

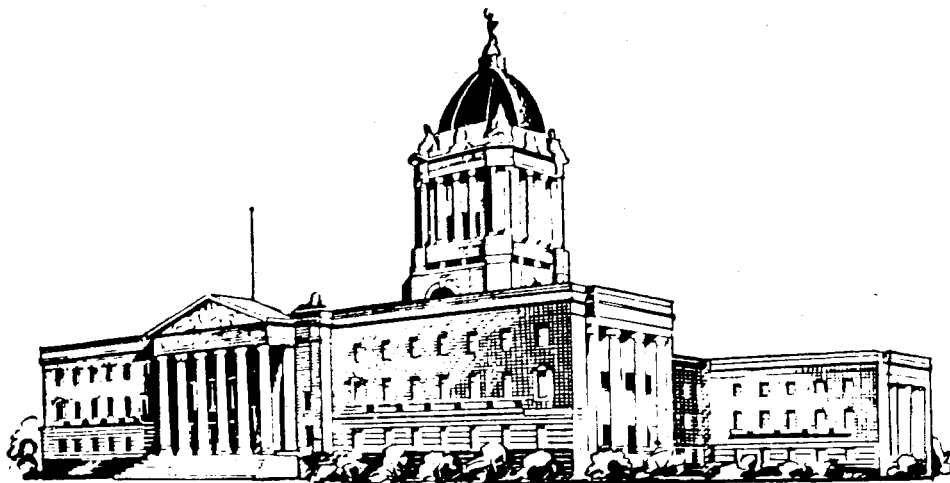


Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Speaker

The Honourable Peter Fox



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THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
8:00 o'clock, Monday, April 29, 1974

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Before we proceed with the Department of Highways, I'd like to draw attention of the members to the galleries on my left where we have the 157th Brownie Pack of Sturgeon Creek under the direction of Mrs. Tackaberry, and the Brownie Pack is from the constituency of the Honourable Member from Sturgeon Creek. On behalf of all the members, I bid you welcome.

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MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Virден.

MR. MCGREGOR: Mr. Chairman, I listened to the Minister before the supper hour break, while it was brief, and I understand it was quite an increase in his budget, and I think that's certainly necessary to upgrade our roads in the way society needs them and demands them, and especially catering to our tourist trade. The area that is a real problem, has been for many years, is in our provincial road system. I remember when the then Minister of Highways, Walter Weir, sold it to the municipal people under the understanding that the government would keep it up as well as the municipal people. I can realize it was easier to handle from the top end of the department, too, under that system and it didn't prove to be that successful in those days but it's deteriorated greatly since then because in the certain program that was laid before in the grading, etc., it's fallen apart, and the people that are receiving the real criticism has been the municipal people. In my experience around here, the few years I've been here, I can say to every municipal man within my constituency you could always sit down with him, you could always understand them, and what they're after, and I don't believe there's a municipal man today, or in the past, that came here that didn't ask me to sit in with the particular Minister that the problem was. Certainly in recent weeks it's been with the present Minister, and I just say that somewhere there's got to be more money found to upgrade these provincial roads, or indeed, if that isn't the case, then let's, Mr. Chairman, turn it back to the municipal people who did a hell of a lot better job of looking after them, whether it be in our own, our other party that was in power or the present one, I would say likewise. And I should have dug out some of the other speeches when I was on the other side, and the trend wouldn't have changed very much what it is today. And I must say my House Leader in other years always chewed me out for being too kind, and I think I got the message this afternoon to be a little bit kind, but to be an ornery sort I'm going to cross him up, instead of being kind, I'm going to be my natural self.

The other area of the same provincial roads, some as you know are gravel and some are hardtop, and the real problem in my area of Manitoba is towns along the side of the provincial roads. I think the Premier last June at a particular meeting in Virден, he pretty well promised or committed himself to a new program. I know as of a year ago it wasn't possible to put access roads off of PRs--(Interjection)--Yes. To my Honourable Member from Lakeside that's true, but he promised then that there would be a change in the program and I don't believe I got that from the Minister's message before supper. If it was there, I missed it, and he'll straighten me out if it was indeed there. But I think that is necessary because in rural Manitoba if one town that's beside a PTH gets it, another town of smaller or larger and is on the other road doesn't get it, I believe when blacktop goes close to it there should be an addition of funds to accommodate that.

I must say over the years in working with, and the people under the Minister, and I certainly have got full co-operation regardless who was in the Deputy Minister's chair, and his staff and his secretary when I was in, if it was possible to get to the deputy it was always easy to do, and I think he understood me and what I was trying to present. And I could also carry that on to my district people on the road system, and certainly in my constituency they're conscientious and are good civil servants, and often they get criticized unfairly, but if you know and understand them, and the many times I've stopped along the road--(Interjection)--It's obvious, Mr. Chairman, there's more chiefs over here than there is Indians and I happen to be one of the Indians, and as usual I don't get--(Interjection)--There's nothing wrong with the Indians, it's the chiefs that's the problem over here. Well, I'll handle myself in the next election.

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(MR. McGREGOR cont'd)

In the highway program, there's one program, there's one route that you've heard me often speak of and that's U.S. -Canada 83, and our American friends are looking to us. I remember speaking on this several years ago when Mr. Borowski was the Minister. He agreed and he almost promised that this was done, and that is attach 83 in conjunction with No. 10 to The Pas and in conjunction with 391 to Thompson, and I would like to take that message back to South Dakota the 25th of this month at a directors' meeting in which my honourable colleague from Roblin is now Vice-President, will be president next year, and that convention will be in Russell and I'm sure it will be the biggest on record as Virden was some few years ago. But I just request of the Minister to give that consideration. That doesn't cost anyone anything to do that, and it will encourage our southern friends coming here knowing they can stay on 83, and they do like to get up into Northern Manitoba because from there they know there's good fishing. It is our biggest industry, is the tourist industry, and if we could just do a little more promoting on 83, the road isn't that terrible but there are troublesome spots in it that need to be certainly upgraded and hopefully before June or October of 1975 - I don't think the date is set for Russell - and let them go on to their fishing in Northern Manitoba.

A question that I could quickly put, a few questions that I've got down here to the Minister: Is the Provincial Government going to give financial support to - I've looked in the book here and I can't really find it out - to Osborne Street Bridge, Sherburn Street Bridge, the bridge in St. Vital and Fort Garry, and the bridge in Charleswood?

Another question: Has the city received funding from the province for accumulating land for the beltway? What has been done for the cities of Brandon and Dauphin in this same type of program?

Is the Highway Department aware of the transportation study being done by Jerry Fast on the Planning Secretariat?--(Interjection)--They should be, that's right, but I don't hear that they are. Is the Highway Department involved directly in this study?

Are there more joint Federal-Provincial projects than were done in the past? And now again I'm thinking of rail abandonment and in lieu of rail abandonment what is the program? What is the Minister's program? Because I hear rumours that there's \$30 million in the kitty from Ottawa to replace and I know that won't go far, and again I don't find it in Estimates but it might well be not to be announced until a positive stand on rail abandonment is taken and where they go.

The other area that has bothered me, sitting here for many months wondering what programs are coming out in my area or indeed in Manitoba, and knowing, generally speaking, Estimates are not let or announced while the House is sitting, and if I was a contractor I would certainly, I think, be able to study and understand my estimates in the midwinter months, that now with the pressure on the contracts will be coming out thick and fast as of tonight, and is there not a program that we should be looking at that would alleviate the Minister and his staff from this night on rather than be doing it for the last three months, so the people who have got the contracts can sub-contract etc. to make the program, generally speaking, cost not more but more efficiently?

These are a few facts that I jotted down. No other province distributes a program to the House prior to Estimates. The Manitoba Department of Highways, as a courtesy, has been distributing a program to the Legislature and abiding by that program, both as to uncompleted programs from past years and not advertising it, except for pre-advertising, until the departmental estimates and a copy of the program were presented to the House. Because of the greatly expanded highway program and the resultant increase in budget, the procedure which is presently being followed makes it exceedingly difficult and probably impossible to carry out the program which is distributed to the House. This results in an ever-increasing number of projects which cannot be completed and therefore are indicated as a carryover from the previous years. As a result, this will cause the present level of service construction-wise to deteriorate so that at some point in time we will have no new projects and the department will only complete the carryover projects, and I think if you take this that I've barely had time, but there's more pages of the finishing up last year's or the year before's program than there is in the new program. I think if this was changed, and I'm sure you would find support at this desk and I think indeed if it's explained properly on this side of the House, if that legislation could be changed to be handled in a different manner.

