

WEATHER

Tonight: Mostly Clear
Sunday: Cloudy, Rainy Periods

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B.C. to Sell All Insurance

By BRIAN BUTTERS
Times Staff

The B.C. government, in a dramatic three-pronged move Friday, commenced a complete takeover of the \$135 million automobile insurance industry and also cleared the decks to enter the general and life insurance fields.

The proposed Insurance Corporation of B.C. will emerge as the nation's largest insurance underwriter.

The main feature of the two bills introduced by Highway Minister Bob Strachan is that the government alone will sell all kinds of automobile insurance. Each driver in the province will buy his insurance from the government before he is allowed to drive.

The Automobile Insurance Act plan will come into effect March 1, 1974. Motorists will purchase their insurance policy — through their own private agents or directly through the government — at the same time as they renew their licence plate stickers.

The 2,000 private agents will have the option to either become agents for the government corporation or go out of business.

Supplementary insurance over and above the minimum coverage required by the government will not be available from private plans as is the case in the Manitoba government-run plan, but must be purchased from the government.

The government plan will likely result in a break for younger drivers who have had to suffer through high premium rates in previous years, Strachan said. Each driver will be evaluated on an individual basis, he said.

"The young people of this province are not going to be gouged as they have in the past."

While not being specific about the rates which will result from the new plan, Strachan did say rates would be generally lower. "Automobile insurance will be at cost and you can't get it any lower than that," he said.

At the same time that the government is taking over all car insurance, the move into the field of general insurance, will be with a difference.

The government corporation will compete with private insurance companies for business on a profit-making basis.

These fields will include fire, casualty, marine, property and general home insurance, Strachan said. In addition, the door is open for the ICBC to go into the field of life insurance if the cabinet decides.

Car-Repair Shops, Too

There is also provision in the legislation for the government to establish its own car-repair shops. Strachan said at least one such shop will be set up, mainly for the purpose of obtaining information on costs of car repairs.

The types of car insurance available under the government plan will closely resemble what is presently offered. There will still be a minimum requirement of \$50,000 public liability. Other options will be available at extra cost to the customer, currently the case.

Car insurance will become a two-part policy for the individual driver. There will be one policy for the driver himself, with the premium scaled according to the individual's driving record, meaning the bad driver will pay a comparatively higher rate than the good. A second policy will be written on the vehicle.

Individual agents and companies will have until Oct. 1 of this year to apply for licences as agents representing ICBC. If they do not have licences, the agents will have to rely on business in other types of insurance in order to stay in operation.

The government will pay no take-over compensation to any agent or company, he said. "For years the insurance companies have been saying 'we're losing money, we're losing money.' We are doing them a favor. They should be paying us."

Strachan denied that the power in the legislation enabling the government to go into other forms of insurance is a first step to a government monopoly in those areas as well. He described the government move as "social legislation meeting the social requirements of the people of B.C."

He said the corporation will be a more comprehensive set-up than exists in Manitoba in that it covers the whole field of insurance. It is designed to "eliminate the delays and administrative problems that have been besetting the drivers of this province for so long," he said.

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HOUSE ACTION...

● Saanich and the Islands Conservative MLA Hugh Curtis flayed the government for its failure to provide adequate municipal assistance in the budget.

● Premier Dave Barrett told the Legislature latest cost estimates of power development under the Columbia River Treaty with the U.S. have topped \$1 billion.

● The provincial government wants to make day-care "much more universal" than it is at present, Rehabilitation Minister Norman Levi said.

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Ceasefire Not Working JMC Admits

Times News Services

SAIGON — With nearly 15,000 Vietnamese casualties reported in the first three weeks of the ceasefire, the United States, North and South Vietnam and the Viet Cong issued an urgent appeal today to stop the shooting.

The four parties of the Joint Military Commission, which is charged with helping keep the peace, acknowledged that the ceasefire is not working and called on the South Vietnamese and Viet Cong high commands to:

Order regular and irregular armed forces and armed police to end hostilities, strictly respect the ceasefire and settle all questions by peaceful negotiations.

Prohibit armed patrols into areas controlled by opposing armed forces and flights by armed bomber and fighter aircraft of all types.

Stop armed attacks against any person, either military or civilian by any means whatsoever.

Prohibit all combat operations on the ground, on rivers, on the sea and in the air.

Meanwhile, Canadian teacher Mare Cayer, looking pale and drawn and wearing clothes a couple of sizes too large, arrived here today on his way home to St. Raymond, Que., after five years of detention by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese.

