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**Official Report of**  
**DEBATES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**(Hansard)**

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THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1974

Night Sitting

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THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1974

The House met at 8:30 p.m.

**Introduction of bills.**

**Orders of the day.**

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

ESTIMATES: DEPARTMENT OF  
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION  
(continued)

On vote 225: Minister's office, \$77,072.

**MR. D.E. SMITH (North Peace River):** Mr. Chairman, after a foo-fah like that, you may not live too long, you know, because these ladies today are getting a little bit more concerned all the time about the fact that they have equal rights. I'm sure that the Lady Member for North Okanagan (Mrs. Jordan) was up about the same time as I was; so I feel sure that you're going to have to explain that sometime.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** We always save the best for later.

**MRS. P.J. JORDAN (North Okanagan):** Oh, you're a doll.

**MR. SMITH:** Anyway, at the supper hour adjournment I was about to get to my feet and speak about one particular problem that involves the Minister and the federal government. I would hope that the Minister would be able to do something about this. It's a problem that may exist in many parts of the Province of British Columbia, but one that's been brought to my attention by Chief Harry Dicky, chief of the Fort Nelson Indian tribe.

Basically it's a matter of registered traplines in the Fort Nelson forest area, which takes in the Snake River and the Deer River and a number of the tributaries. It seems that some years ago at a time when the price of fur was anything but attractive many of the traplines, the registered traplines, which originally belonged to native people were let go or sold to other individuals — mainly persons who trapped as a hobby rather than on a full-time basis.

Of course, the Minister is as aware as I am of the fact that the price of fur has accelerated tremendously in the past few years. A number of these Indian families that originally had trapping rights in that area, of course, would like to get the trapping rights back into the hands of the Indian people.

That's probably a worthwhile project on their part, but it involves your Department of Recreation and Conservation, who actually control the areas of the registered traplines. It involves the federal government, who are mainly responsible for the treaty Indians in Canada. It also involves the people who now have those traplines by virtue of the fact that somewhere back a number of years ago they probably purchased those lines from Indian people.

Now I'm not going to suggest that the price they paid was inadequate or anything else. I have no idea what the price was. The fact remains that the Indian people in the Fort Nelson area feel that they have lost the benefit of the trapping rights in a number of key areas: in the Fort Nelson area, out on Fontas River and in a number of the

areas and rivers that run into the Fort Nelson–Liard river system.

I don't know what can be done about it, Mr. Minister. I don't have the answer to the problem, but I do think that it would be wise if your department or someone in your department.... I think I know one of the personnel in your department who would be an excellent man to ask on your behalf, and I'm not going to name him publicly. Certainly he has a deep and long association with the problems of the people in the province, including the native people and the trappers, and I think he would be a good man to represent the department.

What I'm suggesting is that I would hope that a representative from your department would get together with Chief Harry Dicky in Fort Nelson, who is the chief of the band up there — and probably you would have to bring in a representative of the federal government — and see if something can be done with respect to the traplines that are in that area that originally belonged to the native people and have since by sale or by the fact that the traplines were just never used and came up for registration again or somehow now are in the hands of other individuals, mainly white people who trap as a part-time way of making a few extra dollars....

The Indian people feel that traditionally trapping is a way of life that they know and understand. I'm not going to say they didn't desert that way of life, because many of them did. The reason they did was because the price of fur was very bad for a few years, very bad.

**MR. D.T. KELLY (Omineca):** That's right. That's right. I agree with you.

**MR. SMITH:** You can't blame them for that; if they couldn't make a living trapping, well, why go out and trap on those traplines?

But times have changed. They were not as astute and sharp perhaps as they should have been originally in allowing those traplines to change hands for some nominal monetary value. I have no idea as to what the monetary value might have been, but I think the

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Minister can guess what the monetary value might have been in a number of cases. So I would hope that somehow he could set up at least an investigation of that whole problem.

I know the people now are not averse to allowing the traplines to go back to the native Indian people. But we must take into consideration the fact that a number of improvements have been made on the lines and cabins built, and so on, and they feel that they should be compensated for that.

So I bring this to the attention of the Minister because it is a problem with the Indians in the Fort Nelson area. Now if it's a problem with them, I'm sure it must be a problem with other native people in other parts of the province.

Perhaps there's a way of getting these traplines back into the hands of the native people who are best equipped to live that sort of life. I think that there should be an undertaking on the part of the Indian people, if they do somehow get acquisition of these traplines back into their name again, that they'll look after them and do a proper job of trapping.

But it is a way of life that they know and they understand. The price of fur right now is, of course, as high as it's been in the last 25 years. With diligence and hard work it can return to a person who knows the wilds a fair income, certainly much better than most of them make right now.

I'm sure that the Minister must be aware of the problem. I don't think there's an instant solution. But I do believe that if his department would get together with the chief of the tribe in the Fort Nelson area and the federal Department of Indian Affairs, there might be a solution found, and these traplines, which originally belonged to the native population and the native Indians in that part of the province, could be brought back into their control.

**HON. J. RADFORD (Minister of Recreation and Conservation):** Yes, Mr. Member. I'm surprised that you

haven't written me about this problem. You just brought it to my attention now. I imagine that if the traplines were sold, they would have to be bought back.

However, I'd like to announce that we will be hiring a tracking coordinator or fur manager and he will be stationed in Prince George. He will also have a technician with him. We will bring about expanded extension services to develop better harvest and more humane methods of trapping and will hold seminars and discuss various ways of assisting the native people in the north in marketing their furs. There are also some other innovations we intend bringing in. So I would like some more information and some names concerning the situation of the subject you just raised.

**MR. SMITH:** Just a supplemental point, if I could.

One of the problems, Mr. Minister, is the fact that the native people sometimes have a problem trying to give you the information that you would require regarding the traplines. They can tell you the general area and what not, but sometimes the history and the background is a little faded and lost. But they do have a problem.

I have a great deal of confidence in the chief of the Fort Nelson tribe, Harry Dicky, who is a very well-known Indian in that part of the country. Certainly, when he speaks for the Indian people up there, he speaks from a knowledge that is based upon a lifetime in that part of the area.

**MRS. JORDAN:** Mr. Chairman, the news that was announced following my colleague's comments is good news indeed. It is not a subject I intended to talk about myself.

Just before we start, Mr. Chairman, I would like to mention that before dinner a most unfortunate comment was made by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition regarding this Hon. Minister.

Interjection.

**MRS. JORDAN:** I'm sorry, I meant to say the Hon. leader of the Liberal opposition, who might better identify himself with the television programme called "StarTrek," in which the main character, I think, is called Bones.

I would like to disassociate myself with any of the remarks that he made. I think this Minister in himself has considerable charms of which we are all aware. I think that he has much in the way of athletic ability. I would like to mention — this is a personal comment — that when I was growing up and used to enjoy dancing, and ballroom dancing very much, I always found that men of modest stature and fleet of foot were often the very best ballroom dancers. At the rate this Minister was dancing around the rest of us before dinner, there is no need to question his physical agility.

Just speaking of his agility, Mr. Chairman, during dinner time I had a call from someone who either must have been in the gallery, or had someone in the gallery, regarding the comments, or lack of comments by this Minister to my questions.

I suggested that he was going to be victimized by the overbearing stature of the Minister of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce (Hon. Mr. Lauk), and that of entering into the fish farming business in a major way, and this was not denied by the Minister. This is when he showed some of his agility.

I would again pose this question, Mr. Chairman.

Just from that one comment I have had one phone call, within a matter of an hour, to ask me to pursue this matter further because there is concern. If the

government is going to make funds available to fish farmers in British Columbia, who are producing food, through the Industrial Development Corporation of British Columbia, they fear that the policy being practised in other areas

of the government demanding a share of the business in return for the loan, will affect them. There is no way that these people, who have to be very agile in their own business to make it profitable — it is a highly specialized art — could possibly compete against government under the terms that have already been set out by this government in the forest industry for example.

I would ask the Minister specifically to deny that the government is going to go into any form of commercial fish farming, either for food or other purposes, and then these people need not be concerned any more.

There is the matter regarding some press releases from this Minister's office that I would like to question. Perhaps he can clear up the concern. This is what is an apparent disparity, for a relatively unknown reason, in regard to the price the government is paying for some of the land it is acquiring. Now, I recognize that assessment values vary around the province, and that certain land values are higher in certain areas of the province. But when one examines the four that I wish to bring up here, there seems little logical reason for the really marked disparity there is.

The first one that I would like to draw to the Minister's attention is his announcement of the purchasing of Cathedral Provincial Park holdings; a matter of some 40 acres for which he paid \$50,000, which works out to approximately \$1,250 per acre. If my knowledge is correct, this is a high alpine area. It is within the park, and I recognize that the government is anxious to get hold of as much land as possible anywhere, as well as in parks.

But the next one, which was privately owned and was within Tweedsmuir Park, is 402 acres, for \$35,000 total cash payment. This works out to approximately \$87 per acre. I could see this if this was in a very remote area, and it was dry, without water, without other advantages. But this property is situated on both sides of the river, and it contains approximately 4,000 feet of river frontage. Mr. Chairman, river frontage in British Columbia today is extremely valuable land. Its potential for recreational purposes, both for the private and public sectors, is great. So I would ask why, on this basis, with 4,000 feet of river frontage and 402 acres of privately owned land within Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, it only worked out to \$87 an acre, approximately.

Then you compare this with Otter Lake, which happens to be in the Minister of Public Works' (Hon. Mr. Hartley's) constituency, where 111 acres averaged out to approximately \$1,270 per acre, for a total of \$141,000. This has 2,000 feet of frontage on Otter Lake, with a gently sloping foreshore. But, Mr. Minister, \$1,270 per acre, when one compares that it is half of what you got in the way of river frontage, and yet 10 times, nearly 12 times, as much per acre as what you paid in Tweedsmuir Park....

The last example in these comparisons — and there are others, but I have picked these four out specifically — is at Desolation Sound, where the government purchased 97 acres at what is called Grail Point. That was \$75,000, and this has a large area of waterfront, almost a mile — a mile of ocean front at approximately \$770 per acre.

Now, Mr. Minister, these purchases were announced between March 18, 1974, and April 1, 1974; Cathedral Park being on March 18; the land in Tweedsmuir Park, March 22; the land in Otter Lake Provincial Park, March 22; and the land at Desolation Sound, April 1.

This is an incredible disparity for land, which while it may not be similar in actual visual concept, is in fact valuable in terms of its water access, its frontage, and also, with Cathedral Park, its alpine qualities.