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(MR. MCGREGOR cont'd)

It is suggested that since the Department already tenders and contracts projects under the pre-advertising system for which moneys are voted in Capital Accounts without the program being presented to the Legislature, that a similar procedure be followed with the normal estimates. The Legislature invariably votes on their Interim Supply, and with this Interim Supply plus Capital moneys on hand, departments could carry on with the tendering and eventually present the program to the Legislature at the time of the departmental estimates. To date the Legislature has never deleted any project from the program as submitted to the House with the Estimates, and it's difficult to foresee that this would ever be done. If a new procedure as mentioned above were adopted, the department could tender projects, subject to ratification by the House, at the time that the Estimates are submitted, and if there is any deletion in the program and authorized spending then this could be done from the projects remaining and the authorized allotment of funds. And I'm sure if this were looked at closely it's workable.

Again I must urge the Minister to look at your provincial roads. I certainly have letters, some other problems, some other roads, but the whole theme--and I know you can be on two trends; you can think of the tourist highways and again it's No. 1 and the ones into the lakes, and I'm sure the Minister can go back and say, "Well, that's fine, we'll do that, but don't you come down for money for the lesser roads." But I just think over the years there isn't enough spent on the highway program if we're going to keep up and keep in step with our neighbouring province and with our nation to the south. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. G. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, most members in this House know the Member for Virden as being very kind and not exactly abrasive when he's addressing one of the Ministers about needs in his constituency, and I will also take a letter out of the Member for Virden's sheet and try and be kind to the Minister.

I think Manitoba has progressed a long way from the days when the highways were built on a more or less political basis, and of course there's nothing wrong with that because where the most people are that's where the most construction should go on. And when I make that statement I don't give this government any credit for that, because they came along after two administrations that had for years and years been pouring a great deal of the budget percentage-wise into the highway systems of this province. So I think that the department should not exactly change direction but they should look at some other priorities when they consider their spending and I know they have to plan two years ahead.

For example, there hasn't--and I've only had a ten minute opportunity to examine the yellow sheets to see where construction is going, but as far as I know there's not one word of policy, nor is there any suggestion that there be a new type of road construction, and I'm talking now about roads that will help tourism and help the people of the areas concerned. I speak specifically of the east side of Lake Winnipeg. For two years in a row now, there's been violent discussions about government programs with the construction of winter roads. Now I ask the Minister, how many years - and of course these are for the years that he will be responsible for - how many years is Manitoba going to say to the people on the east side of Lake Winnipeg that you're not even being considered in the planning stages or construction in that area? We know that with the gas shortage in the United States that tourist camps and the tourist operators, in Manitoba in particular, indeed all of Canada, have advance bookings this year far in advance of anything they've ever had before, from our American friends. So we should be looking to the future in this area, where we build roads now that will be of help in the future as well as in the immediate period ahead of us. So I think that the Minister is remiss in not even mentioning the fact that this important area of Manitoba should be due for a road some time soon. It will help the native peoples, it will help the fishermen, the trappers, the mining groups and so on. In fact, it will do something that always happens when there's competition in transport, it will substantially reduce the cost of living in those areas. And the government, about all they've done so far is to produce a few statistics that the cost of living has been reduced a few cents here or a few cents there per pound or per ton, as the case may be. So I'd like the Minister, when he's responding, to tell us if his government has any plans whatsoever for building a new road into the north on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. I'm not asking for miracles but surely they could say that we have on the planning boards a major road in this area; we hope to build so many miles per year, and in a few years' time you can look with pride for something that was needed and long overdue.

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(MR. G. JOHNSTON)

While I'm talking about tourism and roads in tourist areas, I don't know if the Minister has ever been recently from Whitemouth to Rennie, but I advise him not to go because he won't make it. I had the misfortune to travel that road on Sunday and it was all but impassable, and this was a paved highway. This was a paved highway; now it's a morass. And I hope that there'll be some special effort made to do something about this situation; if not, then to divert the tourists on to the other arteries in the area. But the road from Whitemouth to Rennie is an absolute disgrace, and I know that the members of the department probably know that and there's reasons, but the road is old and worn out and it needs a major rebuilding job.

Now, I understand that the Province of Ontario on its main roads have for many years now had a higher quality of road that will support heavier traffic than we have here in Manitoba. Is the government intending to bring our roads up to strength, the same as the Ontario roads? Now I know this is a very major expenditure but it's a problem; and if the Minister has any plans in this regard or if he has any reasons as to why we're not moving in that direction in our new construction. For example, in the two-laning of No. 1, which is going on in the vicinity of McGregor to Portage, is that new section of road being upgraded to look after the heavier traffic that is presently being borne on the roads, or do we have to say to the truckers and the Trucking Association that when you hit the Manitoba border you have to off-load some of your goods at certain times of the year?

As I said, Mr. Chairman, there's really not a great deal that can be said that is of a contentious nature in the highway building program. The government, I notice, is spending 26 million this year vis-a-vis 25-1/2 million last year. My recollection is since about 1960 various administrations have always been spending in the neighbourhood of 20 million, so that I can't say that this government is doing any more or any less than previous administrations in this regard, and taking into account the general tax burden that the people in the province have to bear, I appreciate the Minister has a problem in obtaining his share of revenue when the Cabinet sits down to divide up the tax pie.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to turn for a moment to the report of the Highway Traffic and Motor Transport Board, and this report makes some strange reading in certain places. On Page 9, it's noted that there were no changes in the jurisdiction of the Traffic Board during 1973, that the Board's authority to establish controlled areas adjacent to limited access highways was successfully contested in the courts on two separate occasions, with the result that two 1,000-foot radius control circles were found to be null and void. Now I notice that the Minister in his opening remarks said nothing about this problem. Does he intend to introduce legislation? What is the government's program in this regard? The very fact that there is a division of jurisdiction between control and provincial roads and provincial highways leads me to wonder if there's not anything said about that. This is a rather odd situation, where one set of regulations doesn't apply to the same situation, namely the control and regulation on provincial roads and trunk highways.

I notice that there's been the establishment of a Sign Committee to study all aspects of signing in the province, but there hasn't been any report yet, and this has shown itself up in some reduction in signing around the province. This may be all right, because we certainly don't want our scenic highways to be cluttered with signs; but it seems to me that this Sign Committee was appointed last year, and when are they reporting? And has the Minister got the report and does he intend to act on any of the recommendations, and what are some of the recommendations in this regard?

Now, Mr. Chairman, when one examines further into the report, the operations of the Taxicab Board, there seems to be some odd statements made here. In the past period of time reported for, a total of 31 applications for taxicab driver's licenses were rejected, as the applicants either lacked sufficient knowledge of the City of Winnipeg or were on probation at the Safety Division, or had insufficient driving ability or otherwise failed to meet the Board's requirement for taxicab drivers. Now that may be so, and I guess it is, but it's very difficult to give an answer to people who say - and I've had them say to me and I'm not a Winnipegger, but I've heard the complaint a few times, and some of the Winnipeg members I'm sure will bear with us to what I am about to say is true - and that is that at certain periods of the year, and not only Xmas or New Year's but on rainy nights or stormy nights, one cannot find a cab in Winnipeg. At the airport one can't find a taxicab at certain hours. I think the Mayor of

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(MR. G. JOHNSTON cont'd) Calgary embarrassed Winnipeg nationally when he brought this up in a rather blunt fashion.

Now before this government appointed the new Taxicab Board and before certain regulations were changed, I never heard of that problem before. I note in the report on Page 16 that taxicab driver's licenses have gone down from 2,459 in 1972 to 1,904 in 1973. Well, Mr. Chairman, this is an odd situation. The City of Greater Winnipeg has grown by about 10 or 12 percent in the same period of time and one would think that the Taxicab Board would introduce policies that would encourage at least that industry in staying level with the growth and population. Instead of that we have a reduction of 550 licensed taxicab drivers. I note that the owner-operators, the operators of a taxicab business, were 149 in 1972 and 172 in 1973. Now these figures don't jibe somehow. Are the more owners doing less business, or are the new owners just working certain hours and parking their cab if there happens to be a storm or if there happens to be a rain, or whatever? There's no explanation spelled out in the report, but it seems odd that as the population goes up by 10 percent, the number of cabs drop by 25 to 30 percent in the same period of time.

There's something wrong with policy here, that allows or lets that happen. It seems to me that the ratio should sort of stay the same. People at the airport should be able to get a cab when they get off a plane, because schedules are known. I think that people on New Year's Eve or any other time should be able to call a cab. So I have the feeling that there's too much regulation through the Taxicab Board, that something isn't being allowed to happen freely, because this situation has never ever happened before. If it's because the cabbies can't make a living, well then they apply and I believe they were given an increase in rates. So the answer isn't there. I don't think the answer is there, that the men who operate the cabs and the businesses as owners or operators can't make a living because of rates. I have a feeling it's for some other reason and I'd like to hear from the Minister in this regard.

