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**VERBATIM REPORT**

Wednesday, March 21, 1973

SPEAKER: THE HONOURABLE JAMES M. RUSSELL



The House met at 3:00 P.M.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Minister of Justice.

HON. T. A. HICKMAN: (MINISTER OF JUSTICE): Mr. Speaker, sometime ago the government initiated a study of the desirability and the feasibility of an emergency telephone call system whereby callers in the St. John's Area could by dialing one easy to remember three digit number contact the fire, police, ambulance, poison control or any other required emergency service. Telephone companies throughout North America have reserved the number 911 for this use subject to communities being able to satisfy certain conditions such as guaranteed twenty-four hour answering service and that it provide access to fire, police and ambulance service as a minimum. In Canada the Bell system with which Newfoundland Telephone is associated has a policy that the company will bear the cost of the rather extensive modifications to their system required to implement this service provided those basic conditions are met.

Following initial discussions during which all the emergency services agreed such a system was highly desirable from the point of view of the general public, a committee was established under the Chairmanship of the Director of Emergency Measures and comprised of senior representatives of the Newfoundland Constabulary, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the St. John's Fire Department, the Ambulance Service of the General Hospital and the Poison Control Centre at the Janeway Hospital, whose objective was to develop a system that would be operationally effective, satisfy the conditions laid down by the Telephone Company and be capable of implementation at reasonable cost.

Experience in other cities in Canada where such a system has been studied indicated that the bulk of the cost would be made up of salaries of special operators and supervisory personnel with installation and service charges making up only a small proportion of the total.

The proposal put forward by the committee set up by government involved no increases whatever in personnel costs. It recommended that the existing switchboards of the constabulary and the St. John's fire department be amalgamated to deal with 911 calls in addition to normal routine calls to those agencies. This would insure that at least two operators trained in dealing with emergency calls would be on duty twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty five days a year. Any additional administrative and co-ordination tasks would be made the responsibility of the EMO staff.

Consideration was also given to the needs of other areas of the province for access to assistance and emergencies that cannot be adequately handled by the local emergency services. The Provincial Government contact in those circumstances is the Emergency Measures Organization which maintains a duty officer on call at all times. The committee proposed that such calls be directed to the Emergency Reporting Centre who would put the caller in contact with the EMO offices or the duty officers.

I have approved the committee's report and recommendations and the Newfoundland Telephone Company have indicated that the concept satisfies their terms and conditions for use of 911. It is with pleasure therefore that I am able to announce there will be established effective July 1, 1973, this year, an Emergency Reporting Centre in St. John's through which;

A. callers from anywhere in the free dialing area in and around St. John's can by dialing the one number 911 be put into immediate contact with any required emergency service; and

B. callers from any other area of the province can by asking the operator for St. John's, 911 or direct dialing to EMO number 722-2107 report a major emergency and request assistance from the provincial

Government.

To ensure a smooth transition to this system, the existing numbers of the St. John's fire department 722-1234 and the Newfoundland Constabulary 722-5111 will be retained in use but as the 911 code becomes known it is expected they will be used only for routine calls and the reporting of incidents not requiring an emergency response.

It is worth noting that only three or four other areas in Canada have so far been provided with 911 services and in no other cases that we are aware of have similar arrangements been made to utilize the system for province-wide reporting of emergencies and requests for assistance.

The success of this new system will depend in large part on the co-operation of the public in reserving the use of 911 for calls of the most urgent nature.

My department and the Newfoundland Telephone Company propose between now and July 1, 1973, to carry out a public information programme designed to ensure that the system is understood and effectively utilized. As the first phase of that programme, a comprehensive briefing of the news media is planned following this announcement.

HON. EDWARD ROBERTS: (LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION): Mr. Speaker, let me just say simply that this is a good thing. I am delighted to see that the problem has been solved. It is an old problem, one which goes back some time and indeed I think the minister will find and probably will confirm that the present initiative comes from a letter which was written to the then Minister of Provincial Affairs, Mr. J.R. Chalker, in I think about the summer of 1971, suggesting that we have another crack at the problem. I know about the letter because I wrote it, but it is a good thing. We have had a multiplicity of emergency services in St. John's and it makes sense to have one number which gives access to them all. It is just really an adaptation of the British 999 system. It is a good thing that it is going ahead and let us hope that it does not have to be used often but let us hope that when it is needed it will

be used.

HON. G. OTTENHEIMER: (MINISTER OF EDUCATION): Mr. Speaker, I have a brief announcement and that is the appointment of the following three persons to fill vacancies on the Board of Governors of the College of Trades and Technology. They are Doctor Leslie Harris, the Dean of Memorial University of Newfoundland, and Mr. Newman Kelland, an assistant superintendent with the Avalon Intergraded School Board, and Mr. John N. Green, a practising lawyer. These appointments will bring the Board of Governors to its full compliment of twelve. Actually there was one vacancy due to a resignation and two vacancies because the board had never been at its full compliment.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

MR. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of this honourable House to present a petition bearing some 800 signatures. It is the prayer of this petition that the road known as the Thicket Road connecting the highway and Upper Island Cove to that of Harbour Grace be upgraded and paved. It is a distance of 2.8 miles. This road, Sir, services the communities of Upper Island Cove, Bishop's Cove and Bryant's Cove and it is used for transportation by school buses for the children to the Roman Catholic Schools at Harbour Grace and Carbonear. It is also used, Sir, as a short distance to transport the sick, suffering and dying to the Carbonear Community Hospital.

This road, Sir, has had a lot of use in the past and probably this is why it is in deplorable condition. It has been used by the previous administration as a political gimmick, and a promise to be paved. I trust, in the absence of the Minister of Transportation and Communications, that the honourable Minister of Finance will see fit that this road will be upgraded and paved in the ensuing year.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the petition presented on behalf of the 800 residents of the Thicket Road over in the district of Harbour Grace.

There should be no problem at all, Sir, for the government to grant the request of the prayer of this petition in view of the fact

that "Uncle Ottawa", the Minister of Finance's friend, Mr. Turner, has dumped twenty-four million dollars in the provinces lap this year. There should be no problem to get a few roads upgraded and paved. This is a reasonable request, Sir, and I hope that the government will see fit to grant the prayer of this petition in this fiscal year.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

HON. T. A. HICKMAN: (MINISTER OF JUSTICE): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the honourable the Minister of Municipal Affairs, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce;

A bill, "An Act Further To Amend The St. John's (Metropolitan Area) Act."

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 Repeal The Telegraph Tax Act."

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. CROSBIE: You will have to get your pencils ready. These are questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition. The answers are not in writing. So, is everybody ready? They are all on the Orders Papers.

Starting with question (62) on the Order Paper of February 27, 1973, numbers of appeals of decision. The question is:

"What is the number of appeals of decisions by the Personnel Administration Division concerning classifications of public service employees that have been submitted to the Classifications Appeal Board but have been returned to individuals for failure to conform with appeal procedures?"

Answer: a total of sixty-one appeals returned to individuals because they failed to conform to appeal procedures.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. CROSBIE: No, I am going to get it verbally. These are all very simple answers but if you need to check it, I can give you these.

Next question (63), on the Order Paper February 27, asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

"What is the number of appeals of decisions by the Personnel Administration Division concerning classifications of public service employees that have been submitted to the Classifications Appeal Board and that were returned to individuals or departments of government, commissions,



agencies or boards for the reason that the appeal dealt with matters mainly outside the jurisdiction of the board?" Answer: Classification Appeal Board informed 123 individuals, that their appeals dealt with matters mainly outside the jurisdiction of the board.

Question No. 64, on the Order Paper of February 27, asked by the Leader of the Opposition. "What is the number of appeals of decisions by the Personnel Administration Division concerning classifications of public service employees that have been submitted to the Classifications Appeal Board and which have been returned to the Departments of Government, Agencies, Boards and Commissions which initiated and made such applications for review?" Answer: A total of two appeals were returned to the Classification Appeal Board, to the Departments of Government, Agencies, Boards and Commissions which initiated and made such applications for review.

Question No. 65, on the Order Paper of February 27, asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. "What is the number of appeals of decisions by the Personnel Administration Division concerning classifications of public service employees that have been submitted to the Classifications Appeal Board and on which decisions have been rendered and in respect of which the review decisions did not uphold the original classifications?" Answer: Final decisions have been rendered by the board on sixty appeals. Of these decisions a total of nine did not uphold the original classification. So, fifty-one have upheld them and nine did not uphold the original classification.

Question No. 66, on the Order Paper of February 27, asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. "What is the number of appeals of decisions by the Personnel Administration Division concerning classifications of public service employees that have been submitted to the Classifications Appeal Board and on which decisions have been rendered and in respect of which the review decisions upheld the original classifications?" Answer: Fifty-one. Final decisions are sixty and of these decisions a total of fifty-one upheld the original

classification.

Question No. 67, on the Order Paper of February 27, asked by the same honourable gentleman. "What is the number of appeals of decisions by the Personnel Administration Division concerning classifications of public service employees that have been submitted to the Classification Appeal Board and on which decisions have been rendered?" Answer: The Classification Appeal Board has received a total of 321 appeals as of February 28, this year. They have rendered the final decision on sixty. (Oh! we got the answers. We have the answers.) No, we cannot table, it is too short. We want to give quick service).

Question No. 68, on the Order Paper of February 27, asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. "What is the number of applications for review of classifications of public service employees that have been filed with the Personnel Administration Division but have been returned to individuals for failure to conform with appeal procedures?" Answer: Twenty-seven.

Question No. 69, on the Order Paper of February 27, asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. "What is the number of applications for review of classifications of public service employees that have been filed with the Personnel Administration Division that were returned to individuals or Departments of Government, Commissions, Agencies or Boards for the reason that the appeal dealt with matters mainly outside the jurisdiction of the Division?" Answer: Seventeen.

Question No. 70, on the Order Paper of February 28, asked by the Leader of the Opposition. "What is the number of applications for review of classifications of public service employees that have been filed with the Personnel Administration Division and which have been returned to Departments of Government, Agencies, Boards and Commissions which initiated and made such applications for review?" Answer: One thousand and fifty-three.

Question No. 71, on the Order Paper of February 28, asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. "What is the number of applications for review of classifications of public service employees that have been filed with the Personnel Administration Division which have been heard and on which decisions have been rendered and in respect of which the review decisions did not uphold the original classifications?" Answer: Three hundred and seven.

Question No. 72, on the Order Paper of February 28, asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. "What is the number of applications for review of classifications of public service employees that have been filed with the Personnel Administration Divisions which have been heard and on which decisions have been rendered and in respect of which the review decisions upheld the original classifications?" Answer: Three hundred and eighty-nine.

Question No. 73, on the Order Paper of February 28, asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. "What is the number of applications for review of classifications of public service employees that have been filed with the Personnel Administration Division which have been heard and on which decisions have been rendered?" Answer: Six hundred and ninety-six.

That is the lot. I am not sure whether I answered Question No. 70 or not.

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.