I hope the Minister has a reasonable explanation for this, and I may wish to question him further after his answer. But it just doesn't sound right, Mr. Minister, and we wonder what sort of methods you are adopting in terms of offering prices, because people should be getting a fairly equal amount of money for their land.

The next news release that I would like to refer to, which in my mind reflects a lot of the confusion that is emanating from the Minister's department, is in regard to the establishment of a new class A provincial park at Pennask Lake, which is near Summerland. This is a 604-acre class A provincial park, to be known as Pennask Lake Provincial Park.

The Minister said that Pennask Lake is the most important source of trout eggs in British Columbia for the

province-wide stocking programme of the Fish and Wildlife Branch. I recognize that this is true. But then he goes on to say that preservation and protection of the lake's trout-egg supply was of paramount consideration in the setting aside of Pennask Lake Provincial Park. Increasing angling pressure on the lake's trout population has caused concern on the part of the Fish and Wildlife Branch for the future of Pennask Lake as a trout-egg supply source.

Mr. Minister, if one is concerned about the supply of trout eggs, and concerned about the pressure of fishing by the public on this lake, then surely one doesn't go around and establish public parks that are going to increase the pressure on that lake in terms of fishing and campers. It is 604 acres, so I would assume it is what you would now class as a high-density park development, which sounds horrible to begin with.

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Also, if you are going to have 604 acres, what, 100, 150 campsites, that is a lot of people. One wonders if there isn't another reason why the Minister has purchased this land — one is the fact that the government is utilizing the Parks Branch as another way of acquiring land in its aim to control more and more of the private land in British Columbia. Or if, in fact, it wasn't to cut off the water to the private lodge that is situated on Pennask Lake.

Surely, Mr. Minister, the statements in your news release are completely in conflict with each other. I would think that if you had wanted this to preserve the pressure, and you wanted this land, you might have classed it as a forestry reserve or something, but not class it as a park in which you are going to develop public access and public facilities.

The next matter that comes to mind is just a small point that again emanates from what comes out of the Minister's office, a lot of which he's not aware. We in the opposition were wondering if you had any more of this official government paper that is handed out so liberally to the MLAs.

This is an official British Columbia press release issued by Daisy Webster and Hon. Jack Radford, dated May 21, 1974; It doesn't relate at all to the Minister's Ministerial duties; it's purely a constituency matter. I think it is a grand idea that the government is going to supply all MLAs with official government stationery on which they can make official government announcements relating to their constituency. I hope the Minister will confirm this. I'm sure that this helps the Hon. Member in meeting her commitments.

The last point I want to bring up at this time, Mr. Minister, was in relation to your statements regarding snowmobiling. It's a great sport among politicians, and I would say some of the uninformed public, to suggest that snowmobiles are the be-all and the end-all of disaster in recreation and ecology. This simply is not true.

Snowmobiles, like anything else, can be hazardous if they're mishandled or if they're abused in terms of what they're used for. But like any other sport — skiing, skating, driving, racing — snowmobiling has a very legitimate role to play in winter recreation. It offers an ideal opportunity for handicapped people and older people who may not have the physical stamina that the Minister has to get out into the country, to get out into the backwoods, to get away from a lot of people, to just enjoy the countryside or to indulge in photography or to enjoy bird watching. Winter bird watching is a most interesting pastime. These vehicles frequently use logging roads that are not used in the wintertime by logging trucks.

There have been a lot of studies done, many of which are within this Minister's department, which indicate, under proper management, snowmobiling does not have any major ecological impact.

Rather than the Minister standing up here and setting everyone's heads aloft by saying snowmobiles are going to be banned, I wish he would clarify the statement. What we need and what I've been asking for since being in the opposition, and what I was working for when in government, was a proper snowmobile policy in British Columbia. This can be worked out quite adequately with the snowmobile association which is striving to see that snowmobiles are used in a responsible manner and is striving to police their own members and to educate their own members.

There needs to be, Mr. Minister, proper areas in this province designated for snowmobiling, not to their exclusive use but areas where it can be properly controlled in terms of opening dates and closing dates so there can't

be any ecological damage from machines being used when there is an improper or lack of snow pack. It's important.

I would request the Minister to enter into dialogue with the forest industry itself and the forestry department. I've been associated with some briefs that have come to the Minister, one with particular reference to the Spallumcheen area, where, with the help of the Fish and Wildlife Branch, naturalists and conservationists, the local snowmobilers, the regional district, the forestry department, we have put together a 25-square-mile area which can be properly used for snowmobiling. It was the Vernon snowmobile club that pioneered the waterproof maps and was the first area in the province to chart proper routes with acceptable signs in order that there wouldn't be accidents and so that people would use the buddy system and wouldn't get lost. It seems to me, Mr. Minister, rather than standing up here after the Liberal leader's (Mr. D.A. Anderson) comments — which were rather narrow in their view, if I may say — and saying, "Yes, we're going to restrict snowmobiles...." There certainly are some areas where they shouldn't be, but you have a responsibility to develop snowmobiling areas.

One should be in the lower mainland within the vicinity of Cypress Bowl and in that area. I've helicoptered over that back area myself and there are some ideal snowmobiling grounds where you don't have conflict of use between skiers, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers. Each has a rightful place.

I hope the Minister will answer some of these questions.

**HON. MR. RADFORD:** Yes, Madam Member, in reference to your concern on fish farming, I don't know where you got the idea that the government had an interest in getting into the fish-farming business because we don't.

With reference to the process of acquiring property for parks, you mentioned the \$40,000 paid for some land within Cathedral Park. I happen to

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remember that one specifically out of the hundreds of acquisitions we make throughout the year. I remember that one because I sent it back for further study. However, that \$40,000 was the appraised value.

You mentioned the Tweedsmuir Park acquisition along the river. Because of a public-spirited gesture from a citizen on the inholding, we did get that at a special rate. We very seldom buy properties over the appraised value. I can't remember any off hand. There may have been a few, a few dollars over appraised value, but most of them are bought under the appraised value or at the appraised value.

In regard to Pennask Lake the class A park that was created there, making it a park doesn't necessarily say there's going to be more fishing pressure put on that lake. However, the release was made. We're making it a class A park but we're not going to upgrade it to a great density so that it will have conflict on the lake.

You mentioned snowmobiles. I mentioned earlier that snowmobiles may be banned for the use of hunting. The Member should realize and should know that we have no jurisdiction in this department over lands outside of the parks.

However, we have been talking with the Lands, Forests and Water Resources Department; we have been discussing with FIR on providing some land for snowmobilers. I think the Member remembers that the former government tried an experiment of allowing snowmobiles in Manning Park and the former government disbanded that idea. That's all I have to say on that.

**MR. J.R. CHABOT (Columbia River):** Three short questions. Question No. 1: can fur-bearing animals be trapped in class A parks?

Question No. 2: has the government entered into any negotiations for the purchase of the Hoodoos on the shores of Dutch Creek at Fairmont Hot Springs or is it going to be allowed to sift on into the hands of Americans who are in the process of negotiating for its purchase?



Question No. 3: I received a phone call this evening regarding White Swan Lake. White Swan Lake is without any doubt the most popular fishing lake in the east Kootenays and it has been well stocked by the hatchery at Bull River. At the moment there's a very limited amount of campsite property on the lake. The south side is a highway; on the east side there's no access; on the west end it's swamp; on the north end there's limited acreage which is presently a private campsite. It's presently for sale and contains 40 acres. The approximate price is \$125,000. I suggest there is a need for a public campsite on the top end of White Swan Lake.

I'm wondering whether the Parks Branch of the Department of Recreation and Conservation is presently consulting on the possible purchase and development of a public campsite on White Swan Lake, the most popular fishing lake in the east Kootenays. I think it's worthy of consideration and would make an excellent project for the Parks Branch to ensure that fishermen have an opportunity of having good facilities on White Swan.

**HON. MR. RADFORD:** In regard to the Hoodoos, Mr. Member, the Land Commission is looking into that. We recommended to the Land Commission that they take an assessment on the Hoodoos. There is not too much in the way of park values there. The fish and wildlife values are rather high there because it is a wintering habitat for some of the ungulates in that area.

**MR. CHABOT:** On the sides of the Hoodoos?

**HON. MR. RADFORD:** No, at the bottom of the Hoodoos.

**MR. CHABOT:** Oh, no, no. On the top.

**HON. MR. RADFORD:** Now, concerning White Swan Lake: private property here dominates most of the usable area, as you said, and we will examine this year some of the property there to maybe bring in a park system.

**MR. CHABOT:** There are 40 acres for sale right now.

**HON. MR. RADFORD:** We will be looking into that, Mr. Member.

Vote 225 approved.

Vote 226: general administration, \$515,176 — approved.

Vote 227: environmental conservation (SAM), \$502,396 — approved.

On Vote 228: Provincial Museum, \$1,414,598.

**MR. N.R. MORRISON (Victoria):** I wonder if he could give us some complete details on item 031, which is a complete new entry.

Interjections.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Would the Hon. Member repeat his question for the benefit of Hansard?

**MR. MORRISON:** Well, I wondered if he could tell us why that cost was high. That was really the question I wanted to ask. I heard the details of what

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it was but I wanted to know why the cost was that high.

**HON. MR. RADFORD:** The cost of \$220,000 of acquiring the train?

**MR. MORRISON:** Yes.



**HON. MR. RADFORD:** Well, actually the cost was very low, because we acquired a train, I think, on Vancouver Island when the cars came over here — a steam locomotive — for \$1. The one in Vancouver, I believe, was purchased for \$1 and we will be getting cooperation from the BCR with this project. Actually the figure is very small when you consider the five cars that we will be using. So \$220,000 is a very small amount.

**MR. MORRISON:** Really what I wanted to know is whether that figure includes the money that will be spent on them after acquisition.

**HON. MR. RADFORD:** I think that the trains will be maintained through the BCR and maintenance will be kept up. That's the arrangements that we've discussed so far.

**MR. MORRISON:** This is the vote that it will be in?

**HON. MR. RADFORD:** No, the maintenance will be done through the BCR, I'm told.

Vote 228 approved.

Vote 229: marine resources, \$198,863 — approved.

On vote 230: Fish and Wildlife Branch, \$7,078,622.

**MR. CHABOT:** Can fur-bearing animals be trapped in a Class A provincial park?

**HON. MR. RADFORD:** I'll have to get that answer and let you know. I'm not too sure on the new parks that have been created up in the north because I'm pretty sure there are some trap lines involved within those areas there.