Now, I know the Minister is not given to long-winded statements such as some of his colleagues are, and I'm not going to speak any longer because I know he would like to give some answers and I know some of the other members on both sides of the House have some particular questions to address to him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell.

MR. GRAHAM: Thank you very much, Mr. Graham. You know, Mr. Graham, once every year in this Legislature we in the opposition have the opportunity to examine the estimates of expenditure of each and every department of government. This is the role of the opposition and this is the very purpose of the presentation of the estimates, so that the opposition can have the opportunity to examine, in detail if necessary, the spending estimates of every department of government. Tonight we are examining the expenditures of the Department of Highways, but Mr. Chairman, we're not examining all the expenditures of the Department of Highways; we're just examining some of them. There is a substantial portion of the expenditure of the Department of Highways that is not examined by this Committee; it is not reported in the Minister's estimates; and I want to address myself tonight to that portion of the estimates that does not appear in the program that the Minister has laid before us. But before I do, Mr. Chairman, I want to take a look at some of the things that have happened in the Department in previous years.

Several years ago, Mr. Chairman, we had a Minister of the Crown who felt that there was some wrongdoing in the Department and he commissioned an investigation. Now I understand that that investigation cost somewhere in the neighbourhood of 34,38 thousand dollars, something in that neighbourhood. And that investigation uncovered a wrongdoing somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$17.00 in the department. Mr. Chairman, there have been members in this Legislature have asked for an investigation which we believe involved millions of dollars and the government refuses to investigate, and yet they were quite willing to investigate when a member on the government side wanted an investigation which showed there was \$17.00 spent in the wrong way. So, Mr. Chairman, I find it rather amusing, to say the least, that if government feels there is nothing to be hidden, that they should not approve of an investigation, because investigations in the past have proven that very little wrongdoing occurred, and I think that is probably a tribute to those that work for the Department of Highways. I think it is commendable for those members of a dedicated Civil Service to conduct their affairs in such a way that only \$17.00 worth of misappropriation or affairs of that nature could be exposed.

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(MR. GRAHAM cont'd)

I think it is only natural that any evidence of misappropriation would probably be most evident in the Department of Highways because that is a department which is most open to public scrutiny. The members of the Department of Highways are open to public scrutiny every day of the year and everyone in the Province of Manitoba can see in some way or another how that department carries on its business, so at this time I want to pay particular tribute to those members of the department who conduct their affairs in such a manner as to bring honour to the department and to the public service at large in the Province of Manitoba - and I will include the Minister in that.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, I now want to criticize the Minister for not revealing to this Legislature all the expenditures that occur in his department, and I refer specifically, Mr. Chairman, to the capital expenditures that have been appropriated in this House, and in the last three years it has been very consistent; it has been an amount of \$10 million every year, which is under the nomenclature of Assistance for Northern Roads and Special Roads and what not, and we have no accounting for that in this Legislature. There is nothing about it appears in the Estimates that are before us and yet we just passed in Capital Supply an account for \$10 million for Northern Roads.

It wasn't too long ago, Mr. Chairman, that I asked the Minister of Finance if he could supply us with an accounting for that expenditure for the past year, and the Minister gave me that accounting and, Mr. Chairman, some of the facts that were revealed there display a remarkable callousness, I would say, for the credibility of those that wish to approve that type of expenditure, and I want to refer in particular to one item which appears in the 1973 capital expenditure of \$10 million, and this is on Provincial Road 391, work order N102, and the nature and the location of the project is such: completion of base course and bituminous surfacing of the Burntwood River Bridge approaches in the City of Thompson.

This may, according to the Minister of Northern Affairs, may properly be called Borowski Bridge, and I say to the Minister that if it was, and the expenditures are correct, then I would say that the former Member for Thompson was probably the greatest man that we ever had in the Province of Manitoba because the total expenditure, Mr. Chairman, the total expenditure that was approved for that project was \$18.00; \$18.00, Mr. Chairman, for the completion of base course and bituminous surfacing on the Burntwood River Bridge approaches. Mr. Chairman, \$18.00 wouldn't even pay for the flagman, and yet we in this Legislature are asked to approve expenditures of that nature. This is under Capital Supply which doesn't appear in the estimates of the department.

There was another one here that sort of interested me and this was work order No. N103, and the nature and location of the project is completion of base course and bituminous surfacing north of Grand Rapids - and - get this, Mr. Chairman - it's from Mile 36 to Mile 63 in the Unorganized Territory, a total distance of 27 miles, the total cost of the project was \$136.38; 27 miles of road for \$136.38. Mr. Chairman, the ability of this Minister to build cheap roads astounds me.

A MEMBER: Boggles the mind, Harry.

MR. GRAHAM: But unfortunately, unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, all of the jobs that he has completed under the Capital projects, \$10 million worth that we were asked to approve in Capital Supply, not in the detailed Estimates but in Capital Supply, one lump sum, there was another job and this is on Provincial Road 285, work order N121, completion of grading and gravelling Section 13-56-26W, Section 19-56-25W, entitled Rahls Island Road in the LGD of Consol, and this was a total of 1.1 miles. It wasn't bituminous surfacing, it wasn't paving or asphalt, it was just grading and gravelling; 1.1 miles and the expenditure was \$73,711.66. Mr. Chairman--Mr. Chairman, I raise the subject of these projects at this time, only to point out that either the accounting procedures in the department are abominable or the Minister has at least shown a wide variety of expenditures between the ridiculous and the sublime, but to ask members of this Legislature to approve capital expenditures of this nature, I suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, are neither practical nor reasonable. I find it rather ridiculous, because all of the projects that are listed here, Mr. Chairman, when you add them all up, they come to exactly \$10 million. Not \$9,999,099, not \$10 million and one cent, but exactly \$10 million. Mr. Chairman, that indicates to me that either there has been a lateral transfer of funds, which I think is possible and probably is highly probable, but when you get a lateral transfer of

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(MR. GRAHAM cont'd) funds from one fund which is not accountable and another one which is, how do you find out really what the true cost of any project is and how much money is really appropriated for any one project?

Mr. Chairman, we are asked on this side of the House to examine, to probe, and finally to approve the expenditures of government for any particular project, and Mr. Chairman, I want to do that. I want to see the accounting of any projects of government, and if they're worthwhile projects then we on this side of the House will certainly approve them as rapidly as possible, and if they aren't worthwhile then we have the opportunity to point out to the government why they are not worthwhile and why they should not be approved; either the expenditure is excessive or for some other reason. But as long as we have a transfer, a lateral transfer of this nature, going on within a department, how can we on this side of the House examine in a proper manner the expenditures of the department?

Mr. Chairman, I raise this matter at this time because we are just starting to examine the expenditures of this department, and I would hope that before we're finished the Minister will give us a full explanation of everything that appears in the program that he has laid before us, plus a full explanation of the \$10 million that he is asking us, or has already asked us to approve in capital expenditure, which comes under his jurisdiction for approval and for bringing into effect in the province of Manitoba. All we ask is that we get a full accounting so that we, in our own minds, can look at the projects that he proposes, give our blessing to them if they're worthwhile, and also our criticism if they are not worthwhile.

INTRODUCTION OF GUEST

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please. In the loge on my left I'd like to welcome a former member, John Ingebrigtsen, the former member for the constituency of Churchill. On behalf of the members, I welcome you here.

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MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

MR. PATRICK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just have a few points to bring to the Minister's attention and I'm sure I will not take more than five minutes, but I do want to acquaint him with some of the problems that I have in my constituency.

Mr. Chairman, the thing that really prompted me to get up to my feet, perhaps the Minister can explain under item No. 4, where we have some 90 percent increase in the Motor Vehicle Branch and from \$3 million, \$3,885,000 to \$7 million, and I just wondered why such a great increase and perhaps the Minister can, when he will be replying to the questions, perhaps give us some explanation why such an exorbitant increase, because it is in a range of 90 percent increase in the operation of the Motor Vehicle Branch. It may have something to do with the Autopac and there may be some transfer of moneys, I don't know, but perhaps the Minister can give me the answers.

I know that when the Minister introduced his estimates he mentioned about the increase, a substantial increase, very high increase, in accident rates in the province and fatalities, and he also stated that this was not only predominantly in Manitoba but other provinces as well, and my concern is I wonder are we doing everything possible in the way of highway construction in the way of safety to try and eliminate this or to reduce, because surely, Mr. Speaker, the death and injury as a result of traffic stands a challenge to the Minister because it's his department and I would hope that he would concern himself with this problem and see if anything can be done. I know that we have the radar system, to what extent I would like to know. The Minister may have time to explain to what extent is it successful. I know we have a limited number of patrol cars on our main highways and is this working to any success or not? Perhaps the Minister can be of some help in this area. I know he talked about inspection of automobiles. I wonder what percentage of the cars are inspected annually. Is it five percent, or is it less, on an annual basis, and maybe this is the area that he should increase.