HON. J. G. ROUSSEAU (Minister of Rehabilitation and Recreation): The hon. member from Labrador South raised a question yesterday about Paradise River in Labrador. I have had the officials of my department check this out and I have been informed that Mr. Daniel Martin, the supplier there at Paradise River, who operates a very small retail store, has few supplies on hand. The bulk of his fall order was not delivered. There is, as we

understand, sufficient food in Cartwright to hold over until the beginning of the navigation season but unfortunately this food is delivered through twenty or thirty miles by ski-doo. We have contacted the wholesaler, Ackerman's Limited, in Cupids, suggesting that we would be prepared to pay a subsidy of four cents a pound for Mr. Ackerman to get the supplies for Mr. Martin to Goose Bay and from then on we will undertake, through the Division of Northern Labrador Services, to get the supplies to Paradise River. As yet we have not heard back from Mr. Ackerman. We are waiting for a return phone call.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HON. E. M. ROBERTS (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Education. I think he may be aware of the situation at Buchans with respect to the possible removal of the source of heat for the two schools there, the Roman Catholic School and the Integrated School. Could he tell us what steps, if any, the government have taken? I realize they do not operate schools but the boards doubtless will need additional help to enable them to deal with the problem. Could he tell us what steps, either the government have taken or are being taken to make sure that the schools in Buchans do not close because of a withdrawal of heat? I understand that that could happen. Would the minister care to - does he want me to repeat it? If the minister could make an answer - I understand that there is an imminent danger that the heat will be withdrawn and the schools will then have to close.

HON. G. R. OTTENHEIMER (Minister of Education): Mr. Speaker, the latest word I have on it, by latest word, about forty-five minutes ago, around fifteen minutes to three, when I made the latest check, I understand that officials have located two boilers; one from the vocational school and one owned by the Town of Grand Falls. It is hoped

and contemplated that one boiler, the one in the vocational school which ever that means, the larger capacity, will be used for the hospital. It is hoped that the boiler in the Grand Falls Vocational School will be used for the Hospital at Buchans and that the second boiler which to the best of my knowledge belongs to the Town of Grand Falls, and it is being checked for adequacy, will be used for one of the schools. Now we are endeavouring (and an official of the Department of Public Works is working on this) to locate a third boiler. The other possibility, if the situation results that there is only one boiler for two schools, I have instructed my deputy minister to speak with both superintendents and to see what arrangements, temporary arrangements could be worked out that a boiler could service one of the schools, whichever is the larger and the more suitable but that the two school boards would agree to sharing the services of this facility, presumably on a shift system and for however long is necessary. That really is the limit of knowledge now. Work is still going ahead in this area. The situation is not clear. This is how it looks now. It could be that before six o'clock

I would have further information in which case, with leave of the House, I would certainly be glad to make it known.

MR. ROBERTS: Just one supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, if I may? There is some cost obviously going to be involved in this, This would be borne I assume by the government and not by the school boards or for that matter the Hospital Board at Buchans. Could the minister speak to that point please?

MR. OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, in our desire if at all possible, to provide the heating services for the schools, and the Minister of Health is not here, so I can only presume it is the same there for the hospital, we have not really gotten into negotiations on the cost factor because we wish not to add what could be another complication. Primarily what we hope to accomplish is the provision of heat, so we have not, in education, I think I am right probably in saying in health, gotten into any negotiations as to any cost sharing or how the cost will be borne.

MR. ROBERTS: I can understand that, Mr. Speaker, but could the minister tell us what the government's policy will be? We were through this before and the cost of this type of moving boilers, setting them up, housing them, the men etc., could be substantial. I do not know the detailed situation of the finances of the Exploits Valley Board or the Integrated Board in the area. I do not know them but I suspect like every other school board they just could not find this sort of money in other words, it may be a Procrustean bed policy, to provide help without giving the financial assistance. Could the minister, if he cannot indicate government policy, could he indicate whether this could be given consideration? I think they are going to need some additional help.

MR. OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, I certainly will answer it perhaps negatively by saying that certainly the schools will not be provided with heating services because of financial requirements. I shall repeat that I am not yet sure that there will in fact be a heating service for either of the schools, is something that is being worked on but certainly schools at Buchans will not be deprived of heating facilities because of any financial burden on these school boards. This we are presuming is not going to last

ad infinitum, I would not say for the next three years.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, about twelve days ago the honourable Premier promised the Concerned Citizen's Group that within a week of their presentation, which was twelve days ago, that he would state government policy on the Downtown Complex. Is the honourable the Premier in a position now, Sir, to make the statement?

HON. F. D. MOORES (PREMIER): First of all, Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member for Bell Island normally does, he has misconstrued what was said twelve days ago. There was no commitment of a specific date as to when government policy will be clear but I can say, Mr. Speaker, that the document presented by the Concerned Citizen's Group has been under study. We are not in a position to say anything, other than what we have said before, at this time and that is, it is primarily a municipal responsibility and at such time as the government becomes involved else such time as we are in a position to make a comment on the representation they made to us, we have no further comment until one or the other of these things result.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister of Justice has been able to consult with his colleague, the Minister of Transportation and Communications, on whether or not the Motor Registration Office hours are going to be extended this year for the issuing of licence plates, in view of the fact that I understand there is some trouble with the computers and they are not getting the plates out on time?

MR. HICKMAN: No I have not, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Communications and Transportation is presently in St. Barbe South or St. Barbe North. He was in St. Barbe South, I believed he crossed the border into St. Barbe North without any interference. I have not been able to communicate with him.

MR. M. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the honourable Minister of Recreation and Rehabilitation. In much the same vein as the one I put forth yesterday. In view of the fact that the supply problem on the coast is a perennial one which is aggravated this year by the non-delivery of supplies on the last coast steamers, I would like for the honourable minister to inform the House what provision has been made to deal with what is

an impending emergency in many communities around the coast?

HON. J. ROUSSEAU (MINISTER OF RECREATION AND REHABILITATION): Is it an impending emergency now or in the spring or next winter?

MR. MARTIN: I would just like to qualify this, if I may. I had some communication from a couple of the merchants there who informed me that because of the increased buying power created by the LIP projects there is a run on supplies and that they are going to be short within a matter of weeks.

MR. ROUSSEAU: Well, the only thing I can say right now is that we are not going to let any community in Labrador and I am sure in the rest of the province be without any essential supplies. When we determine which supplies are essential and if it is an emergency situation, I am sure we will do everything we can to rectify the situation.

MR. MARTIN: Another question, Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct to the honourable the Premier. Regarding the same matter, I would like for the honourable Premier to inform the House as to why the function of providing such emergency service which was so adequately performed by the Department of Recreation and Rehabilitation, why this function was removed to the Emergency Measures Organization Office which do not seem to be able to be able to cope with the problem?

MR. MOORES: Mr. Speaker, the situation was that there was a committee set up, involving the Emergency Measures Office together with government, to try and forecast what the problem would be with the severe ice conditions and that primarily at that time regarded the northern area of the province. The ice condition in Labrador, as the honourable member knows, is annual, it happens every year. I can only say that together with the Minister of Recreation and Rehabilitation, together with the Minister of Social Assistance, that all the necessary steps will be taken to ensure that the necessary facilities and the necessary supplies and so on, the critical ones, will be available to the area which the honourable member is concerned about.

MR. E. WINSOR: Mr. Speaker, in the light of what the honourable the Minister of Recreation and Rehabilitation has stated, that the government have



offered a four cent per pound subsidy for freight to be airlifted into Labrador, I wonder if, (I do not know whether I should address this question to the honourable minister or in the absence of the Minister of Transportation and Communications maybe I should address it to the honourable the Premier) The government have received requests from the people of Fogo and Change Islands for a freight subsidy. They were very appreciative of a subsidy given for passengers but during the ice blockade, which still exists and may for a considerable time yet, the people of Fogo Island and Change Island have to pay the minimum of twelve cents per pound for freight which must be airlifted in there. In the light of what the honourable Minister of Recreation and Rehabilitation stated, if we are going to offer it to one part of the province, then why not the other?

MR. MOORES: Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer the question for the honourable member for Fogo in that all the isolated parts of the province, all those that have suffered because of weather conditions and ice blockades and so on, will be the subject of the same study by this committee, to make sure that the services are adequate for the people involved.

MR. WINSOR: Mr. Speaker, that may be all right for the future but what about the present? The present now we are concerned with, not a year hence.

MR. MOORES: Mr. Speaker, I might remind the honourable member that we always deal with the present and not the past as is the case in the opposition.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with the future and the present. May I ask what the honourable the Premier is prepared to do about freight which has been flown in without subsidy in the past? I refer to the past couple of months - specifically referring to that area in the Straits from L'Anse-au-Clair to Red Bay.

MR. MOORES: Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to talk about what has happened in the past few months any more than in the past twenty-three years. What I am prepared to do is for the honourable member for Labrador South and the honourable member for Fogo to sit down with the honourable Minister of Rehabilitation and Recreation and the honourable Minister of Social Assistance and get an immediate solution to any outstanding problems that there may be,

starting as of now, if these four gentlemen are prepared to get at it.

MR. WINSOR: I thank the honourable Premier for that offer but the request has been made to government quite some time ago for this freight subsidy and no action has been taken. Air freight has been flown in to Fogo Island and Change Island since the 1st. of January. There was no action then and we had to plead and plead to get the air passenger subsidy. Now the honourable Premier and the honourable members have the habit of doing that for years,

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

MR. WINSOR: it is not this past twenty-three years, it is the present.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Fogo I am sure realizes that he was out of order and he was making a speech and not asking a question.

MR. WINSOR: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but it takes some people longer to get the point across to the government,

to bring it across to the government.

MR. MOORES: Not according to me. There are also some people longing to say it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY:

MR. SPEAKER: It being Private Members' Day we shall proceed with motion 5 on the Order Paper. I think the hon. Minister of Education adjourned the debate last night.

HON. G.R. OTTENHEIMER (MINISTER OF EDUCATION): Mr. Speaker, I last spoke briefly on this very interesting and exciting topic on last private members' day. I am certainly looking forward to hearing more, not of myself, but of the debate. (No, no do not go too far, I am just going to be a minute). I am telling the hon. gentleman not to wander too far because while there may be other speakers there may not be and if the House Leader put the question and the hon. gentleman out of the House certainly he would cry "fowl."

MR. NEARY: (Inaudible) I would love to speak to it.

MR. OTTENHEIMER: Very good. So, Mr. Speaker, I shall have to forego the opportunity of having anything more to say and probably forego the pleasure of hearing the hon. member for Bell Island speak on this resolution which has been such an exciting one, a debate where there has been no repetition nor anything, perhaps one of the most enlightening ones. But I do want to get down and see what developments there may come in the course of the afternoon on the situation with respect to Buchans.

So I think the hon. gentleman will understand that I am not slighting by any means his resolution if I do in fact absent myself and keep working in that area.

MR. NEARY: Well, Mr. Speaker, it looks like the government benches have run out of speakers. They have run out of steam.

MR. MURPHY: We have run into an emergency.

MR. NEARY: I have an emergency in my office right now, Mr. Speaker, a young lady who has been fired by McLean this morning, and I was just trying to find out why when I had to come back into the House.

MR. MURPHY: That is the member's fault.

MR. NEARY: It is not the member's fault. Another example of the turnover in the staff they are having down there at McLean's offices.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to conclude the debate on my request that this hon. House appoint a select committee to investigate the relationship between Mr. George McLean and the government, the various government departments, crown corporations and corporations and individuals doing business with the government, to investigate such relationships, Mr. Speaker, and to determine whether there is indeed a conflict of interest in the government's retention of the McLean Organization, may I again, Sir, repeat some of the grounds for my request. Number one, Sir, in my introduction of this resolution I asked the government to explain why \$116,056.97, to be exact, was paid out of the public treasury for the period ending June 30, 1972, to George McLean Public Relations.