Vote 230 approved.

Vote 231: Creston Valley Management Authority, \$96,130 — approved.

Vote 232: Parks Branch, \$10,131,184 — approved.

On vote 233: grants in aid of regional parks development and recreational centres, \$4,900,000.

**MR. R.H. McCLELLAND (Langley):** Mr. Chairman, just briefly I want to ask the Minister if he will tell us whether or not this government is going to put any money into development of regional parks on the lower mainland. Since 1966 we've been acquiring regional parks in that area. We have several thousand acres of excellent parkland now available but it isn't being used by anyone. The people are beginning to wonder where their tax money is going and when they'll have the opportunity to start using some of those parks.

I'm speaking particularly of Tynehead Park, with almost 800 acres, Campbell River Park, with over 1,000 acres and Aldergrove Lake Regional Park, with 900 acres or so. Of them all, only Aldergrove Lake is being used.

Would the Minister also tell me at this point what is the status of Aldergrove Lake Regional Park? Is it going to be closed down because of health problems, or is it going to be allowed to be kept open for the summer season for tourists?

**HON. MR. RADFORD:** We'll let you know on the Aldergrove one, Mr. Member. I'm not up to date on that one. However, I think you are aware that the government pays one-third of the capital cost of acquisition on parks for regional districts.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Just briefly on a supplementary, I know that. We paid one-third for acquisition. It's been a good programme over almost 10 years now, but I think it's time that we started developing some of those parks, even on a minimal basis and even if they're left in their wild state for the next five or six years, as long as we can get people onto them.

We've heard the government talk a lot about accelerated park development. These are important parks in the most rapidly growing part of British Columbia and it's time we started putting some money into development of them.

**MRS. JORDAN:** I'm just not sure I have the right vote. Is this where grants for facilities are concerned?

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Order, please! That's provided for under these votes.

**MRS. JORDAN:** Do you have any grants here for recreational activities in pursuit?

**HON. MR. RADFORD:** It's the question of recreational centres for elderly citizens. This was a fund that was just changed over from the Provincial Secretary's portfolio.

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**MRS. JORDAN:** You wouldn't let me talk about equestrian activities under this section. (Laughter.)

Vote 233 approved.

On vote 234: youth training programme, \$750,000.

**MR. CHABOT:** A brief question on vote 234. Could the Minister tell me how many young people will be involved in this youth training programme — that enlightened programme started by the former enlightened government in 1953 being carried on by the socialist horde (Laughter) and expanded?

I was wondering if the Minister could tell me what the distribution.... If there were too many I don't want to know. I want to know if there's going to be any work done in Assiniboine Provincial Park, Bugaboo Provincial Park, Hamber Provincial Park, Purcell Wilderness Conservancy or the Wasa Lake campsite.

Will there be a Class A provincial park established in the Kinbasket region? (Laughter.) Are you one of my supporters for renaming that lake from "Old MacNaughton" back to good old Chief Kinbasket?

**HON. MR. RADFORD:** This programme has been greatly expanded under the new hordes, Mr. Member. (Laughter.) It's been expanded not only in numbers of students but in the amount of money that's been allotted. There will be approximately 265 students this year in the programme.

As for your questions about your area, in the Mount Assiniboine area, there will be 15 students at a cost of \$25,000. Mount Robson will have 30 students working in that area at a cost of \$50,000. So you see that politics are put aside by this when it comes to helping....

**MR. CHABOT:** Mount Robson is not in my riding.

**HON. MR. RADFORD:** I can't understand the lack that was put into some of the areas of the opposition. It's a good job that this government came into being to get some work done in your area.

**MRS. JORDAN:** You don't even know where the ridings are.

**MR. CHABOT:** We're spending all our money on Leo's riding.

Vote 234 approved.

#### ESTIMATES: DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

On vote 235: Minister's office, \$100,716.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** I'm disappointed that the Minister would not have made an opening statement. The Members of the opposition have been waiting for months and months and months for this opportunity just to hear his opening statements and to have a chance to deal with his estimates. He's refused us the opportunity of listening to his golden Scottish brogue for a few moments. If the Minister wishes to change his mind and make an opening statement I'll gladly give way to him.

**HON. R.M. STRACHAN (Minister of Transport and Communications):** Mr. Chairman, they say they've been waiting months and months and months. I have in my hand the questions I've answered during these months, page after page after page of questions that I have answered either on the order paper or during the oral question periods. I can't think of a single question you still have to ask me about my department. That's why I expected the vote to go right through without questions.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** I wonder if all of those questions are printed on vague coloured paper, because that's the kind of answers we got from that Minister during question period.

I've a few questions then, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister didn't manage to answer. First of all, dealing with his responsibilities in the Department of Communications, I'd like to ask him when we may expect the report from Mr. Barry Clark, because I think that may be an interesting report. When the Minister was up in Harrison Hot Springs speaking to broadcasters up there, he told the broadcasters there that the subject of Mr. Clark's study was going to be much more than the educational television that we were led to believe in this House that the report was to be about.

In fact, the Minister said at that time that Mr. Clark would be asked to "discover the shortcomings of the present system." That's the term that the Minister used in that speech in Harrison. I wonder what he meant by "discovering the shortcomings of the present system" and whether or not Mr. Clark dealt, in fact, with ETV at all. Is he dealing with some other aspect, or is he just cooling his heels until his rentalsman costume is made to order?

Mr. Chairman, I'm a little frightened...

**HON. D.G. COCKE (Minister of Health):** Do you want a tranquilizer?

**MR. McCLELLAND:** ...about the role that this government may be wanting to take in the field of communications.

Certainly we know from past statements by Members of the government and Members of the NDP backbench that this government does want control of

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all cable systems. There isn't any doubt about that.

The Minister also said, up in Harrison at that meeting of the broadcasters, that the province is going to have to be part of the job of developing cable in British Columbia. He indicated that the job wasn't going to be done and the expansion of communication facilities would be done according to provincial priorities.

I agree, Mr. Chairman, that the province needs to have a voice in developing national policy with regard to broadcasting in all its phases, but the national character of our broadcasting system needs to be maintained at all times. We can't allow the balkanization of our broadcasting facilities, and allow each province to go its own way regardless of the national need in broadcasting.

I'd like to know at what state are the negotiations between the Minister of Transport and Communications and Ottawa with regard to the provincial voice in cable systems. Through you, Mr. Chairman, to the Minister: are you now in active negotiation to develop any kind of a provincially-operated community antenna television service now? Have you been in any kind of negotiation with the federal government? And what is the Ottawa reaction?

You know, I still get the idea that Ottawa doesn't want to relinquish the right to control broadcasting in all of its forms. When the Minister talks about the Communications Ministers across the country banding together to protect the provincial interests, I think he's being a little naïve in that I don't believe that Ottawa is going to give up those rights. I think those Communications Ministers are still illegitimate children because they haven't been recognized by Ottawa as an organized group of any kind.

I would also like to ask what plans you have to enter into the field of radio, if any. Do you have, through you, Mr. Chairman, designs on a provincial radio network or any kind of a closed-circuit radio system in the province? Are there any plans to enter the private sector, or to take equity positions in the private sector? Are we going to have the opportunity, for instance, to expand the weekly press release service, which we now get from the Premier's office, into some form of electronic media so we could then be given the opportunity to have the John Twigg propaganda hour on radio?

Those are important questions, Mr. Chairman, and I think it is time the people of British Columbia knew not only what your ideas are — we know what the ideas of the government are with regard to cable television — but also where they are at. What progress have you made with the federal government? What are your plans for the future with regard to both CATV and radio systems in the province?

I'd like to move on briefly to the subject of ferries, and ask a couple of questions about ferries. First of all, I wonder if the Minister could tell us the results of the dining room questionnaire which was distributed on the ferry mid-April, 1974 — whether or not that questionnaire is finished, and whether the Minister or his staff have been able to correlate the results of that questionnaire which asked: Do you consider the dining room service should be retained? Would you be willing to pay higher prices? And a weird sort of a No. 3 question: Do you feel that dining rooms should be replaced as the only lounge area for smokers?

Are there results from that questionnaire yet? Did you have any results from the other questionnaire that was sent out by the employees of the ferry system, which asked much the same kind of questions, before the employees of the ferry system were told to cease and desist from passing out that questionnaire?

We know, Mr. Chairman, that there are going to be no dining rooms on the new ferries. It would seem to me that we would have wanted to find out whether or not the people who used those ferries wanted dining rooms before we took precipitous action and cut them out, not only on the new ferries, but I understand as well from the ferry which is being stretched and repaired right now. There is no dining room on that one either. Yet we don't seem to know whether or not people want the dining room service, and whether or not they would be willing to pay for that service.

You know there are no savings in wages in cutting back the dining room service. When this issue was first raised in the House, we were given to believe at that time that the reason the dining room service was being cut back was because there were too many people standing around during non-peak periods. But that really doesn't make any difference because the Minister has already assured us that nobody is going to lose their jobs. They are still going to be working for the ferry service, so there won't be any savings, at least in wages, from the cutback of that kind of service.

What we are seeing instead is a situation where we are moving stewards, who work in the dining room service, to deckhands. And when we're doing that we are knocking off deckhands who have been waiting on standby for full-time jobs. So from a personnel point of view, the dining room cutbacks could be very bad for morale in the ferry service. I don't want to leave the impression that I think morale is bad on the ferry service right now, because I don't think it is too bad, except for a few certain watches where they have some problems. But the dining room service and those people who have been working in the dining room service, is one of those areas where there is a serious morale problem, mainly because they don't know what they are going to be doing, and they don't necessarily want to be moved away from a position as a steward into one as a deckhand, even though they

may get more money for it.

There is a serious problem with regard to the ferries and the personnel on the ferries, Mr. Chairman, with regard to the personnel complaints among the staff on the ferries. Too often it seems that they are being short circuited and funnelled away from management and put into some kind of middle-management or even lower-management groups which never do deal with that complaint. It is then allowed to fester, and the problems which resulted in a major strike by the ferry workers not too long ago result from that festering of those complaints which could have been adequately handled at a much earlier time.

There is no consistent method of handling grievances in the British Columbia Ferry Service. In many instances, because of the way grievances have been handled in the past, the staff members are afraid to make complaints because they feel it will go to their immediate superior, and life may be made very hard for that individual who takes it upon himself to make a grievance, and it never gets to the proper authorities.