The point that I would like to really make to the Minister at the present time, I think there should be compulsory examination for professional drivers and by professional drivers I mean drivers driving school buses, which has been of some concern to the House in the last while and I know is of great concern right across Canada at the present time. There's a debate going on in that respect, so I wonder what kind of exams drivers have to take in respect to, not only

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(MR. PATRICK cont'd) the school buses, but cabs, trucks and so on. I don't know if the Minister has made any progress in the area but perhaps he can give some consideration to that.

Now I am somewhat concerned because I know my colleague from Portage has mentioned about the highway and highway construction, and I wonder are we really building highways to last for several years or are we building them just to last perhaps for one year or so? Because, Mr. Chairman, unless our highways cannot stand the test through our winters--but you don't have to go too far. All you have to do is travel in the Province of Ontario and not too far, some of their highways are as old as ours or older, and it seems they do not have the breaking of the pavement that we have in Manitoba. The same, I know, exists if you just get across the line into North Dakota and the same thing happens there. You find that either the construction is much more super to ours or their engineering is much better as far as the temperature and the weather is concerned. So I would like to hear from the Minister in respect to, not only the accident rate, but as far as our construction of highways are concerned. I know the problems of cracking of pavement and almost complete breaking up of bituminous pavements on our highways, and surely we've had enough experience with that that we should be building, in my opinion, better highways than we are at the present time, because in the long run I feel it's costing us more money.

I think that we should also, Mr. Chairman, be concerned about safety. I think that there should be a requirement for perhaps recording of accidents, all kinds of accidents, the causes, so the Minister would have some kind of research in his department that would indicate what causes the accidents, that knows on highways it occurs where the drivers cannot see to distance, and I wonder to what extent the Minister has that kind of research. Now surely he must have, or be able to get from his department to some extent, to what extent the seat belts are used and are they really that successful as a result in people using them and not getting injuries. So I think that the Minister and his department can do much more as far as safety is concerned, because I think it should be mandatory as far as I'm concerned. The Minister responsible for Manitoba Insurance Corporation mentioned helmets for motorcycles and, Mr. Speaker, as far as I'm concerned I think it should be mandatory.

Now I know there has been a tremendous increase in the bicycle accidents and, again, my feeling is that perhaps the motorist does not have the same respect for the bicycle driver and the motorcycle driver as he has for another car, and this is another area that the Minister can give us some information. But I do feel that there must be some statistical system for analysis of all accidents, so that then the Minister would have and be able to cope when he has these analyses, when he has these results, and know what to do. So I don't know to what extent the Minister has been involved in this area.

But the point that I really want to bring to the Minister's attention, Mr. Chairman, is the construction, when I mention the construction of highways - and you don't have to go too far - in St. James, Portage Avenue to Sturgeon Creek, and I know the Minister will say, well, "it's not my responsibility," but his department makes a substantial grant to construction of Portage Avenue and I know in the area of Woodhaven to Sturgeon Creek, when that part of Portage Avenue was built, the neighbours in Woodhaven that have lived there for some 50 years at the time told the contractor and told the engineers that the system that they put in there, the culverts were not sufficient to take the water and they said the road will not last. And it's a strange thing that the residents that lived there, the old-timers who have been there for many many years, knew as much as some of the engineers, in fact more, because they told the engineers that the water will not be able to go through the culverts across Portage Avenue. And what happened, in fact what happened, the damage that's done to Portage Avenue, which is substantial, but it backed up the water - while the Assiniboine was empty in Winnipeg, it was empty - it backed up the water all the way, it did damage on Ness and all the way down through the area. So this is quite evident that the culverts were not sufficient, were not large enough to take the water. So I'm just bringing it to the Minister's attention.

Mr. Chairman, the other point that the Minister must give some immediate attention to, that in addition to the traffic on Portage Avenue which is now not sufficient to take all the traffic, say between Headingley and Inner City, I think that he'll have to give consideration to a road or a street or a highway along Saskatchewan Avenue to Headingley. I think it's a must, because we have, as the Minister knows, two large shopping centres in Assiniboia. There's

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(MR. PATRICK cont'd) one on the drawing board which will be larger than the other two, and there was some talk of a fourth shopping centre, and Mr. Chairman, there's just no way that one thoroughfare, Portage Avenue, will be able to stand all that traffic. There's just no way. You'll have extreme difficulties in that area unless there are some other provisions made, and I think that one area that the Minister can give consideration and improve--I don't say that there has to be a two-way paved street, but certainly the road along Saskatchewan Avenue from Headingley to the Perimeter and all the way to Sturgeon must be fixed, graded, and let's say hardtopped or tarred, because at the present time all you have there is gravel, and not only at times in the spring it's impassable but another two weeks it'll be so dusty that if the Minister won't, I'll be getting complaints from many of the neighbours in there that the road should be either oiled or fixed up. So not only am I complaining about the dust that we get in the summertime, but he has to make provisions for more thoroughfare for the traffic from, say, Headingley to the Perimeter and to Sturgeon Creek.

I would also like to hear from the Minister if he has any more information, or what has happened as far as the Inner Perimeter Beltway is concerned. Is this still on the drawing board, is it still proceeding, or has it been stopped at the present time, or what is going on? I know that the present system of Inkster to Sturgeon Creek certainly is a great improvement for a lot of traffic and I would have hoped that the city would have proceeded with a two-way street in that area. And it doesn't have to be fast traffic, it doesn't have to be 60 miles an hour or 70 miles an hour, but it will certainly take a lot of traffic at 40 miles an hour and would be almost substantial or sufficient, and we may not need the expensive beltway that has been talked about and for which the land has been, or much of the land has been expropriated in the Sturgeon Creek area.

So these are some of the points that I wish to bring to the Minister's attention.

A MEMBER: We'll turn that land into a prairie park.

MR. PATRICK: We have a prairie park in St. James already which is appreciated, but I would also like to ask the Minister if there's any reciprocal agreements between other provinces in respect to people moving into the Province of Manitoba; at one time I think everyone had to take a driver's test. What are the circumstances now? If people move from Ontario to Manitoba or from Alberta, is the Minister or his department and the Motor Vehicle Branch able to get the information on that driver, say, from the other province to see if a driving test is necessary in the province of Manitoba or not. I know that I've had some people come to see me with that and perhaps he can look into that matter.

The other point that I would like to raise with the Minister: is the highway in Headingley that goes from Trans Canada to Saskatchewan--that's the highway that connects Saskatchewan to Headingley which I would say there's quite a few people or quite a few homes on that stretch of road, I don't know if there's 30 or 40, but almost every spring it becomes almost impassable or at times impassable, because it has been brought to my attention every spring, and surely it wouldn't take much to put some gravel on that road so when it is spring and it's breaking up, that the people can at least get by on that road or travel on it. The name of the road just skips my mind but I can bring it to the Minister's--I believe there is, not a number, but I think there's a name on that road, and it's my understanding it is a provincial road. I feel that certainly the Minister, if he doesn't believe me I'd be prepared to take him out and show it to him and show him the kind of condition that the road along Saskatchewan Avenue is, which is deplorable, and I think it should be improved.

So, Mr. Chairman, I mentioned I will not take more than ten minutes and I don't believe I have, so that's the points I'd like to make now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. MCKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Honourable Member for Assiniboia for his five-minute oration which has well run into 20, and I'm sure the Minister appreciates his comments. My speech would be a more wide-ranging speech, Mr. Chairman, and one that I'm really uptight, that the policy that was not designed today in the Minister's remarks, I would not like to make that speech tonight with one minute on the clock. Mine is going to be wide-ranging, asking for a better policy, so if you'll permit me, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make that speech at another date.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Member for Roblin will be able to continue his remarks next time the committee sits. Committee rise. Call in the Speaker. Mr. Speaker

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(MR. CHAIRMAN cont'd) your Committee has considered certain resolutions, has asked me to report same, and asks leave to sit again.

IN SESSION

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. HARRY SHAFRANSKY (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose, that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

. . . . continued on next page

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR - RESOLUTION NO. 32

MR. SPEAKER: The first item on Private Members' Hour, Private Members' Resolution No. 32.

In that regard, before it's moved, let me indicate that the Chair has some difficulty in relating it, whether it does require an advisory or not, and I would like to have guidance from the House.

The Honourable Member for River Heights, the Leader of the Opposition. The Honourable House Leader.

MR. GREEN: If there is some question, and it hasn't been observed by us, but I would think that the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition would not want to argue a moot point; he could put the words in and that would satisfy himself and yourself and our side as well. Just consider the advisability of, and then proceed with the resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Is that agreeable?