Well, Sir, the excuse that I received from the hon. the Premier for lashing out \$116,000 of the tax payers' money was that this was a progress payment. Well I contend, Sir, it was an advance to Mr. McLean because up to that point, up to the end of June, 1972, no work had been performed by McLean. So how could it be a progress payment? It was an advanced, Sir, an advance to McLean to set up an audio-visual office in this province.

Number two, Sir, and this is only common sense and in keeping with good business practices, why did not the government invite presentations from other public relations firms and call tenders for slide presentations and films? There were no invitations to other public relations firms, Sir, to make presentations. There

were no second choices. There were no tenders called for slide presentations and films and it appears, Sir, that more emphasis was placed on the amount of work produced or the amount produced rather than the quality of the work. Now we have heard an explanation from the hon. the Premier and some of the ministers on the opposite side that you do not call tenders for public relations. You might not call tenders, Mr. Speaker, but you invite presentations and you select the best presentation at the lowest cost. This is the same as calling tenders, Sir, and yet we were told by the hon. Premier back in June of last year that McLean would bid on government contracts the same as anybody else. Well, Sir, we have now been told that no tenders were called, no invitations to make presentations were asked for from other firms. It is possible, Mr. Speaker, because I have checked this out and the experts tell me that it is possible to call tenders for slide presentations and for film work.

Number three, Sir, and the Premier has not answered this to our satisfaction, in the midst of the ERCO controversy last year, why was McLean allowed to issue press releases for both the government and the company? Number four, and this is probably the most serious charge of all, Sir, involving the triangle arrangement between McLean, the government and the province's new fiscal agents, Burns Brothers and Denton. Mr. Speaker, how can the lawyers down in the Justice Department, how can the architects of the conflict of interest legislation draft effective legislation which is going to be brought into this House in a day or two, how can they draft this legislation, Sir, with this kind of a cozy arrangement going on between the government, McLean and the government's fiscal agents? How, Mr. Speaker, in all conscience, can the McLean outfit act for the government at the same time that it represents the Tory party of this province?

Number five, Mr. Speaker, why did the hon. the Premier and the government not see fit to investigate serious charges made by the

former Minister of Education involving outlandish fees and charges for making a number of what would appear to be inexpensive slide presentations for the Department of Education? What about the serious statements, made by the former Minister of Education, of political patronage? The hon. Leader of the Opposition quoted from this article which appeared in the "Toronto Sun," Mr. Speaker, of January 13, "John Carter a thirty-eight year old St. John's farmer-businessman charged he was flung out of the Moores Cabinet because he was too strait-laced in his opposition to political favours." A pretty serious charge, Mr. Speaker. In an interview the former Education and Youth Minister said he had objected to such things as proposals to have film strips made by a Toronto Public Relations Firm at a cost of \$4,000 "when the strips could have been done by my department, with our own equipment, for about \$500." What a revelation, Mr. Speaker. Then the former minister who says he was flung out went on and talked about the United States promotor John Shaheen. Then he said, "I was not Mr. Popularity with Mr. Moores," said Carter, a one time president of the Newfoundland Progressive Conservative Party. He also ran against Moores for the party leadership

said he incurred the Premier's displeasure for stopping an attempt to have the film strip work go to NACOM Limited, a Toronto public relations firm, headed by George McLean. 'McLean had done public relations work for the party during the election campaign,' said Carter, 'so they are handing him a lot of contracts now.'" A little bit of payola, Mr. Speaker. 'Moore's did not openly overrule my decision to stop the strips award, but I knew he was displeased,' said Carter. Moore's is vacationing in the West Indies and has failed since last Friday to answer repeated telephone calls about the charges. He is due back in Newfoundland on January 12."

Here is what McLean says about this, here is what Mr. McLean says about all this, Mr. Speaker. McLean said his company, is now doing film strips for the Newfoundland Government in several departments. "But we feel very proud of our work since it is being done by us in Canada rather than in Boston as was the case before." Regarding Carter's objections, McLean says, "the former minister had wanted to personally appear early and often in one of the film strips to be used in the schools." McLean said his company has produced film strips for the Departments of Tourism, Fisheries and Highways. "NACOM has also established a five man office in St. John's," he said.

"Carter noted," just listen to this, Mr. Speaker, "Carter noted that both Moore's and Justice Minister Alex Hickman, had been the guests in Florida recently of Shaheen and they were there to watch the last Appolo moon shot. 'Shaheen is getting along just as well, if not better, with them now as he ever did with Joey,' claimed Carter," and this is headed "Newfoundland Government Could Teach Joey Tricks."

I would say they certainly can, Sir, if what the former Minister of Education says is true. We have not seen anything to disprove what the former minister said. A cabinet minister did

not break his oath of secrecy, as far as I can see, questions the administration because of what appeared to him to be political patronage, payola, graft if you wish. I do not know if that is a proper term, Mr. Speaker. It is a strong word but it certainly looks that way. A little bit of graft from Mr. McLean, and a former minister makes this statement.

It was not the member for Bell Island or the Leader of the Opposition or the member for White Bay South, Sir. It was not a Liberal who said it, it was one of the biggest, strongest Tories in this province. It is brushed aside by the Premier, brushed aside.

On number six, Mr. Speaker, why did not the Minister of Finance or the honourable Premier when they were speaking in this debate, why did they not explain subhead 1412-05-06 - Public Information Service - \$43,000? An item strongly criticized by the Auditor General in his annual report to the House of Assembly for the year ended March 31, 1972. Why, Mr. Speaker, were we told by the Minister of Fisheries, in the House of Assembly, in June of last year, that there were no contracts in his department and he said he could not see any involvement. To quote the honourable minister, Mr. Speaker, he said, "I cannot see any involvement. I cannot answer that one specifically." Yet, Sir, the Auditor General in his report tells us that \$43,000 was lashed out to McLean without authority, no authority for it.

If the minister wanted to, he could stand on the floor of this House and he could tell us some hair-raising stories about Mr. McLean, Mr. Speaker. Above any other minister on that side of the House, the Minister of Fisheries knows what it is like to have his arm twisted, to be browbeaten into giving McLean government contracts, on instructions and orders from the Office of the Premier. They are not written contracts either, Mr. Speaker.



I challenged the government when I introduced this resolution, "produce the contracts," I said, "lay them on the table of the House." They have not produced them yet, Mr. Speaker, because there are no written contracts. Contracts are given out at the whims of the Premier. Whenever Mr. McLean comes begging for another job, a call from the Office of the Premier and instructions are given to find some work for McLean. The Minister of Fisheries knows this. Why did he not get up in this honourable House during this debate and tell us the truth of this matter?

June 29, 1972, quoting from Hansard, the verbatim report of this House, Sir, " Mr. Cheeseman - 'There are no existing contracts in the Department of Fisheries and I cannot see any involvement. I cannot answer that one specifically. I cannot see any connection that it would have with Burgeo. To my knowledge, no.'" The minister knows full well that his officials have been bludgeoned into paying McLean, giving McLean advance payments on account, no work performed. I would like to tell the honourable minister this, seeing he did not have the courage to get up in this debate, I would like to tell the honourable minister what Mr. McLean thinks of him.

'Last Christmas, Sir, when they were doing a film on the fishery, a phone call came through to Mr. McLean's office down at Elizabeth Towers, from Toronto, asking one of the employees to work overtime, to get some work done on the fishery film. This particular employee did not want to work during the Christmas period, so McLean says, "Do not worry about it, we will pay you double. We will double your pay if you will work during the Christmas holidays on this film." Finally the employee said, "No, I am not going to work. I do not want to work during the Christmas holiday." Mr. McLean is alleged to have said to this employee, "Look, we have been paid for this film. We do not have

any work done on it and that stupid Minister of Fisheries, Chesseman, is likely to ask for the film." That is what Mr. McLean thinks of the honourable Minister of Fisheries. I am surprised that such an honourable gentleman would sit in his seat in this House tongue-tied and allow this sort of skulduggery to go on right underneath his nose, Sir, it is a terrible situation.

Mr. Speaker, I reminded the honourable Premier, in the debate three weeks ago, that eleven days after the honourable the Premier had installed himself on the eighth floor, one of the first pieces of correspondence that came into his office was from Mr. McLean, begging for work. That is true, Mr. Speaker, if it is not true, then why did not the honourable Premier see fit to check his files and find out if Mr. McLean had written him on January 29, 1972, eleven days after he had become Premier of this province? Instead of brushing the matter aside by stating he did not recall getting any such letter. He did not recall! Did he ask his secretary or some of the flunkies down on the eighth floor to check the files? No, he just said he did not recall.

Number eight, Mr. Speaker, why did the honourable the Premier appear to mislead the House on June 28, 1972, when he stated, when we were doing the item by item debate on the estimates, he said, "Certainly there is nothing in my department that he has been involved in. Any particular project that comes up," said the Premier, "in any department that his services apply, he is eligible to bid on it as other will be."

The Premier has not denied saying this. His answer was, "Well, ask the Leader of the Opposition, he told us, you cannot

call tenders on public relations work." Well, Sir, I have had plenty of time over the last three weeks to check all over North America and I have been told by people who know that what you do in cases of this sort is invite presentation. Then you select the best presentation at the best cost that you can get. Did the honourable the Premier do this? No, Mr. Speaker, of course not. It was not done, Sir. The Premier did not live up to his word.

MR. MOORES: That is not quite true, the first presentation was to be made on March...

MR. NEARY: There was one presentation.

MR. MOORES: (Inaudible)

MR. NEARY: There were no other presentations.

MR. MOORES: Excellent .

MR. NEARY: Number (9), Mr. Speaker, what about the reports that the McLean organization and its subsidiaries are in constant difficulty with the provincial civil service? What about this? The rumours are widespread, Sir, in this building and in this city everybody knows about it except the government. The government do not know about it, how the employees of Mr. McLean come in and stand up, they are the only ones who can do it, wait for their cheque, pass in an invoice, rush down to the Department of Finance, where the minister's officials make out a cheque, it is brought back and given to them within ten or fifteen minutes.

MR. CROSBIE: It is the first I have heard of it.

MR. NEARY: The minister had better check on it, because it is not the first I have heard of it. The officials are browbeaten, Sir, browbeaten into submission.

Number (10) I asked this question when I introduced this resolution. Where did the money come from for McLean to set up an audio-visual company here in Newfoundland and for the purchase of equipment? Number (11) Why does the company here have such a large turnover in staff? Only one employee has been with the company in the one year that it has been in operation in this province in both offices. The

honourable Premier is trying to be smart now, he says, he thinks:

"We will vote for it," If the honourable Premier had any sense he would vote for it because it is a pretty serious matter.

MR. MOORES: The honourable member for Bell Island...

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if that is an invitation or not. If it is an invitation, the answer is no, Sir.

MR. W.N. ROWE: You will have the member voting against the motion.

MR. NEARY: Not interested. Not for sale, Sir, not interested.

The honourable Premier knows that I am not for sale.

MR. MOORES: No, you are just buyable.

MR. NEARY: The honourable Premier knows that.

AN HON. MEMBER: For rent.

MR. MOORES: That is right.

MR. NEARY: I will deal with that, Mr. Speaker, when the time comes.

MR. MOORES: Do not pay now, pay later.

MR. NEARY: There are two forms of law in this province, Mr. Speaker, one for the rich and one for the poor. Over on Bell Island, Sir, a few welfare recipients are being investigated for alleged abuse of welfare.

AN HON. MEMBER: There is one.

