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SPEAKER: THE HONOURABLE JAMES M. RUSSELL

The House met at 3:00 P.M.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

Gentlemen before commencing today's proceedings, it gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the honourable member for Twillingate and all members, of course, to welcome to the galleries a delegation of six from the Town of Twillingate, accompanied by Mayor Manuel or among their numbers being Mayor Manuel and Dr. Dennison, Medical Superintendent of the Notre Dame Bay Hospital.

I trust that your visit here will be interesting and informative and your other endeavours will be productive. On behalf of all honourable members I welcome you to this day's sitting.

PETITIONS

MR. F. J. AYLWARD: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition on behalf of the community and in particular the fishermen of the Community of Fair Haven, in Placentia Bay.

Fair Haven is a small community of approximately 200 people.

Within the last week the fishermen in this community have experienced a disaster resulting from the complete loss of all the fishing gear of every fisherman in the community resulting from the present Arctic ice in Placentia Bay.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the honourable members will realize from hearing the news media and really from an article only appearing in yesterday's "Evening Telegram" that in the memory of the fishermen of the area this is the first time in practically fifty years that Arctic ice has appeared in Placentia Bay.

The effect of that on these fishermen is disaster, Mr. Speaker, because every fisherman in Fair Haven, there are only a small number probably twelve or fifteen, about ninety per cent of these fishermen had every gill net they had in the water, and as a result of the presence of ice they lost every net they had.

Now this imposes a severe financial burden on these fishermen.

In fact they are all fitted out with their gear for the season

and as a result of course they are heavily in debt and they now have no gear to commence fishing. I brought the matter to the attention of the departmental officials and a delegation from Fair Haven. We met with these this morning and with the executive assistant to the Premier who is now the acting Minister of Fisheries.

But, Mr. Speaker, the situation out there is desperate and unless these men obtain immediate assistance they will not be able to fish this year. Sir, unlike any other storm damage this one I respectfully submit is an emergency situation. The present legislation or the present method of compensating fishermen for storm damage I respectfully submit does not cover the situation which prevails in Fair Haven because in Fair Haven, although it is a small community, you have every fisherman losing every net and this means a complete economic standstill.

Now the present assistance available, I understand, is that the government will pay the bounty on gill nets and also fifty per cent of the net cost. But this to these fishermen who are now heavily in debt is a burden which they are not in a financial position to assume and certainly it is very, very doubtful whether the suppliers would furnish them with these nets. So unless they get an immediate emergency assistance, it means of course that there will be no fishermen fish out of Fair Haven this year. They are very, very concerned about it. The damage that occurred last Wednesday, it only came to my attention today because they could not get out to their fishing grounds until the ice had receded and only yesterday or Monday could they get out and survey the damage. But they lost everything that they had, Mr. Speaker.

Now this situation is not without precedence and I am not asking the government for anything new because a similar situation prevailed in I think Morton's Harbour last year when because of ice the fishermen in that community lost all their fishing gear and as a result, of course, financial assistance was made available to them.

Under the scheme presently in existence, the financial assistance

available to the fishermen entitles them to buy these kits but, Mr. Speaker, in order to assemble these kits, it takes, I am told by officials of the department, approximately ten hours. All of these men or the most of them have something like thirty nets each. So it would take one full month for these men to get ready or these fishermen to fish this season, if they only get the kit. So what we are asking this government for is an emergency assistance to provide these men with nets and equipment which they can put into the water as soon as they can get back to the fishing grounds.

Presently in the Community of Fair Haven there are about 300 quintals of salt bulk fish, already salted there. This will indicate, Mr. Speaker, to the members of this House that this small community and the fishermen in it are full-time fishermen and they fish for twelve months of the year. So that the best three months of any fishing year are April, May, and June. We are practically through April now and unless this assistance is made available to these fishermen immediately, then their loss could be substantial.

So I implore the government and the members of this House to support this petition and to see that these fishermen are provided not with the customary assistance because this will not enable these men to return to the fishery. They will need financial resources which will provide them with nets already assembled to be put into the water. I cannot over-emphasize the emergency of this small community but really it is today a disaster area because of conditions that could not be foreseen, Mr. Speaker.

While I am on that point, probably it would be a good time for members and the appropriate officials in the federal and provincial Department of Fisheries to consider ways and means of forewarning fishermen of the presence of large bodies of Arctic ice because the first thing I asked these fishermen was: could they not have foreseen that this ice would be in on their nets and could they have time to get out and remove their nets? But I am told that they have never seen

the like of this, none of them in their living memory, and I am glad to see some of them are here in the galleries today. They stayed in to see if they can get something done about this.

But, Mr. Speaker, it seems in this technological age somewhat fantastic, somewhat absurd really, to think that this large quantity of ice could come so close to the shore and cause such damage and that no one was forewarned. So I do not know what department or really what government's responsibility it is but I would certainly strongly recommend to our provincial Department of Fisheries to take whatever steps are possible and necessary to see to it that in the future situations of this nature will be detected early enough to warn the fishermen. Because I am told along the coast, in Arnold's Cove and Southern Harbour some fishermen had time to get out and remove their nets but others have suffered similar loss to the fishermen in Fair Haven.

So I hope that the government will make available immediate financial assistance, not alone to the fishermen of Fair Haven, the entire community, but there are one or two others in Southern Harbour and Arnold's Cove who lost their complete means of a livelihood as the result of an unforeseen catastrophe and that is the presence of this Arctic ice after, as I have said before, a period of fifty years.

I cannot over-emphasize the need and the plight of these fishermen and I refer this petition to the department to which it relates and ask that it be given immediate consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable the member for Twillingate.

MR. H.W. C. GILLET: Mr. Speaker, I have great pleasure in supporting the petition so ably proposed by the honourable member opposite. He is correct when he says that we had a similar situation in the Morton's Harbour Area, actually some of the fishermen belong to Cuttle's Island. We also had damage to fishermen from Twillingate Area.

The damage at that time was caused by Arctic ice, something which is not a stranger to us. But the unfortunate part of the

condition last year was it was foggy, very foggy for a period of time so that all of a sudden the ice came in out of the fog and the nets were lost. When I represented the fishermen to the Department of Fisheries, the honourable Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Cheeseman, who is no longer with us, was very sympathetic. He agreed to supply these fishermen with the kits. They went back home very satisfied. They had their nets ready for fishing in a reasonable time. Apparently the fishermen from Fair Haven consider that they cannot wait to get their nets put together, they need the complete net ready to go into the water. This, of course, is something that will have to be decided between the government and the honourable the Minister of Finance and the fishermen. All I can say is that I wish them well and I hope that the government will give immediate consideration so that these fishermen can get back to work and earn a livelihood as soon as possible and that should be immediately.

HON. T. A. HICKMAN: (MINISTER OF JUSTICE): Mr. Speaker, if I may have a word in support of this petition. This matter has been brought to government's attention today very ably by the honourable the member for Placentia East.

This administration, as has been indicated by the honourable member for Twillingate, when faced with a situation which presumably is identical or close to it as was faced in Fair Haven, showed swift and sympathetic and effective consideration. Whilst I cannot obviously speak on behalf of government at this moment when we have had it brought to our attention for the first time, because apparently the facts only became available to the fishermen themselves yesterday, may I assure those fishermen from Fair Haven that this administration will again deal with their problem swiftly and I hope effectively.

MR. SPEAKER: Are there any further petitions?

REPORTS OF STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES

HON. E. MAYNARD (MINISTER OF FORESTRY AND AGRICULTURE): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table The Report of The Newfoundland Farm Products Corporation for the year ending the 31st. March, 1972.

NOTICE OF MOTION

HON. W. W. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, before we go to notice of motion, I would like to move that when the House rises today it will rise until ten o'clock in the morning. By way of explanation to the House, we had intended to do the Fisheries Estimates today but unforeseen circumstances make it more convenient to do them tomorrow. I have been in consultation with the affable, very friendly member for Bell Island this morning. He was the only member of the official opposition that I could get. We had a very affable and convivial chat about the matter. In a very convivial and affable manner we decided that, after consultation with all concerned, we would switch back today; so that is what we are doing.

In other words; today, by grace of the official opposition and the member for Labrador South, we have switched back to the normal private members' day but tomorrow we would hope to be able to achieve, between ten o'clock and six o'clock or sometime thereafter, the passage of the residue of the estimates which we had contemplated yesterday and also, with the co-operation of the House, possible passage of the supply bills. I move that motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Would the honourable Minister without Portfolio repeat the motion please?

MR. MARSHALL: Shot with the other appellations to the honourable member for Bell Island.

Your Honour, I move that the House at its rising today do stand adjourned until 10:00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Motion, that the House at its rising today do adjourn until tomorrow morning at 10:00 o'clock, carried:

HON. J. C. CROSBIE: (MINISTER OF FINANCE): Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave of the House to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend, To Revise and Consolidate The General Law Relating To The Public Revenue, The Raising Of Certain Loans Authorized By The Legislature And The Auditing Of Public Accounts."

MR. SPEAKER: Are there any other further notices of motion?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. MAYNARD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the answer to Question No. 235 on the Order Paper, asked by the honourable member for Bonavista North.

MR. J. C. CROSBIE: Mr. Speaker, I have the answer to Question No. 248, on the Order Paper of April 16, asked by the Leader of the Opposition. It asks: "As of January 31, 1973 what is the amount of the exchequer overdraft to the Bank of Montreal?" The answer is as of January 31, 1973 there was no exchequer overdraft at the Bank of Montreal.

I also have the answer to Question No. (it does not have the number marked on it here.) It was tabled, I think on April 11. Anyway the question is from the Leader of the Opposition to ask what action, if any, have the government taken in respect of the Auditor General, his report for the fiscal year which ended March 31, 1972? Since that date monies that were on deposit in the children's trust account, the Department of Finance of the Government, with the Bank of Montreal and which were transferred to the Newfoundland Exchequer Account instead should have remained to the credit of the government on deposit with the Bank of Montreal in the former account and that such action should now be taken. The question is; what action, if any, have the government taken about that recommendation? The answer, Mr. Speaker, is this, that the estimates for the year 1962-1963 contained a sub-division, under Head IV - Finance, titled Retarded Children's Trust, \$1 million. This was eleven years ago. This amount was included in the estimates following government's decision to set aside this amount for the children of the province in the proceeds of the sale of the Newfoundland Savings Bank. No instructions were laid down either by the government or the legislature as to how the funds were to be set aside or spent. The Comptroller and Deputy Minister established a bank account on April 3, 1962 titled, "Department of Finance, Children's Trust Account." No

trustees were ever appointed to administer the fund.

About this time government, that is the last administration, decided to proceed with the Children's Hospital at Fort Pepperrell. A memorandum from the Newfoundland Association for the Help Of Retarded Children, following a meeting by the then Premier Smallwood and a delegation of this association, states that it is quite clear that the Children's Fund will be used in connection with the Children's Hospital planned at Fort Pepperrell.

Because the hospital reconstruction cost \$4,450,000, by minute-of-council 376 of 1965, it was paid for by lease-back and out of appropriated departmental funds, the \$1 million remained on deposit in the trust fund. Starting in 1964 various amounts were loaned by the then government to certain departments that were short of funds for particular projects for which special bank accounts had previously been established. These amounts were loaned on the authority of the cabinet or treasury board and were to be repaid within a period of six months. However, repayments were not made by the departments until 1971-1972. So that what happened was that this Children's Trust Fund was used, without anything appearing in the estimates, to make loans to various departments, as of 1964. These departments did not make any repayments until 1971-1972.