He spoke to no one, and at one point when he was chased by about 50 photographers and reporters, looked on the verge of tears.

He was driven from the airport to the villa on the new International Commission of Control and Supervision in downtown Saigon.

He will stay there until he flies home to Canada, probably Monday.

The Communist Pathet Lao said today U.S. prisoners of war held in Laos will be released only after a ceasefire goes into effect.

South Petras, the Pathet Laos' permanent representative in Vientiane, declined to give any details about U.S. POWs in Laos, but said the Pathet Lao leadership has a detailed accounting of prisoners and where they were being held.

PRISONERS DIG UNDER WALLS

McALESTER, Okla. (AP) — Nine prisoners broke out of the Oklahoma state penitentiary Friday night by tunnelling under the walls, authorities said.

The break apparently came after an evening head count, officials said, and it was hours before the men were missed.

Calypso Limping

WASHINGTON (WP) — French oceanographer Jacques Yves Cousteau headed out from the coast of Antarctica Friday aboard his crippled research ship Calypso bound on one engine for Tierra Del Fuego at the southern tip of South America.

U.K. Strikes Mount

LONDON (Reuters) — Britain faced the prospect of a mounting wave of strikes as opposition to the government's statutory prices and incomes policy intensified today.

Rail Talks Halt

MONTREAL (CP) — Contract talks between Canada's major railways and three union groups representing about 80,000 employees ground to a halt Friday and it could be some time before they restart.

Train Crash Fatal

MEGARA, Greece (Reuters) — Four persons died and 36 were injured when a passenger train jumped the rails and fell into a small precipice near here Friday night, a police spokesman said today.

Gas Leak Bang

NEW YORK (UPI) — An explosion in a restaurant Friday night injured five persons and blasted a 15-foot square hole in the kitchen wall.

CANCER CLINIC SET MARCH 6

The Victoria Times and the Canadian Cancer Society's Vancouver Island branch are again this year sponsoring a free public forum, Cancer Facts for Men and Women.

The forum will be held in the Newcombe Theatre at the Provincial Museum Tuesday, March 6, at 7:45 p.m. and will feature short films, commentary by local doctors and a question period.

Purpose of the program is to inform the general public on the facts about cancer; to help erase the "cancerphobia" that exists in society; and to help people realize that cancer is not necessarily the destroyer it appears to be.

Tickets for the forum will be available next week and can be picked up at the Victoria Times, second floor of the Victoria Press Building or at the Canadian Cancer Society headquarters at 857 Caledonia.

Tickets can also be ordered by mail by writing to: Victoria Times, Cancer Forum, 2621 Douglas.

Please, no telephone orders.



H. W. Davey (left) and successor John Farris

CHIEF JUSTICE SWORN

VANCOUVER (CP) — Mr. Justice John Farris was sworn in as chief justice of British Columbia Friday and said he plans periodic reports to the public on the progress of law as it relates to peoples rights and liberties.

The 61-year-old chief justice took the oath on a Bible given to him by his mother 50 years ago and he wore the gown of his father, the late senator J. W. deB. Farris who was the first city prosecutor in the city of Vancouver.

The oath of office was administered by his predecessor Chief Justice H. W. Davey. Chief Justice Farris said the bench and the legal profession had a common purpose in the pursuit of justice, a purpose that involved peoples' rights and liberties.

VW Price Hiked By Devaluation

Times News Services
Volkswagen is planning auto price increases in North America in the wake of the 10-per-cent devaluation of the U.S. dollar.

Bayerische Motoren Werke (BMW) said it will raise West German prices of its models an average of 4½ per cent and that export prices will have to be increased to balance production costs.

Four other West German auto builders also have increased domestic prices in the last three weeks.

The United States dollar was steady again today on the Japanese exchange as stability appeared to have returned to the world's money markets following a week of devaluation and uncertainty.

The dollar finished today's half-day session on the Tokyo market at 264.10 yen, unchanged from Friday's close.

In West Germany, the dollar closed Friday at 2.96 marks on the Frankfurt exchange, which was near the official ceiling of 2.9656 marks. Other European markets also appeared stable with the dollar trading strongly as the hectic week ended.

The British pound, however, sagged to \$2.44 at Friday's closing, apparently because of the stronger dollar and speculator's fears that labor unrest in Britain might sabotage the

government's anti-inflation program.

Meanwhile, the Japanese government was reportedly considering action to ease import restrictions on electric calculators and oranges, two of the several industrial and agricultural products the United States wants Japan to remove completely from the import restriction list.