MR. NEARY: No, not one. It is not the member for Bell Island that is being investigated. If anybody is being investigated it is the member who made the charges in this House, the unsubstantiated charges. Here we have a public enquiry, Sir, a public enquiry investigating four or five hundred welfare recipients on Bell Island for trying to patch up their poor little homes.

MR. MOORES: You are against public enquiries.

MR. NEARY: I am not against public enquiries, I am all for them.

MR. MOORES: Then what are you shooting off about?

MR. NEARY: What I am saying is this, Mr. Speaker, there is a law for the rich and a law for the poor in this province. Here we have McLean sucking out of this province this year, out of the public

treasury alone, a half million dollars. A half million dollars and that is only directly from the public treasury. How much is Mr. McLean sucking out of Shaheen Natural Resources which are depending indirectly for their very existence upon the taxpayers of this province? How much is he taking out of ERCO, National Sea Products, the Linerboard Mill? Mr. Speaker,

AN HON. MEMBER: It is terminated.

MR. NEARY: It is terminated. How much did he, I asked, in this fiscal year? How much?

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible)

MR. CROSBIE: No, no it was more than that.

MR. NEARY: Ministers came into this House and tabled their presentations. We have not had one from the Minister of Finance nor the Minister of Education nor the Minister of Social Services nor all the other ministers representing departments that McLean has his hooks into.

MR. MOORES: The Minister of Education did.

MR. NEARY: The Minister of Education did not.

MR. MOORES: He did too.

MR. NEARY: He did not verbally. He did not give us the total amount. He did not, if he did, I would have it.

MR. MOORES: You would?

MR. NEARY: I would and I do not have it. Members of the House do not have it. The Minister of Education did not make a presentation and he did not tell us what the total amount was that was spent with McLean in that department. The Minister without Portfolio knows that.

Number (12) Mr. Speaker, and I want to deal with this matter of the letter. I would like to know who authorized the Minister of Finance, who was also Minister of Economic Development at the time, to become involved in these high-pressure tactics used to sell advertising for what I call this "scruffy tourist booklet" that was put out and why 80,000 copies of it were dumped either in Robin Hood Bay or burnt

in the incinerators in Toronto?

MR. DOYLE: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Those figures are one hundred percent incorrect, as the honourable member knows.

AN HON. MEMBER: What is the point of order?

MR. DOYLE: The point of order is that the honourable member is quoting totally incorrect figures and he is quite aware of it.

MR. W.N. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, to speak to the so-called point of order; What the honourable minister has done is dispute a fact or an opinion given by the honourable member for Bell Island, it has nothing to do with the rules or the orders of this House.

MR. MOORES: To the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think it probably is out of order but what I think my honourable colleague was trying to say is that the member for Bell Island is normally one hundred percent incorrect.

MR. NEARY: We have him back. We have him back in the province and I have him back on his feet. That is a major accomplishment, Sir.

AN HON. MEMBER: It is a major statement too.

MR. NEARY: A major statement of policy. Mr. Speaker, let us deal with this letter first, and I will dispose of the letter rather quickly. As the honourable Minister of Finance was sucked into this, and it is not very often the honourable minister makes a blunder, I can assure the House of that, not very often but I caught him on this one.

Here is what the honourable minister says in this letter that he gave to McLean about a year ago: "This will advise" he says; "that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has consented to the publication of the magazine 'Newfoundland and Labrador '72' by McLean Public Relations, for which your advertising support is being solicited." Since when, Mr. Speaker, did McLean or anybody else have to get the consent of the honourable Minister of Finance to put out this booklet? Since when? Does everybody in the future who is going to issue a publication on Newfoundland have to come to the honourable Minister of Finance to get his consent? Is this a new law that we have not heard about? No

wonder the honourable Minister of Finance would hang his head in shame. Then he says; "For which your advertising support is being solicited." Do you know what Mr. McLean did with that letter, Mr. Speaker?

There was another letter written then by Public Relations Consultants Limited. This letter was sent around, there was a lot of propaganda in it and do you know what they said to all these potential advertisers? "Please refer to enclosed letter from honourable John C. Crosbie." It was a form of blackmail, Mr. Speaker, that is what it was. I do not think the honourable minister will make that mistake again, that was a boo boo! He got caught, he knows he did.

Mr. Neary.

The honourable minister knows I caught him with his finger - no not with his finger in the pie but almost, I suppose. We may even get the minister to vote for this resolution before we are finished with him. You know something else about this tourist booklet, Mr. Speaker, we were told by the Minister without Portfolio, the honourable Premier and a couple of other ministers, I believe, the Minister of Finance told us too that Mr. McLean was not paid for these two advertisements that showed a picture of the honourable Premier and a picture of the Minister of Provincial Affairs and Services

They were not paid. That is true, Sir. I made that statement when I introduced the resolution. I said that they were not paid. It is not that they did not try to get paid, Sir, because I have here in my hand (I am going to table this) an invoice, July 14, 1972, Public Relations Consultants Limited, which were McLean's agents, (I do not know, Mr. Speaker, if they are an affiliate of McLean's or not) which says: "Government of Newfoundland, Confederation Building, St. John's, Newfoundland." Two pages advertising "Newfoundland and Labrador, 1972, \$1,000." Typed down at the bottom: 'Important, please mail cheque to above address but make payable to Provincial Tourist Guide Limited.' Received Office of the Premier, records office, July 31, 1972." This invoice was received in the Premier's Office. Then this was sent from the Premier's Office down to whatever department was responsible for paying this bill. It was not paid. No thanks to the honourable the Premier and the government it was not paid, because on August 15, a month later, a second invoice came to the government. This time it originated from Suite 211, Elizabeth Towers, St. John's, Newfoundland, dated August 15, 1972, "Provincial Tourist Guide Limited to the Department of Economic Development, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Confederation Building," two pages advertising Newfoundland and Labrador, "1972, \$1,000, important, please mail cheques to above address and make payable to Provincial Tourist Guide Limited."



Mr. Speaker, I would like to table these two documents. These are authentic. They were not paid, no thanks to the honourable Premier nor anybody in the government. If we got a select committee, we would find out why they were not paid. They were not paid.

AN HON. MEMBER: How clever he is.

MR. NEARY: Mr. McLean tried to browbeat the civil servants into paying it. I have other correspondence that I could table, Mr. Speaker, and I will table it if the government will agree to set up this select committee because it involves a number of people outside of this House. I can produce the evidence and the witnesses, Sir. All I need is the select committee. I will do it.

MR. MOORES: If I listen to the hon. member for Bell Island - a thousand dollars worth of building materials. Is that what you are saying?

MR. NEARY: We will deal with the building materials. Do not worry about that. The Premier is stooping pretty low now, Mr. Speaker. He is stooping pretty low. We will deal with that when the times comes. The hon. Premier better be prepared to either fling one of his ministers out or the House will fling him out.

MR. MOORES: Or you will just do it gracefully on your own.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I asked in my original submission why the McLean's Companies were continuously having financial problems as we were told in the information that we received from Toronto? If the hon. the Minister without Portfolio wants the source of that information, I would say, Sir, that the way is open to him. He can get the source of that information. There is no problem. All the government have to do is to set up this select committee. The honourable minister will get the source of that information quicker than he thinks. It is just a smoke screen the honourable minister put up. I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, why government cheques are assigned to the Royal Bank of Canada on Young Street in Toronto? All we have to do is go down here in the Registry Office, Sir, or read the financial reports on business in this province. You can find out, public knowledge. You can find out what happens to Mr. McLean's cheques. They are not deposited here, Sir, this

great Newfoundland Company that we heard so much about. They are sent up to the Royal Bank of Canada on Younge Street. I think I asked this question before. How come that besides the Electric Reduction Company of Canada, McLean also handles public relations for National Sea Products, Labrador Linerboard and the Shaheen Organization? All depending. Sir, directly or indirectly upon the public treasury for either their existence in this province or for grants and subsidies from the taxpayers of this province. What about the film strips we are now hearing so much about? What is the disposition, Mr. Speaker, of the 800 per cent profits on these strips? What is the markup on production costs, agency commissions, etc., over and above the charges that are made on the public treasury?

I made a statement sometime ago, Sir, that if you combine the McLean income in this province, this year, including what McLean is getting from Shaheen, National Sea Products, what he got from the Linerboard Mill, what he got from the Electric Reduction Company of Canada and what came directly out of the public treasury, it would be anywhere between three-quarters of a million and one million dollars. Sir, I am not afraid to make that statement inside or outside the House. The total combined income will be - it is a half million directly from the public treasury. Why, Mr. Speaker, has it been necessary to have special messengers from Toronto deliver at St. John's Airport certain films and other documents, only to have the messenger returned on the next flight to Toronto?

I ask this question, Sir, of the hon. Minister of Tourism. Why is it necessary to have representatives of McLean's tag along with officials of the Department of Tourism, under jaunts all over North America, at the expense of the taxpayers of this province? Number seventeen, Sir, and the Premier made no reference to this: I wanted to know if Mr. McLean or any of his associates were involved in writing the Speech from the Throne

or any other matters relating to Opening Day?

Mr. Speaker, the honourable the Premier has not answered a single one of these charges, other than attempt to distract the House by charging that I was using the immunity of the House to make such charges. Mr. Speaker, as a parliamentarian of relatively brief experience, the honourable the Premier should know that the very reason for parliamentary immunity is so that the elected representatives of the people may probe into all threats to good government. This is a privilege, Mr. Speaker, that is as old as the right to vote and elect a candidate of your choice to a legislative body. It is a practice, Sir,

MR. NEARY: that is observed throughout the free world. We inherited the system, Sir, I did not make it up. Anytime, Mr. Speaker, that the honourable the Premier or anybody on the other side of the House wish to do away with immunity of this House, Sir, then there is a process whereby this can be done. Right at the time, or just around the same time that the honourable the Premier and his colleagues were making this statement, Mr. Stanfield, the great saviour of the Tory Party of Canada, on a visit to Newfoundland, when he appeared on an open line programme on C.J.O.N., said this about diplomatic immunity or parliamentary immunity.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the honourable Premier and his minister disagree with Mr. Stanfield. He said, "I think the immunity should be preserved."

MR. MARSHALL: I wonder would the honourable member yield the floor for just a moment because I got a matter of great revelation to him that he might like to be enlightened.

MR. NEARY: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MARSHALL: It is a matter of the report of expenditures on the Department of Education.

MR. NEARY: On Buchans?

MR. MARSHALL: No on Education, the Department of Education, George McLean, the great -

MR. NEARY: Inaudible.

MR. MARSHALL: May I have leave, Mr. Speaker, to table the fourth or fifth installment of the "Book of Revelations," for the honourable the member for Bell Island. We were so anxious to get it for the honourable the member, Mr. Speaker, that we only have one copy here but we will get extra copies taken now and circulated.

MR. NEARY: What about the presentation from the Minister of Social Services?

MR. MARSHALL: We will even translate it for the honourable member, if he wishes we will read it to him.

MR. NEARY: We were told in this honourable House last week that Mr. McLean made a slide presentation on adoptions, children available for adoption for the Department of Social Services. We do not have it. Well we may as well have it all.

AN HON. MEMBER: No, we got nothing to hide.

MR. NEARY: Would the honourable Premier send one of his flunkies down to get that for us?

MR. MOORES: No, but we will look after an adoption if it is immediate.

MR. NEARY: What can you do, Mr. Speaker. The honourable Premier would have been far better off if he had stayed up with the delights of Montreal. Well I wish I was with the honourable Premier, I wish I was with him.