In his 1970-1971 report the Auditor General objected to the following: (1) The funds of the children's trust had been improperly used. (This is the Auditor General's opinion.) (2) The expenditures of the borrowers had never been authorized by the House of Assembly, that is, the departments who were loaned the funds. (3) The public accounts have never properly accounted for the expenditures. (4) The public accounts failed to disclose the real cost of certain programmes where costs had been paid for by funds obtained from the trust but not accounted for in the departmental expenditure accounts. That was the Auditor General's comment in his report of 1970-1971, for the previous year. So this was his opinion, that these were

being improperly used and so on.

As a result of the Auditor General's comments, the Comptroller and Deputy Minister wrote the departments concerned, these were the Department of Fisheries, the Department of Mines, Agriculture and Resources. There was a suggestion that additional funds in the 1972-1973 estimates be provided to repay the amounts owing the children's trust fund. Subsequently it became apparent that funds would be available in 1971-1972 through countervailing savings in an amount sufficient to repay the loans. Treasury Board authority was sought and obtained to enable this. From funds available in 1971-1972 these loans that went back to 1964 were repaid by the departments.

The required expenditures to repay the loans were charged to the respective subheads, because the original loans were made for the purposes for which these subheads were set up, namely; fishing gear bounty, hog breeding and a provincial abattoir, that is what the funds were used for.

The Auditor General's present position is that special warrants should have been obtained to enable the loan repayments to be made, since the legislature did not make specific appropriations for these repayments. It is Comptroller's position that special warrants were not necessary because the expenditures were definitely applicable to the subheads to which they were charged. The legislature did not specifically approve any of the individual payments made out of the respective subheads.

Upon repayment of the loan referred to above, the balance of the children's trust account stood at the original \$1 million. It was then decided that the account should be closed and the balance transferred to the exchequer account and this was done October 12, 1972. The Auditor General has raised another objection in the closing out of the account without legislative authority.

It is our position that since the legislature issued no instruction with regard to the original appropriation, and the account was set up by the Comptroller, it could likewise be closed

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by the Comptroller.

So the \$1 million set up in 1962, without any trustees, has been closed out and the \$1 million paid back to the exchequer. In the meantime, of course, the children's hospital

constructed at Fort Pepperrell amounted to well in excess of \$1 million which was spent by the government in connection with the hospital. So, that is what has happened to it. There is a copy here if the honourable member should want it.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, if the minister has copies, I shall read them and try to follow the tangled tale. I gather that there is still a difference of opinion between the controller on one hand and the auditor general on the other on two points. Number one, whether these matters ever had to be authorized or the expenditures for these hog breeding and fisheries assistants had to be authorized. Secondly, as to whether or not the account could be closed by the controller or whether it required the necessary authorization. Is the minister taking further steps to resolve - one dispute would be at best historical. There is no question of misappropriation here, I take it. The money was spent for legitimate, public purposes. Are steps being taken to resolve the other matter, the difference as to the closing of the account?

MR. CROSBIE: Well, that is a difference of opinion. Our position is that since the account was opened by the controller, he can close the account. The auditor general says that it should only be closed if the House of Assembly issued an instruction in that connection. We do not agree with his opinion. So, he has commented on it. Anyway, that is the story of the childrens' trust fund. There are some copies here. The whole procedure is most unusual.

On question number 219, on the Order Paper of April 4, as of a current date this asks about the Civil Service Commission. The answers are, as of a current date the following persons are members of the Civil Service Commission, Eric S. Jones, Chairman, appointed July 29, 1971. Ronald J. Fewer, Vice-Chairman, appointed November 1, 1966. John W. Robertson, member, appointed July 1, 1968. The Civil Service Commission is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council in accordance with the Civil Service Commission Act, 1953.

Each member holds office during good behavior until he attains the age of sixty-five years but is removal by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council on address of the House of Assembly. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and member of the commission are not paid per diem allowances. Travel expenses are paid in accordance with treasury board travel and relocation regulations. The annual salaries of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and the member are; Mr. Jones, Chairman, \$17,680. Mr. Fewer, Vice-Chairman, \$15,600. Mr. Robertson, the member, \$13,000. These are the only members of the commission.

The answer to (6) (a) was nil. That is per diem allowance.

The next question is what is the total value of amounts paid them for travel, meal and accomodation expenses during the last year? The Chairman, \$607.27. The Vice-Chairman, \$1,404.27. The member, \$2,445.

Part (7) of the question asks what is the total amount paid in salaries and wages for part-time and full-time staff and the number employed with the commission. For the fiscal year 1972-1973, a total of \$23,901.40 is paid in salaries for part-time and full-time staff of the commission. During the year the commission had a permanent full-time staff of four and one temporary employee for four months.

Section (8) asks how many meetings did they have during the year. The answer is, the Civil Service Commission does not hold meetings as such. Applicants for positions in the Civil Service are interviewed by the commission. During the fiscal year 1972-1973, 1,978 persons were interviewed for 600 positions. As to their hours, they observe regular Civil Service office hours.

Question (10) or part (10) asks as to what vote are the costs charged. In the fiscal year 1972-1973, the cost of the amounts referred to in paragraphs two through seven were charged to head 4, subheads 4-03-01 and 4-03-02, Department of Finance. That is the end of the question.

I have copies here if somebody should want them.

HON. T.A. HICKMAN: (MINISTER OF JUSTICE): Mr. Speaker, I have a very short answer to question 279, asked by the honourable the member for White Bay South. The answer is identical with the answer to question 276 on yesterday's Order Paper, which is in connection with a report that was submitted to me by an Opportunity for Youth group. That has been given to the joint federal-provincial corrections committee.

HON. I.V. HICKEY: (MINISTER OF PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT): Question number 240 is asked by the member for Twillingate, Order Paper of Wednesday, April 11, 1973. I would also like to point out, Sir, that further questions with regards to the Emergency Measures Organization should be directed to the honourable Minister of Justice.

The answer to question 282, as asked by the honourable member for Bonavista North, on the Order Paper of Wednesday, April 18, 1973.

MR. SPEAKER: Gentlemen before going further, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome to the galleries five young ladies from the 50th St. John's Company of the Girl Guides, accompanied by their leader, Mrs. Zinck. I understand that the girls had to attend a sitting of the House of Assembly as part of their merit badges. It is quite possible that they would have attended of their own volition anyway. I trust that your stay here will be interesting and informative and you will return on many other occasions.

Are there any oral questions that the honourable members wish to ask, today being Private Members Day?

Motion (9) on the Order Paper:

MR. NEARY: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I was rather surprised at the remarks made by the member for St. John's East, the Minister without Portfolio, in the House a few moments ago. I want to assure honourable members that his remarks were unsolicited. I presume they were spontaneous, Sir, and I assume they were from the

heart. Sir, it just goes to show that when the government make a sane, reasonable, sensible request of the opposition that we have no hesitation at all in co-operating with the government. That is why today we are back debating a resolution put on the Order Paper by my colleague, the member for White Bay South, dealing with highway safety.

MR. SPEAKER: If the honourable member will permit. We are today debating the amendment to that motion as proposed by the honourable the Minister of Finance. It is a technical point perhaps but the honourable member is well aware that the records should also show that.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I was about to lead into that. The debate started with a resolution placed on the Order Paper by my colleague, the member for White Bay South, on highway safety. Incidentally, Sir, I invite honourable members to watch "Issues and Answers" tonight on CJON. If you think, Mr. Speaker, that what the honourable Minister without Portfolio has said in this House this afternoon was surprising, then you should see what I said today on "Issues and Answers" about the honourable Minister of Finance. He will never believe it. The praise that I heaped on the honourable minister, Sir, is fantastic. He will never, never believe it. I invite the minister to sit by his television tonight and make sure that he is tuned to CJON t.v. at ten o'clock I think it is when "Issues and Answers" comes on. He will be pleasantly surprised. Now, last week I was talking-

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: No, Mr. Speaker, I have not mellowed. I have a great deal of respect for the way that the Minister of Finance can debate in this House. He is one of the few members on the opposite side that one can debate with and enjoy it, because the minister understands what the House is all about, Sir, one can enjoy debate. Last week when the minister moved an amendment, this resolution, Sir, he was in full flight. We saw how the minister can baffle you if you do not watch him in debate. Now he can be very low and sneaky and

he can twist and turn and use figures to his advantage, Sir. He does his homework, as was proven last week when he moved the amendment. When the minister has an opportunity to sit down after careful research by his executive assistants and the officials in the Motor Registration Branch of the Department of Transportation and Communications and feed the figures to the minister, feed them into his computer, Sir, he is then at his best in this House when he is debating in that way, Sir. When we on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, catch the honourable minister off guard or we toss some figures back at him and he does not have time to sit down and study them and he has to get up and make off the cuff statements, then I would say that that is probably his weak point.

Last week, Sir, he came into this House with a set of figures that would baffle any man. I was sitting and there were figures flying right, left and center. You did not know what minute you were going to get statistics right between the eyes. Now, in that kind of debate, Sir, and the kind of a debate that we are carrying on now, I think the minister should have shown that he had a little bit of the milk of human kindness in his heart. Instead of coming in and moving an amendment to this resolution and trying to influence his colleagues on the other side to vote against the resolution by moving this amendment and using statistics in the debate to try to influence his colleagues - I think, Sir, that this was poor judgement on the part of the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, we have this usual noise, Sir. I am sorry but I cannot think straight when there is noise going on out in the corridor.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member is quite correct. The Chair recognizes the problem. It has a little jurisdiction over members who do not happen to be within the House. There is a certain amount of difficulty when a speaker is attempting to make a point and honourable members are not listening and in fact are engaging in their own conversations be it within the House or within earshot of the House.

I ask anyone who is within earshot of the Chair to take these protests to heart and to conduct conversations in muffled tones, as the Standing Orders permit.

MR. NEARY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The point that I was trying to make was this is not the kind of debate when you bandy around statistics. This, Sir, is an emotional issue. For once the Minister of Finance should have shown that he had the milk of human kindness in his heart, that he did not have ice water in his veins and that he did sympathize with this cause put forward by the opposition and the Newfoundland Safety Council. Mr. Speaker, what were some of the statistics that the Minister of Finance fired at us last week? Well, this is a report from the "Evening Telegram" the following day, Tuesday, April 12.

"Mr. Crosbie produced statistics concerning highway accidents, personal injuries and deaths in the province for 1970 and 1971 and compared them with the corresponding figures for Canada as a whole. He showed that in 1970 Newfoundland with two point four per cent of the population of Canada had one point five per cent of the total number of highway accidents in the nation. One point four per cent of the personal injuries and one point four per cent of the total fatalities. Mr. Crosbie said that these figures showed that highway safety in Newfoundland is actually better than it is in the rest of Canada." Now, this is where I hope to prove that the Minister of Finance was incorrect, Sir. I will get to that in a few minutes. I do not intend to belabour the point, Mr. Speaker, I am really not in the mood for debating today. I am not as sharp as I usually am. These late night sittings are really getting to me. Sir, this is a very important matter and I will try to rise to the occasion. I may get steamed up as I go on. As I say, this is an emotional issue.