MR. SIDNEY SPIVAK, Q.C. (Leader of the Opposition) (River Heights): Yes, Mr. Speaker, that's agreeable.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Lakeside: WHEREAS the Western Economic Opportunities Conference of 1973 has not contributed to the amelioration of a number of serious problems affecting western Canada; and

WHEREAS the importance of energy and the buoyancy of the western economy have provided new opportunities to reassess the impact of national policies on western prosperity and development; and

WHEREAS there now exists opportunities for the western provinces to provide national leadership in the articulation of new national policies; and

WHEREAS it is desirable that a western position on new national policies be so far as possible regional and bipartisan in character;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that this Assembly consider the advisability of the early convening of a legislative conference with membership to be drawn from the Legislative Assemblies of the four western provinces and to include members of Parliament from the four western provinces for the purpose of reviewing:

(i) National economic policies, its impact on western Canada and western Canada's contribution to its development;

(ii) Western Canadian priorities with regard to the development of national policies respecting all primary products;

(iii) The development of national policies regarding capital investment, foreign and domestic;

(iv) The development of effective policies to deal with the continuing problems of poverty in western Canada, especially within the native communities;

(v) The proposed changes in the distribution of seats in the Parliament in Canada.

MOTION as amended presented.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, I may, with leave I think, amend if I may another part of that resolution and that was the reference to "bipartisan in character." It should have been "nonpartisan" in character.

MR. SPEAKER: Assembly agree that there is nonpartisan instead of bipartisan in the . . . (Agreed). The Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the honourable members would give me an opportunity to present this for their consideration in a serious manner, and I want to, Mr. Speaker, address my remarks to the substance of the problem but I believe that there are a few words that have to be said about the mechanism that I would propose.

First it is not my proposal, nor is it my suggestion that this conference in any way usurps the role of government, nor is there any suggestion in what I am proposing that the policy decisions of government are not to be made by the governments. Rather I believe that there is an opportunity and there is a need for the members of the Legislative Assemblies of the four western provinces to meet, not necessarily on a regular basis, but to meet over a period of time together to discuss common problems, to try and see whether they can identify the areas of concern and potential solutions, to exchange information, to have a better understanding of how each in their own region are dealing with the social and economic problems of the day. As a result of the information supplied, the exchange that takes place, and the

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(MR. SPIVAK cont'd) opportunities for discussion, there can very well be an opportunity for direction to be given to government which government can execute and follow if it so desires, and a better understanding of those who are not in government but still form that Legislative Chamber of the province, to be able to deal intelligently and cope with the problems.

Mr. Speaker as of 1960 Duff Roblin, and others, observed that federalism as it is practised has a peculiar effect on the parliamentary government, as it is also practised in this country, and in effect, Mr. Speaker, the federal-provincial conferences that have developed have in fact become in essence almost a third level of government. Now that may not be a bad thing in all respects, Mr. Speaker, but it does mean that those who are in the legislative assemblies as legislators, at all levels of government, tend to hear about decisions and then to rationalize why the decisions were made, rather than to have been involved in the actual decisions themselves.

The Western Economic Opportunities Conference in Calgary had its imperfections. There were some who believed that not very much was accomplished. It was in many respects a breakthrough of a kind, and it was a recognition that there are national problems that can be most sensibly approached by trying to solve them on a regional basis. The conference that I would propose builds on that precedent but it goes further in seeking the involvement of the elected representatives from the four provincial jurisdictions as in the west, as well as those federal representatives who represent western Canada in the House of Commons.

Now while there has been through the Prairie Economic Council meetings over a period of time, a degree of collaboration between the western provinces - and at one point it only included the three provinces and now the four - the developments like the energy crisis bring home that the interests diverge even within the prairie provinces at various points, and in the final analysis, Mr. Speaker, it is up to the various provincial governments to reflect and protect those interests. I think that there is, and becoming a tendency on the part of even the government within Manitoba, they've become parochial in many respects. I think this has been exemplified by some of the prairie provinces. Yet our problems remain, our problems have not been solved; and the new national policy that we talk about has not been achieved. We know that the national policy of the past, which involved both tariffs and transportation, resulted in an increased degree of prosperity for Eastern Canada and provided for Western Canada several burdens to carry. We know that the solutions that we are looking for are not changes in constitution; the solutions we are looking for are political in nature, within the political capability of the governments at hand. It would seem to me that if we looked for what we are trying to reach in western Canada it really is not a preferential treatment today but rather a treatment that would be one of equity. We can examine the periods of history in recent times, and we can reflect on the period of time of John Diefenbaker and say that that was one period when for western Canada there was in fact a period in which there was equity not preferential treatment.

Now I mentioned the Western Economic Opportunities Conference and I want to, if I may, deal with that for a few moments. The Honourable Minister of Mines and Natural Resources was present and a participant; I was only an observer. Of course the Premier was present, and there were a few other Ministers as well. I believe that there was value to the conference. I believe that there was an exchange of information. I believe that there were opportunities for informal exchanges of ideas and policy in the meetings that took place outside the formal procedures that were followed. We now have advanced from the Western Economic Conference into the problem of energy, and we know that the energy needs of Canada, and particularly of eastern Canada have been real and genuine, and we know that there have been opportunities for some of the western provinces to reap the benefits of a non renewable resource.

However, even during this time, Mr. Speaker, there have been attempts by some of the eastern Canadian politicians to characterize both Premier Blakeney and Premier Lougheed as the blue-eyed arabs of the west, and I suggest that that is a measure today even in Canada with all that has been done, of the demonstration of how some in eastern Canada, including some in Ottawa, have examined and reviewed the history of western alienation, our point at this period of time, and have disregarded the historical inequities in which the west have, in fact, laboured under during our confederation.

It would appear to me that very little progress at this point has been made with respect to transportation policy, notwithstanding the thrust and direction of the Minister of Transportation at the Western Economic Opportunities Conference. But having said that, there were

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(MR. SPIVAK cont'd) certain grand phrases used, there was certain indication of the extent to which government was prepared to use its power to try and overcome the inequities. It would seem to me that the time has come for all the legislators to have some understanding and review, and to discuss to see whether there is some kind of agreement as to, well, how far we are prepared to pursue this to correct some of those inequities in the shaping of a new national policy.

The importance of energy may be transitory. I doubt if this is the case, and the co-operative spirit that ultimately prevailed between the western provinces and the rest of Canada I believe provides strong leverage for that development of that new national policy.

Now economic conditions in regions vary and the economic conditions in the Maritimes are not the same as the economic conditions in western Canada or the east. I am not interested in the Balkanization of this country; nor am I interested in policies that will maintain or continue a Balkanization, but I do believe that there is a need for the kind of conference that I'm suggesting for that opportunity to be provided for legislators to understand the full extent and direction that government is undertaking in any given area, and to be able to see and exchange ideas of how they are coping particularly with their social problems.

Mr. Speaker, it's my belief from the limited knowledge that I have, that if we were to examine social conditions in British Columbia and to examine the probable staging of what will occur there, with their financial capacity to be able to fund and deal with those problems, and compare that to our situation, and our particular need, and the need of our native people, and the need for imaginative and very grand initiatives in that particular area, that one would recognize that problems are different and that the funding is different, because the economic base is different, but there are certain things that we should be talking about with respect to our particular problems that I suggest are different than the other regions in Canada, and the other areas. It would seem to me that again while government will ultimately make that policy determination, and this proposal is not to take away from government's authority or from government's final decision-making, there is an opportunity for an awareness and for an education that I think is essential for legislators who have to deal day to day in this Legislature and in the Legislatures of Alberta, Saskatchewan and B. C., with the social problems, with the suggested solutions, and with the approach of governments. In many respects the approaches of government are piecemeal. In many respects they truly do not reflect, or have not been based on evaluations and information that is required for those decisions. In many respects, Mr. Speaker, the protest of opposition to programs introduced by government is based on limited information and does not provide the kind of opportunity that governments usually have for their civil servants to exchange information, for their civil servants to meet, for the ministers to meet in conferences and to be given the kind of detailed information which gives them an advantage in their policy-making, but not necessarily the advantage that's required for the explanation or for trying to arrive at the consensus that must be arrived at in this House in order both that legislation be passed, and passed in a way that there can be an approval which would reflect the approval of the people of the province.

There are more sophisticated policies that we are going to be dealing with; there are new instruments of policy that are going to have to be developed. The national policy is in the process of evolution, the new national policy, and it would seem to me that the kind of meeting that I'm suggesting could be held. I'm not suggesting, Mr. Speaker, an annual meeting; it may be once every four years; it may be once every three years. But I do believe that there should be this opportunity, and I believe that that opportunity would be a worthwhile one, and that opportunity would help, I think, in the rationalization of many things that the Prairie Economic Council have dealt with but have not come about because of the problem areas, political problem areas, that they confront themselves. I can elaborate and deal with that in greater detail possibly on the second occasion which I may have to deal with this bill, or on the opportunity of closing the debate on this bill.