Here is what Mr. Stanfield says on immunity -

MR. MOORES: Immunity.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Stanfield, great saviour of the Tory Party of Canada.

MR. MOORES: Immunity as opposed to immunization.

MR. NEARY: "I think immunity should be preserved. Members of Parliament have had immunity for hundreds of years.

AN HON. MEMBER: A political pill.

MR. NEARY: "I think it is an essential part of freedom of debate and free speech, freedom of frank speech in Parliament."

Now that is what the great idol of the -

MR. MURPHY: Finish the rest.

MR. NEARY: I do not have the whole.

MR. MURPHY: Read the rest of it. Yes, read it all.

MR. NEARY: If the honourable minister wants the script, he can go and get it the same as I did.

MR. MURPHY: He did not mention it but he certainly referred to people like you.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, as I say, if the honourable Premier or the ministers or the government wants to change this immunity in this House, then there is a process whereby this can be done.

However, Mr. Speaker, in this particular case that we are debating before the House now, it is interesting to note that all the charges that I made in this honourable House on Wednesday, February 21, 1973 were already made outside the House and all the unanswered questions that I put to the government today and on February 21, have been repeated time and time again, Sir, outside this honourable House, and will be repeated, Mr. Speaker, over and over again in the months ahead and the honourable Premier knows that I made these statements outside of this honourable House. The honourable Premier knows because of a little discussion he and I had down in the corner there last week. I do not repeat private conversations, Sir.

There is not one charge, one statement in here that I would not repeat in this House and have repeated and will continue to repeat outside this House. So, Mr. Speaker, this foolish red herring the honourable Premier and the minister have introduced in this debate will not dupe even the more weak amongst those who are following the shady dealings with the McLean companies.

So, Mr. Speaker, may I further point out the weakness of the Premier and his choice of public relations fellow travellers. The Premier's defence is less than a weak defence. What the honourable Premier said in the House is a nondefence, since he answered not a single one of the charges to which I drew attention of the honourable members of this House.

We do, Mr. Speaker, need a select committee to investigate these charges, so that, Sir, if there is indeed no conflict of interest, the government may continue its present suspect relationship

with George McLean and his associates.

If, on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, the investigation indicates that there is indeed conflict or even suspicion of conflict, then steps must be taken immediately to provide the obvious remedy, Sir.

Regarding my statements, Mr. Speaker, that a select committee could quite easily validate them by calling witnesses, sending for documents and so forth, the charges that I made, Sir, would either be validated or they would be thrown out. For instance, Mr. Speaker, to my statement that a vast proportion of the shoddy tourist booklet, put out at the end of the tourist season last summer as a private blackmail project by the government's present public relations council, ended up in Robin Hood Bay dump, there has been no answer. The good of the people of this province demands that there be an answer.

MR. DOYLE: I rise on a point of personal privilege. On March 7 in this House, I tabled a document of some six pages which detailed the relationship between my department and the McLean Organization. On the sixth of those six pages I clearly stated what happened to the 100,000 odd copies of that booklets that were printed.

Now is the honourable member doubting my words? If so I would like him to say so.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, to that point of personal privilege, I submit there is no point of privilege, the honourable gentleman is merely trying to enter into a debate. My colleague made no accusation involving the member for Ferryland directly or indirectly. He is merely making a statement in debate.

We read the honourable gentleman's statement. I know exactly what it is worth.

MR. SPEAKER: I have to rule that it is not really a point of privilege. It is a matter of the difference of opinion between two honourable members.

MR. NEARY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say, Sir, that a select

committee should be set up for the good of the people of this province. They demand an answer to this. To my statement that Newfoundlanders hired by the McLean Organization have left because of the insight they gained into the unethical practices of those people's public relations council, Sir, there has been no answer and a select committee is needed to secure an answer.

To my statement that a substantial amount of public money was advanced to Mr. McLean and his associates to establish an audio-visual company in this province, no answer to my statement, Sir. To my statement of an appearance of conflict of interest because of McLean's dealings with firms directly and indirectly involved in financing from the public treasury, no answer. To my statement of political favouritism to Mr. McLean for services rendered on behalf of the Tory Party in two provincial general elections and one federal election and for anticipated favours in the future, no answer, Mr. Speaker. To my statement that high pressure tactics were being used to secure payments of bills from various government departments and to suck money out of the government in private business, no answer, Sir. To my statement that apart from all the other charges that go into make up this staggering figure of \$420,000 of the taxpayers money that Mr. McLean and associates get, no answer, Sir. For the good of the people of this province, they deserve answers, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, these and numerous other questions must be answered to the satisfaction of all concerned, otherwise Sir, a dark cloud will hang over the head of this government and this province for a long time to come. I would go as far as to suggest, Sir, that if the people of this province do not get the answers, then Mr. McLean may be responsible for bringing down this government.

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April 27, 1971, when the Minister of Finance was standing on this side of the House, Sir, he amended the Throne Speech and I will quote from Hansard, "Upon the motion that Mr. Speaker leave the Chair, Mr. Crosbie moved, seconded by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that all words including and after the word "that" be struck out and the following be substituted thereof, 'that an inquiry be instituted into the operations of Martin Goldfarb of Toronto with respect to work underway for the Government of Newfoundland by his firm and reported political opinion polls underway in the province by Martin Goldfarb for the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and any possible conflict of interest or impropriety thereby resulting.'" Well, Sir, Mr. Goldfarb only received one-fifth, Mr. Speaker, of the rip-off that Mr. McLean is getting out of this province, and the Minister of Finance when he was here in opposition thought that this was improper, there was conflict of interest, Mr. Goldfarb was working for the Department of Tourism and the Liberal Party at the same time and that there should have been an investigation for \$75,000 or \$80,000, one-fifth of what Mr. McLean has been paid or that we know about that has been paid out of the public treasury.

Well, Sir, I say to the Minister of Finance, if there was justification for an investigation at that time and justification for the minister to bring a resolution into this House, well then, Sir, there is certainly justification for my bringing a resolution into this House when there was a half a million dollars involved, and I would hope that the Minister of Finance would have the courage to stand up and vote for this resolution in view of his past performance in this House.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, may I say it would be far better if the government used the half million dollars subverted for the support of the McLean Organization as a loan fund from which low income

families could borrow to finance over the long-term and at a nominal rate of interest purchases of homes. If such a fund were available, Mr. Speaker, at least one hundred families would become homeowners this year, families who at the present time can never hope to be anything more than victims of the landlords that we have heard so much about. If the government is going to lash out hundreds of thousands, a half a million this year, a million next year and maybe a million and a half the following year, if they are going to lash out this kind of money for public relations, Mr. Speaker, then let them do something that will benefit our people instead of these silly, foolish, one minute television shots of how we should sand our highways, and it is shown so often, Mr. Speaker, that they have reached the stage of boredom.

Mr. Speaker, in placing this resolution before the House of Assembly I would ask and hope that in the name of honour and decency that members on both sides of the House would vote in favour of this resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been moved and seconded that a select committee of eight members be appointed to investigate into and report upon the matters set forth above and any other matters incidental thereto, the said committee having the power to send for persons and documents and to examine witnesses under oath.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

In my opinion the "Nays" have it.

DIVISION:

MR. SPEAKER: Those in favour of the motion please rise: the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Woodward, Mr. W.N. Rowe, Captain Winsor, Mr. Neary, Mr. F.B. Rowe.

Those against the motion please rise: the hon. the Premier, the hon. the Minister of Labrador Affairs, the hon. the Minister of Social Services and Rehabilitation, the hon. the Minister of Supply

and Services, the hon. Mr. Marshall, the hon. the Minister of Finance, the hon. the Minister of Fisheries, the hon. the Minister of Provincial Affairs, Mr. Stagg, Mr. Brett, Mr. Peckford, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Young and Mr. Evans.

I declare the motion lost.

MR. SPEAKER: Motion (6):

WHEREAS during the past ten years over 60,000 accidents have occurred on our highways, and

WHEREAS these accidents have resulted in personal injury to over 25,000 people, and

WHEREAS these accidents have resulted in 800 people being killed, and

WHEREAS records for the year 1972 indicate an increase in traffic accidents and injuries of between twenty-five and thirty per cent over the year 1971, the highest in our history, and

WHEREAS records show that 108 Newfoundlanders were killed in traffic accidents during the year 1972, the highest number of fatalities in our history, and

WHEREAS the Newfoundland Safety Council has submitted a brief to the Government supported by a petition of nearly 10,000 licensed drivers requesting, among other things, that a Royal Commission be set up to examine into all aspects of the situation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House direct the Government to establish immediately a Commission of Enquiry to examine, enquire into and investigate all aspects of highway safety and that such Commission of Enquiry be directed to report back to the Government with their findings and recommendations without undue delay.

MR. ROWE (W.N.): This is from chalk to cheese, Mr. Speaker. We just had a highly controversial motion before this House to conclude today and voted down to the shame of the members of this House. This motion on the other hand should not be controversial. I see no reason why all members of this House should not vote for it.

The motion is that this House direct the government to establish immediately a Commission of Enquiry to examine, enquire into and investigate all aspects of highway safety and that such Commission of Enquiry be directed to report back to the government with their findings and recommendations without undue delay.

I had hoped, Sir, that this motion would be a work of supererogation, that it would become redundant, that I would be able to stand in the House today and to ask the consent of the House to withdraw the motion. I had hoped that the government by this time would have acceded to the request of the Highway Safety Council to set up a Royal Commission, a Commission of Enquiry to investigate the matters alleged in their brief to the government some three or four weeks ago. I see that that has not been done so I have no choice today but to proceed with the motion and to make a few brief comments on it.

First of all, Sir, let me go into the magnitude of the problem facing Newfoundland and Labrador in respect of highway safety, accidents, injuries and the carnage on our highway system. I have some statistics here, Sir, which are very revealing, statistics which many people in Newfoundland and Labrador and across Canada have become deadened to, they have very little impact on them. I hope that by reiterating, repeating these statistics or some of them today, that members of the House can look at the whole matter afresh and decide that something should be done to try to curb this problem of highway safety and lack of highway safety in our province. The statistics, as I have said, have been supplied to me by the Highway Safety Council and other sources in the province.

One revealing figure, Sir, is the fact that, according to the Highway Safety Council, 15,000 young people every year reach the driving age, reach the age of seventeen, 15,000, a veritable army of

young men and women who reach the age where legally they can be put in control of a lethal weapon, the motor vehicle. Another statistic, Sir, is that about thirty-four per cent of all road accidents, more than one-third per cent of all road accidents involve people under the age of twenty-four years. Statistics show that one out of every three teenagers is sooner or later involved in a traffic accident, one out of every three young person between the age of seventeen and under twenty is involved at some point or another during that period that they are under twenty in an automobile accident. The statistics also show that drivers under the age of twenty total under ten per cent of all drivers but these same drivers are involved in nearly sixteen per cent, getting up for double, of all highway fatalities in our province and over sixteen per cent of all

motor vehicle accidents, ten per cent of our driving population are involved in over sixteen per cent of our accidents across this province. The accident involvement rate of teenagers, people under twenty, is twice the average of drivers twenty years of age and over. The question which brings to mind, Sir, immediately is why this should be so? Young people are usually blessed with acute vision, better reflexes, greater strength, better response to stimulus, all this sort of thing, yet they are involved in twice as many accidents as drivers over the age of twenty. That is a revealing statistic, Sir, and it should be looked at by somebody in an expert capacity to try and determine why that should be so.

