, Madam Speaker. They hope that the people of Manitoba are going to have short memories. They are hoping that the people of Manitoba won't recall what the alternative is here in Manitoba, Madam Speaker, but they are going to recall because we're going to help them recall what that Sterling Lyon Government was doing in this province during that period of time.

The self-righteous members on that side of the House choose to forget what happened in this province during those early years of the government. I want to tell you some of the things. I want you to remember the freeze on the hospitals that took place and on the schools and all public buildings in this province, arbitrarily cut from any budgets - no consideration for any of those. That was a decision by the Member for Sturgeon Creek. He took that and he sat behind that table and said, no more in Dauphin, no more in Flin Flon, no more in The Pas, no more for Manitobans. That's what he said in 1979, 1980. It was arbitrary; it was across the board. There was no sensitivity to it. It was a Tory style of acute protracted restraint. We saw that acute protracted restraint, Madam Speaker. We saw it in health care, in social services, in education cutbacks. We remember that they couldn't even change the sheets in those years, Madam Speaker, in the hospitals.

As I said earlier, we remember, Madam Speaker, the record number of Manitobans fleeing this province for other opportunities in other parts of the country. We remember the major fiasco in Hydro that was going on, and their witch hunt to try and find something wrong with what the NDP had been doing before and the

witch hunt in MPIC at that time. We remember the Alcan fiasco that the Member for Arthur was talking about earlier. He asked questions about Crown lands in this province, and we recall the Alcan fiasco so vividly at that time. We remember, Madam Speaker, the waste of the taxpayers' money during those years. "We're sitting on a gold mine."

They talk about communicators, Madam Speaker. They talk about us, and here they were, trying to advertise before the election that Manitobans should have hope and faith because they were sitting on a gold mine just waiting to be developed. "Don't stop us now." Well, the people of Manitoba decided that they had to stop that mess in 1981, and they did.

Theirs was a record of failure. It was a record of failure in women's issues, in Native issues, in housing, health care and education, and it went on and on, and there are numerous examples.

As a matter of fact, in my speech in 1983, March 1, 1983, I went through a whole list of failures and broken promises by that government, as printed in the Winnipeg Free Press of Saturday, May 2, 1981. I went over those one by one. If the Member for Sturgeon Creek wants to see those, well he can have them. I can give them to him any time he would like or he can read Hansard. There are numerous examples. Yet, they sit there, self-righteous, and try to criticize this government as one that makes mistakes, as if they had never made a mistake. Well they have, millions of them in their time in government, Madam Speaker, too numerous to count.

I was interested to hear the Member for Ste. Rose the other day when he spoke. He said in his recent speech, Madam Speaker, that we on this side of the House, in government, want to open the anxiety closets of Manitobans. He said that we in government want to create spectres of fear so that we can say to Manitobans, don't worry, we'll protect you, just trust us. Well, I have never heard anything so absurd and twisting of the facts, Madam Speaker, as that kind of statement because, if anyone is fear-mongering, if anyone chooses to divide this province, to split apart and cause division among the people of this province, it is those people over on that side of the House.

How can that member stand up in this House and say that it is this party in government, the New Democrats in government, who are seeking to destroy unity in this province? Clearly, it is the Conservatives over on that side. We saw that in 1984, in '83 with the French Language debate in this province, when they chose to twist and manipulate the people of Manitoba, but it didn't work. It didn't work, Madam Speaker, and they're trying to do it again. They're trying to do it with Crown corporations; they're trying to do it with health care; they're trying to do it with social services, to twist the facts, Madam Speaker, so that the Manitobans will be confused. They want to create division in this province. They don't want to build cooperation, sharing and caring, to build on the caring nature of Manitobans. They want to divide and split apart Manitobans.

You know that's so obvious, Madam Speaker. Over the last number of years, they've done that consistently, and I think it's quite clear that it's New Democrats who wish to build up, to bring together, social democrats who want to build on the cooperative, caring spirit of Manitobans. Cooperation and caring worries Tories. They're very worried over there.

You can see it on the Member for Sturgeon Creek's face. It worries them deeply because that is foreign to the Tory philosophy, Madam Speaker, where the strong in society get stronger and the condition of the poor and the downtrodden get worse. That is the way they would like to have it. So the very survival of the Tories depends on the Mulroney-Reagan approach to government, to divide and split, to create division and mistrust in the institutions of society, and that is what they try to do.