I mentioned social policy, and I want to deal with just two aspects very quickly in the time that's allowed to me. I refer to the question of the native people, and I believe that there are needs - well there is a great need - for new provincial programs and new federal programs. The kind of consultation that I'm talking about I believe can assist in the development of those policies. I believe that the native people in the west share many common problems but they also have different ones, and the policies that have to be developed on a national basis may

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(MR. SPIVAK cont'd) very well have to be confined not to just the region of western Canada but to the smaller area of the province, and here I then, in no contradiction, suggest that there may very well be parochial policies that are acquired if we understand and agree that it is needed, and further, if we can reach consensus that insofar as western Canada's concerned that we are prepared to accept that kind of policy in this particular area as part of the national policy to assist our people, our native people, who basically make up a very significant sector in this province and western Canada who are within the poverty line of our country.

The other has to do with the problems of the urban and rural areas, and the problem of the urban areas in the west as opposed to the urban areas of the east, the major urban areas of the east, with their population so huge by comparison, and with their position very different than the position of some of our urban areas in western Canada; and again the need for the fashioning of new policies which will take into consideration those needs of our urban areas in western Canada, and which will help develop a national policy in this particular matter which would reflect the regional character of western Canada.

Now a month ago the Premier spoke on the subject, What Does the West Want? He spoke at the University of Manitoba's Students Union. I don't necessarily agree with all his comments - and I don't think you'll find that strange, Mr. Speaker, there are many times that I do not agree with all his comments - but I find myself prepared to support one of his comments, and he said at one point, Mr. Speaker, and I quote: "There are those who say that our current difficulties in arriving at a consensus on a national oil policy arrive from too much stress on regional interests and too little attention to national needs." He concedes that while there was some truth in this, regional power plays did not begin or end with oil. Well I agree. In virtually every field of endeavour in Canada, and with respect to a great many commodities beyond a single one, so-called national policies, Mr. Speaker, have created national hardships. It is rather a rare occurrence in fact for a regional policy, especially a western regional policy, to create a national problem.

Now I don't like or defend that position but it's true that in the past so far as our present situation is concerned, this has been the case. Western policy which has been adopted as national policy has not created hardship on the rest of Canada. National policies which have taken into consideration the regional needs of the east have, in fact, created hardships on western Canada. I believe that this situation creates an opportunity not to exploit, for we've been on the receiving end of that too long, but to see a re-definition of national priorities and policies undertaken, while at this particular time I believe that Western Economic Opportunities, whatever the reasons for that conference coming to be, whatever limited qualifications were really accomplished so far by it, nevertheless was the base. I believe that the kind of proposal that I put forward is one that is worthy of consideration, and worthy of receiving the confidence of this House, to the extent that the conference would give us an opportunity to assist Manitoba, western Canada, and to strengthen the very fibre of our own national independence and national being.

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

MR. WALLY JOHANNSON (St. Matthews): Mr. Speaker, in spite of the facade of reasonableness presented by the Leader of the Opposition, I think one can characterize his introduction of his resolution basically as simply hairbrained chatter of irresponsible frivolity. He seems to be entering a competition with the Leader of the Liberal Party as to who can introduce in this House the most idiotic constitutional proposal, and he's doing rather well. I think he's almost exceeded the Leader of the Liberal Party in the competition. And I would wonder, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. JOHANNSON: Mr. Speaker, I would be interested in knowing the views of the Honourable Member for Morris who I know believes in the political party system, and I know believes in a parliamentary and responsible government. I'd be very interested in getting his views on this particular resolution which has been introduced by his leader.

Now the resolution basically has been introduced because of the failure of the Leader of the Conservative Party to get elected in this province, the failure of the Leader of the Conservative Party to become Premier of this province. He can't get elected in this province, therefore he resorts to this kind of constitutional subterfuge to get a say in the making of national policy as it affects the western provinces. The Conservative Party has failed to elect a national government; it's failed to even elect a single member in Saskatchewan on the provincial level;

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(MR. JOHANNSSON cont'd) it's failed to elect a government in B. C. ; it has elected a government in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, basically this resolution is an attack on responsible government. Now the pattern in this House has been that the Liberal Leader has led the attack on responsible government. Now we have the Leader of the Conservative Party taking up the challenge. The traditional and proper procedure in this country is that duly elected provincial governments when they have matters to discuss meet in provincial conferences between provinces. If they have matters they want to discuss with the Federal Government, the duly elected governments meet with the duly elected Federal Government. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Conservative Party never listens; he loves to talk but he never listens. Probably that is one reason why he remains on that side of the House, and will remain there for a long time. Now I'm not certain whether he'll remain in his present position. --(Interjection)-- George. No. Mr. Speaker, in Canada the traditional procedure is that elected governments meet one another. This is the traditional procedure in this country; it is the traditional procedure in a federal state which has a parliamentary and responsible system of government.

A MEMBER: What is responsible government ?

MR. JOHANNSSON: Well, some members of the Opposition don't seem to understand what responsible government is. The Member for Morris does understand it and therefore I'm looking forward with great interest to his contribution in this debate.

Now the reason for this system is because if provinces and the Federal Government meet and they do come to an agreement, they have some jurisdictional authority to act on those agreements. If they reach a decision, they can do something about it. They can do something about it in their respective jurisdictions. And, Mr. Speaker, the honourable member proposes a western legislators' conference. What legal jurisdiction does it have, what legal authority ? It -- (Interjection) -- Yes, it's a glorified seminar. The conference can't do a thing except talk. The Leader of the Opposition of course loves to talk. The conference can do nothing but talk. It'll be a great deal of sound and fury signifying nothing. If, Mr. Speaker, if this review that the Leader of the Opposition talks about did happen to come to some agreement among legislators, there is no obligation on any elected government to do a damn thing about it. The provinces have no obligation to act on it, as he's pointed out. The Federal Government has no obligation to act on anything, any agreements arrived at by such a conference.

Now, considering that total lack of any legal authority, Mr. Speaker, and considering the fact that such a conference would have one tenth of its members from the Liberal Party, one tenth of the members of such a conference would be Liberals, the Prime Minister of Canada would laugh at this, he would laugh at any kind of consensus, or any kind of agreement arrived at by such a conference. I have far more respect for the constitutional expertise of the Prime Minister of Canada than I do for the Leader of the Liberal Party here. The Prime Minister would see this proposal basically for what it is, and it's an attempt to undermine responsible government. -- (Interjection) -- Yes. And you'll get it as long as you keep proposing matters that are attempts to undermine responsible government, you will get replies criticizing such proposals. Mr. Speaker, what's the reason behind such a subterfuge ? At present there are four provincial governments in the west, and out of four, three happen to be NDP governments, one Conservative. This means that at any western conference of premiers or at any conference of western governments . . .

A MEMBER: The good guys dominate.

MR. JOHANNSSON: . . . there's a majority - Yes, the good guys dominate - there's a majority of NDP governments.

A MEMBER: We don't always agree.

MR. JOHANNSSON: This happens to be the way our system works. This happens to be the way a federation of parliamentary responsible government works, and it's worked for a long time within this country, and I think it's worked reasonably well. Mr. Speaker, I thought there must be a reason why the Leader of the Liberal, or the Conservative Party would propose this particular format, and so I checked the Parliamentary Guide, and what did I find ?

A MEMBER: Tell us.

MR. JOHANNSSON: Well, out of 350 elected representatives in the west, the majority would be non NDP members.

A MEMBER: Really ?

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MR. JOHANNSON: Now that's not a great feat of arithmetic; all one has to do is look at the Parliamentary Guide. So, Mr. Speaker, what do we have here? Basically we have a revival, we have a revival on the level of western Canada of the GGG.

A MEMBER: Government by the opposition.

MR. JOHANNSON: Yes, the revival on the western Canadian level of the Group for Good Government.

A MEMBER: They're going to take over the west.

MR. JOHANNSON: They're going to take over the west by circumventing the elected governments of western Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I observed in today's paper an ad placed by the Conservative Party requesting support, both financial and otherwise; a support asking people to join as supporters and to stop the trend that they claim this government represents.

A MEMBER: The socialist hordes.

MR. JOHANNSON: The socialist hordes, yes. They're going to stop the socialist hordes.

A MEMBER: The long arm of the left.

MR. JOHANNSON: Mr. Speaker, this is a legitimate course of action. This is what the Leader of the Conservative Party should be doing. The proper course of action for him is to act in such a way that the people of Manitoba at the next election will elect him as the premier, will give him a majority of members in this Legislature. And I couldn't criticize him if he follows that particular procedure. But, Mr. Speaker, at the same time he proposes a ridiculous resolution. Ordinarily, as I say, the Liberals propose these ridiculous resolutions, now the Leader of the Conservative Party has taken the lead from the Liberals.