During the past ten years in our province, Mr. Speaker, there have been 60,000 highway accidents in this province, 6,000 highway accidents every year in the past ten year, and of course it is going up steadily all the time. There have been injuries as a result of these accidents. There have been injuries to 25,000 people over that ten year period, an average of 2500 per year or over 200 injuries, serious and minor, but 200 injuries on the average per month in this province. Over that same ten year period over 800 people, young and old alike, have been killed, blotted out, annihilated as a result of highway accidents. 800 people, eighty per year on the average and going up steadily all the time.

During the year 1972, just past, a couple of months ago, there was between a twenty-five to thirty per cent, nearly a one-third increase in traffic accidents and injuries in this province, an amazing acceleration of highway accidents in Newfoundland and Labrador. There were 108 people killed in this province as a result of highway accidents in that same year. The average for the ten years is 80 per year, There were 108 killed last year in this province as a direct result of highway accidents. That is two people per week blotted out, killed, involved in fatalities as a result of driving on our highways in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We are all used to gory highway statistics, Mr. Speaker, this accident which occurred in Ontario a day or two ago is found to be interested and horrible for a day or two then it fades, recedes into the background again-

We are getting used to gory statistics, gory happenings and horrible experiences like that one. But I would like to merely mention to members of the House and the public for a moment, mention what would happen if suddenly in this province or in Canada a disease, a new disease were to occur, were to happen, which had the effect of killing in the run of a year 108 people or two people per week in this province, particularly if such fatalities related to the greater part to young people, perhaps people under the age of twenty-five years, people in their prime. I am sure that in that case, Mr. Speaker, there would be quite an outcry, quite a political agitation of every type to do something about that kind of an occurrence which was killing two people per week or an average of say one hundred per year in this province.

But unfortunately we have become blasé and uninterested about what is happening really on the highways, the carnage on the highways in the province. The statistics become even more intolerable when they are projected a little bit into the future. The statisticians or the people who spend their time doing this kind of unpleasant job say that one out of two people, one out of every two people who drive today either has been involved in a motor vehicle accident in which he suffered a disabling injury or will be involved in the future in an accident which results in disability or death, one out of two people alive today either has already or will at some time during his life in the years to come, statistically one out of every two will be involved and disabled in some way as a result of a motor vehicle accident.

Now, Sir, these statistics are horrible in the extreme, in my estimation. I think that the reason we become blasé about it and uninterested in these types of statistics is that first of all we are so accustomed to hearing them over the radio and over television or reading it in the newspaper and secondly, there seems to be a feeling afoot that there is nothing that can be done about it anyway, that it is a price which must be paid if we are going to have the convenience of driving in cars over our highways.

I do not subscribe, Mr. Speaker, to that view. I think that there can be a remarkable reduction in the number of accidents and the number of fatalities on our highways. I think there is need for a commission of enquiry to inquire into the causes of accidents in Newfoundland and to come up with some recommendations. I am not saying that we in little Newfoundland and Labrador should try and do some original research, what I am saying is that we should collate and take the information which we can obtain elsewhere and see what use we can make of that. Also, Sir, we should look at some of the unique problems in Newfoundland and Labrador dirt roads and great expanses of gravel roads and this sort of thing. Look at some of the unique and at least different problems and see if that can be coped with in a better way than we have been doing in the past.

The brief of the Newfoundland Safety Council asked the government for a number of things. The brief asked that a commission of enquiry be set up to look into an improved licencing system where for example people applying for licences should undergo physical tests and tests for vision to see how acute their eyesight is, for example, and as people get older and older they should be subjected to tests to make sure that people are really physically fit to drive.

They ask that there should be a high school driver education course. On that point, Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that studies conducted by experts in the field show that drivers are capable of driving twice as safely as they do. That is a statistic. The studies show that young people for example who were trained to drive in high school drive twice as safely as those who are not trained to drive. In other words, drivers who underwent a driving course before getting their licences, who did this in high school, have only one-half of the accident rate which drivers have if they did not have such a drivers course in high school.

In other words, it is possible that by that reason alone, the studies and the statistics and figures show, to cut in half the number of accidents which we are having in this province and indeed anywhere else in the world, in Canada, for example. The Newfoundland Safety Council offered a high school



driver education course in this province, I believe it started some time early in February, forty-nine hours of intensive training, actual on-site training as well driving cars and this sort of thing, forty-nine hours of training at a no-profit cost of fifty-five dollars. No profit at all to it, this is the cost per person of conducting this kind of a drivers course. This I would submit, Sir, is small in terms of the damage which it will avert in the future and the agony and injury and that sort of thing which it will avert in the future but large when it comes to an individual family with one or more students in school actually coming up with fifty-five dollars on the spur of the moment to allow their school children to learn how to drive properly.

A question which I would ask on this particular point, concerning driver education courses, is just how relevant our education system is anyway? Perhaps the honourable member for St. Barbe North might have a word or two to say on this. How relevant is our education system, Mr. Speaker, when there is not included in the curriculum something which is so vitally important to everybody's life? The least an education system should do, in my estimation, Mr. Speaker, is to train people how to survive in the life ahead. As we have seen from the statistics which I have quoted, the problem of

surviving an accident or getting out of an accident without some disabling injury is becoming increasingly less as time goes on. More and more people in our society, as more traffic and more roads come into being, are going to be involved in this sort of thing. So, the least we can do is insist that our high schools have some kind of a course which offers people at least a decent chance for survival on our highways.

The cost of such a universal course in highways, Mr. Speaker, I would submit would be a very small percentage of the damages and agony and injuries which would otherwise occur. In other words, the cost in personal property alone of not having this kind of a course would be far, far greater, many times greater than the actual cost to the state, to the government or to boards of education, of having such a course, free of charge, to the young people in our province.

The fourth thing which the Highway Safety Council Brief asks the government was that there be more stringent regulations. I am not sure if there are even any regulations now but more stringent regulations concerning Driver Instructors' Schools which we all see in operation in Newfoundland. I would say that these people are providing a good service but the Highway Safety Council think that they can provide a better service and that there should be stricter regulations governing the operations of these Driver Instructors' Schools.

They also ask that there be a bicycle licensing system.

They also say that there should be a point system for people who are involved in infractions of the law, that there should be a demerit system, that points should be deducted from peoples total number of points, leading up to a point where perhaps the license of that person might be lost or suspended. To me, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more basically unfair in this world than the system of fines which we now have for traffic violations.

For a man who is making two, three, four or five thousand dollars a year, a twenty-five or fifty or a hundred dollar fine for speeding is an astronomical fine and cuts into the welfare of his family. For a man making ten, fifteen, twenty or as some people in our society eighty and a hundred thousand dollars a year, what is a twenty-five dollar or a

hundred dollar fine for that matter? Nothing at all, a drop in the bucket.

The unfairness of the system is such that there is a greater sanction on one segment of our society, a greater pressure with regard to traffic violations than on other parts and portions of our society.

I think that the point system as recommended by the Highway Safety Council is a good thing that should be brought in so that everybody is put on the same footing when it comes to infraction of the law, breaking of the highway regulations and everyone, be he rich or poor, realizes that by losing certain points for - or however the thing works - for traffic violations, they all stand the same chance of losing their licenses or having their licenses suspended.

There are other matters which are not mentioned by the Highway Safety Council which might be looked into by such a Commission of Inquiry, Mr. Speaker. For example, the Trans Canada Highway, generally, I think should be looked at by some expert body over the next two or three months to see if it really is the death-trap that a lot of people think it is. I do not have statistics on this point but I would think - I believe I heard somewhere that there are more accidents per capita in this province than there are on the average across Canada. I would say that the Trans Canada Highway in no small measure has contributed to that.

This Commission of Inquiry, for example, should look into the whole idea of three lanes on such a highway where you have one car coming towards you from one direction and two lines of traffic going in the other direction. If there were ever a suicide system, Mr. Speaker, in operation in full daylight, there it is, in my estimation. A Commission of Inquiry should look into that aspect of it and see whether this is really too unsafe to be allowed in the province for our traffic.

A Commission of Enquiry could look into the aspect of the signs regarding passing on the Trans Canada Highway, the confusion that is caused by the signs which say "keep right", "slower traffic keep right" rather than say "keep right except to pass" because nobody on the highway ever thinks that he is slower traffic. You have the situation where people are passing on the right hand lane or people are getting impatient because someone is driving slow in the left hand lane. All this sort of

thing should be looked into by a Commission of Enquiry. It is not beyond the wit of man to look into these things, Mr. Speaker. We should also study statistics on the Trans Canada Highway to see where accidents are occurring, where serious accidents are occurring on that highway and see if there are some death traps on that highway which should be looked at, and the problems relating thereto should be remedied by extra construction or by warning or by something. The public should know what are the dangerous parts of the Trans Canada Highway, certainly the parts that are more dangerous than others.

The other roads in the province: Anyone who has driven in the rural areas of Newfoundland must be appalled at the fact that the roads go along cliffs and wind around and there are very few guardrails in evidence. If you happen to go out of control on one of these roads, you end up going down a sheer precipice. The question of guardrails should be looked into and the best kind of guardrails for the roads of this province, particularly off the Trans Canada Highway.

Perhaps the question of insurance should be looked into by such a commission as well because as much agony as is caused by accidents on the highway, there is also additional agony caused by the people who have been involved in an accident, make a claim for damages in court, succeed in their claim and find that their injuries cannot be adequately compensated for either because the person who was driving the other car and who was at fault had no insurance and was not required to have insurance or because the limits in the insurance policy were not high enough or because the judgement recovery limits were not high enough. A Commission of Enquiry should look into those questions. They should answer the question as to whether in this province we should have a no-fault insurance system. That may be too broad a question to ask this Commission of Enquiry but perhaps we could get some preliminary notion from them, Mr. Speaker, as to whether there should be a no-fault insurance scheme.

They should also perhaps make recommendations to the government regarding raising the compulsory limit on insurance policies from whatever it is now to a higher limit so that somebody who is injured in a car

accident and perhaps is entitled to a claim for damages or entitled to damages in the amount of two or three hundred thousand dollars, and these are certainly not out of line if somebody is turned into a vegetable as a result of an accident and has to have intensive care for the rest of his or her life. Two or three hundred thousand dollars for such care is certainly not out of line and this is the tendency of recent judgements not only in this province but across Canada. So, the question of how high limits or how low limits on insurance policies should be would be, I think, a good question for this Commission of Enquiry to go into.

Also, certainly this Commission of Enquiry would hardly need to inquire into this situation and that is the judgement recovery situation where I believe the limits are now thirty-five thousand dollars. That is if someone is injured in an accident and the person who injures them and who is at fault cannot be found and has no insurance. Judgement Recovery Limited pays damages up to the amount of thirty-five thousand dollars. Well, that in this day and age is too trifling an amount, Mr. Speaker, and should be raised and perhaps the Commission of Enquiry could indicate to the government how much it should be raised to. The Commission of Enquiry could look into the whole question using data from other provinces and statistics in our own province, look into the whole question of accident-prone drivers, drivers in this province who have been involved in many more than their share of the accidents.