He said complete statistics for the year of 1972 are not yet available. The minister said that while 108 traffic fatalities in Newfoundland in 1972 was 108 too many, it was necessary to take a look at possible reasons for the number of fatalities. For one

thing, he said there were more paved roads in the province in 1972, a total of 1,684.2 miles at the beginning of 1972. I would say that pavement is there thanks to the previous Liberal Administration. Sir, how would the honourable minister (if he is listening to me) like to be down standing by the emergency department down at the General Hospital when some poor Newfoundlander is being brought into the emergency on a stretcher, battered and bruised and severely injured and the minister standing there with his statistics and saying to the gentleman that is being brought in or lady or whatever the case may be, "Well, you are statistic number 108. I think the reason for your accident, the reason that you are severely battered and bruised and had to be lugged off to hospital on a stretcher is the fact that we have more paved roads in Newfoundland now than we have had before." I am sure, Sir, that the poor, old person who is struggling to hang on for dear life will appreciate that.

"In addition," he said, "there were a total of 1,911 miles of paved road in the beginning of 1973, an increase of thirteen per cent". Well, can you not see a poor old widow, Mr. Speaker, with her poor little children there and the Minister of Finance coming up knocking on the door saying, "Pardon me, Mam! I am sorry for your trouble. I sympathize with you. Do you realize that we have 1,911.1 more miles of paved road this year than we had last year?" I am sure that poor widow and her little orphans will understand and appreciate that.

He added that members have not seen anything yet with regard to the provision of paved roads in the future. Well, I have no doubt about that, Sir. They have not done anything since they got in but probably in the election year which may be two or three years from now the voting machines will be out all over the province and you will see the pavement going down. Nothing new, nothing unusual in that, Sir, except that that crowd over there, that honourable crowd were not going to do that. They were going to change all of this. Well, we will see it. They are holding back now but it will all come

out in the election year.

The minister also quoted figures concerning the returns on the gasoline tax in the past three fiscal years. I do not know what bearing that had on it, Sir, but he showed an increase over that period of twenty-two point four per cent which he said means an increase in vehicles miles travelled to twenty to twenty-five per cent. Well, Sir, fine. Well and good. I cannot question that figure. The minister says this is so. I do not disbelieve the minister. His figures are probably correct but can you see some poor head of a household, Sir, crippled for life, going off in a wheelchair, unable to work any longer to provide a livelihood for his wife and family and the Minister of Finance coming up to him and saying, "Ah, I know what happened to you. Do you want me to explain to you? Here is what happened. You are the victim of that twenty-two point four per cent increase in gasoline tax which means an increase in the vehicle miles travelled." I am sure that poor old soul, crippled, for life in his wheelchair, will understand what the honourable minister is trying to tell him. "The tax," he says, "brought in a total of \$26,824,000 in 1973." All that proves, Mr. Speaker, is that the Gasoline tax is one of the biggest revenues that we have in this province, an increase of eleven point one per cent as I indicated a few moments ago. He said that this means that the number of accidents, personal injuries and deaths would also be increased. Well, so what. That is a statement of fact, Sir. What point was the minister trying to make? They are going to be increased and this is precisely why we brought the resolution into the House to find out why they are increasing.

"Therefore," he added, "the situation is not alarming." Well, I hope to show the honourable minister shortly that this is alarming. This headline that we see here in the "Evening Telegram", "Newfoundland's Highway Safety Record Best in Canada," is not so, Mr. Speaker. It is just not so. I will prove it to the Minister of Finance in a few minutes.

The minister also said that in 1972 there was a total of 148,798

motor vehicles registered, a seven per cent increase over the previous year which he says is another reason why accidents, injuries and deaths would be increased. Well, Sir, I would say that is a clear indication that the finance companies are really cleaning her in this province. I do not think it means a thing as far as safety on our highways is concerned. It is an interesting statistic. We are glad to have it but it will do nothing to comfort, Sir, people who have been involved in serious motor accidents, vehicle accidents in this province and the survivors of people who have been killed on our highways. All this proves, Sir, is that we are becoming an affluent society and that the banks and the finance companies are doing a thriving business. I cannot see the Minister of Finance sitting in the back of an ambulance, some poor fellow being brought in, the intravenous is hooked into him, they are giving him a blood transfusion, he is just about drawing his last breath, he is gasping and the minister says, "Now, my dear, poor, little fellow let me tell you this. I do not know if you are aware of it or not but you are the victim of an increase in the motor vehicles that are registered in this province." The poor, old fellow, as he draws his last breath, will be happy to know that the minister was sitting by his side providing him with all these interesting statistics. He will go off happy knowing that he left behind him an affluent society. That is all that proves, Mr. Speaker.

The minister explained that he feels the situation should be considered carefully and members should not vote hastily on it but perhaps take several more weeks yet to debate the matter. Well, Sir, if we did take several more weeks to debate this matter, I do not think we would be wasting the time of this House because this is a pretty serious issue. I was hoping, Mr. Speaker, when this resolution was brought into this honourable House that members on either side of this House would be free to vote on this matter according to the dictates of their conscience. It is not a partisan, political matter, Sir, by any stretch of the imagination. Members should be free to vote on this very important matter as they see fit. They should not be bound by party

rules and regulations. They should not have to tow the party line. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that if the Premier were to say to his members, "Members, you can vote on this issue however you see fit. Some of you may have strong feelings on this. Vote as you may but vote. Vote early and vote often" -I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that the member for Bonavista South down there is in favour of this resolution and the amendment. I am sure the member for Bonavista South would like to vote in favour of having an investigation, a thorough, independent study made of the safety highway accidents in this province.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Not a royal commission?

MR. NEARY: Not a royal commission. Well, what would the honourable minister like to see? He did not tell us in his debate. Maybe when I take my seat, Sir, after I am finished speaking on this amendment, maybe the member for Bonavista South can be encouraged to participate in the debate and tell us how he feels about it. I do not know about the member for Harbour Grace or whether he would like to see an investigation in the highway safety or not. It may have an effect on his business. The business is dead enough, Sir. It is a very grave situation. I would certainly like to hear what the honourable member from Harbour Grace has to say about this whole matter because there are a lot of accidents on the Conception Bay Highway and on the Trans Canada Highway. The member travels over these two highways every day of his life. I do not know whether he realizes that his life is in jeopardy or not, Sir. I would like to hear what that member has to say. I would like to know how the member for St. Mary's feels about this. He has to travel over one of the most dangerous roads in this province to get to his community, Sir, the Cape Shore Road. There have been a few accidents down there. How does the minister feel about this? How does the member for Gander feel? I remember, Mr. Speaker, when the member for Gander was on this side of the House, not so long ago, Sir. He may be back here again. The minister may be back here again. That minister kept pushing the government to do something about the accidents on our

highways. Does the honourable member not remember? I would like to find out now if the honourable minister has changed his mind. There are a lot of accidents on the highway between St. John's and Gander and vice versa, from Gander to St. John's, on the Trans Canada Highway, down around the National Park, a few accidents down there. How does the minister feel about it? Perhaps, if he should take part in this debate, Sir, he will tell us. The point that I am trying to make, Sir, is that this is no time in my opinion for the Minister of Finance to come cutting into this House with all kinds of statistics that would baffle even Einstein. What we need, Sir, is a little common sense on this matter. We were very disappointed to say the least, Sir, to hear the minister, who I presume was speaking for the government, state that the members of the government side would not be voting in favour of the resolution. Then the minister moved an amendment to the resolution which I doubt very much was in order but Your Honour accepted it so I had no choice but to say that the amendment is in order. I think the amendment destroyed the purpose of the original resolution. Be that as it may, Sir, I do not think the minister should have thrown all of these statistics at us and at members of his own side of the House. All it did was confuse the issue. We were grossly disappointed, listening to the minister asking his colleagues and the members on the government side to vote against the resolution.

We already know, Mr. Speaker, what the Department of Transportation and Communications are doing in the way of highway safety. Do we want the department to carry on, Sir, in the old haphazard way that they have been carrying on in the past? Officials, civil servants have a tendency, Mr. Speaker, to get in a rut sometimes. Maybe they need some new thinking brought into the department. I think so far there has only been a piecemeal approach to this problem of highway safety. I think that the government would have been very well advised indeed if they had gone along with our recommendation. So, therefore we were very disappointed to find that - now it is a foregone conclusion,

Mr. Speaker - the government are going to vote against the resolution and probably in favour of the minister's amendment.

Sir, I do not know if it is a fair statement or not for me to say that obviously the government are in fear of an investigation into the highway safety accidents in this province. They are afraid, Mr. Speaker, they are in deadly fear that they may be embarrassed by the recommendations of an independent enquiry or an independent study of the safety conditions on our highways in this province. The minister's statistics, Sir, can be disapproved if on no other grounds than on the information that has been given us by the Newfoundland Safety Council that the main reason - there are two main reasons for accidents in this province, Mr. Speaker. We are told that alcoholic liquor

is associated with fifty per cent of the accidents on our highways. Another thirty to thirty-five per cent, Sir, are caused by human error. Mr. Speaker, eighty-five per cent of the accidents on our roads and highways in this province are caused either by liquor or by human error and not for the reasons that the Minister of Finance gave us in all the statistics that he brought in here last week. The minister gave us a great lecture, Mr. Speaker, on the cost of royal commissions and mind you, he might find an ally here in his criticism of the cost of some of these royal commissions. I think the royal commissions are nothing but a bonanza for lawyers. They found another milch cow. That is why royal commissions are dragged out, Sir. I know I am the subject of a royal commission at the present time. It has been going on now for almost a year and God only knows when it is going to end! But, Sir, I agree with the minister but the minister also stated that a lot of these royal commissions were necessary and they did a good job, some did not do so good a job, some were fairly expensive. Sir, if they were, nine chances out of ten most of the money was spent in legal fees. They are a real bonanza for the lawyers.

In this case, Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland Safety Council suggested a time limit. This has been the great weakness in the appointment of royal commissions in the past, there was no time limit put on them. The Newfoundland Safety Council recommended that if a royal commission were established that it be given three months to report and make recommendations to the government. The minister missed that very important point. That was very important, Sir.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I said a few moments ago that I would shoot down, explode a lot of the arguments that were put forward by the Minister of Finance last week when he brought in all these statistics.

MR. SPEAKER: If the honourable member would yield before he closes the hon. Minister of Finance's statistics?

We have in the galleries two visiting groups of students; the first being from Henry Gordon Academy, Cartwright, ten Grade XI students, accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Manuel Hardy; and also a group of thirty-nine, Grade IX students from Queen Elizabeth High School in Foxtrap, accompanied by their teachers, George Evans and Owen Nichols. I trust that your visit to the House of Assembly this afternoon will be interesting and informative. On behalf of all members of the House of Assembly, I welcome you to this afternoon's proceedings.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that these young students are here this afternoon because I think that highway safety should start in the schools and I also think that driver education should start in our schools, it should be a part of the curriculum of the schools.