The frantic Tory-inspired media works to create this discord in cooperation with the Tories in this province and across this country, to upset the trust Manitobans have in their governments and for each other. I think that is deplorable because we have a caring society in this province. We want to build on that, to work together to build a stronger Manitoba, but that is not the goal of the Opposition. Divide and conquer. That's the way they want to be, because they're very worried if people get together and work in a cooperative way, in a sharing way, the Tories will never be elected in this province. But there is so much more that has to be accomplished by social democrats in this province to lead the way, to create conditions that foster this caring nature, this sharing society that we all want in this province, at least on this side of the House.

There are many obstacles to overcome. We have seen many of those obstacles, but we are moving forward steadily. We are moving forward, step by step in this province. There will be setbacks like there was with Autopac, but we will continue to move forward, step by step in this province, regardless of what that Opposition wants.

And that is why we will have confidence voted in this government here tonight. That's why it will be maintained in this House, and that's why we will continue to govern until 1990 when the people of Manitoba will once again elect a New Democratic Government in this province.

Part of the grand Tory design to create discord in this province, of course, is aimed at some of our fundamental institutions. One of those is the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation that has been established by a New Democratic Government some 16 years ago in this province. They want to dismantle Autopac. That is clear from what they have said in their speeches, the little hints they have dropped. They are a little bit afraid to say it right out clear because they are afraid that the people of Manitoba still won't buy it, that they may not have conditioned them enough to this. So they are clearly trying to undermine MPIC so that, if they ever get into government, Madam Speaker, they can at that time destroy it so there will be only the private sector insurance in this province that we see putting upon the people of Ontario and other provinces in this country.

Now we look at the Member for Ste. Rose, the critic for MPIC. In his speech, he said: ". . . and it needs an opportunity to have a re-examination of the public insurance situation in this province" - nice, veiled terminology. He says the private competition is not interested in coming to this province because they know that, by a single change of the regulations in the basic insurance coverage, there is not an opportunity to start a portfolio of extensive private insurance. He's got to change that. He says: "Has Autopac run out its string?"

Has it now put itself in a position where competition must be returned to the industry?" All these rhetorical questions. What he really is saying, Madam Speaker, is that MPIC must be destroyed in this province. "The mandate of Autopac MPIC has to be re-examined," he says again. So, Madam Speaker, it is clear, abundantly clear to us, that the hidden agenda of that Opposition over there is to destroy Autopac, as it was in 1977 when Sterling Lyon came to government in this province.

Madam Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about Autopac. The Tory and the media have endeavoured over the last number of months to twist the facts about Autopac. They have twisted the facts day after day after day to try to influence the people of Manitoba on this issue, to try to camouflage the real benefits of the Public Insurance Corporation. But finally, Madam Speaker, I've been rather surprised. But really I think it's clear why, that the Free Press, for example, in Winnipeg has now started to publish some of the other sides of it just a little bit, so that they can ensure that they have some credibility left.

You see, people are starting to read through this. They are starting to see through this game plan by the Free Press and by the people from the Opposition. They're starting to see the real truth, and so now they're coming out with some information. They're starting to actually publish some of the statements that the Minister responsible for MPIC is putting on the record. They are starting to publish them.

They said now that private companies echo Autopac complaints over motorists' claims. They're starting to make headlines like that. Insurance companies across Canada are facing the same kind of soaring bodily injury costs that forced Autopac rates up an average of 18 percent this year.

A MEMBER: When was that?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: That was just the other day here - I think Saturday's paper - just now, on the 20th of February. For two months, nothing but innuendo and negative coverage on this issue - Sunday's paper.

Then they went on to make some statements. Mr. Uruski said, "Premiums would have been much worse this year if the government had followed the Tory Opposition's advice in the last election campaign in which Gary Filmon promised an immediate 10 percent Autopac rebate, the good guy, the giveaway there, \$33 per driver. He was going to give away as part of his cuts in taxes and his increase in programs and his reduction in the deficit during the election of 1986. He was going to do all of those things. He was going to be all things to Manitobans and they saw through it, and they saw through the rest of it on the other side of the House.

The Tories, during the campaign, were saying the rates should have been dropped because of the \$71 million reserves, and they made an election commitment to do that, he said. Uruski said: "Crown-owned Autopac differs from private insurers because it provides coverage at a fair price for drivers in high-risk groups and has lower administrative expenses. If you're going to have the selective rating system of the private companies, young people and taxi drivers and

other high-risk groups are going to pay," he said. They're going to have to pay dearly regardless of their record, and that is exactly what happens, Madam Speaker.