In addition to that, perhaps not within the Minister's jurisdiction, but I think this is a serious problem in that the union does not back up its staff members aboard the ferry system when they have serious personnel grievances.

I've said before that there is only one way that problems which are apparent in the B.C. Ferry Service will ever be solved, and that is by a complete and impartial inquiry, a full management survey into the operations of the entire ferry service, of the upper management of that ferry service, and all of the divisions under that upper management.

Perhaps the Minister would answer now the question about the promises that he made to the union with regard to these kind of grievances when the strike was settled. He promised at that time that those grievances would be opened up and would be the subject of a special inquiry, and that was one of the bases upon which the ferry workers went back to work. I would like to know whether the Minister has taken any steps in that regard. If so, were they successful? Is there an ongoing inquiry at the moment? What exactly is happening in that area?

I wonder what led to the decision, or what seems to have been a decision, to take novelties out of the newsstands aboard ship. It is a strange situation which we have now; we have half a news service, it seems, on the ferries. Upon whose recommendations was this done? Does the Minister believe that there should be no amenities offered to the tourists who really love to take that ferry trip, and find it the best bargain in North America probably? But they would still like to have some of the amenities which, in the past, have gone along with the ferry trip.

I want to get back for a moment to the dining rooms on the ferries. I still think the government made a bad decision — or the Minister, or whoever made that decision — when they decided to cut back the dining room services on the ferries, and did not include dining rooms on the new ones, and cut the dining rooms out of the latest remodelled ship.

I think what was really needed here was a good, hard look at the whole catering department of the B.C. Ferry System so we could have established some kind of efficient service which would have offered that dining room service not at a loss, but perhaps as a money-making proposition, run like an efficient, good restaurant is run anywhere else, on land or on sea.

We should have had professional restaurateurs in there operating those dining rooms, establishing some kind of control over food portioning and menu planning — of which there was little or none and still isn't — and establishing some sort of control over rampant waste in the ferry dining rooms. We should have had some kind of control by a senior person in charge of the restaurants to make sure the turnover was as favourable as any good restaurant would be downtown. If we had done all of those things, Mr. Chairman, I believe we wouldn't have to put ourselves into the position of cutting out those dining rooms.

Charge a decent price for the meals. One of the cheapest meals in the country is to go on the dining rooms on the ferry and have a steak. People would be willing to pay much more for the kind of meals being served aboard those ferries and they would be willing to pay for the privilege of eating in luxury aboard those ferries when they have the opportunity to travel on them.

I would urge again the Minister to give some serious consideration to my request and others for some kind of

a top management inquiry into the entire ferry system, and particularly with regard to staff grievances. As I say, there doesn't seem to be at the moment any equitable system of settling those grievances and there are some serious staff problems aboard the ship.

I've heard many complaints over the past six or eight months from individual ferry workers who have had problems and have been either afraid to take them to their superiors or who have taken them to their superiors and have suffered some kind of consequence because of it. Female employees have been afraid to complain to their immediate superiors and were reduced to tears in many instances on their watches because of the attitudes of their superiors to them. That kind of a situation can't be allowed to continue. I don't think it will ever come to an end until everything is brought out in front and laid on the table and completely aired.

I'd like to get some clarification if we possibly can from the Minister with regard to the other ferries in the system. The Highways Minister (Hon. Mr. Lea),

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during oral question period not long ago, indicated to me that I shouldn't be asking him any questions about Highways ferries any longer because they were all under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Transport and Communications. Yet the day after I asked that question in the House what do I find on my desk but a news release from the British Columbia Department of Highways talking about the Shelter Bay–Galena Bay ferry, under the signature of the Hon. Graham Lea, the Minister of Highways.

Now, who is running the Highways ferries? Is it the Minister of Transport and Communications? This is dated May 9 in the afternoon yet; a release from the Minister of Highways. The question I raised about the inadequate and unsafe service of the ferry over the Easter weekend in the form of a petition from residents of Quadra and Cortes Islands was given the same kind of answer from the Minister. Yet I'm told that even today it's the regional Highways engineer in Courtenay who is issuing all the directives regarding that ferry. So somebody doesn't know who is operating what.

There has also been some concern expressed to me about the possibility of eliminating the service of the Mill Bay–Brentwood ferry. I'd like to ask the Minister whether or not he plans or the department plans to eliminate that service or cut it back. It is a service which is taken advantage of by many people. Revenue increased substantially over the past year even though there was no change in price. It saves a lot of miles for a lot of people who use that ferry as a shortcut. It is estimated 70 per cent are commuters who buy the book of 10 tickets for \$7.50. It does provide an important service to a number of people of British Columbia — a ferry that has been running since the 1920s.

It seems to have been cut back somewhat now since the first busy period of this spring. They've been turning away cars, I understand, up to 30 or more every trip on Sundays. I think instead of cutting it back — and I don't know whether that's the Minister's thoughts or not — he should be attempting to get a larger ferry to take some of the extra traffic off the Malahat and away from the urban Victoria area.

Incidentally, I understand the ferry still has no radar and can't go out in bad weather. It wouldn't cost too much money to get a small radar unit installed in that ferry.

If I could move on briefly to one of the Minister's other areas of responsibility, I'd like to talk for a moment about the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia. There are several questions I would like to ask about that operation. First of all, part of the problem was raised earlier today in oral question period. I believe it was raised today. It has to do with the lateness of payment from ICBC to small operators, whether they're repair shop operators or towing operators or whatever they happen to be. There is a serious problem in that these people are waiting for their money. For some reason, while the computers over there are spewing out cheques to people who don't deserve them, the people who do deserve them aren't getting their money.

I know of one small towing operator in the lower mainland who had some \$15,000 in back debts from the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia. Many of these people who operate, as many small businessmen do, on a



pretty strict budget are right up against it, and have their backs against the wall now. Some of them, I'm afraid, will go belly up if they don't get more prompt service from ICBC. The small towing operator I'm talking about has 100 cars in storage right today that he can't get any action on. Those cars are in storage at \$100 a day for 100 cars. Those bills are adding up pretty quickly. He doesn't seem to be able to get any action from ICBC.

I mentioned earlier the problem about the computer system throwing out cheques to people who don't seem to deserve them. I wonder if the Minister could assure the people of British Columbia that that \$1 million computer system we have at ICBC isn't going to come flying down around all the executive assistants because of a bad programming job on the part of the people who fed the input into that computer system.

There is a lot of resentment already about the way the government placed the order for that programming in the first instance. One firm, IBM, was given a blank-cheque \$1 million contract and told to get the job done as quickly as possible. But the people I've spoken to who are in the computer field say that there wasn't anywhere near enough lead time to programme that computer system correctly. There will be real trouble with the computer programming setup in the very near future. The whole project could come apart because of that serious lack of time to make the kind of proper planning that was necessary to set up such a sophisticated computer system.

Perhaps we're just seeing the tip of the iceberg now with these cheques that are coming out. I hope that the Minister can assure us that the system is well in hand and that we won't be running into any more difficulties with it.

We've heard a lot from this government about its increased aid to municipalities and how it was picking up the tab here and picking up the tab there for the municipalities. It was the great white father. But I'll tell you, Mr. Chairman, some of the municipalities aren't very happy about ICBC.

The Minister was quite upset one day in the House when he referred to the fact that I had taken it upon myself to write the municipalities and ask them what their insurance rates were for the year. I thought I

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was just doing my job, asking those people to tell us whether they're happy with ICBC, whether it's costing them more, whether it's costing them less. That's the right of every British Columbian to know.

I'm happy to say that I got a number of replies from the municipalities around the province, not all of them but quite a few. Some of them are paying less for their insurance this year but not very many. Most of them are paying more and many of those who are either paying about the same or less are paying it on the basis of a very tenuous situation that's been set up with regard to fleet insurance. The Village of Parksville is paying \$100 more. The Town of Castlegar is paying about \$2,500 more: \$2,513 in 1973; \$5,100 in 1974.

Now there is, as I understand it, a 30 per cent rebate to municipalities on a fleet basis for satisfactory performance over the year, and a further 10 per cent for, I don't know — super-satisfactory performance, I suppose. But nobody seems to be able to get the correct explanation of how this rebate will in fact be covered. When the municipalities and towns and cities write and ask how those things will be handled, they can never seem to get the correct answer.

So in many instances, while they may be budgeting for a 30 per cent or 40 per cent deferral in their insurance rates, if they don't have this so-called satisfactory performance over the year, they are liable to find out at the end of their budget year that they didn't in fact qualify for that 30 or 40 per cent rebate, and they are going to be stuck with the extra money anyway. And where do they get it from? Except for those municipalities which have some foresight, most of them haven't budgeted for that extra money.

Here is the District of Hudson's Hope: 1973 premium, \$691; 1974, \$2,248.

Township of Richmond: \$20,600 in 1973; 1974, \$31,000 — an increase of 53.64 per cent.

Here again is a situation where many of these municipalities, as the provincial government did in the past,



carried their own collision insurance. But now they are forced into accepting collision insurance through ICBC, which is another hidden tax on the property owners in the municipalities. They would far sooner continue to carry their own collision, because they found it to be much cheaper. The provincial government should be the agency which knows about that kind of short cut to cheaper insurance rates, because the provincial government used it to good advantage itself for many years.

The Corporation of the District of Saanich will increase from just over \$15,000 to \$26,000, without the 40 per cent discount. If the 40 per cent discount is acceptable, then their increase will only be about \$700 or \$800. But once again, the mayor of the District of Saanich says: "I have no knowledge of what criteria the authorities will use to determine a good or bad performance." None of them do.

Campbell River — up \$475.

The City of Langley — fire truck insurance is up 300 per cent. Total insurance increase in the City of Langley is 45 per cent.

District of Langley — an increase of 120 per cent. Fleet insurance skyrocketed in many areas.

Here is the Corporation of the District of Summerland, up 48 per cent from \$3,000 to \$4,400.

Here is the Town of Ladysmith who had to go to their insurance agent and redraw their entire insurance programme, because they said that if they were to have the same level of coverage in 1974 as they had in 1973, it would have cost them 100 per cent more.

The Town of Williams Lake: 1973, \$4,660; 1974, \$5,600 with the discount. If they don't get the discount it is up to \$7,800 — an increase of almost 100 per cent.

District of Abbotsford — an increase of 33.2 per cent if they get the additional 10 per cent discount, and that increase includes the 30 per cent discount. If they get the additional 10 per cent discount it will bring their increase down to 20.8 per cent.