The finance ministry also was reported considering action to allow the import of U.S.-made air conditioners, refrigerators, automobiles and color film without tax for one year — as a means of reducing Japan's large trade surplus with the United States.

Here's How To Become Better You

How many times have you started on a self-improvement campaign and never finished?

It's not very easy to give up when you follow the Beauty Improvement Plan beginning in the Times today on Page 26. This plan is written to help you be successful in reaching your goal.

You can lose up to 20 pounds in eight weeks by reading and actively taking part in the self-improvement plan.

RELEASE SET

NEW DELHI (UPI) — India will repatriate 179 sick and wounded Pakistani prisoners of war Monday, the defence ministry announced today.

TIMBER ZONING PROPOSED

By AL FORREST
Times Business Editor

DUNCAN — The raging controversy between environmentalists and the forestry industry could be resolved through a system of zoning of timberlands, University of B.C. Research Forest director John Walters said here Friday.

He said under the plan, the forestry industry would concentrate on harvesting high-yield timberland with large, efficient machinery.

The industry at the same time would pull out of thousands of acres of timberland and make it available for recreation or other activities.

Studies on the feasibility of zoning for single and best use are under way at UBC, he said.

"At this stage it is still just a proposal. The forestry industry has still not fully accepted the idea and it is very controversial."

He addressed the annual meeting of the British Columbia Association of Profes-

sional Foresters at Eagle Hall. The meeting drew 140 foresters to its three-day session which ended Friday.

"One of its advantages (of zoning) would be that it would bring an end to the confrontations between environmentalists and forestry activities," Walters said.

He said in one test study at UBC, the forestry industry could pull out of 75 per cent of a section of timberland it now holds and still have the same net yield in timber. The land vacated by the industry would

be available for fishing and camping.

Cutting of timber is going to become a highly-mechanized operation, he said, and timberlands in future should be selected on the basis of which area is most conducive to high-yield operations based upon greater use of machines.

Land zoned for logging should be only those sections that are relatively flat, accessible and offer a high yield.

This implied first choice.

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MAIL UNIONS ACCEPT CONTRACT

OTTAWA (CP) — The 28,000-member Council of Postal Unions gave the government formal notice Friday that postal workers were satisfied with terms of a tentative contract settlement.

Notice of the ratification of an agreement initialled three weeks ago came after results that showed 73 per cent of fulltime postal workers favored the settlement.

Gunmen Free Girl

Times News Services

FREEPORT, Grand Bahama Island — Andrea Spencer, the four-year-old daughter of Canadian banker Robert Spencer, was back home today after a 30-hour ordeal with kidnapers on this casino-dotted resort island.

Two men abducted the pyjama-clad girl at gunpoint Thursday night from her parents home and demanded \$250,000 in ransom.

She was returned to her home this morning, police said, refusing to give any details. They said her father, manager of the Freeport branch of the Royal Bank of Canada, had delivered the ransom money to a pre-arranged spot, but it had not been picked up by noon today.

The Bahamian government clamped tight security checks on all persons leaving the island while tourists and local residents joined police in searching for the girl Friday and Friday night through pine woods and scrubland.

Andrea's mother was reported under sedation during the ordeal.

It was the second abduction incident for the Spencers. In June of last year, Mrs. Spencer was abducted from their home by a lone gunman who ordered the banker to withdraw \$300,000 in cash.

The abductor drove away with Mrs. Spencer in the Spencer's car, but she was able to leap free when police engaged the gunman in a gun battle. The car was later found abandoned but no suspect was ever arrested.

Agent Labels NDP Plan 'Licence to Steal'

The British Columbia insurance industry will continue its battle to be permitted to sell car insurance alongside the government program, Zurich Insurance Company manager Manly Price of Vancouver said today.

He said new advertisements placed by the insurance industry will ask for a write-in campaign to try to influence the provincial government before the legislation is proclaimed.

Price said one of the main problems with the government monopoly is there would be no outside supervision on rates.

"You could almost say the government is getting a licence to steal. That may be too rough, but the point is there would be no way to check the rates established by the government."

Under private insurance, the rates were subject to scrutiny by the provincial government's British Columbia Automobile Insurance Board.

"Obviously this board now

will be disbanded and there will be no protection for the general public."

He said all insurance companies in B.C. are co-operating in the write-in campaign and the results will be turned over to the provincial government.

The public is being asked if it wants private insurance companies to be permitted to compete with the government car insurance plan.

The government move into fire and other insurance areas

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