For example, there is some very high figure which represents the percentage of accidents which are caused by the same persons time and time again. Some very high proportion, relatively speaking very high proportion of the population

are the same ones every time involved in accidents. This Commission of Enquiry could report to the government on what other jurisdictions have done about such accident-prone drivers, whether it means suspending licences or prohibiting them from driving or something. Look at other jurisdictions and see what they have done concerning this whole question. Then there is the question, of course, of drinking and driving which has not been wiped out, which has not even been solved but has been brought down somewhat by the breathalyzer which has been brought into operation in the past several years. Perhaps this Commission of Enquiry can give us some information, some recommendations on what kind of penalties, other than the normal penalty under the Criminal Code, should apply to people who are involved in accidents as a result of drinking or being impaired - penalties with regard to suspension or cancellation of their licences. This same commission could examine other jurisdictions again, such as Sweden, which for example has taken a very strong line against people who are driving when they are under the influence of liquor and get involved in accidents.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very unsavoury but true statistic that across Canada some fifty per cent of the accidents which have occurred have involved the consumption of liquor. In other words, perhaps if something can be done about this drinking and driving problem, we may be able to reduce the accident rate, perhaps not by fifty per cent but by some very large and substantial proportion and that together with driver education would perhaps have a very salutary effect on the whole problem of highway safety which is presently confronting us.

Now, Mr. Speaker, finally in my few remarks let me repeat again what I said earlier. Such a royal commission does not have to be expensive and it does not have to be time consuming. They should do, as I have said, not any original research into problems which have already been examined by jurisdictions throughout the world. They should be able to collate this information, gather in this information, look at recommendations

of other jurisdictions, see what they have done in other jurisdictions and see what the results have been. They do not have to do any original research in respect of that kind of information. They can do some research into our distinct, unique and peculiar problems in Newfoundland; a road system which is very extensive, the dirt roads, the gravel roads we have, the paved roads and the Trans Canada Highway. Perhaps there are some unique or at least different problems there which this Commission of Enquiry could look into and could make some recommendations on.

I would say, Sir, that such a Commission of enquiry could look into this whole situation and report back to the government within a matter of months, three, four, five or six months and that then the government would be in a position, hopefully, to bring in some better laws than we have now.

Let me say in conclusion that when I was a member of an administration, I think there were on one or two occasions a request made to us by the Safety Council to have a royal commission enquiry into traffic safety and the cause of traffic accidents in our province. I am sorry now ( I was sorry then) but other wise people won the day at that time. I am sorry now and I was sorry then that we did not have a commission of enquiry in the past two or three years, when the accident rate in this province started to shoot up phenomenally . It is never too late, Mr. Speaker, to take this kind of a measure, especially in view of the fact that in 1972 there was a far greater increase I believe in the accident, injury and fatality rate than there has been over a similar period of time before in the history of our province. I think that the year 1972 should serve as an object lesson to all of us. The accident rate and the rate of fatalities and the horrible injuries that resulted from car accidents, all of that is shooting up at too great a rate. I would say that when 1973 is finished, we will find that the rate of increase has been even greater than in 1972, especially in view of the harsh winter

that we have had in many parts of the province. It is never too late. I hope I do not hear from any members of the other side, Mr. Speaker, anything like; well you had your opportunity to do it when you were in. I am getting kind of sick of being blamed for things that were done or were not done when I was seven, eight or ten years of age. I was the member of an administration for some three years. A fair proportion of that time, I was a minister without portfolio. I was a minister of the crown with departmental duties for two years, Mr. Speaker, and up to my neck in things like the DREE Programme and the other problems of the province which were confronted by the Department of Community and Social Development, so much so that I and my other colleagues, I would submit, who are presently here today and who sat in the earlier administration, the prior administration, really did not have too much opportunity to think about other problems facing the province. But now that we are in opposition, you can take a long view of things, you can take a perspective on things; you have an opportunity to sit back and to conceptualize a bit and think about the problems in this province. I am sorry that I did not take out more time to study this particular problem and to recommend to my colleagues, although I had no direct responsibility for it, that a royal commission enquire, a commission of enquiry be set up. Now that I have looked at the statistics, studied the problem, I find it is something which merits some study and some quick study and efficient study.

Hopefully, the members of this House, the members of the government who control the House, the majority in the House will accede to this simple, non-controversial request of myself, which is done because of the brief which has been passed into the government and which has revealed the facts and statistics which I have talked about here today. I do not see any reason why the government should not do it. There is no claim that it will be too expensive. It should not be expensive. There is no claim certainly that it is not necessary, because it is necessary.



The figures themselves state that quite clearly, Mr. Speaker.

I have great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, in moving the resolution.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say at the outset that according to the last remarks made by the hon. member for White Bay South, that there is obviously no intention on the government's part, there could be no intention, it would be rather ridiculous to attempt to blame, as the honourable member indicated, the opposition for the traffic accidents that have occurred in the past. We know that they share with us the great concern for the problems which we have in this particular area.

Now the hon. member for White Bay South has introduced a resolution to this House, Mr. Speaker, which, as he has indicated, contains really the terms of a brief that was submitted to the government (I use government in the broad sense. I believe it was circulated to all members of the House of Assembly) by the Safety Council of Newfoundland, accompanied by a letter from the president where amongst other things there was requested this royal commission which is the prayer of the resolution of the honourable member for White Bay South. I would compliment him for bringing it before the House and certainly for the very clear and fair way in which he presented

MR. MARSHALL: his particular arguments in support of the resolution. However, Mr. Speaker, it would appear to us, it would certainly appear to us that the major - and this is without derogating in any way the arguments that have been brought up in support of the resolution or derogating for that matter which we would not want to do, degrade concern which we should all feel with respect to highway safety and in any way undermining the fine work of the Newfoundland Safety Council, really what is required is not a commission as such, a royal commission or a study into the problems. It would probably be a little bit too facetious to say we know all of the problems but we know a great many of the problems themselves and what is necessary really is the taking of action, taking direct action and implementing measures which are going to materially improve the safety conditions on the highways of this province.

This we are pledged to do. This we have been doing and will continue to do in consultation with such organizations as the Safety Council of Newfoundland together with the other experts.

Now, accompanying the brief of the Newfoundland Safety Council, which I said forms the body really of the resolution, the honourable member for White Bay South, in a statement to the effect that all members have received this. That there have been a frightening increase of fatalities, injuries and accidents on our highway during the past year, this is recognized and very seriously viewed by the government. Not only has there been an acceleration, as a matter of fact, in the past year but there has been an acceleration pretty well every year as the volume of traffic increases, and more stringent safety measures need to be taken as well.

The Safety Council also points out, as the honourable member for White Bay South has, that there is a need for immediate action to improve existing conditions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, perhaps it would be beneficial, before adverting completely to the remarks of the honourable member for White Bay South, to trace some of the items that were brought up by the Newfoundland Safety Council, referred to by the honourable member for White Bay South, and address ourselves to the action which this government has taken with respect to them.

First of all the Safety Council says and we agree that there must necessarily be an improved licencing system in the province. This was one of the -

MR. NEARY: There is no quorum.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Would the Clerk please count the House?

MR. SPEAKER: There is a quorum. The honourable member for St. John's East.

MR. MARSHALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was indicating, this matter of highway safety is uppermost really in the minds of this government and during our term of office we have been doing as much as we possibly can and we will continue to improve the situation.

Now with respect to this brief that I was referring to, of the Newfoundland Safety Council, they quite pointedly and rightly indicate that there is need in this province for an improved licencing position with respect to the licencing of drivers. In particular they refer to stricter written examinations which ought to be taken. They suggest that there be physical examinations for drivers and stricter road tests implemented. Now these are three of the main headings that the Safety Council has addressed itself to and in response to this, the government has considered it and considered statements of the Safety Council very carefully and has agreed that there should be a change in the written examination.

The Safety Council put up a question paper with about one hundred questions on it. In considering the representations by the Safety Council in relation to the needs of the province and the capabilities in the province and the suitability of a particular paper, it was agreed that we would adopt and the government is in the course of adopting a standard national written examination paper designed by the Canadian Conference of Motor Transport Authorities for use of this province and this is in the process of being implemented.

So this is one way in which a royal commission addresses itself so that in four months time the problem is already in the process of being done and tackled. With respect to the physical examinations that are required, understandably the Safety Council have indicated much more stringently perhaps than "John Q. Public" would really desire, that a person who goes in for a licence should automatically have a physical examination. You can make all the laws you like Mr. Speaker, but it is very hard to impose a law which may not, I would not say it is not completely workable, which may not be workable in infinite detail.

However, in connection with this, at the last conference that was held of Ministers of Highways throughout Canada which the honourable the Minister of Highways (who, by the way, today unfortunately is in Corner Brook, is unable to be here, he tried to get here but various connections did not allow him to be). when he was up on the mainland, they decided that they were going to implement different tests for various classifications of drivers. For instance instead of having - there is probably a little bit too much standardization between the test for a truck driver and an ordinary driver for the purpose of pleasure driving in his automobile, and for motor cycles, and the modes and the onus or the nature of the test, the hardness of the test should vary. Obviously a truck driver should have an even more stringent one.

We are going to look at this and we are in the process of looking at it and in due course we hope to be able to implement a practical programme with respect to the examination of certain drivers.

Another item brought up by the Safety Council was the need of a relicencing system and the Department of Highways has taken certain measures with respect to this, Mr. Speaker. If a driver's permit has elapsed for a period of three years or more, if a person has a physical disability or if the police report that a person has bad driving habits, there is enough scope with the regulations now to require a new test, and this will be done. The various authorities concerned have been told to keep a very close eye on it.

With respect to high school driver education that the Safety Council has referred to, that the honourable member for White Bay South also referred to, this is a matter which is paramount in our mind, it is a point that is very well taken. It is a fact that the accident rate is very high for drivers under the age of twenty. I think the honourable member for White Bay South indicated that there was an incidence of about sixteen per cent higher, which is a very, very significant variation in the numbers of accidents for people under the age of twenty.

The department is very, very cognizant, Mr. Speaker of this problem. It is not really just a problem of course in the Province of Newfoundland, this is a problem that is not localized here but is applicable to many other jurisdictions throughout North America. In connection with this, government have implemented a driver education programme. It has for instance, and I know the honourable member for Bell Island who is not here would be interested in this, it has caused to be produced three driver education films, and I hate to mention the word again, Mr. Speaker,

to bring his name up again, by NACOM Limited, alias George McLean or what have you.

But these films have been, as I say there are three driver education films, Each film will run between thirteen and sixteen minutes and will deal with the general driver education that is necessary to the facts related in this province because in this province we do have probably a little bit more peculiar situation, the driving problem is probably a bit more acute.

The driver education films are being made available to safety organizations such as the Newfoundland Safety Council and also to the various school, the high school students across the province, Not only are they being made available but the government is encouraging the showing of these films throughout the province, to the younger drivers. At the same time we commend very much the programme that has been implemented by the private sector, by the Newfoundland Safety Council itself, in its driver education programme for these young people

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This council has done an excellent job and it is really an indication of the type of work that the private sector, as it were, a private organization can do, and can do beneficially. So together as I say we are very, very aware of the heavy necessity of driver education with respect to our younger people. We have taken steps with respect to this and we will be taking much firmer steps as the time goes on.

With respect to driver education school that was mentioned in the brief of the Newfoundland Safety Council, there is a body of thought I know that perhaps the examinations ought to be given by officials, I believe of the Department of Highways rather than by the police themselves. Mr. Speaker, here again we come to the practicality of the situation, perhaps a member of the RCMP or the Newfoundland Constabulary who is expert in many fields; perhaps you do need in this day and age and perhaps it may be more beneficial to have somebody whose life is solely devoted to the purpose of giving examinations to drivers, particularly to younger drivers, to test them with respect to their reflexes and their ability to drive and what have you.