Mr. Speaker, all the statistics and all the arguments that the minister put forward last week all led to one thing, that the mileage that was being clocked on our highways, the mileage that was being piled up by all these increases in motor vehicles, by putting down more pavement, by selling more gasoline, all lead to one thing, people are now driving more than they did in the past. The minister used a set of statistics to show that the deaths per 100,000 population in Newfoundland were the lowest in Canada. He was quite right, Sir. But following the minister's own line of reasoning, if we follow through on his logic, these were not the statistics, Mr. Speaker, that he should have used. The minister kept telling us that people are driving more, they have more pavement, more cars, better cars, more money to buy gasoline and oil to drive these cars. The figures he should have been using was the number of miles that people were driving vehicles in this province each year.

Now I would like to give the minister the statistics that he should have used last week, that will show beyond any doubt, Mr. Speaker, much to my dismay and I hoped that I will not be considered unpatriotic.

for saying this, that Newfoundland's highway safety record is not the best in Canada. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it is seven down the list, believe it or not. It is seventh out of ten provinces. The figures that I am going to give the House now, Sir, I obtained from Statistics Canada yesterday morning. These are the latest figures Mr. Speaker. I want to point out to the House that these are the latest figures available. There are no updated figures and these figures are for the year 1970. But, Sir, I would also like to point out to the House that if you accept the figures of the Newfoundland Safety Council that were released on Monday, which show a sixty per cent increase in fatal accidents on our highways in 1972, if you update these figures, Sir, it makes the Newfoundland picture much worse than the figures I am going to quote for 1970. It probably makes us, Sir, high-liner in the whole of Canada for accidents and fatalities on our highways. These figures, Mr. Speaker, are based on one hundred million vehicle miles driven. Let me repeat that, Sir. I want honourable members to be perfectly clear on the figures that I am about to give out. These are for fatal accidents per one hundred million vehicle miles driven. That is precisely the point that the Minister of Finance is making. These figures, so I am told by Statistics Canada, are arrived at by using estimated consumption of petroleum fuel and based on an estimated mileage per gallon of thirteen point seven two miles per gallon. These are the only figures which are available in Canada, Sir.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me inform honourable members what that means in the way of statistics. Well, Sir, the national average, taking into account the number of miles driven, the national average for Canada is five point four fatalities. The Yukon, Northwest Territories are next in line with three point eight. Manitoba is four point zero.

Ontario is four point three. Saskatchewan is four point seven. Alberta is four point seven. Newfoundland is five point five. This is the number of fatalities in relation to the number of miles driven by vehicles.

MR. MORGAN: Bull!

MR. NEARY: Sir, the hon. member for Bonavista South says bull. Does he want to argue with Statistics Canada?

MR. MORGAN: It is for 1970, is it?

MR. NEARY: Yes it is 1970. These figures were given me yesterday by Mr. Wes Hutchings of Statistics Canada.

MR. MORGAN: In 1970, how many accidents?

MR. NEARY: I do not know. I got it here somewhere.

MR. MORGAN: You are talking about fatalities and -

MR. NEARY: Well I do not know what they were. They are here somewhere.

MR. MORGAN: (Inaudible).

MR. NEARY: These statistics were not important? Alberta is four point seven. Newfoundland is five point five, only to be exceeded, Sir, by British Columbia, five point nine; Quebec, seven point three; Nova Scotia, six point eight; Prince Edward Island, seven point five and New Brunswick, the highest of all, eight point six. In relation to the number of miles driven, Sir, Newfoundland is number seven on the list and we are point one percentage point higher than the national average. The national average is five point four. Newfoundland's average is five point five. So all the arguments that the minister used, Mr. Speaker, pointed towards the number of miles driven by vehicles in this province.

Mr. Speaker, that explodes the honourable minister's statistics. You do not gauge your record, Sir, by the number of deaths per one thousand people. You look at your record, Sir, based on the number of vehicle

miles driven. Statistics Canada tell us that the formula that is used is based on one hundred million vehicle miles driven. These figures are arrived at by using estimated consumption of petroleum fuel and based on an estimated mileage per gallon of thirteen point seven two.

Now if you updated these figures, Mr. Speaker, what a shock we would get because we are told by the Newfoundland Safety Council, in a release on Monday, that the number of fatalities on our highways increased in 1972 by sixty per cent.

If I may now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote a few paragraphs from a transcript that I received from the Newfoundland Safety Council, a press release they made on Monday past. I might say Sir, that I asked the Safety Council if they would give me a copy of this release. There are some very interesting statistics in this release, Sir, if the hon. member for Bonavista South would just be a little bit patient. I do not mind giving the statistics, Sir. These are authentic, verified by the Newfoundland Safety Council.

First of all the Safety Council say: "For the past four Wednesdays, Private Members' Day, this request for a royal commission has been debated in the House. The Newfoundland Safety Council has been following the debate very closely and we were extremely disappointed to learn that the proposal for a royal commission has been rejected by the government."

The Newfoundland Safety Council, Sir, obviously have taken a defeatist attitude. They think it is a foregone conclusion that the government are going to vote against the resolution. No doubt, Sir, they will because the Minister of Finance moved an amendment to the resolution.

"Two main reasons," said the Newfoundland Safety Council, "for the rejection of the royal commission have been brought forward:

(1) The government have stated, as indicated by Finance Minister, John Crosbie in the House of Assembly last Wednesday, that the accident picture in Newfoundland is not as alarming, not as frightening, not as terrible as it has been made out to be. Mr. Crosbie went so far as to state that Newfoundland has the best traffic safety record in Canada and that there was no dramatic accident increase in our province and hence he felt that a royal commission would be useless. Mr. Crosbie based his remarks on figures which compared Newfoundland's accident and injury rate with the rest of Canada." Then it goes on and gives an example.

"Mr. Crosbie deducted from these figures that we are having less accidents, not only for our population but that we have a better accident record than other provinces." I am quoting, Mr. Speaker, and I want the hon. member for Bonavista South to listen to this. The Newfoundland Safety Council says, "This is not a reality. This type of reasoning and deduction is totally incorrect, totally misleading and totally false." They say, "You simply cannot compare Newfoundland's accident rate, injury rate or fatality rate with the rest of Canada, using population figures no more than you can justify comparing sheep with goats." I agree with them. I just gave the correct figures. They ask, "Why?" They say, "Because in order to get a true picture of how Newfoundland compares to the rest of Canada, you have to: (1) Take into consideration the difference in the number of motor vehicles in Newfoundland as compared to the rest of Canada; (2) You have to consider the difference in the number of licenced drivers in Newfoundland as compared to the rest of Canada; (3) You have to consider the difference in the miles driven in Newfoundland as compared to other provinces;" (These are the figures I just gave. The latest figures, 1970 figures, were given to me by Statistics Canada)" (4) You have to take into consideration the difference in the types of roads we have in Newfoundland as compared to the rest of Canada." The

minister did not tell us anything about that. A lot of our people are still forced to drive over dirt roads, substandard roads. All the minister told us about was the amount of pavement, the number of miles of pavement we had in this province. We already knew that anyway, Mr. Speaker, because it was Liberal pavement.

Then they go on to say: "In addition to these, there are many other factors which have to be considered before anyone could even attempt to determine how Newfoundland fairs in relation to other provinces of Canada as a whole." Now they give out a few figures here. They say, "In 1971 traffic accidents in Newfoundland increased by sixty per cent." The Newfoundland Safety Council tell us that. Does the hon. member for Bonavista South dispute these figures? These figures, Sir, are authentic. I would like to hear the honourable member's source of information. These are actual figures, Sir. These are facts. "Traffic accidents in Newfoundland in 1972 were 11,664. In 1971 there were 7,302." These figures were given out by the Minister of Finance, verified by the Newfoundland Safety Council. Does the hon. member for Bonavista South have his own figures? Well it says here, Sir, "Traffic accidents in Newfoundland in 1972 were 11,664."

MR. MORGAN: What is their source?

MR. NEARY: I do not know what their source is, Mr. Speaker. Maybe it is the Provincial Department of Highways, I do not know. "In 1971, there were 7,302 an increase of sixty per cent." The Newfoundland Safety Council, Sir, are a group of mature, common-sense people. They did not just pluck these figures out of the air. They did not make them up. Listen to this. Here, Mr. Speaker, you can see the fatality rate in the past three years, people killed in Newfoundland. "In 1970, there were sixty-nine. In 1971, there were eighty-seven. In 1972, there

were one hundred and eight." The Minister of Finance gave us these figures last week and yet he says the figures are not available for 1972. There were one hundred and eight fatalities in 1972. It is up sixty per cent. Not included in these figures, Mr. Speaker, are the many variables involved as already mentioned such as the poor driver-education programmes, poor roads that our people have to drive over and so on.

Now here is the Newfoundland Safety Council's answer to the minister's statement that his colleague, the Minister of Transportation and Communications, has this situation well in hand. The Newfoundland Safety Council say to this statement: "We must take strong exception. Quite frankly it is the feeling of the Newfoundland Safety Council that the activity of the Department of Highways is misdirected, that one hundred per cent of their effort is being placed into only ten per cent of the problem, i.e., the Department of Highways has attempted to justify their position in traffic safety by citing the improvements which have made in new road construction, motor vehicle inspection, etc." They say, "Granted these things are necessary but we must realize that ninety per cent of traffic accidents are caused not only by the roads or conditions of motor vehicles but by driver error," Sir, the mistake of the individual behind the wheel. They say, "It is an alarming problem, when you consider that you can stand near any highway, street, road or intersection and observe with incredible regularity the number of motorists who roll on through stop signs, make improper turns, do not use their turn signals or use them properly, go speeding along the highways and roadways and travel the Trans Canada Highway without any regard for their own safety or others on the highway." They say, "Even more discouraging" (We have dealt with this at some length and I have no intention of going into it in detail now) "is the fact that very little is being done in the area of driver education, stricter licencing, relicencing, point system, stricter controls on

impaired driving, etc." Yet we are told by the Minister of Finance that his colleague has the situation well in hand. The Safety Council says, "What is frightening about our traffic problem in Newfoundland is that in the past ten years we have had 60,000 traffic accidents in this province; 25,000 injured and 800 killed." What is frightening as well, Sir, that approximately two out of every three drivers in this province have been involved in traffic accidents in the past ten years. That is frightening, Sir. Something needs to be done about it. That is why the opposition in this House of Assembly brought this matter before the House and before the people of this province. They say, "It is frightening when you consider that practically everyone who hears these statistics and figures and who hears this sad story can recall (I have no doubt but honourable members of this honourable House can) names of a number of people who have been killed in traffic accidents, possibly a member of their own family, one of their co-workers or one of their friends." These are the facts, Mr. Speaker, of the traffic accidents in this province. These are the facts, Sir. I am amazed, surprised and disappointed that the government have seen fit to bring in an amendment to the resolution; destroying the purpose of the resolution, to try and get something done about the slaughter on our roads and highways.