As a matter of fact, we had an editorial recently in the Free Press on Saturday, as well, by one Frances Russell, in which she did indeed identify the other side and the problems with the private insurance companies that Manitobans recognized when the Public Insurance Corporation was brought into Manitoba in 1971. Those are far in the background now. They have to be brought out once in a while or else people have to live in some of those other provinces to see the way private insurance companies treat the motorists in those provinces.

Let's take a look at this. An 18-year old male driver in Kenora who had one accident last year is paying \$5,295 for his car insurance. Do you see that kind of absurdity in this province? A 27-year old Lynden, Ontario woman lent her 1987 car to her boyfriend. He had an accident and the car was pronounced a \$10,000 write-off. Her insurance company later cancelled her coverage because she supposedly still owed \$1.00. You see, this is the kind of stuff. They talk about red tape and bureaucracy at MPIC. Let them go to the private insurance companies and find out what it's really like, because there are no advocates there. Another woman had her insurance cancelled after she had a minor accident. She was later reinstated as a high-risk new driver. Her premium shot up from \$480 to \$1,800.00. She sold her car.

Yes, we'll call an election when it's ready. Mr. Premier will know when the Manitobans have the facts. You see, they're coming out now, and they'll continue to come out.

We saw one of the critics, Madam Speaker, who was making some comments, Gordon Sinclair in the Free Press. He had lots of negative things to say about Autopac but look what he said. "What our survey found was, just as Autopac officials had been telling us, Manitoba drivers aren't the only ones being splashed by a big, red puddle. The British Columbia equivalent of Autopac, ICBC, lost dump trucks full of money last year, although no official figures have been released. The Saskatchewan Insurance Corporation did likewise. But this year, B.C. announced average boosts of 22 percent. Saskatchewan premiums are up by 10 percent. The problem - it is higher costs of settling personal injury and liability claims" - not mismanagement, as the members opposite would have Manitobans believe, not mismanagement but higher costs of premiums, of payouts for Manitobans. He said: "Now I'm prepared to accept Autopac's story that Manitoba drivers are paying the price for an abrupt, cross-country change in the cost of claims and court cases."

You see, Madam Speaker, after there has been so much innuendo on the record, so much negativeness, they start to realize that the people of Manitoba cannot be fooled that easily, that they know why MPIC was put in place in this province, and they know about the benefits. That side of the story has to be told, it will be told, and they will understand clearly that MPIC has offered millions of dollars in benefits to Manitoba drivers over the last 17 years, and will continue to do it in the future.

Madam Speaker, portions of an external Autopac audit obtained by the Free Press support the

government's contention that it couldn't. You know, the members opposite have talked about a cover-up on the behalf of government that we did not tell Manitobans the whole story. Well, listen, let's put the facts on the record.

The Free Press has acknowledged that the Auditor's statement clearly stated that the government couldn't have predicted earlier in 1986 that Autopac would go on to lose a total of \$82.5 million in the next two years. So there was no cover-up on this side of the House, Madam Speaker, no cover-up whatsoever. We provided the people of Manitoba with the facts like we will continue to do on this issue and all issues.

Madam Speaker, I found the Liberal Leader's comments quite interesting as well. She was going to talk about free trade, and she's not sure where she stands on it really because she's not sure which way the wind is blowing on this issue. If she follows along with John Turner, well, he's not sure yet about where it's going. "We'll send a delegation down to Washington and check it out." The Liberal leader in the province does not want to get too far out on this. She says, "Well, let me make it very clear to both sides of the House that I think that the Prime Minister negotiated a rotten deal." But then she hedges, "But that doesn't mean that free trade in some areas is not a valid objective and indeed not a good one." So let's just hedge a little bit so that we don't get too far off on this issue.

That's exactly what she wants, Madam Speaker, because it is that rotten deal that we have to deal with in this country, that precise rotten deal that Mulroney negotiated with Reagan. That is the one on the table, not free trade, not the concept of free trade, but that rotten deal. That's what's on there and that is what we are against and that's what she should be against, and she should stand up and tell the people of Manitoba where she stands.

Madam Speaker, she's going to support that side of the House. After that, they aren't interested in looking at the issues regarding the free trade deal. They don't want to examine it in detail and see how much Canada is giving up to get very little in benefits from the U.S. They don't want to examine that; they don't want to talk about it. They just want to talk about the concept of free trade, how great it is because Mulroney needs it. He needs it desperately, politically. He hung everything out to get it and he got it, Madam Speaker. He got a deal that is going to affect the future and, yes, the future for generations and generations of Canadians in this country.