A MEMBER: It's "caucutagious".

MR. JOHANNSON: They're going to be following him very shortly I'm certain. Through this subterfuge, this ridiculous subterfuge, the Leader of the Conservative Party is going to gain a say in western Canadian policy-making. Mr. Speaker, when a man has to resort to such subterfuges the only conclusion I can come to is that he's lost hope of ever becoming premier of this province. He's lost hope. -- (Interjection) -- Well, the Leader of the Liberal Party never had any hope. (Laughter) So he doesn't have any to lose. The Leader of the Conservative Party has lost hope and therefore he proposes this ridiculous creature to us, what I can only characterize as a toothless tiger.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Liberal Party, I'm sorry. I realize you'd like me to be correct.

MR. ASPER: I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the most haunting thought I have is that there may have been a change of roles in the last hour or so, half hour, and apart from your perhaps Freudian slips, where I became the Leader of the Opposition and my honourable friend became the western renegade, the person who spews treason across the floor of the House. I'm sure if the First Minister were here, he'd - oh, I'm sorry, it was male treason, Mr. Speaker. Now I for the first time in a long time no longer am cloaked with this sense of loneliness that has been my yoke to bear for these three and a half years that I have tried to give voice to a view of western Canada that seemed -- (Interjection) -- My honourable friend, the ex red coat asks me why the red coat; it's in honour of the GR. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I can only say to the Leader of the Opposition, welcome to the club.

To the Honourable Member from St. Matthews, I am disappointed really that he chose to respond in a sarcastic way rather than in a manner that dealt with the substance of the resolution. For nobody, nobody can really - and I hope he is not as is his wont taking the official line that the government has chosen on this - but, Mr. Speaker, there's no reason to vote against the resolution, there's every reason to support it. There may be reason to amend it, there may be reason to fortify it, there may be reason to broaden it, but there's no question, Mr. Speaker, that any act, any action that focuses public attention on the insistence by western Canadians for a better structure of Canada for the benefit of not only western Canada but for all of Canada, can not help but be a good concept. Mr. Speaker, this is not the only time conferences have bridged the gap between platitudes on one side and bayonets on the other side; and conferences' dialogue, bipartisan dialogue, has always been a healthy thing in this country. And, Mr. Speaker, the concept of calling on western Canadians of all political stripe to come together to fashion a common position on a non partisan, non political basis can do nothing but

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(MR. ASPER cont'd) fortify those of us who wish to see a new structure in western Canada, a new kind of country, a country that recognizes the promise, recognizes the challenge, recognizes its responsibilities to redress some of the grievances that have been long outstanding.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member from St. Matthews asks the fatuous question, what legal effect would this constituent assembly, or this conference have? Well, Mr. Speaker, there have been dozens of conferences throughout the world on many subjects, whether it's environment, whether it's on international war crimes, and whether it's on a better understanding of the call for a bilingual Canada or whether it's on a call for a new economic social political and cultural deal for western Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I can remember ten years ago, I can even remember ^{six} years ago writing a book in which I devoted some substantial portion to an explanation to my fellow eastern Canadians as to why there was anger in western Canada. I can remember another book that was written about the same time, a book called "The Unfinished Revolt", and that was written by some Albertans, all in government, and they took the same line. I can remember, Mr. Speaker, not an editorial, not a book review, not a university seminar, nothing about western Canada pre 1967. It was an old whine from the Progressives, an old complaint that people had grown tired of. And westerners were known as complainers, people who went to Ottawa and asked for more handouts, more small programs that they could go back to their electors with and say, look at what we forced the Federal Government to do for us, and always leaving the illness, never solving, never curing the problem.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen leaders of political parties, leaders of Legislatures, government in western Canada for decades, go to Ottawa, bang the table, come back with \$13 million in grants for whatever their project was, and not ever get down to the real issue, that the structure of this country - that's what the resolution refers to, a new national policy - the structure of this country must be reshaped, or those of us who speak in Western Canada with frustration, with anger, with a growing impatience for redress, will only increase the volume, will only increase the support and, as has been said by not only myself, not only the First Minister of Ontario, but even the First Minister of this province and including the Finance Minister of Quebec recently, used the term "straining the bonds of Confederation." It's become a recognized term. Mr. Speaker, when I remember using that expression a number of years ago travelling around in Eastern Canada speaking to whatever groups would listen to the western case, I found very few people understanding the resentment, but in 1968, '67, conferences began to be held. There was a conference at Lethbridge, I'm directing this comment to my honourable friend from St. Matthews, because conferences are the substitute for throwing bricks; conferences are a substitute for placards and protests and parades and militancy.

Mr. Speaker, this is something perhaps my honourable friends opposite wouldn't recognize. Maybe their training or their predilection is for confrontation. They have complained bitterly in the years that I've spoken on this subject; I have said confrontation may indeed be necessary. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party brings in a resolution that is reasonable, that seeks to avoid confrontation, and that's not good enough. The conference known as One Prairie Province Conference began a chain reaction that led to the first national conference where a Prime Minister of this country sat down for the first time with regional premiers and tried to conceive of a national policy that would benefit their region, entitled The Western Economic Opportunities Conference. And Mr. Speaker, the Honourable House Leader of the NDP suggests that the reasons, the motives for that conference were political.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't care what the motives were. The motives aren't even worth considering. What is important is the conference took place; that change began; that a recognition, a national awareness has been created for the demand, the insistence, the cry for a new deal for the West. Mr. Speaker, it began at Lethbridge and nobody -- and I remember young Peter Lougheed, who was a back bench MLA -- and yes, young. I can remember people attending that conference giving papers, and I commend the report, the report of the conference, to my honourable friend from St. Matthews as to what can happen at conferences, because a whole new approach was taken, a whole new line of thinking; a whole new requirement was raised. And many of the people who attended that conference have since gone into public life, have become identified with a thrust toward a better arrangement for western Canadians, and who

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(MR. ASPER cont'd) are influencing public policy today because they went to a conference; and Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether my honourable friend from St. Matthews wants them to go to a military school or to some kind of a military underground camp to train in lieu of going to conferences, but Mr. Speaker, that to me is a very acceptable substitute to the kind of innocuous comment that the Member from St. Matthews made.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues. He didn't touch on one of them. There are a number of real issues that a western parliamentarians' conference might deal with and might go to the rest of this country with a united face, a united voice, in the spirit of love of Confederation and goodwill toward the rest of this country, and Mr. Speaker, all of us in this room and in the political parties of this room have ambiguous commitments. We have divided loyalties because we are Canadian. We are provincial and yet we are regionalists, and sometimes this brings us into open conflict with our own political parties.

The Leader of the Opposition's resolution tried to - and I think perhaps successfully - avoid that problem by saying it is a conference of legislators who will meet to discuss our common problem, and every party now has on the tip of its tongue in western Canada something that didn't exist six years ago, Mr. Speaker, or five years ago or four years ago. In the past four years we in the west, all of us, perhaps all of us in this room, have contributed to a growing sympathy all across this country for the legitimate hopes of Western Canada. Somehow it's happened, and let's not take the credit; let's not say it was the First Minister's speech, or the Leader of the Opposition's speech, or my speech, or anybody's. It's happened. But it's happened, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, everyone has made some contribution to it. Now . .

MR. ENNS: I haven't.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member from Lakeside is too modest. Usually I wouldn't have that observation for his comments but tonight he is too modest. Mr. Speaker, there are things to talk about that can only be talked about at that kind of a conference, where we can reach unanimity, whether it's national transportation policy which keeps Western Canada economically retarded, a new kind of approach to DREE, Regional Decentralization, requirements that Crown corporations be required to decentralize their spending power. Mr. Speaker, if those things happen, if we were able to come to Canada and negotiate with one voice in Air Canada, CBC, Bank of Canada, Industrial Development Bank,, CDC, and all of the billions of dollars of spending; Mr. Speaker, if we were to achieve only that, we would dynamite just the Manitoba economy by a perpetual ten percent growth.

Mr. Speaker, that's something that all of us can understand. Mr. Speaker, we talk in this province - at least I have and I'm sure many members of this House feel the same way - of economic federalism, because, Mr. Speaker, we have fought to get cultural federalism and we're getting it through our bilingualism and our multi-cultural federal policy. We have scored that victory. We are working toward a B & M Cultural Canada. Now, Mr. Speaker, we want to move toward two more things: new economic federalism and new political federalism. This kind of a conference could be an historic launching pad. It could create a unanimity that has never been expressed, with the prestige, the force and the influence that that kind of a conference can create.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I understand I have approximately seven or eight minutes left. Ten minutes?