I will go right back to where I started, Sir, in the beginning. I am not going to go over it again but if I were in the mood today, I could talk on this subject for another few hours. We are told, Sir, that fifty per cent of the accidents have liquor involved. Another thirty per cent are either caused by human error or a nonsafe condition on the highway. These are facts, Sir, and yet we are told by the Minister of Finance that his colleague has the situation well in hand,

there is no need to do anything unusual about it. He tells us that the resolution was calculated to strike alarm. He tells us we have a new Department of Transportation and Communications now so that is going to take care of the whole situation. Well, Sir, I do not think anybody really believes that. The name may change but the faces are the same, Sir. So I say to the Minister of Finance, while he may be a good debater, he may have done his homework and his statistics may be correct, that this is not the time, Sir, to try to defeat a sincere, conscientious effort on the part of the opposition, nonpolitical, nonpartisan, Sir, in trying to do something about the number of people that are killed on our highways. I think if the minister do have any weaknesses that this is where it is. He has no feeling for people. He is like a human computer, Sir. The statistics just run out of his ears. The minister can spew out statistics all over the House but it does not get away from the fact, Mr. Speaker, that practically every day in this province somebody is either injured, battered, bruised or killed on our highways. The minister can use all the arguments he likes and give us all the lectures he wants about the cost of royal commissions. If we did spend a few paltry dollars, Sir, on a royal commission to investigate, it may save a lot of heartaches and hardship on families in this province, Sir.

Only the other night, Mr. Speaker, I had occasion to go down to St. Phillips to attend the wake of a young girl, thirteen years old, who was killed on the Thorburn Road. I only wish that the Minister had been with me to see the sorrow and the tears of hardship and heartbreak caused that family. The minister would not come in here and reel off his statistics there. I say, for God's sake, to the Minister of Finance, as

good as he is at debating in this House (I hope he does not get carried away with the kind remarks I made about him today on "Issues and Answers") as good as he is, as smart as he is, as intelligent as he is and as bright as he is, for Heaven's sake get a little bit of milk of human kindness in your heart! That is what keeps the honourable minister from leading a political party in this province, Sir. That is what keeps him from it. He is too cold-blooded and calculated, Sir. I hope in my few remarks today - I think the Minister of Finance was making notes there. I have no doubt that he is going to leap into this debate, Sir, because the minister has the right to close the debate because he moved the amendment.

Sir, I have news for the hon. Minister of Finance. This is such an important matter, Sir, this matter of highway safety in this province, that I am going to move an amendment to the minister's amendment. Mr. Speaker, I would like to amend the amendment, to add the following words after the words, "all aspects of highway safety," "and this House further directs that the Minister of Transportation and Communications appoint an advisory board, including a representative of the Newfoundland Safety Council and other independent and qualified persons and said board to invite representations from the general public and interested parties so that the board may submit to the minister advice as to which measures are feasible to improve safety on the highways of the province and should, therefore, be adopted by the department."

Mr. Speaker, I move that amendment so that the amended amendment will now read, Sir: "That this House direct the Department of Transportation and Communications to continue to inquire into and investigate all aspects of highway safety and this House further directs the Minister of Transportation and Communications, etc." I am not going to read the amended amendment again, Sir. I have a copy for Your Honour.

AN HON. MEMBER (Inaudible).

MR. NEARY: I have a right to speak to the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

I am not going to speak at any length on the amendment. I might say that this -

MR. SPEAKER: There is a limit to the number of amendments and amendments to amendments that can be entertained by the Chair. I believe this is the limit. I see nothing out of order with the amendment to the amendment. The honourable member may speak to it.

MR. CROSBIE: I would like to make a submission on the amendment to the amendment, to the effect that the amendment to the amendment is not a proper amendment to the amendment. I refer to Beauchesne. We are all learning this process, Mr. Speaker. Beauchesne, page 169: "As the proposal of an amendment to an amendment originates a fresh subject for consideration, the new question thus created must, to prevent confusion, be disposed of by itself. An amendment when undergoing alterations is therefore treated throughout as if it were a substantive motion upon which an amendment has been moved. The original motion accordingly is laid aside." We have to lay aside the original motion, which is a good place for it. It should be laid aside. "The amendment becomes for the time a separate question to be dealt with until its terms are settled. Since the purpose of a subamendment is to alter the amendment, it should not enlarge upon the scope of the amendment but it should deal with matters that are not covered by the amendment. If it is intended to bring up matters foreign to the amendment, the member should wait until the amendment is disposed of and move a new amendment."

I submit, Mr. Speaker, based upon this very learned Beauchesne here, that the purpose of this subamendment is to enlarge upon the scope of the amendment, which it should not do, and to deal with matters not covered by the amendment and that, therefore, we should continue to deal with the amendment and not permit the amendment to the amendment, until the amendment has been voted on. Then the amendment being voted on, we can have another amendment, because the amendment to the amendment enlarges upon the scope of the amendment.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, an amendment cannot be ruled out because of its vagueness nor can it be ruled out because of the honourable member's vagueness who introduces it. I cannot submit that. On page 170 of Beauchesne, there is a paragraph which says: "An amendment approving part of a motion and disapproving the remainder is out of order."

Now I submit, Mr. Speaker, that this subamendment approves part of the amendment and disapproves the remainder and that, therefore, it is out of order for those reasons. This amendment to the amendment approves us doing away with the royal commission concept and approves a Department of Transportation and Communications continuing to do the very fine job they are doing on it but suggests that there be some kind of an advisory board. It approves part of the amendment and disapproves the remainder of the amendment. I, therefore, submit again that the amendment to the amendment is not amenable.

Page 171, Section 203, I think Your Honour should consider this point: "It is an imperative rule that every amendment must be relevant to the question on which the amendment is proposed. Every amendment proposed to be made either to a question or to a proposed amendment should be so framed that if agreed to by the House the question or amendment as amended will be intelligible and consistent with itself. The law on the relevancy of amendments is that if they are on the same subject matter with the original motion, they are admissible but not when foreign thereto. The exceptions of this rule are amendments on the question of going into Supply or Ways and Means."

Now having cleared all these points up for Your Honour, I would leave this submission before him.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, if I may speak to the point of order of amendments to amendments, I may attempt to amend the amendment to the amendment which the hon. gentleman from St. John's West has just made.

I submit, Your Honour, that if Your Honour should wish to refer to Beauchesne or further to Paul Grave, Paul Grave being the authority cited by Mr. Beauchesne in support of his contention, or if Your Honour should wish to refer to Sir Erskine May, the more standard work, one would find that the amendment to the amendment proposed by the honourable gentleman from Bell Island is quite in order. I submit that the various

citations read by the gentleman from St. John's West, when he spoke on the question of whether or not the amendment to the amendment was in order, proved this submission. The relevant clauses on amendments also apply to amendments to amendments. An amendment to an amendment, Your Honour, must be governed by the same rules as an amendment itself. The honourable gentleman has made certain reference. Let me refresh Your Honour's mind with some others. Page 168 of Bell's book, it deals with the main point of an amendment. It is citation (202) that Your Honour can read along with us. "The object of an amendment may be to affect such an alteration in a question as will obtain the support of those who without such an alteration must either vote against it or abstain from voting thereon or to present to the House an alternative proposition either wholly or partially opposed to the original question." It goes on as to how that may be achieved.

It says in the next paragraph: "A motion may be amended by leaving out certain words in order to insert other words, by inserting or adding other words." This pretty well covers the situation on amendments.

My colleague's motion, the amendment to the amendment, falls within the second category there, by leaving out certain words in order to insert other words. Then we go on. The honourable gentleman read citation (202) about the fact that an amendment must be disposed of by itself and so must an amendment to an amendment. That is in order but that has nothing to do with whether the amendment is in order or not. That merely says, what happens if Your Honour should accept the amendment to the amendment and agree with the question that the honourable minister proposes to amend, which may be further amended by the hon. gentleman from Bell Island.

Part three of that citation (202) which the minister read says: "Since the purpose of a subamendment is to alter the amendment, it should

not enlarge upon the scope of the amendment but it should deal with matters that are not covered by the amendment." I find it very hard to see how one can deal with matters not covered by the amendment without enlarging upon the scope of the amendment. But apparently one can move an amendment to the amendment that does not enlarge upon the scope of the amendment but does deal with matters that are not covered by the amendment. It must be. The rule of statutory construction with which Your Honour I know is intimately acquainted - the words must have a meaning. There cannot be words, in Parliamentary Law, that do not have some meaning. I suggest that my colleague's amendment to the amendment as proposed does not enlarge upon the scope of the amendment but does in fact deal with matters that are not covered by the amendment.

I submit further that it is not intended to bring up matters foreign to the amendment in which case the member would have to wait until the amendment is disposed of and move a new amendment, instead of moving an amendment to the amendment as he has done. What he has done, Sir, is move that we deal with matters that are not covered by the amendment, not that we enlarge the scope. We are talking of the same scope. The amendment moved by the Minister of Finance would refer the entire question back to the Department of Transportation and Communications. We do not propose to enlarge upon that scope. We are not suggesting that it be referred as well to the Department of Tourism or to the Department of Health or to the Department of Rehabilitation and Recreation. That, Sir, I submit would be to enlarge the scope. We instead are dealing with matters that are not covered by the amendment; namely that there should be an advisory board, an advisory board to the minister, appointed by the minister, to seek advice and to give advice to the minister. He went on and said that an amendment cannot be ruled out because of its vagueness. I may say that that is a most interesting parliamentary point.

The honourable gentleman read some other citations which further support, in my submission Your Honour, the fact that the amendment to the amendment as proposed by the hon. gentleman from Bell Island is in order. He said, i.e., "It is an imperative rule that every amendment must be relevant to the question on which the amendment is proposed." Sir what could be more relevant than the amendment to the amendment as proposed to be moved as an amendment to the amendment by the hon. gentleman from Bell Island.

Now Your Honour with these few short words in submission, I hope we have set the matter crystal clear. The hon. Minister of Finance and myself I submit have given a learned exposition of parliamentary law on this extremely important question of amendments to the amendment.

I submit, Sir, that the evidence is in order or that the amendment is in order and that my colleague has moved a valid amendment to the amendment and that he should be allowed, once Your Honour puts the question, to go on and to speak in support of the amendment to the amendment and to give his reasons for moving this amendment to the amendment. Indeed Your Honour has already accepted the amendment. As I understood it, Your Honour has allowed a little discussion on it.

MR. SPEAKER: With regard to this very weighty matter of parliamentary procedures, it is one of the matters which neophyte Speakers or Deputy Speakers have nightmares about that they are eventually going to be confronted with a procedural decision on amendments and amendments to amendments and amendments to the amendments to the amendments.

It is not a matter which has caused a great deal of study by myself up to this point so accordingly I have to recess for a short time in order to consult with my officials on this matter.

On motion the House recessed.

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

After studiously researching this point, my officials and I have reached the following decision. I will take the liberty of reading it from notes I have here.

The amendment to the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Bell Island appears to be in order, as it does not enlarge upon the scope of the amendment by referring the question of highway safety to another department or in referring the matter outside a department of government generally but rather deals with matters not covered by the amendment by giving more specific direction to the Department of Transportation and Communications as to the manner of improving highway safety. I refer members to Beauchesne, page 169, citation (202).

The amendment to the amendment as proposed by the hon. member for Bell Island reads as follows, to add the following words after, "all aspects of highway safety," which are the following words in the amendment to the motion as proposed by the hon. Minister of Finance, the following words: "and this House further directs that the Minister of Transportation and Communications appoint an advisory board, including a representative of the Newfoundland Safety Council and other independent and qualified persons, and said board to invite representations from the general public and interested parties so that the board may submit to the minister advice as to which measures are feasible to improve safety on the highways of the province and should therefore be adopted by the department."

The hon. member for Bell Island may proceed.