The Liberal Leader says in her speech: "If we're going to deal with the federal issue, then let's deal with the federal issue which impacts on Manitobans in a way which would be long-lasting, and that is the Meech Lake Accord." She doesn't want to talk about free trade, Madam Speaker. It's not going to be long-lasting; it's not going to affect Manitobans for centuries to come. Only the Meech Lake Accord is worth talking about. Well, Madam Speaker, she's going to find out the facts in this House in the next few days.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

In accordance with Rule 35(3), the question before the House is the proposed amendment of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition:

THAT the motion be amended by adding to it the following words:

That this House regrets:

- (a) the Government's mismanagement and political manipulation of our Crown corporations resulting in millions of dollars in losses and massive increases in Autopac and other Crown corporation rates;
- (b) the Government's failure to provide a plan to deal with the serious economic and financial problems facing Manitoba;
- (c) the Government's lack of openness and honesty in providing vital information to the public on all areas within its jurisdiction;
- (d) the Government's insistence on opposing the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, contrary to the best interests of farmers, workers, manufacturers and suppliers, and contrary to the results of its own economic studies on free trade;
- (e) the Government's mismanagement and wrong-headed priorities which have resulted in a lack of funding for vital health services, education and agriculture programs;
- (f) that this Government has thereby lost the confidence and trust of the people of Manitoba.

All those in favour, say Yea; all those opposed, say Nay. In my opinion, the Nays have it.

The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. G. MERCIER: Yeas and Nays, Madam Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Call in the members.

A STANDING VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

YEAS

Birt, Blake, Brown, Carstairs, Connery, Cummings, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Hammond, Johnston, Kovnats, Manness, McCrae, Mercier, Mitchelson, Nordman, Oleson, Orchard, Pankratz, Rocan, Roch.

NAYS

Ashton, Baker, Bucklaschuk, Cowan, Doer, Dolin, Evans, Harapiak (Swan River), Harapiak (The Pas), Harper, Hemphill, Kostyra, Lecuyer, Mackling, Maloway, Parasiuk, Pawley, Penner, Plohman, Santos, Schroeder, Scott, Smith (Ellice), Smith (Osborne), Storie, Uruski, Walding, Wasylcyia-Leis.

MR. CLERK, W. Remnant: Yeas, 27; Nays, 28.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is accordingly defeated.

The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. C. BIRT: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would move adjournment and call it ten o'clock.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is it the will of the House to call it ten o'clock? (Agreed)

The hour being 10:00 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned till 1:30 p.m. tomorrow. (Tuesday)

(English translation of Hon. G. Lecuyer's speech in Volume XXXVI No. 8A, pages 185-86, Monday, February 22, 1988.)

... which was the most successful yet, with total attendance of between 350,000 and 400,000 visitors from the United States and neighbouring provinces. Participation was greater than ever, and I especially want to congratulate the 3,000 volunteers without whose help this could not have come off, and certainly not with the success of this latest Festival. I also congratulate the leadership and personnel for organising an event of this magnitude.

More than 20,000 students were involved, making it a successful school programme. And for the first time, the Festival got its kick-off on Provencher Boulevard. This went over very well, with the active participation of St. Boniface businessmen.

There were more ice sculptures than in previous years, and very beautiful ones, as attested to by the visitors. There were more visitors to Voyageur Park and to Provencher Park; more at the Rendez-vous than before. To accommodate stage events of all types, song, dance, and artisans of all kinds, there were four tents in the Parc du Voyageur as opposed to two last year.

There were also a number of sporting competitions including dogsled races, snowshoe races, basketball international ringette and hockey tournaments, and even a weight-lifting competition. As I mentioned, there was a minor level, pee-wee hockey tournament, as well.

Madam Speaker, this was also an opportunity for Francophones to meet and renew friendships in a joyous atmosphere, to rub shoulders with fellow citizens of other cultures, and in so doing, to foster better understanding and to attend the various relais where Manitoba artists as well as those from other provinces held forth.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(English translation of Mr. Rocan's speech in Volume XXXVI, No. 8A, page 186, Monday, February 22, 1988.)

We also took part in this event of last week, and wish to thank the 3,000 volunteers who gave of their time . . .