MR. SPEAKER: Eight minutes.

MR. ASPER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say that I find two small things that I would want to see changed in the resolution. The first, Mr. Speaker, is not terribly important but worth considering, and that's the first paragraph of the preamble. Mr. Speaker, I'm not yet ready to adopt the view that the first paragraph of the preamble states, that "the Western Economic Opportunities Conference of 1973 has not contributed to the amelioration of a number of serious problems affecting Western Canada," mainly because, Mr. Speaker, I think the only negative aspect of the resolution - in all other respects it's positive - it is negative to say that it has failed, and that's the implication, so I will be calling for that change.

Mr. Speaker, other than that, there is a serious omission that I would ask be included and that the Honourable Leader of the Official Opposition consider supporting, because I have said and I want to say again, that until you include in the negotiating list the fundamental things, and that is the political structure of Canada, then we will always be going, cap in hand, to these kind of conferences, to federal-provincial conferences, because the structure of Canada

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(MR. ASPER cont'd) politically, the constitutional structure, will work against us. We require -- for example, we could have added it here -- we want immigration policy which will deflect population from the over-developed regions of the country to the sparsely settled, because with a new immigration policy, for example, we would have people. People mean more MPs. More MPs means greater political voice. means more influence in national affairs, particularly as they affect your region. Mr. Speaker, I would be asking that the Honourable Leader of the Official Opposition consider adding to the list that which I consider fundamental, the constitutional changes required to put in place a machinery which will prevent the disparities and the inequities from ever arising again once they're cured. Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. GREEN: I wonder if the honourable member would permit a question? When the immigration policy . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the House.

MR. GREEN: Yes, if the immigration policy was changed to deflect the people, let us say, to Manitoba and Saskatchewan, would you then have laws which required that they stay there?

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

MR. ASPER: Of course not, Mr. Speaker. It's no part of our suggestion that there be immobility, but that implies as Australia has learned in trying to build a nation, and has successfully achieved population decentralization a lot more than we have, given the problem they had, Mr. Speaker, it automatically follows that when you deflect population you create economic action in those areas, economic cultural social action, that goes with it to make the people who are deflected from, through the incentives of pioneering, of settlement, of home-steading, that will want to stay in the region to which they move. Mr. Speaker, that's how they have built the state of Israel. That's how they are building Australia. And it's not unreasonable to ask that Canada be built, using the same devices the same as others.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the fundamental of that is that unless we then enshrine true federalism, which is the partnership of ten equals, into our constitution, then Mr. Speaker, we will be ever dominated. As long as there is 65 percent of the members of the House of Commons elected from east of the Lakehead and, as long as 74 percent of the seats in the senate come from east of Sault Ste. Marie, there is little hope in my sad but long-considered opinion that we will ever achieve law-making influence as westerners within the Canadian structure under its present political, constitutional position. And so, Mr. Speaker, until you can honestly say Canada is a partnership of ten equal partners, then, Mr. Speaker, we will not; we will find three years from now the yards we make, the accomplishments we achieve, the negotiations that are successful, will be obsolete because new programs, new thrusts will come along from Ottawa, from central Canada, which again ignore the western voice because it is not equal. --(Interjection)--

Mr. Speaker, the Member from Lakeside suggests unacceptable solutions. Mr. Speaker, that's very interesting that he should say that Mr. Diefenbaker is acceptable to many Canadians, in his own party that there is talk of separation from the Conservative Party. I'm thinking of the Honourable Mr. John Horner, who's saying, "I want out of the Conservative Party because it's anti-west". Mr. Speaker, it's Mr. Horner, Member of Parliament (PC) close your bracket, that is talking about uniting the dissidents into a new western party. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have not yet reached the conclusion that this is inevitable. I am still content, unlike many western Conservatives, and some western Liberals, and some western NDP as a matter of fact, to try to work through the structure. But, Mr. Speaker, until we strike a constitutional balance that gives Western Canada, which represents 40 percent of the provinces, 60 percent of the land mass, but only 30 percent of the voting power, an equal regional voice. Then, Mr. Speaker, we have got rep by pop, we havenot got federalism, we've got a unitary state, we have a dictatorship of the majority, and that majority is only going to continue to live in Eastern Canada. And so, Mr. Speaker, it is my view that the Resolution makes abundant sense, but with suggested changes, and I now propose to move them.

I wish to move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie, that the proposed resolution be amended by deleting the first paragraph of the preamble and by adding to the body of the proposed resolution at the conclusion thereof: "the Constitution of Canada" amongst the things to be considered, "the Constitution of Canada. . .

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MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. ASPER: "the Constitution of Canada and the changes required in the political structure and institutions of Canada in order to give Western Canada a greater voice in the national decision-making process."

MR. SPEAKER: Moved by the Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party, seconded by the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie -- the honourable members are aware of the amendment? In that case I'll dispense with it. The Honourable Member for St. Matthews state his point of order.

MR. JOHANNSSON: Seeing that the Leader of the Liberal Party did not provide us with a copy, could you read it for us, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Well I was intending to but someone said "dispense" because they were in a hurry. I have no objection to reading it. Seconded by the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie, that the proposed resolution be amended by deleting the first paragraph of the preamble and adding to the body of the proposed resolution at the conclusion thereof:

"(6) the Constitution of Canada and the changes required in the political structure and institutions of Canada in order to give Western Canada a greater voice in the national decisions-making process."

Do the honourable members understand the amendment? The Honourable House Leader, speaking to the amendment.

MR. GREEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm speaking to the amendment. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the Leader of the Opposition, when he heard the response of the Leader of the Member for St. Matthews, that he was still convinced that the Member for St. Matthews had not really presented an argument to his resolution and that he was convinced at the end of the Member for St. Matthews' speech just as solidly, if not more so, about the rightness of his position as he was when the Leader of the Opposition would have dismissed the criticism that had been raised by the Member for St. Matthews. But, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that after hearing the Leader of the Liberal Party speak to the resolution as proposed by the Leader of the Opposition, and to indicate the reasons why he thought that it was such a fine resolution, I am sure that the Leader of the Liberal Party must have at least shaken the Leader of the Opposition's confidence in the right. . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. GREEN: . . . in the rightness of his position. So we have Mr. Speaker, the peculiar situation of the Leader of the Opposition being convinced of the rightness of his position by the arguments that were presented against it--(Interjection)--Oh no, you'll have a chance to speak. I am merely surmising, Mr. Speaker, I am merely surmising what is going on in the Leader of the Opposition's mind with respect to his own resolution, and if there was any good arguments against it, it's the support that he has got and the basis of that support that he has received from the Liberal Party, because the Liberal Party has presented, Mr. Speaker, a series of hypotheses to this House on the basis of the structure of Canadian federalism, which I don't think can be accepted by any person, with the exception of the Leader of the Liberal Party, and I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that if he thought them through he would not accept them.

He has based the position of the West on the fact that we present, I believe 40 percent of the provinces, 50 percent of the land mass. Mr. Speaker, he's forgetting something. He's leaving out the Territories. Mr. Speaker, it's the Territories, the Northwest Territories, that represent perhaps 50 percent of the land mass of this country, and he, Mr. Speaker, has dismissed the Territories as not even being a partner of the ten that he is talking about. Now I'm not, Mr. Speaker, suggesting that there be eleven partners. I am merely trying to indicate that the basis of the partnership that the Leader of the Liberal Party is talking about is just impossible to accept. Does the Leader of the Liberal Party really say, really say that we are a partnership and that equal partnership in Confederation is assumed by Prince Edward Island and the Province of Ontario, that they are equal partners in Confederation and that they have equal political weight within the context of Canada?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am merely asking whether that is the basis upon which he proceeds, you know, because, Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of partnership that I would like. I would say that if I and John D. Rockefeller were partners, the two of us together would be very rich and that we should therefore be equal partners. Now the . . .

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

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, I don't propose to ask the Honourable Minister about his relationship with Mr. Rockefeller, although it's the third time that I've heard him raise his relationship with Mr. Rockefeller in this House in the last three years; there must be something going. But my question to him, my question to him, Mr. Speaker, is: does he not see any significance in the fact that North Dakota with a population less than that of Manitoba, has in the United States Senate . . . federalism as many seats as New York, which has a population that's greater than all of Canada, but in the Lower House they have rep by pop and they balance the two.

MR. SPEAKER: By leave, I'll allow the Minister to answer, but time is up for tonight.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate it. I would not look to the United States senatorial and regional government position as one which I would want to follow as a member of Canada, but furthermore, the State of North Dakota is not an equal partner in the United States of America.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister will have an opportunity to continue. The hour being 10:00 o'clock, the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:30 tomorrow afternoon. (Tuesday)