MR. NEARY: I thank Your Honour for your ruling. Sir, this amendment is in line with a recommendation made by the Newfoundland Safety Council on Monday of this week, Sir. I am not going to prolong the debate, Mr. Speaker. I feel that all that can be said in this honourable House about safety on our highways has been said. I would only be repetitious, Sir, if I went over all the ground again. I do want to point out that this recommendation of ours to have a safety advisory board set up is in line with a recommendation made by the Newfoundland Safety Council and I think that most honourable members of this House will agree with that recommendation.

This matter, Mr. Speaker, is above party politics. I realize, Sir, that it is too late to do anything about those that have already been killed and injured on our highways. We have to look to the future, Sir. The problem before us is quite obvious. We can no longer tolerate a hit-and-miss approach to this very serious problem Sir. What we need is a well-planned constructive programme directed at the root-cause of accidents on our highways in this province. I say, Mr. Speaker, and I agree with the Newfoundland Safety Council in this matter, that this problem is completely above politics. The debate in this honourable House so far, Sir, (I believe this is the fourth Wednesday now that we have been debating this matter) if it should do nothing else, if honourable members on the opposite side should not vote in favour of having a safety advisory council in this province, if we have done nothing else, Sir, we have accomplished nothing else in this honourable House, Sir, we have gone a long way in highlighting these major problems which confront us.

As the Newfoundland Safety Council points out, we still have a long way to go. Although our request for a royal commission, Sir, will, I believe, be rejected, we strongly recommend that in the interest of public safety in this province that all members of the House vote in favour of the amendment that I put before the House this afternoon. This is a sincere, genuine attempt on our part, Sir, to try to do something about this problem. Even though, Mr. Speaker, we might all agree or some might agree that the Department of Transportation and Communications is doing a good job, we feel that they should be given the opportunity to do even a finer job for the people of this province by having available to them, Mr. Speaker, the findings of a safety advisory board, empowered, Mr. Speaker, to enquire into all factors which could contribute to the growing carnage and property damage on our highways as demonstrated by the figures quoted by the Newfoundland Safety Council and given to the House by Statistics

Canada. I hope, Sir, that we will not let party politics blind us in this matter. I am sure if the Minister of Health, the member for Carbonear, were to speak in this debate, Sir, that he could tell us -

DR. ROWE: I have spoken.

MR. NEARY: The honourable minister has spoken. Well I hope the minister speaks to the amendment because that minister knows the heartaches that are caused by accidents on our highways, by fatalities and by injury. Now only heartaches for the survivors, Mr. Speaker, of the victim of the accident but also the person responsible for the accident. Some drivers, Sir, involved in fatal accidents in this province never recover from them. We probably all know drivers that have unfortunately been responsible for killing somebody on our highways and we never stop to think about the heartaches and the sorry that is caused to these families, Sir.

So I plead, I appeal to members on the opposite side not to be opposed to this amendment, that they take a positive outlook and act on this constructive suggestion as put forward by the Newfoundland Safety Council. This may be a blessing in disguise, Sir, if members vote in favour of the amendment to the amendment, as it may be responsible for bringing the Newfoundland Safety Council and the Department of Transportation and Communications back together again. It may re-establish communications between the Newfoundland Safety Council and the department because I feel, Sir, the Newfoundland Safety Council has made a major contribution to improving highway safety in this province. I do not know if there is any dialogue between the minister and his officials and the representatives of the Newfoundland Safety Council at the present time. If there are not, Sir, it is a pity.

So I plead and appeal to members on the opposite side of the House to vote in favour of the amendment to the amendment in the interest of saving lives on our highways and roads in this province.

MR. MORGAN: Mr. Chairman, I spoke originally on the original motion, a resolution to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate all aspects of highway safety. Now I do not know whether to speak to the amended amendment or to the initial amendment by the Minister of Finance. The honourable Minister of Finance's amendment to the resolution was to the effect that this House direct the Department of Transportation and Communications to continue to enquire into and investigate all aspects of highway safety and to continue to adopt all such measures as are feasible to improve safety on the highways of the province.

The most important thing, disregarding the amendments to the resolution, is that action be taken immediately on this matter and by appointing a Royal Commission, which would take maybe months to get a report, maybe even a year or more, is not the answer (As I spoke before I indicated so) but that the Department of Transportation and Communications carry out the necessary work and continue along the lines they have been doing in the past to overcome the hazards we have on the highways and roads in this province. The last speaker indicated that this was an emotional issue. I think it is attempted to have it made an emotional issue. It is an important issue, sure it is. It is important to all of us who travel on the highways and are concerned about the safety of our drivers and our passengers. I do not know if it is so emotional as the honourable gentleman from Bell Island makes it or pretends for it to be but it is a very important issue.

Now the honourable gentleman from Bell Island, most of his speech this afternoon was a rebuttal of the statistics which were given by the honourable Minister of Finance on the last Private Members' Day. He tried to tie it in to the fact that because the honourable Minister of Finance gave these statistics which according to the honourable gentleman from Bell Island were not correct, that he was not concerned about these problems. I am

sure the honourable gentleman from St. John's West is just as concerned as each and every member of this House about the safety on our highways. We have had too many Royal Commissions in the past and some of them have been useless, in regard to their reports being made policy or implemented by our government or by the previous government.

So the most important step is to get action from the department immediately. The government is not afraid of a Royal Commission. Our government are taking the appropriate steps now and they will continue to do so in the future. They are not afraid nor in fear of the result of the report of the Royal Commission into highway safety which the honourable member from Bell Island was indicating. That is not so. That is just a way of putting the resolution to say that this government is not concerned about highway safety. This government is very concerned about highway safety and the honourable Minister of Transportation and Communications indicated so on last week's Private Members' Day.

I will agree with the honourable members of the opposition that the two most important factors affecting the fatalities and accidents on our highways today are human error and alcohol, liquor. These facts he gave of fifty per cent caused by liquor and thirty per cent by human error are correct. This leads me to believe that the most important thing in trying to cut down on highway fatalities is driver education. We must have a good driver education programme to properly train the drivers, especially those young drivers going out for the first time on our highways and roads in this province. That is one of the recommendations that have been submitted to this government by the Newfoundland Highway Safety Council. It is also one of the major points that the minister is concerned about and is taking action on. I will deal with the action that our department is taking in a little while.

Now the honourable member for Bell Island by trying to rebut all the statistics given by the honourable Minister of Finance -

the statistics were according to him incorrect.

MR. NEARY: No, Mr. Speaker, I will have to correct the honourable member. I did not say that the statistics were incorrect. As a matter of fact I said the minister's statistics were one hundred per cent accurate but he was using the wrong statistics.

MR. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker, the statistics used by the honourable member from Bell Island and those that were used by the honourable Minister of Finance were mainly for the years 1970 and 1971 because 1972 were unavailable. That is the reason why I questioned earlier the source of the information giving these statistics for 1972. The facts are that irrespective of percentages, let us look at the figures, the basic figures themselves of what has been happening in Newfoundland in the past two years, 1970 and 1971 with regard to highway fatalities and highway accidents. In 1970 in Newfoundland there were 8,090 accidents in this province and this is in comparison to the total number of accidents in Canada and all across the nation, of 556,427. These are the exact figures and that is in 1970.

Now the logical question to ask: What percentage of the total accidents in Canada occurred here in this province? That is a logical question to ask, comparing it to the rest of the nation. You look at 8,090 accidents in this province and using that as a percentage of 556,427 accidents across the Nation of Canada and we have 1.5 per cent of all the accidents in Canada occurred in Newfoundland. That is a fact. The other facts regarding the accidents in this province are in 1971. In 1971 we had 8,106 accidents in Newfoundland while in the rest of Canada all across the nation we had 554,230. So again using percentages, we had 1.5 per cent of all the accidents across Canada occurring here in this province. If one were to use it in relation to the population Newfoundland - 2.4 per cent of the population of all Canada.

So these are the facts. You cannot dispute the facts.

These are the facts as they stand today for 1970 and 1971.

I can go on with more of these facts. In 1970, for example, there were 2,492 personal injuries in Newfoundland while across Canada as a whole there were 177,930. In 1971 there were 2,500 personal injuries in Newfoundland while Canada totalled 191,472. So again we break it down to percentages and these are the exact figures. There is no question mark on these figures. We did have 2,492 injuries in Newfoundland in 1970 and we had 2,500 personal injuries in Newfoundland in 1971. These are the exact figures and the honourable member from Bell Island or any other member of this House cannot question them as they are the exact figures. So you break these figures down to the percentage when we had in 1971 for example a total of 191,472 personal injuries all across Canada, break that down and it comes out to 1.3 per cent. So of all the personal injuries in Canada we had 1.3 per cent here in this province. These are the two main facts in this issue and that is the number of accidents and the number of personal injuries.

Now let us look at the total deaths caused by accidents: In 1970 the total deaths in Newfoundland, and the honourable member from Bell Island was correct in this fact, was sixty-nine.

MR. NEARY: Sixty-nine too many.

MR. MORGAN: I agree and I am sure every member in this House agrees. Every death caused by accidents in this province is one too many. We all agree with that. Nobody is disputing that. In 1971, and it is a sad fact that it was increased in this province up to eighty-seven. It was sixty-nine in 1970 and it went to eighty-seven in 1971 while all across Canada in 1971 we had a total of 5,440 fatal accidents. So again we come down to the question as to what the percentage of total deaths in Newfoundland was of the total of all Canada. Breaking it down into percentages in 1970 it was 1.4 per cent and in 1971 it was 1.6 per cent. In 1971 the total number of vehicles registered in this province was 139,119 and this was increased in 1972 by 19,000.

So, Mr. Speaker, the situation is that these are the facts and nobody, I am sure, in this honourable House, especially on this side of the House, is going to use statistics to try to beat down the possibility of doing something about our highway safety. We are all concerned and we all want to see some action to prevent the accidents and injuries on our highway. But we are not using these statistics, as the honourable gentleman from Bell Island was trying to point out, to try to beat down the resolution. We are not trying to do that. We are presenting them as they are, the facts, and these are the facts and we accept them as such.

So, Mr. Speaker, in the amendment brought in by the honourable Minister of Finance, which gave the indication that the resolution was a good resolution, I think we should give credit to the honourable member from White Bay South who brought it into this honourable House, but not to the point of appointing a Royal Commission to investigate this matter. If we want the Transportation and Communications Department to continue to do what they have been doing, the first question you ask is as to what they have been doing in the past with regard to highway safety. Now when the Newfoundland Highway Safety Council submitted their brief to this government, the Newfoundland Government -

AN HON. MEMBER: Mr. Speaker, could we have a quorum count please?

MR. SPEAKER: We do not have a quorum. Would the clerk count the House please?

We now have a quorum.

MR. MORGAN: As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, the first question, if we are going to continue along the action that has been taken by the department in the past, the first question to ask is: What action is the Department of Transportation and Communications taking on this matter? Now when the brief submitted by the Newfoundland Safety Council was submitted to the Newfoundland Government it was asking for six major items for consideration

by the government and by the department concerned. These were: Number one, an improved licensing system in the province. Number two, a high-school driver education. Number three, regulations regarding the driver instructor schools. Number four, the licensing of bicycles. Number five, the merit system or the point system. Number six, the relicensing system. These were the major points brought forward by the Newfoundland Safety Council, asking for the attention of the department concerned and follow-up action.