The Town of Merritt — the town clerk says an increase of some 50 per cent over last year. If in fact the municipality can obtain not only the 30 per cent discount, but the additional 10 per cent, the rates under ICBC will be similar to what we were paying in 1973. No assurance, however, that they will get either of those.

I don't understand why these districts and towns and cities have such different experiences. Each of them seems to be in a different situation with regard to what was supposed to be a universal insurance scheme. But here is one which is the same, while another one is up.

Here is the Town of Fort St. John, up 39.9 per cent, from \$4,200 to \$5,800.

Village of Tofino: \$265 in 1973 to \$700 in 1974.

District of West Vancouver — their costs are about the same.

The Town of Comox up 16.57 per cent on 17 vehicles.

Town of Smithers about the same, with the 30 per cent discount.

And there are the others — the Town of Ashcroft, Corporation of Esquimalt, District of Terrace. Terrace is up about \$400, but given the 30 per cent discount the others all seem to be about the same. Hardly any will be paying less, but none of them, Mr. Chairman, know whether or not they will be able to take advantage of that 30 per cent discount. They don't know whether they will be able to take advantage of it because they don't know what the criteria are for establishing that 30 per cent or 40 per cent discount.

While I am on the subject of fleet discounts, Mr. Chairman, there are small trucking outfits in the Province of British Columbia which have ended up paying exorbitant, rip-off prices for their insurance this year because of the inadequacy of the fleet discount system of ICBC.

I just bring to you one example of a small trucking company in Langley which paid \$6,743 for its fleet insurance in 1973, and for the same coverage in 1974 would now pay \$9,317, a 40 per cent increase. Thankfully, that is after the adjustments were made by ICBC to fleet discount proposals. Before that he was going to pay about a 200 per cent increase, but ICBC had second thoughts and made some adjustments. But that small operator is still going to end up paying 40 per cent more. He has got 25 units.

Another operator in Langley who has an oil dealership with I don't know how many trucks — a few trucks — has paid three times as much for his insurance this year as he did in 1973.

In addition to that, the fleet operators never ever had to pay interest on their insurance loans, if you will — deferrals is more correctly put, I guess — under the so-called rip-off private insurance companies. The insurance companies used to carry them so that they could pay over a certain period of time, and they paid no interest whatsoever. They always had five months or so in which to pay their premiums. Now they are faced with not only increases of 40, 50, 60, 300 per cent, but they are also faced, if they want to defer the payments over a few months, with 14 per cent carrying charges. That doesn't seem fair.

They could also, under the old system, Mr. Chairman, buy their insurance at a time which was best for them, when their business was at a position and their cash flow was in a position to make it possible for them to afford to buy that insurance at that time. Now they have got to buy it in the first quarter of the year, regardless of what their situation is.

I would just like to remind the Minister, Mr. Chairman, that whatever you use, you will find that somewhere along the line a truck bought it. If we are going to rip-off these truck operators in British Columbia, we are doing a disservice to every consumer in the province, because ultimately all of those insurance costs will end up right on the nose of a consumer charge for the goods that that truck had to haul.

I had a question too, Mr. Chairman, about the advertising campaign put on by ICBC. It seems funny when you have got the only game in town that you have got to go out and spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to advertise it. Even a weekly newspaper in my area — not my own, Mr. Minister — had the guts, the intestinal fortitude, to come out in a strong editorial against ICBC advertising, even though that newspaper was deriving a considerable amount of its revenue from this kind of silly ads by ICBC which we found in every weekly newspaper and every daily newspaper in British Columbia.

Interjection.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Dunskey gone mad in this kind of a situation. I would like to read what this weekly newspaper thinks about the kind of waste and extravagance that we've seen in the advertising campaigns by ICBC.

Perhaps it might be a good time, too, to bring...perhaps the Member for Columbia River (Mr. Chabot) was going to do it — but we should talk about the ad we have running on television with one Bruno Gerussi who is teaching the children of this province to be dangerous drivers. For some reason the people at Dunskey Advertising, or whoever it was that set up the ad, put the cue cards over there somewhere, and Bruno Gerussi has to keep looking off to the side while he's driving at 90 miles an hour down the road. At least, Mr. Chairman, in the next advertising campaign you could have the cue cards put up on the hood of the car so that Bruno could look at the road while he's driving. I think he's looking....

Interjection.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** He's looking right; he sees Social Credit on his heels I think.

But back to this editorial, Mr. Chairman. It's called "Ridiculous Patronage" and it's from the *Langley*

"The public has probably noticed by now that newspaper publishers throughout B.C. have been having a heyday for the past couple of months, thanks very much to the NDP provincial government and its autoplan advertising campaign.

"Lord knows, the publishers of the community papers in B.C., particularly the very small and relatively new ones, need this kind of advertising support to stay in business in these days of soaring taxes, wages and material. But really, isn't the government getting a little ridiculous the way it seems to be throwing advertising costs to the winds?

"Already we are hearing public comment that indicates that the NDP's advertising campaign is kicking back. People are noting that some of the ads are claiming that Autoplan is designed to lower insurance premiums and keep them lower, and these people, including us, realize that the excessive amount of advertising is doing only one thing, pushing up, and up, and up the cost of those premiums.

"If the NDP hierarchy thinks that it is buying the press of the province with its lavish

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advertising spending spree, it is only showing its woeful ignorance. The publishers are professionals in the field of public communication and public relations, and they're not going to be influenced by the ignorance or the foolishness or irresponsible politicians. In other words, put your money away, because you're not buying anybody with it.

"We know that a certain degree of advertising is good business for any business, Autoplan and any other business would be dear without an adequate programme.

"The publishers need a reasonable amount of advertising support to stay in business, but they do not relish political patronage. They expect that the buyer of advertising, whether it be the NDP government selling an insurance plan, or Joe Doe selling a second-hand scrub board, is using space in the paper only because he is buying a needed service. If a paper cannot sell the goods that it's advertising, any honest publisher would be the first one to admit that the paper is better off out of business and certainly in no need of political patronage."

There's more to it, Mr. Chairman, but it concludes:

"The *Langley Advance*, being one of the recipients of the huge sums of money being thrown around like drunken loggers by the NDP officials, may be in a queer position to criticize, but we think that the time has passed for someone, as well as John Citizen, to call a spade a spade."

Well, I certainly hope they won't be cut off from government advertising because of that bit of honesty, refreshing honesty I might add, by a weekly newspaper which puts its principles above everything else.

I'd like the Minister to tell us whether or not the government has entered the auto-wrecking business through ICBC; if not, whether it plans to. And if so, when? What is it doing in regard to the establishment of car-storage areas — because driving around the country these days, you find all kinds of little places, many of them right down town, with dozens and dozens and dozens of wrecked and partially wrecked cars laying around — eyesores in the middle of attractive communities. And we're told it's because ICBC doesn't have anything else to do with these vehicles.

I know for a fact that one company, Mainland Car Storage of Vancouver, was apparently put out of business by ICBC because ICBC sent them a letter some time ago informing them that the government planned to set up its own salvage depots, that his service was no longer necessary, but if any of your staff wants to come and beg us for a job, we'll consider you.

So not only were the insurance agents put out of business when ICBC was established, but a lot of peripheral businesses as well seem to have gone down the tube because of the actions of ICBC. So I think we'd like to know when we're going to see some of these unsightly areas cleaned up, what is going to happen to the wrecked cars in the future.

Is it true that there will only be one claims centre from Matsqui to Boston Bar? Is it necessary, if that is true,

for all cars to be hauled all the way from Boston Bar to Matsqui for adjusting purposes and for repairs. If so, that seems like a pretty enormous waste on the part of the ICBC premiums.

I also had a question that I wanted to ask about the government's furnishings in the claims centres and other areas — the Royal Centre and places like that.

I had a complaint, Mr. Chairman, from an organization called the Superior Steel Desk Company, whose head office is in Edmonton. They have supplied the provincial government, through tender, I might add, with a lot of desks — B.C. Hydro, many of the testing stations of the Motor Vehicle Branch and other areas, including a third of the furniture in the Royal Centre operation of ICBC. But I understand that the latest tenders for the claims centres of ICBC specified three distinct companies — Flexsteel, a company called Skally and Durante, and another called... Cyril Birch. Cyril Birch?

**MR. CHABOT:** Cyril Black?

**MR. McCLELLAND:** No, it wasn't Cyril Black, Mr. Member. (Laughter.) Now, these are all B.C. companies; I think they should have the opportunity to bid on open tender the same as everybody else, but it seems, from the information I can gather, that the difference between the furniture supplied by these companies and the furniture supplied by Superior Steel Desk is that all of these companies supply only high quality furniture — and high quality, Mr. Chairman, means very expensive.

Now why did we specify those three companies by themselves? How much more expensive is that furniture going to be? How much more luxurious than the furniture in the Royal Centre is that furniture going to be?

It's interesting too that there's another B.C. company, which builds and supplies office furniture, called Crane Woodcraft Products of Richmond. They weren't named in that tender call. So if you were looking for only British Columbia companies, I don't understand why we didn't use all of those British Columbia companies.

Mr. Chairman, I touched briefly earlier on the problem of ICBC forcing people to buy collision insurance which really is just another hidden increase for the taxpayers of British Columbia, because those people who chose, for one reason or another, not to

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have collision insurance coverage on their cars did so for very good reasons. They could save a lot of money by not having collision coverage. And they felt that they were in a position whereby they could look after any kind of collision claim that they may have. But now those people are not any more in that position of choosing their own course of action. They must buy their collision insurance from ICBC, and there again, another direct tax upon the consumers of insurance in this province.

I have a letter from a Fort Langley resident who addresses, for some reason, the letter to the Attorney-General. And his salutation reads: "Dear Big Brother,"

"Thank you so much for relieving us of yet another personal responsibility. Now we don't have to lie awake any more wondering whether we can afford to take out collision insurance on our 1969 truck and our '67 car. It doesn't matter any more whether we can afford it or not, for you have decided for each and every one of us that we need financial protection from our own stupidities.

"Government car insurance has turned out to be a boon for our family, even though it does cost us an extra \$128. All we have to do is economize even more on food, clothing and heat for the whole family.

"Please let us know in time when the government will take it upon itself to force us to insure our house, our TV set, our refrigerator or any other personal belonging so that we can apply for bankruptcy and go on welfare.

"It certainly is a great comfort to know that we have a government that takes all personal responsibilities from the shoulders of its weary subjects. I do wonder, though, when and where it received the right to play Soviet in democratic little

I think that is a pretty good letter and outlines the case pretty well about the autocratic attitude of ICBC in regard to this area of insurance coverage. We have been ripped off in so many ways by this great people's programme on collision coverage.