Now so far the minister of that department has taken action on a number of these recommendations because the minister is concerned with the problem and has been dealing with it for the last number of months since taking over that portfolio. The department is planning or this government is planning to adopt the hundred question paper system proposed by the Safety Council and to adopt the standard national written examination paper which is designed by the Canadian Conference of Motor Transport Authorities, CCMTA. Now that is one thing the government is going to do, is planning right now, is to have a hundred question examination paper for drivers. This will more or less become then a standardization programme with the rest of Canada in standardizing the examinations to be used for license drivers.

Now the other part with regard to issuing license is the physical examinations. Should there be physical examinations? Now the Safety Council is recommending that the government use physical examinations prior to issuing a drivers license. It is a good point. I must admit it is a very good point because some of the drivers we have on our highways they do obtain a drivers license and in some cases they could be partially blind or color-blind or any other human defects, body defects, but they do obtain a license because they do not have to go and get a medical examination. So this part about having a potential driver take a medical examination prior to receiving a drivers license is a

good point but I think it will put a very heavy load on our medical profession in this province if every driver whether he is in good health or not would have to go and get a medical examination and to get a medical certificate to issue to the motor vehicle registration bureau before obtaining a drivers license. It is going to place a very heavy burden on the medical profession.

It is an important point but it is a question mark especially in the rural areas of Newfoundland where we find even now doctors overloaded with work, and this would of course increase their work. In my view it is a big question mark on whether we can do that. In fact I will so far as to say that we cannot in rural areas of the province. We cannot implement a programme that will call for a physical examination of every potential driver in this province.

The other point with regard to what the Highway Safety Council in this province wants to see done and what is being done by the government, there is no need for a Royal Commission to investigate to see if it should be done because it is already being done by the department and that is with regard to examinations. The Safety Council feel that the Department of Transportation and Communications should have its own examiners. The Minister of Transportation and Communications pointed out last week that he has already been in consultation with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in this province on this matter because they are the ones doing most of the examining now especially in the rural areas of the province. It was also done, according to the minister in his speech last week, by the previous government.

Now if this government were going to have their own examiners, it is going to be a very much additional cost in that department because they are going to have to have a number of examiners, quite a few all around the province to replace the existing stations of the RCMP with their constables doing the examining now. At the

present time the RCMP scattered all around the island and many smaller type RCMP stations are doing the examinations and giving the driver examinations to new drivers. The minister and the department have been giving consideration to the establishment of examining machines. They have been looking at this. They have been investigating this, in other words a mechanical means of an examination. I have seen them in many offices in the Province of Quebec where you can go in and actually take an examination by means of a machine in the registration office or where you obtain your drivers' license. Of course these machines as well are very costly and at this point the government is not in a position financially to get involved by means of examining machines and using these machines for drivers to get their examination.

Another point was mentioned in the brief from the Newfoundland Safety Council and that was the licensing of bicycles. Now I think more important than that is the motorcycles. How are we going to control the issuance of license and should a driver of a motorcycle for example be given a stricter test than a person driving a car? We see numerous motorcycles on the road now during the summer months, especially on our highways, and the Safety Council was insistent on that point about bicycles and motorcycles, and I think the part about motorcycles is well taken. The Department of Transportation and Communications has taken it in a serious vein to the point that the department now, this government now have a special license for motorcycle drivers, in other words a different license from the driver of a car. They also have a different license for a bus driver. By the segregation of these types of licenses rather than one uniform license, where a man obtains a drivers' license so can go drive a bus, a motorcycle or any kind of a car, they are now being segregated. This is one of the major point brought in by the recommendations of the Newfoundland Safety Council.

So why the opposition in the beginning would want a Royal Commission, when the government have already taken this action, taking it now and they will continue along this. This is what the honourable Minister of Finance asked, when he brought in his amendment to the resolution, to continue to adopt all such measures, as we now are adopting, in the future, to overcome the hazards on the highways, and that is what we are doing. I can go on to point out the good things that the Minister of Transportation and Communications and this government are doing with regard to highway safety. For example, right now, with regard to the licensing system, the department now demands that the re-examination of licenses be placed in three categories and that is, if the permit is lapsed three years or more, any person with a physical disability of any kind and the third one is, if the police report of any individual, like bad driving habits or the violation of traffic regulations etc. and if he loses his drivers license because of these reasons.

So we have three reasons: A license could be lapsed for say a period of three years or more. Number two is where we have a physical disability of some kind or other, a cripple or something like that and number three is where the person has lost his license by means of violating highway traffic regulations. So a re-examination is not just placed in an overall general way. It is broken down now into three categories and this is what the Highway Safety wanted to see done. It has been done. It is being carried out right now by this government and by the Department of Transportation and Communications. So that is another reason why there is no reason for a Royal Commission, because this work is being carried out now and we are going to continue along these veins in the department and in the government.

Most of the accidents apparently that have occurred in this province in the past four years are caused by drivers under the age of twenty-five, young drivers. The accidental rate is

extremely high in the younger drivers. I would like to say that of the Newfoundland Safety Council, despite the fact that sometimes I get the impression that they want to be attacking the government, like for example last week when we saw an outcry, by the executive director I think, blasting the ministry. It was not a constructive statement. In my view it was not. It was not a constructive statement. He just came out with a statement, called a press conference and blasted the minister. Now that is one of their bad points and I thought was uncalled for. It was just a matter of coming in and sitting down with the officials in the department and doing something constructive but not calling a press conference to blast the minister on some points he made in this debate in this honourable House.

That is one of the bad points. But there are also good points. I notice that they are carrying out an educational programme. There are now two schools where the Newfoundland Safety Council are conducting a driver educational course. These two schools, of course, are the Consolidate High School in Marystown and the Holy Heart of Mary in St. John's. This is the kind of work that the safety council should be doing. I think it is good to see them doing now these driver education programmes. If they carry on in that manner, it has nothing to do but to benefit with regard to highway safety in the province. Although their grant was reduced slightly, it was not substantially reduced this year, from \$10,000, I think to \$7,500. But this does not indicate to me that this government are not concerned with the work that they are doing. I am sure the government appreciates this kind of work that they are doing. If they continue along doing that kind of work, that is fine but not to be using the safety council as a kind of a political machine to get at the government.

At times when I have seen and heard some of the statements made by an employee of that safety council, I begin to wonder if they are constructive or just to get at the government, attack the government on matters relating to highway safety. The reason why I say this is because last week in this honourable House the Minister of Transportation and Communications said for all who listened that the Highway Safety Council in this province did not make any reasonable attempts to contact his officials. We have in the Department of Transportation and Communications a highway safety officer, I think his name is Mr. Bartlett. The Highway Safety Council did not make any reasonable effort to contact that safety officer and to talk over the problems of highway safety and the hazards on the highway. Now why did they not do that? It is there job to do that. Instead they were condemning the minister because they could not meet with the minister, and they could not meet with the Premier. But these were not the people concerned, they should also go in with a liaison, with the authorities in the minister's

department. Then if he came to an obstacle, if they dealt with an obstacle they could take it up with the minister responsible, in this case the Minister of Transportation and Communications.

So this lack of liaison in the past by the Highway Safety Council again leads me to the question mark of whether they are in some cases sincere. Surely they are bringing out statistics about what is happening on our highways and they are concerned, that is their job. But the fact is if they fail to make any efforts to sit down with the officials in the Department of Transportation and Communications and to go over these problems and to make recommendations to that department and to the officials to work with them in liaison, I am hopeful in the future that this attitude will change, instead of wanting to meet with the Premier and to come out and say, "well the Premier refused to meet us. The Minister of Transportation and Communications refused to meet with us." This has happened in the past, The Highway Safety Council said this publicly, complaining about the fact that there was no liaison. But the Department of Transportation and Communications, as stressed over and over by the minister, both publicly and outside of this House and in this honourable House, that he is more than willing to co-operate with the Safety Council, but he would also like to see on the other hand co-operation from the Safety Council. It goes two ways, co-operation from both sides.

I notice that the amendment to the amendment which was brought in by the honourable the member for Bell Island is asking that an advisory body be set up to more or less work with the government. First of all, they are asking for a royal commission. Now they seemed to have changed their minds and they want now an advisory body which will advise the Department of Transportation and Communications and the government on what to do about highway safety. It seems to me they are inconsistent.

It is fine to bring a resolution before the House to get the attention of the public about this matter but not to get too emotional

and make it too dramatic because it is not as serious as it is made out to believe. It is a serious problem but not as serious as the opposition members seem to want it to be, in dramatizing it and making it an emotional issue. Like I have said, the amendment to the amendment is wanting the government to set up an advisory board. Now I think the Newfoundland Safety Council could be, as it is right now, an advisory board and the minister would be more than willing to use the Newfoundland Safety Council as an advisory board to his officials and to his department so that they can go out and solicit their views, the Highway Safety Council, as to what they felt the problems were and what they are and what they felt should be done.

This is what the department has been doing in the past, Only last week the minister made a plea for co-operation, that he would work with them on a public statement. Now this is the kind of thing it said in the resolution brought in by the honourable Minister of Finance, that the Department of Transportation and Communications will continue to adopt all the measures as are feasible to improve safety on the highways of the province. The Department of Transportation and Communications are doing it now and they will continue.

I would like to see, with regard to this advisory board mentioned by the honourable the member for Bell Island, that the Safety Council would be that advisory board as they exist right now, work in close liaison with the government, with the department and with the minister concerned and work on matters which will improve the highway safety.

The point mentioned about the merit system, I think that before the merit system can be brought in or a point system used for licenced drivers. This is something that should be investigated I think, not with a royal commission but by somebody or persons to look into this matter of using the point system in the province, because there are many implications to it. Now I think maybe we could assign someone like the safety officer we now have employed with the department. He could look into this for a matter of time and make some recommendations to his minister on using the point system.

But before the point system can be, there must be some kind of an independent appeal boards set up around the province. For example, if a man is caught for speeding and he receives two speeding tickets, he went through maybe two or three red lights in a year, and a number of other traffic violations, and if after say six or seven points, if we are using the point system, that man loses his licences, he must have somewhere to go to be able to appeal that decision to take away his licence. So there must be some kind of an appeal board or boards set up around the province. We would have to look into what would happen by means of using these appeal boards. So the point system may be a good recommendation but it has to be looked into further before it is brought into effect in this province.

The action has been taken as far as I am concerned, the action has now been taken by the department. We have 137,000 drivers in Newfoundland and these drivers are the concern of the officials of the department, and of the minister and of this government, that they will be able to drive in safety on the highways and the roads in Newfoundland. The drivers themselves are the main cause of the accidents. I mentioned earlier when I spoke on the original resolution that it was the drivers and in some cases the construction and road design that caused the accidents.