What about motorcycle drivers? They've been ripped off pretty badly. Many of those motorcycle drivers believe they deserve a better rate because many of them are only weekend drivers whose motorcycles are parked in the garage most of the time. Yet they've got to pay 50 per cent, 100 per cent or 200 per cent more for their auto insurance. Where is the justice in that from this great people's corporation?

I had a letter from someone who owns a motorcycle that I thought might be interesting to the people. Here is a case of a young fellow who moved to Vancouver from Winnipeg and who owns a motorcycle. He was charged \$68 under Manitoba's Autopact; he pays \$554 here.

This letter from a gentleman in Vancouver quotes "that yellow and irresponsible rag that we see floating around Victoria from time to time — *MLAs at Work* — which says we're going to all get new, low, low, low rates when they were touting the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia.

Here is a gentleman in Fort Langley who has written to the Premier of British Columbia, Premier Barrett. He sent me a copy, adding his voice to the many British Columbians who oppose the compulsory insurance scheme's treatment of motorcyclists. He goes on to say:

"As a group, motorcyclists are used to being treated with ignorance and discrimination. But many who may once have been NDP supporters expected a fairer deal from the government insurance. High rates — some 200 to 400 per cent over that charged by private firms — make a mockery of claims that Autoplan will save motorists money.

"Motorcycles take far less room on roads and in parking, burn less fuel, cause less pollution, and it would seem to those who choose to ride them that they are helping to reduce traffic. The whole situation is highly unfair. "

He makes some pretty positive suggestions on how some of the problems may be alleviated. He says, first of all, that the government might be wise to honour its repeated commitment that no B.C. motorist or motorcyclist will pay more for similar insurance this year than last. We are certainly getting nowhere with the phony rebate system that ICBC has set up which will insure that hardly anyone who deserves a rebate will get it because of the fantastically twisted method by which those people must calculate their 1973 rates. This letter writer goes on to say that a high percentage of motorcycle accidents occur with beginners,

"often on machines that they do not own. So it would be a good idea to have preferential rates for longer-term riders with good records. For new riders, lower rates could be available for those having taken proper instructional courses.

"Many motorcycles are ridden only on weekends and spend most of the time in storage. Have preferential rates on fire and theft for those kept in locked garages. Introduce the, 'ride to work' or 'pleasure only' categories, the same as you have done with cars.

"Allow motorcyclists the freedom of choice; perhaps private firms will solve the problem. There are lower rates available in England and the United States in areas of higher accident risk.

"It is disappointing to motorcyclists to have

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been made the scapegoat of Autoplan. To them, your government's rhetoric seems hollow indeed. What is most disappointing is that it seems that motorcyclists are regarded as a small group of no political significance and the discrimination against them need not concern those in power. What would have happened if all auto rates had gone up 250 per cent?"

So there are a lot of people being ripped off by Autoplan in a number of different ways.

Perhaps the biggest rip-off of them all is in the incredible political interference that we have seen in regard to the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia. Stories of direct involvement by the Minister's executive assistant in establishing positions for people who turned out to be friends of one or more members of the government. The Sharpe case is a classic example of that. Direct political interference and involvement in this area and also in the matter of rate setting as well. The actuarial basis on which we hope ICBC was founded has got to have been thrown out the window because of the kind of political actions that ICBC, at the insistence, we assume, of the political body in Victoria, changed rates willy-nilly given some pressure from various kinds of groups.

**MR. CHABOT:** Primarily the Minister.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Primarily the Minister, we assume. Decisions in ICBC, we are told, are no longer being made because everybody at the management level is afraid to make any meaningful moves because they know very well they may get hatcheted by the Minister's executive assistant or they may have the Minister himself down their necks, telling them when they will move, how far they will move and in what areas they will move.

The mismanagement of ICBC, if it continues, will be the shame of this province. I understand that in the early stages of ICBC, the government asked to have a management consultant firm do some studies about the management of that firm and it was in such a mess that the consulting firm wouldn't even touch it.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Oh, shame!

Interjection.

**ME. McCLELLAND:** I'll close just by saying that ICBC is too important a corporation to be allowed to be fooled around with by political interference by that very Minister who is standing there chirping. Why don't you go out and find a job for one of your friends?

It's too important a corporation to allow it to be managed and directed from a political-influence point of view rather than sound management practises. The Minister, if he was smart, would get ICBC back on the track on some kind of a solid management foundation.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Well, Mr. Chairman, after that rather lengthy potpourri composed of, I would say, 10 percent hot air...

**MR. McCLELLAND:** That's not bad.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** ...110 per cent bubbles, 20 per cent nonsense and the rest all wrong, I will make a few remarks myself.

Starting from the end I would just say this: The first item where the Member was absolutely, completely, 100 per cent wrong was his statement that he understands.... You notice how he says, "I understand this, I understand that." He doesn't understand anything. At no time was any management firm asked to make a survey and refused because it was in a mess.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Be careful.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** It has never been in a mess. Point No. 1. People afraid to make moves because they may get hatcheted by the executive assistant or by the Minister himself. That is absolute and utter rot without a shred of truth in it — not one shred of truth, a complete fabrication like most of the rest of the things you said. Incredible political interference. There hasn't been one single instance of political interference in the operation of ICBC.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**MR. D.M. PHILLIPS (South Peace River):** How can you stand there and say that?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Motorcycles — he compares it with Manitoba. The motorcyclists in British Columbia are able to drive their motorcycles many more months than they are in the Province of Manitoba. They have different kinds of winters in Manitoba than we do in most of....

**MR. PHILLIPS:** What about in the northern part of British Columbia then?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I've sat and listened to that Member make utter, nonsensical statements. I'm going to give you the truth. Are you going to give me the chance to give you the truth?

**MR. CHABOT:** Have you been east of Hope?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Seventy-five per cent of the population of this province live in the lower

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mainland or the lower half of Vancouver Island.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** So rip off the north.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Seventy-five per cent of them live there, where they are able to drive their bicycles for most of the year.

Secondly, I want to point out that if you use this statement, that they sit idle part of the time — if so, they can turn the licence back in.

I have here a letter too from a motorcyclist, and he points out that his went up from \$253 to \$291. But he points out what is happening elsewhere. As I told this House during the question period, it's only in the last couple of years that the industry has started to keep separate statistics on motorcyclists, and they were going to have increased rates this year.

Here's an ad from the Harley Davidson magazine.

**HON. MR. COCKE:** Listen to the truth over here.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Here's an ad from the Harley Davidson motorcycle magazine which tells the motorcyclists of the United States that if a certain bill passes that House their rates will cost them from \$386 a year to \$675 a year for no-fault insurance. Those people had to buy collision — it's part of the concept — but actually the number of people who have collision this year over previous years is only up 15 per cent. That's all.

With regard to the desks, we had to make a specification for the desks and those particular desks met those specifications. We went to tender and took the lowest tender.

I don't know if any insurance agents were put out of a job. Every agent who had been in the business and applied was given a licence.

You asked if we were in the auto-wrecking business. No, we're not.

Advertising — now you read that editorial. I had read that editorial too. If I was a newspaperman and I felt that way, that it was a waste of public money to put those ads in, I wouldn't have taken the money and then written the editorial. I would have refused to accept that advertising. I would have put my principles where my mouth was. That's what I would have done.

**MR. CHABOT:** You can't say that with a straight face.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Mr. Chairman, I would have put my principles where my mouth was. Apart from the fact that the vast majority of the advertising.... You say: "Why advertise? It's the only game in town."



It was a brand new operation. The people of this province had to be informed as to where they went for information, how it was going to work, and....

Interjections.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Order, please!

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** And all but I think two of the ads were carrying to the people.... I think there were two what you would call house ads....

Interjection.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Two of them were house ads....

**AN HON. MEMBER:** What do you call that?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Yes, that's a house ad. The rest were information as to where you phone....

Interjection.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** No, I said two of them were house ads, and that's one of them. That was a house ad. But why didn't you produce the other ads that gave in large black letters the phone number where you went for information when you had a problem? I think there were eight ads, weren't there? There were eight ads altogether, and six of the eight were straight information to the public that they had to have.

The reason for the house ads is quite simple. There were people in the province — not many but some — who were misleading the people of this province as to how the corporation was going to operate, what was going to happen to the money and all the rest of it.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Name names!

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I don't have to name the names.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** You ask people in this province.

Interjections.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** That's misleading information.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** And that's why the house ads: so that people would realize the truth about the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia. Now okay, what else did the Member say?

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Interjection.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I agree with you about that particular television ad. I noticed that.

The trucking companies paying exorbitant rates — well, we based the rates on the information given us by the private insurance companies. The same thing applies to the municipalities and the fire districts and so on. You had 180 companies with 1,000 agencies. It depended on how long you'd had it, who the agent was and what company. So there was no uniformity. That's why some of the municipalities are getting lower rates and some are getting higher, because they are now all measured on the same basis. That's the reason why some are up and some are down.

It was a real jungle, as I say, with no rationale to it. But on the information given to us by the private companies it has now been measured out and they are all being treated the same way. In the past they were being treated differently.

Now what else was there? The Member talked about spewing out cheques for people. Well, there was one cheque that went out, and that was because an agent put in the wrong licence number.

IBM was not given a blank cheque. He said there will be real trouble in the computer; that's not true. Now what else is there? Oh, the ferry.

You make the information public, orders-in-council are passed, legislation passes this House. Then the Member gets up and in his serious, accusatory tone talks about asking the Minister of Highways (Hon. Mr. Lea) about the Quadra Island ferry, and he said: "Ask the Minister of Transportation." Then the very next day he announces that something's going to happen to the Galena Bay ferry.

Mr. Member, I keep asking you people to do your homework, because the order that was set up and gave me, in the Department of Transportation, authority over the ferry deliberately said, "B.C. ferries and coastal ferries."

Now you may not know what coastal ferries are, but they operate on the coast of British Columbia. Within the Department of Highways there was something called Highways ferries, but they included a number of ferries.... The annual report of the Department of Highways shows this, if you read the annual report. You'll find that the Galena Bay is not on the coast. It's in the Interior. It's on the Arrow Lakes. So it's still under his direction. Please do your homework before you get up with those accusatory tones.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Don't shout; calm down.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Quadra Island's on the coast. He gave you the correct answer to the question you asked.

Interjection.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Order, please!

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Because these are the people with the experience and we do work together.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Once a year!

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Now what else did you say? We were talking about the ferries. You were talking about troubles on the ferry and that the dining rooms should be run like a good, efficient business.

Mr. Member, the dining rooms on the ferry cannot be operated in the same way as any dining room where you walk in off the street because for about 40 minutes of every two hours, for instance, those dining rooms have to be closed — for 40 minutes of every two hours. You can't set your hours from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. or anything else — or from the time the ferry starts until the time it stops — because you've got two shifts operating. But for 40 minutes of every two hours you can't take customers at all. That is one individual difference.

Now you talk about complaints from personnel of the ferries, and you indicated that they are afraid to raise any protest or complain or make a grievance. Now I can understand people who have been working in any operation of the government of British Columbia being afraid to raise grievances because until 12 months ago there was no union recognition and no union security; and they lived in that state of fear for 20 years. But I'll tell you: they now have full bargaining rights; bargaining is in process — the whole procedure that relates to them as it does to any other people working in the province.

Added to that is the fact that ferry management is looking into it, has met with the union, has met with personnel all over the service. The new manager has, I think, travelled practically every route and talked to the individuals and has met with the union representatives and the complaints are being discussed regularly.

Now, communications. What's Barrie Clark doing? I expect his report very soon. You said I'm asking him to discover the shortcomings of the present system and you want to know what is meant by that — the failure of the present system to carry adequate communications to the more isolated areas of the province. And I said that.

**MR. McCLELLAND:** Why didn't you tell the House that instead of saying you were doing some study....?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** As I recollect the statement, I indicated that.

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He's a little frightened — well, he can be frightened.

Government wants control of all cablevision. Expansion would be according to.... What was that? It was probably negligible, anyway.

What was the state of negotiations with Ottawa?

Interjections.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Oh, you asked me about the dining room questionnaire. There were two of them. One was sent out by the ferries union which contained a statement which was untrue, by the way. I don't know what the results of that one were; I have no idea. With regard to the one that was done by the ferry personnel, the replies showed that 76 per cent were in favour of retaining the dining rooms, and 65 per cent were prepared to pay higher prices for the service.

Getting back to communications, the negotiations with Ottawa — we have had one meeting and I had a further meeting with Mr. Pelletier when he was out here. All of the Ministers from across the country will be meeting on Monday and Tuesday here in Victoria. It's hard to say just exactly what the results will be, but I think Ottawa does recognize the fact that there must be some provincial input.

You expressed the fear about Balkanization. I'd like to read to you the last two paragraphs, and put them on the record, of the statement I made at one of the conferences that I attended as Minister of Communications. I said:

"Let me emphasize, in conclusion, that I am not advocating Balkanization for Canada, a position in which B.C. or any other province retreats behind an electronic curtain, emerging only when there is some problem with frequency overlap."

[Mr. Liden in the chair.]

"On the contrary, I am searching along with the rest of you for a viable means of ensuring regional and provincial input into communications planning, research and services without thrusting inter-polarization between federal and provincial interests. It is my hope that recognition of the differences that do exist, coupled with the realization of the need for cooperation, will allow us to find more effective mechanisms for regulation and development of our communications capability."

I think that outlines generally the policy and the attitude with which I'm adopting this whole relationship with the federal government. How far the federal government is prepared to go in giving the province input into the matter, of course, remains to be seen. I suppose we'll have to wait until after the results of July 8 to find out whether we start over again or whether they continue with the present administration, which has shown some willingness to develop new procedures to allow provincial input.

**MR. H.W. SCHROEDER (Chilliwack):** Just a few questions and just a few notations from the Interior of British Columbia.

I would like to call on the Minister to do a little bit of research and perhaps reconsider his position on the \$14 flat payment for work done by the auto body shops. I had the opportunity during the Easter break to tour through the northern Interior and to talk with some of the businesses in that area to find out what problems really existed in the operations of their business and why they would not accept the \$14 fee as had been suggested by ICBC.

I think, Mr. Minister, in all fairness, some of these points need to be spoken about and some of them need to be considered. I'd be very proud to see you, in the next couple of weeks or couple of months at the latest, review your position on the \$14 figure and perhaps recognize the fact that some inequities do exist, and perhaps make some adjustments for people in the northern Interior.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** You want to pay more?

**MR. SCHROEDER:** They will have to have at least \$16 per hour, some \$17 per hour.

**HON. R.A. WILLIAMS (Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources):** In favour of inflation.

**MR. SCHROEDER:** But let's take a look at the real reasons for it. Here are some of the considerations which I ask you to take a look at, Mr. Minister. Here are some costs that this gentleman from this body shop has listed for us, costs that don't exist in the lower mainland. And the lower mainland, of course, has the greatest number of automobiles, the greatest number of body shops. In working out figures, using averages, these costs that are being experienced by these northerners are not being experienced by the southerners and as a result don't show up in the averages.

For instance, the man suggests one of the obvious — snow removal. This one particular one comes from Burns Lake. These are real costs, not imagined costs: snow removal and, in addition to that, the heating of the plant where they actually do their work. These costs automatically are higher than the ones in the lower mainland and as a result there needs to be some consideration. He doesn't have a figure like 25 cents per hour or 10 per cent over what the cost would be assumed to be in the lower mainland. He just lists these for your consideration.

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The cost of building itself: he happens to have a dollar figure beside this notation. Cement alone for building costs in Burns Lake is as high as \$39 a yard. So in putting up a building in which he is going to do the auto body work, the cost is a percentage higher than it is in the lower mainland. As a result this should be given some consideration when it comes to working out a flat rate for the money to be paid to him from ICBC for work done.

Oxygen and acetylene. He has to buy it in quantities, first of all, that he can afford; secondly, that he can store and, thirdly, in quantities in which it's available, because he has to get it from Prince George. His oxygen and his acetylene cost him \$40 a bottle. He says they have to pay more because the supplier just cannot afford to provide it for any less. So here is an additional cost again, only because it's in the northland.

I've already listed four extra costs. Here is another one. Suppliers in the lower mainland — that is, auto body shops in the lower mainland — when they need a part, lift up the telephone, dial a number and the parts supplier delivers the part right to the door. The individual operator doesn't have to have a vehicle to pick it up; he doesn't have to spend time or pay casual help to go to pick it up. But in the northern country if he wants a part; then he has to call long distance to Prince George for the part; then he has to pay the freight to have the part brought in. These costs are all in addition to costs that the auto body man in the lower mainland experiences.

I've already listed five for you. The next one is even more important. This is the cost of labour itself. This man's experience is this: you cannot entice good labour to work in the north country and to stay there. They would sooner work, naturally, in the lower mainland. It's more comfortable; there is more work. He can be closer to the other amenities of life; he can enjoy himself more. As a result, the labour naturally would sooner work in the lower mainland. As a result, in order to get good workers and to keep good workers, the cost is higher in the north country.

I'm amazed to hear the Minister of Highways poo-pooing the idea, because it's his area that I'm talking about. It's the people of his northland that I'm begging for in this talk. I'm amazed to see that the Minister of Highways wouldn't be sympathetic for these.

**HON. G.R. LEA (Minister of Highways):** We don't beg. We don't beg, and we don't like people begging for us.

**MR. SCHROEDER:** You've always got the tin cup out, my friend; that's the whole concept of the socialist government: come begging and maybe you'll get some. Ask the Minister of Education (Hon. Mrs. Dailly); she'll tell you.

Now it's difficult to encourage men to come to the north country and to stay there. As a result, the cost is more.

The next cost is also a very real cost. If the body shop in the north country is to do the work and to do it now, he has to have some of his supplies more readily available than a bus ride from Prince George. So he has to carry an amount of stock. This man estimates his stock to be valued at something like \$8,000.

This is stock not necessarily being moved every week or every month. But this is stock that's being held there in the instance that it's going to be needed, and \$8,000 worth doesn't have, this man says, that much turnover in a year. Nonetheless he has to have it there. And bank interest at 11 per cent, as he has quoted it here, is an additional and increased cost for this man who is in the auto body business in the north country.

I think, Mr. Minister, that some of these are very, very valid reasons why the \$14 per hour perhaps should be adjusted when you go into the north and into the centre parts of the province.

This man has taken his problem to an accountant to have it analyzed to see what his problem is and why he can't show enough of a profit out of his operations to pay his own salaries. The accountant — I have a copy of his letter here — just simply says that the trend as far as net income goes is bad so you must improve your gross profit to get back up to around 33.3 per cent. This means that you must review your work. It means that you must increase your charges for labour, for parts and supplies used.

This is where the operator raises his hands in frustration and says, "How do I increase my charges if they are at a fixed rate of \$14 per hour?" I think, Mr. Minister, those are very valid reasons, and I would like to see you give them consideration.

The second area that I would like you to consider is the increase of insurance costs for new car dealers. This table that I have before me now comes from my own constituency in Chilliwack, and has a recap of the insurance costs of 12 new car dealers in the City of Chilliwack.

Brett's Ltd., lists their insurance.... By the way, they have a note here saying they were happy with coverage they carried before and were happy with the service that they received from their former underwriter. But that's not important. The important thing is the cost. In 1973, Brett's Ltd. insurance premium was \$3,922. In 1974 the insurance premium, as quoted, \$12,680 — an increase of \$8,700. That's one year's increase in premium.

There is Leo Edwards & Sons Ltd. — the names don't mean anything to you but I want you to be sure that I'm not making up any of these figures — in 1973 their coverage was \$1,241. In 1974 the coverage quoted by them.... And by the way, Mr. Edwards,

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in talking with me said that he couldn't obtain exactly the coverage he had the previous year, so these figures are not an exact comparison. Nonetheless, the amount of insurance he must carry in 1974 cost him \$5,771 — an increase of \$4,530.

Thompson Toyota Ltd. — previously \$1,700, now \$5,100; Beck Motor Co. — previously \$1,100, now \$3,300; Westgate Motors Ltd. — previously \$2,100, now \$4,500; Dougherty-Skaarup Ltd. — formerly \$1,400, now \$5,900; Chilliwack Datsun — formerly \$1,800, now \$4,300; Buchanan Pontiac-Buick Ltd. — formerly \$3,400, now \$8,700; Cherry Motors Ltd., one of the bigger dealers — \$4,500 last year, this year \$13,500; Butchart's Motors — formerly \$2,900, now \$6,400; J&S General Auto — formerly \$652, now \$3,085; G&C Valley Automobiles — formerly \$279, now \$1,208.