So if we are going to have good drivers we must put every effort into making sure that these new drivers, the young drivers coming out on the highways and roads for the first time, must be properly trained and educated. This is the concern of the department and the Safety Council. The Department of Transportation and Communications are now using three educational films. This is a beginning. I would like to see more in the future and I am sure that the minister will be taking steps to make sure there are more films. These films are viewed by the high schools, trades colleges and even the university where we have many students going in and after a few years they are able to purchase a car, after they graduate etc. So these films must be viewed wherever possible by the young people, people under age twenty-five. The films should also be distributed to community organizations,

used at safety seminars and this kind of thing and of course, on television continuously, to use these educational programmes to try and teach the young drivers the proper way to handle a car and the proper way to approach driving on the two lane highway we have in Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, the other point which the department is taking action on right now, there is no need for an investigation or any advisory board to advise them, they already know what needs to be done and they are doing it and that is the publication of a drivers' manual for the benefit of all of those new drivers. This drivers' manual will also be made available to the schools, the high schools and other organizational groups etc. who want to help the young people, to teach them the rules and regulations the means of handling a car on the road but the rules and regulations of the road, The drivers' manual that is being carried out by the government, This was not a recommendation by the Safety Council.

I assume there are other experts around besides the Safety Council. We have a few of them in the department, good men who know their business, who know their work and who do their work accordingly.

Now the inspection of the vehicles has also improved dramatically this year over the past years. We have a much stricter inspection of the cars. This is also an action taken by this department, by the new minister. It was not done before. These are all points that I want to use to show that the department are taking steps and they are going to continue along this way to make improvements.

For example, last year in Newfoundland we had 568, this year in 1972 really, 1972-1973, 568 authorized inspection stations, consisting mainly of service stations and garages scattered throughout Newfoundland. There are also twelve inspectors attached to the Motor Registration Division in St. John's. And for the benefit of the honourable member for St. Barbe North, there were also seven bus driver examiners working from the department this year. In the past year there were approximately 1200 vehicles in this province which had their plates

removed because they were not fit to be driven on the highways. Now that is also an example of what the Department of Transportation and Communications is doing to overcome hazards in driving, making sure that if cars are not properly inspected and not properly road tested let the licence be removed. Last year there were 1200 of these plates removed in this province.

The statistics used by the Minister of Finance last week and those used today by the opposition are not the important points in this debate. The important points are that we must realize and recognize that we have hazards on the highway. We must make every effort and take every step in the future to overcome the hazards of the highway. Unfortunately, in this province we only have a two-lane highway across the province and with the bus transportation and the truck transportation, especially since the CNR decided to remove the railway passenger service, which had a drastic effect on the increase of the highway traffic, if the Safety Council want to do something constructive I would like to see them take as their case the fact that if the rail passenger service were brought back to Newfoundland it would decrease the amount of traffic on the highways. That is a major recommendation which should be made to the federal government, to some of the responsible authorities at the federal level to get the railway passenger service back even if it is only to a point of having a commuting service from St. John's to the rural areas like say Conception Bay and in the Harbour Main District. That area there - back and forth to St. John's. If it were only that kind of a railway passenger service it would alleviate some of the traffic hazards on the highway by means of cutting down the highway traffic. That is something I think consideration should be given to. Whether or not we will get the rail passenger service back again is a big question, but let us hope it will be brought back to some extent.

So the points that have been made by both sides of this honourable House in the debate are well taken and will take well with the minister responsible, with his officials. I would like

to see in the future a close liaison, not the Safety Council calling a press conference to blast the minister of this government or anybody else in this government because they happen to make a mistake, (if he did make a mistake, it is still questionable) in giving their facts and figures with regard to highway accidents and fatalities and injuries. That is not the important thing. In fact I was very annoyed personally to see the Safety Council two days ago call a press conference merely to blast the ministry. Let us hope that they will be more constructive in the future. Let us hope they will get together with the minister and his officials, the responsible ministry, and sit down with him and get down to working together for the sake of all those 137,000 drivers we have in this province, for their sake. Because if we can prevent one accident we have achieved a great deal. That is the main aim I am sure why the resolution was brought in originally, to create concern, to make sure that in the future that we are still concerned, two years from now, three years from now or three months from now, not just concerned now when it is before the House of Assembly. Let us stay concerned so that we will always be conscious of the fact that this is a big problem in Newfoundland.

I think that all members should take it in this light and let us hope that in the future we will see less accidents, less fatal accidents and less accidents causing injuries on our highways in Newfoundland.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. A. J. MURPHY (MINISTER OF SOCIAL SERVICES): Mr. Speaker, there is not much time left in this afternoon to go into any great detail on this very, very important matter. But, since I have been in this honourable House, Sir, since 1962, on the estimates for highways, I think this was one of the very important topics that were discussed. In opposition we were very critical of what the government were doing at the time. We have heard over the past few weeks various points of view put forward as to the statistics, the number of cars, the number of drivers and the number of miles of

paved road, a royal commission here, a special committee there.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, the car today has become almost a lethal weapon. We look at the car itself, and I am very happy, and I think this has been brought out by the honourable member who just spoke, that inspection regulations have been greatly strengthened as to the type of car that is permitted to operate on our roads today. Licencing perhaps might call for some further development as to how long you should hold a licence without having to reappear again. But the two factors in driving, of course, as I said, are the car and the driver. But there is another factor, Sir, that enters into driving today and that is anybody who uses any of the highways, whether it be the Trans Canada, the Topsail Road, etc., after eleven o'clock in the night, Sir, you have heard of defensive driving, in my opinion, Sir, the only way to adopt defensive driving after the night clubs close is to get off the road altogether.

Back in the old days, Sir, when we had the old model "T's" and the old cars, we used to have to stop at a lot of the ponds on the way along to put another drop of water into the radiator. That is gone out but it is the driver who has to stop every ten or fifteen miles now to be replenished.

So when we talk about accidents, Sir, and I think the honourable member for Bell Island today said that fifty per cent of the accidents are due I think to alcohol are being traced, I would say that the percentage is far greater than that. If we are as concerned, and I will not use the word "pretend" but as we appear to be, Sir, about the deaths that are occurring on our highways, I think someone has got to have a long, long, hard, very serious look at what is happening to the offenders. The old opera said, "We will make the punishment to fit the crime." Well the crime of drunk driving - I always get a laugh out of impaired driving. I do not know how many drinks. I do not know if it has ever been boiled down as to when you are drunk or when you are impaired.

But I understand, Sir, and I do not know if I am trespassing in anyway or breaking any laws, that today in some cases if you are

convicted for certain crimes or breeches of the Highway Traffic Act, you can serve your sentence at your leisure - we do not want to inconvenience anybody any more. I think I have read this in the papers. Now, Sir, if we are to establish deterence and we are concerned about our fellow human beings, our children being maimed, killed, crushed, destroyed on our roads, well for God's sake! let us be honest people, Sir. We do not go around giving loaded revolvers, Sir, to people who are not mentally competent to handle them. I saw the other day a case where a guy was pretty well under the weather. I think he was in a tavern, he was wielding a rifle there. Oh, this is a great crime, everybody frightened to death, afraid he would shoot somebody.

But I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, and I will tell everybody in this honourable House and everybody in the country that they are getting away with murder on our highways today. God knows it is difficult enough to drive on that two lane so-called Trans Canada Highway when you have all of your faculties, whatever they may be, without being impaired, whether it be alcohol or drugs or something else.

There is a case told of the guy who was stopped by a policeman for drunken driving and his excuse was that he was too drunk to walk, the only way that he could get home was to drive. So with all this thing, whether you set up a committee, and this is another thing that really galls me today, now these famous committees that tell every department of government how the business should be run. God knows, in the Department of Highways, and it has many, many experienced people. do not tell me that there is not someone at least one person there that can tell us something about safety, without getting a bunch of do-gooders out holding press conferences, trying to destroy this one, destroy that one, reflectorized licence plates, this that and the other thing. I think it has been referred to and I will just refer to it again, the most nonsensical thing I

ever saw on any show was the famous one with the reflectorized licence plates and here was a car parked in absolute blackness, not a tail light or anything on but it showed up the beautiful reflectorized plates, that I am sure that someone had spent about twenty-five minutes on with bon ami to make it shine. Reflectorized licence plates, half the cars passing along that driveway, Sir, you cannot pick out the licence numbers not talk about if you have a licence plate on or not, with the conditions on the road.

Well, in my opinion, I say this again, unless we as legislators, all of us here whether they be opposition or on this side, look at the very, very serious problem that is occurring on our highways - deaths, my 'darlin' fellow, my honourable friend will have the biggest year he ever had around the bay. Because they just get in their cars now, they will say, 'I have 500 horsepower under the hood. Let her go!' No one drives any more, they just aim that car. You are driving in a slow lane, all right, you are doing sixty, if someone passes you, 'it is just as well to be tied on to a tree today as to try and maintain sixty miles an hour on that Trans Canada Highway and feel that you are doing all right. Everyone is in a hurry to get somewhere and unfortunately too many of them are ending up in the graveyard. This is the problem. - I know anybody, and I have done it on three different occasions, 'can come upon a smash on that highway, Death is merciful! Death is merciful in a car accident, but it is the man, the person who has got to go for the rest of his life in a wheelchair. There was one kid, I do not know if he is still alive, who was over here in the Hoyles Home when we used to visit over there a few years ago, twenty-one years old and he was just lying there as a result of a car accident. What is the punishment? How do you value a life or a disability as far as a car is concerned?

I just get a little bit hot under the collar when we talk about this royal commission. We have a safety officer within the Department of Highways, if he has not enough help, let us give him some help. All these great do-gooders I am sure they would advise him or what should be done. Everybody has to have a press conference, I do not care what

it is on, if they want to put a table in the welfare office on Harvery Road, if they want to tell all of my officials how they should deal with a welfare recipient. The same thing has happened to safety, you name it, we have got them. They told us all about the complex on Water Street, the same bunch. The same thing on Signal Hill, everywhere, all this type of stuff, Sir. I feel that we have a very competent Department of Communications and Transportation. We are trying to get places, so all of this thing of dragging this thing in, and the member for Bell Island says this should be nonpolitical. I think this is one of the biggest political issues that has broken this year, trying to condemn a government because they do not have reflectorized plates, because they do not have safety regulations. God help us, we have them! Well let all of us get together not to try and defeat a government or set up a special committee but to save lives, I think that is what we are here for. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I would say, and it is getting near to six o'clock and I do not have too much more to say, that let us consider this thing. If you or I or any of us are permitted any night of the week or any day of the week to load ourselves up with any kind of liquor and take a car on the road and get away with it, I think the crime is on us. We are not defending the people. Let us put some peace into our lives. I am convicted fo something, "Look, it is not convenient next week," "Well, sure, wait until some other time, wait for a few wet days."

Is this what is happening? I ask this, Mr. Speaker. Am I wrong or did I really read this in the papers that one can serve a weekend if it is interferring with you earning a living or anything else? Is this a deterrent? No, Mr. Speaker, this is encouraging one to go out and break the law. In my opinion, this is what is happening.

The Department of Justice. they say I am out of order to talk about this. But as an individual, Sir, and as a member of this House, I feel responsible for what is happening on our highways. The highways are overloaded. They were not built for the traffic they are having to bear, the big transport trucks, the CNR buses and everything

else, Mr. Speaker.

I will just say now that in my opinion royal commissions, special committees will do no good. The Department of Highways, as we call it now, should carry on with the work that they are doing, Sir, and I think, let us take a long hard look at punishments that fit the crimes and we can prevent a lot of mortality on our highways.

MR. CROSBIE: I adjourn the debate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: It now being six o'clock I do leave the Chair until ten o'clock tomorrow morning.