We have a total over here — the total premiums for these 12 dealers last year was \$25,000; this year they are \$75,000 — exactly three times what they were before.

These fellows say this: they have to continue business; the only way they can continue business is if they can bring enough revenue through the business to pay the expenses they incur; they have to pass on all of these increases to their consumers.

I have to tell the Minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, that in trying to help the little guy, you've socked it to them again. I think, in all fairness — and I'm trying to be as kind as I know how — some consideration needs to be given here.

Here is one of the ads that is listed, and as you say, about two of them were house ads and six of them were whatever other kind of ads you have. This ad comes back and it's got some information on it by a man by the name of D.A. Swanson. D.A. Swanson doesn't mean a hill of beans to you, but I will give you just a little bit of background on him so you will know who he is.

He has just recently been awarded, by the transportation section of the Canadian Forces Base in Chilliwack, and recognized as one of 95 who were on parade for safe driving awards. There were some five-year accident-free records; there were some 10-year accident-free records; there were some 15-year accident-free driving records. In that list of 15 years of accident-free driving is the name, Corporal D.A. Swanson.

Fifteen years of accident-free driving. He got into a little trouble with the law — although he doesn't explain to me how it happened — he received 17 points against his driving licence. When he received the 17 points he paid a fine of \$375 plus \$175, I assume for costs, for a total of \$550. He paid a fine, and he believes that he paid his debt to society in paying that fine.

However, in having these 17 points against his driving record, this is what happened to his driver's certificate. He has laid it out here for the next five years, so you get an idea, in five years, of how much it is actually going to cost him. He says that, according to the book, the 17 points should have cost him \$299 but when he got his driver's certificate bill it was for \$347, which he doesn't understand. The cost for the 17 points is \$299; added to that is his actual premium for the car, \$166, so his insurance is costing him \$395 in 1974. Taking the three points off each year, for a succeeding five years, it decreases to \$372, then \$297 — he's assuming, by the way, that the premium is going to remain the same — then to \$210. Over the next five years, to make a long story short, his insurance premium is going to be \$1,450. Add to that the fine that he had to pay when he received his 17 points, and you can see that it rounds out very nicely to \$2,000 of insurance premiums that he is going to have to pay. He calls it "double jeopardy" in spite of the fact that he has an accident-free record. Like I say again, I don't know how he got his 17 points — he doesn't explain that to me. But what....

**AN HON. MEMBER:** He ran over his mother.

**MR. SCHROEDER:** Look at that.... Yes, he may have run over his mother.

But here again is the flat-rate approach. Here is the \$15 flat-rate approach for auto body shops. Here is the flat-rate, inflexible, let's-not-take-a-second-look approach to the point system.

There is a man who, although he is going to be paying his insurance premium and will undoubtedly be driving his automobile, nonetheless he is chafing underneath the high rates.

Here again is another area where there is a flat-rate approach is in the dealer premiums that I listed for you. That's enough for this time up.

Just one thing which they passed on to me while I was up in the Interior. I was interested when the Member for Langley (Mr. McClelland) was talking about the waste that is taking place in the areas of claims centres and salvage depots. They told me, when I was in Smithers, of a gentleman who had an accident in Smithers, just out of town. He had what he assumed to be a \$1,000 automobile. He had the accident and there was no question in his mind

that it was a total wreck. However, he had to call the claims adjuster. The claims adjuster in that area works a day in one place, two days in another place, two days in another place. And the country is huge. He spends half of his time driving, but nonetheless he gets from one place to the other. They called him. He couldn't come that day, but he came as soon as he could. He came to the same conclusion as the people who owned the automobile; he told them what they already knew — that they had a total write-off.

But in order for it to be looked at, we're going to

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have to tow it to the claims centre, and the claims centre is in Terrace. So they called in the tow truck. They towed the car all the way from Smithers to Terrace, and when they got to Terrace to the claims centre, they told them what both of them already knew: "You've got a total write-off here."

Now the next phase was: "You can't leave that car here at the claims centre; you've got to take it to the salvage depot." Guess where the salvage depot is?

Interjection.

**MR. SCHROEDER:** Oh, I wish you were right. The salvage depot is in Prince George. (Laughter.) So they had taken the automobile from Smithers, they dragged it God only knows how many miles west to Terrace, and then they take it to the salvage depot. The whole thing was only worth \$1,000 when it was running. You can see the efficiency. It's funny; it's hilarious; it's ridiculous. But it just gives you one little bit of an insight into the efficiency of the operation of ICBC.

Now I think that the Minister recognizes this. He's a good man, and I think that surely he must admit that this kind of efficiency cannot in any way compete with the kind of service that was being offered by free enterprise insurance in days gone by. I would think that it begins to explain to the Minister why it is that his rates are so high that he can't pay even the auto-body men who are doing the repairs a decent fee for their work, and everybody is in an uproar. The ones who are paying the premium are in an uproar, the ones who are doing the work are in an uproar and the ones who are having their cars dragged 400 miles to a salvage depot are laughing. I think, Mr. Minister, you're too good a man to have that done to you. I'd like to see you make the changes.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Mr. Chairman, the last remark made by the Member put everything clearly in focus. He talked about towing a car from Smithers to Terrace and how terrible this was. And then he used a figure: towing a car 400 miles. Now if he doesn't know how far it is from Smithers to Terrace, then he should never....

Interjections.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** If he doesn't know how far it is from Smithers to Terrace, he should never have raised the point in the first place. You see? Because it's not 400 miles from Smithers to Terrace. As a matter of fact, it's 400 miles from Prince George to Terrace. It's 400 miles from Prince George to Terrace.

**MR. W.R. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition):** That's what he said.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** He gave his case. This is the sort of thing they're doing, you see. He talked about towing a car from Smithers to Terrace, went into great detail about the agent and this and that — and then he talked about towing it from Prince George to Terrace — 400 miles. That's the sort of nonsense we're getting from....

Interjections.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I want the name of the individual who was involved in this so we can check it out.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh! No, no!



**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** You see, Mr. Chairman, they don't like the answers. They've been hoping and praying that everything will go wrong, and they keep hoping and praying. But let me tell you, this is an unusual circumstance. Normally, I'm informed that it would have been sold on the spot. That's the normal procedure. That's why I want this specific case identified so that I can check it out.

Now you talk about this individual: in 15 years he'd never had an accident, but he got 17 points and it was going to cost him \$299. First of all, let me say this. It wouldn't go on for five years. If you have a clear driving record for three years in a row, no matter how many points you get they're all wiped out. I wish you'd do your homework, please. Secondly, he didn't tell you for what he received the 17 points.

**MR. SCHROEDER:** He got the bill.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** He didn't tell you. Didn't you ask him? Didn't you ask him?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oh, oh!

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I know, I know. But for many years in this province, Mr. Chairman, if you had an impaired charge — even if you're, not involved in an accident — you find yourself getting points. This may be the case here, I don't know. But certainly that's about the number of points you'd get if you are charged on impaired driving.

Interjections.

**MR. CHABOT:** Do your homework.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Do your homework; you're all wet. Talk about doing homework!

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** You talk about paying the fine. You've always had to pay a fine. And you've always had your insurance increased. So it's not a

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new principle. You didn't have to be in an accident. If you were picked up on an impaired charge, even without an accident, you were fined and your insurance was increased. It's always been that way. No question.

**HON. G.V. LAUK (Minister of Industrial Development, Trade and Commerce):** But 17 points for a radar trap? You've got to be kidding.

**MR. CHABOT:** Sure, five times. (Laughter.)

Interjections.

**MR. CHABOT:** That's five-and-two-thirds. (Laughter.)

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Mr. Chairman, they read letters from people whose rates were increased. I could read letters from people whose rates were reduced. Naturally anyone whose rates were increased would complain. Naturally. Those whose rates didn't go up or went down, and many of them did — the majority of them did — don't complain. Again we're faced with this matter of 180 companies, different agent, giving: "Well, yes, I know, you're okay." And they write in a certain classification. Now it's the evening-out process, and trying to treat everyone alike. And this does happen.

Now what the dealer forgot to tell you was that under the *Motor-vehicle Act* changes that were made, they gave the dealer a whole lot more freedom to use their automobiles than they ever had before. You may recollect in the last session.... You know, I'm the Minister in charge of motor vehicles as well as insurance, and I look at the whole package. I realized that the dealers had many serious problems with regard to use of their dealer plates — ridiculous bureaucratic regulations, in my opinion.

I discussed it with the super down at Motor Vehicles and I said: "Look, if you're going to enforce them, you're going to have to make them tougher. Why don't you just relax them?" He agreed with me. He'd wanted to do it for years. So they have a whole lot of advantages. For instance, the dealer plate can now be used by a salesman on his car that he uses for his own personal purposes.

**MR. PHILLIPS:** Costs you a fortune, too.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** Well, all right. If you want me to go back to the old system, send me a brief. Send me a brief saying that you want to go back to the old, very limited, very tightly controlled dealer handling, and I'll take a look at it.

Interjections.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** With regard to the \$14 dollar rates, Mr. Member....

**MR. G.S. WALLACE (Oak Bay):** Where's your secretary? You've got everybody else over there.  
(Laughter.)

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** I'm not proud. I have a variety of responsibilities and different.... I don't mind. These are the people who work with me and give me advice.

With regard to the \$14, the ARA, the Automotive Retailers Association, came to us and said they represented all of the body shops. They said: "We want the same rate all over the province."

Interjections.

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** No, no, no. We reached an agreement with the representatives of the Automotive Retailers Association for the same rate all over the province. Now automotive dealers came to my office from my own constituency. I said that the ARA came and told me that they represented all of the body shops in the province. I said, "Do they represent you?" And the body shop operators said: "Yes, we gave them authority to negotiate for us."

I said, "Okay, they negotiated for you, they reached agreement, and now you're saying that you're not going to live with that agreement. You repudiate it?"

They said, "That's right."

But the ARA came to us and asked for the same rate all over the province and that's what we gave them. With regard to the extra costs....

**MR. SCHROEDER:** Did they ask for \$14?

**HON. MR. STRACHAN:** They were negotiating. We gave them negotiating power.

With regard for parts for the north, the parts are whatever that individual puts in, whatever it costs him. The same thing applies to the lower mainland, so that's not a factor. I have a note of the points you raised, but it's first time around and we'll see what happens in the future.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

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

Leave granted.

Hon. Mrs. Dailly moves adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

The House adjourned at 10:59 p.m.

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