But as I think the honourable member for Labrador North will agree with me, we have to face this particular problem in light of our resources and in light of the practicality of the situation. The simple fact of the matter is this that this province cannot afford to place instructors in every region of this province. I know, at the same time we are not derogating the necessity of it. We would very, very much like to be able to do it if it could be done. But it is a matter of priority of funds and we have the RCMP, we have the Newfoundland Constabulary stationed in St. John's and the RCMP throughout the rest of Newfoundland, and we have found that this is the best system we can utilize. It is not a system that - I do not believe even the Safety Council or any members on the opposite side would point to as one of the chronic reasons for the acceleration of accidents in this province. They have acquitted their jobs well. The government would want to compliment the forces for what they have done in this particular direction.

At the same time, when we say that the ideal situation is that we would like to have the people themselves solely devoted to this particular exercise of training drivers and testing drivers, unfortunately funds do not allow at this time. But that is not to say, Mr. Speaker, this government will not bear it in mind and as the exigencies of the public requirements allow from time to time, we will look to the day when we can bring in this particular programme. However, that should not be taken as a statement of government policy for the immediate future, although at the same time it should also be not regarded that we are derogating the necessity of it.

With respect to the point system, we have heard a lot about the point system with respect to licencing and it has many good aspects of it. It has been adopted, I do not know in how many other provinces of Canada but quite successfully in many of them. We are looking quite hard at the implementation of the point system with a view to having it implemented as soon as possible. We in this government want to avoid the awful problem that exists from time to time of arbitrary decisions made by civil servants and administrative bodies which take away a licence from an individual without the recourse of adequate appeal.

Now there could be appeal in this direction, perhaps one might say, to the various courts, but when you have such a regulation which is going to effect everybody in the province, from all sides of the province were the Supreme Court is not readily available every day, you have to set up really some appeal procedure against decisions which may be made from time to time, some speedy, fair, reasonable, rational appeal board.

I can say, Mr. Speaker, that the implementation of this method is now being looked at very, very closely. It will hopefully be implemented as soon as implementation of the same is practical.

Now with respect to this whole area, and here again we want to emphasize the fact and again to compliment the honourable member for White Bay South for his energy in bringing forth this and his intention in bringing forth this resolution which he indicated was noncontroversial, and



noncontroversial it is. But the simple fact of the matter is that we do not think that a royal commission is really the mode and manner by which this very grave problem can be efficiently tackled in the fastest and most expedition manner possible. Rather we would prefer to be able to point to the actions which this government are in the process of taking which it intends to take with respect to licencing of vehicles, with respect to driver education and with respect to such matters as the implementation of the point system.

Now as an indication of the concern of the Department of Highways, concerning this particular matter, it might be well to point out that from January to date, that is from January to March 6 of this year, some 226 sets of licences plates from been removed from vehicles by authorized dealers, and the vehicles sold without plates either for scraping or for complete overall prior to registration. So that over the past three months we have been putting, as much as we possibly can, the onus on the inspectors of motor vehicles to assure that the units concerned are as effective and safe as they can possibly be.

Now there were one or two other points outside of the brief of the Newfoundland Safety Council to which the honourable member for White Bay South referred, which were not included in the positions taken by the Safety Council. One of the points was with respect to the Trans Canada Highway that this commission if appointed should be looked at to see if it is a dead trap. Now I do not know whether the commission would be the proper vehicle to look at this particular consideration and certainly to put that, if there were a commission which in the circumstances I do not feel there should be, if there were a commission it would not speedily report if it had this particular term of reference.

But in any event, Mr. Speaker, cognizant of the fact that we have a two lane highway in this province. We are also very cognizant of the fact that we do not have a railway, a passenger rail service. And cognizant also of the real obligation of the federal government in the matters of transportation and communication in this province. I would agree with the

honourable member for White Bay South that it would appear that there are certain sections of the highway in Newfoundland that is a dead trap, and certainly we should be able to look forward to a four lane highway as soon as we possibly can or at least a four lane highway and particularly the area that is much travelled between St. John's and Come by Chance and the other areas in Placentia Bay where industrialization is growing up. It would seem to me that the federal government under its DREE programmes should be prepared to look at this for the purpose of developing this province in accordance with the manner that is set down by the Department of Regional and Economic Expansion.

However, I do not think that a royal commission, as I say, we are cognizant of the problems with the highway. We are cognizant of the fact that we need a four, at least a four lane highway throughout Newfoundland and we shall work to our utmost royal commission or no royal commission to realize this as soon as these funds are available and when funds are available I say that we have to really look to the federal government with respect to the implementation of this because after all we are the only province in Canada with inferior transportation facilities providing by that great organ of the federal government, the Canadian National Railways, we have no passenger rail system. The buses that we have that they put on our two lane highways themselves

materially increase the traffic on the road, materially increase the risk and certainly there is a moral if not other duty upon the federal government to provide adequate transportation facilities in that area.

However, I am trying to keep this debate, as the hon. member, as relatively nonpolitical as we can. Now another point that was raised and a point I might say that I have thought about from time to time that the signs on the highways in this province of "Keep right except to pass" that they ought to be put up rather than the way they are now and the same way as they did on the mainland. However there are two bodies of thought with respect to that. The experts say that the requirement for all motorists to keep right except when passing is a standard rule and it is a standard rule with respect to three lane highways, for a four lane undivided highway or for a four or more lane divided highway. However it is not the standard rule for a two lane highway which has merely short climbing lanes like those of our Trans Canada Highway, our present situation. In other words "Keep right except to pass" is not the rule with respect to highways of our nature and I believe that the reasoning behind this is that this is a matter of safety in itself. They are afraid that people will be speeding on the right hand side and when they are only climbing lanes that it could result in disaster where they meet together.

As I have indicated it would seem to me from a layman's point of view to be a point well taken but the advice of the experts, whom I hesitate to quarrel with to any great degree, too often is to the contrary and the explanation there with respect to joy riders travelling too fastly in the climbing lanes, is the terminology they use, may be the rationale behind it. I do not think, with the greatest respect to the hon. member for White Bay South, I do not think that it is a proper reference to any commission of this nature that the limits of the insurance be enquired into, no-fault insurance be enquired

into or judgement recovery. I think this would be anyway too broad, that the commission would be bogged down hopelessly from not being able to attack the matter with the speed which the subject desires.

For that matter, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to indicate that this is a matter which requires the utmost speed. This is a matter which has concerned this government for some period of time and which we feel can be best dealt with by actions rather than another commission that is going to cost this province \$30,000 or \$40,000 or \$50,000. Now at the same time when we say that I want to emphasis again and again and again we are not derogating in any way when we say this, the arguments so ably presented by the hon. member for White Bay South as to the necessity of traffic safety, nor are we derogating in any way or overlooking the arguments presented by the Newfoundland Safety Council and by the executive secretary of that council from time to time, Mr. O'Neill. Mr. O'Neill from time to time expresses his view quite forcefully but that is the job that he is involved in. The Safety Council, generally speaking, is doing a great job. We have supported this council as much as we possibly can.

I believe last year, if memory serves me correct, there was a slight reduction, somewhat of a reduction in the grant to the Newfoundland Safety Council, which caused for a time chagrin, I understand by some members of the Safety Council itself, with respect to our actions. It was all a part of the orderly business of government itself and the budgetary requirements. We regretted having to do it and we look forward to increasing it at some time in the future as soon as we possibly can. As I say it did cause a certain amount of annoyance but I would like to assure the Newfoundland Safety Council that our actions in reducing slightly their grant from the government were in no way reflective upon the fine and commendable job which

they are doing neither is our stand with respect to this particular resolution in any way a derogation or undermining in any way the fine work the safety council is doing.

The point of the matter is this, Mr. Speaker, that we do not feel that a Royal Commission as such will do the trick. While we feel that the problems themselves are extremely urgent and commend themselves to the upmost attention of government

Mr. Marshall

and the quick attention of government, that government are very cognizant of the situation and have been doing everything we can and will in the future to implement safety standards within the province

when we do this, we will consult, as I say, with the experts and including the Newfoundland Safety Council. The commission itself: The problem is grave. We are dealing with it. We do not feel that the commission is the way in which it can be dealt with most effectively.

MR. WOODWARD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a few words to this particular resolution and I feel that it is a worthwhile resolution being brought before this House and debated at this particular time. I suppose accidents in this province get more publicity than anything else, maybe more than some politicians. It is not uncommon to turn on the radio and hear of a number of people being killed on the Trans Canada Highway. I must say that possibly eighty per cent of the fatalities, in traffic accidents, are on the Trans Canada. I am sure it has caused the parents of a lot of students who are travelling to and fro from St. John's and different parts of the province a great concern and perhaps more concerned than if they are travelling by any other mode of transportation. The Trans Canada Highway has been dubbed now to be the deathtrap of Newfoundland.

Looking at the safety regulations and the regulations that now apply, I think the concern is a number of people, especially in the rural areas of Newfoundland, are getting on the Trans Canada Highway for the first time. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the number of people who do get licences - take my own district of Labrador, where we have relatively little traffic - with the traffic regulations, people are not that concerned. We do over a year probably have a couple of fatalities on our highways but very little as compared to what happens on the Trans Canada. It is not uncommon for a person to go and have an

inspection or to get a licence without relatively - it is very simple - not knowing possibly what traffic regulations apply to the Trans Canada. I know a number of younger people and maybe older people that hit that Trans Canada for the first time with an automobile and knew very little of the traffic regulations that applied to the Trans Canada Highway, where they learned to drive in a relatively small community, where there was very little traffic.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, when the government do and if they do feel fit to set up a commission of enquiry, that they emboss in their regulations the rules that apply to the Trans Canada Highway and in order for a person to get a licence in this province, they first must know the traffic rules and regulations that apply to (maybe we can call it the super highway) a highway where you have the high speeds that apply to the Trans Canada Highway.

It is not uncommon now to see three or four people getting killed in a pile-up on the Trans Canada. When you think in terms of even city traffic, you will very seldom hear of more than possibly one fatality in a traffic accident - the speeds in the city are not that great. When you get a person first taking to the Trans Canada, all of a sudden you get up to sixty miles an hour, going at that particular speed and not knowing the rules or not knowing how to read, in a lot of cases the traffic signs, then that particular driver automatically becomes a menace on that particular highway. So then I think this is the case where we find out that there are a number of people coming in from the outports, getting on the Trans Canada and naturally people from the city as well.

I remember one family who lived in Goose Bay. They moved into Gander and five

members of that particular family were killed in one traffic accident. It was very tragic indeed, Sir, although this particular person may have known the rules and the regulations that applies to the highways, the person who was involved in the other car did not know the rules and regulations that applied to the Trans Canada Highway. We have so many people who get on that highway who were never taught, because our regulations do not encompass or when you learn your traffic signs, etc., etc., they are not applicable to the Trans Canada. So I think in this respect - another thing that happens in this particular case, Mr. Speaker, that people, in St. John's I know that parents are now more concerned than ever for a driver education in high schools and I support it wholeheartedly. Then again in a number of cases where if you want your son or daughter to train to drive properly, you can take advantage, in St. John's or maybe in Corner Brook, of some private driving school. This does not necessarily apply all throughout the province. Children have learned to drive or teenagers have learned to drive through one means or another but not necessarily being taught properly to drive and to be made aware of the traffic regulations.

So I would welcome, Mr. Speaker, some system of training. I do not think it is the vehicles in as much as this can be, I think, controlled. I support what the government is doing this year by enforcing the rigid inspections on vehicles and taking vehicles off the highways that are a menace and not mechanically safe on the highway. I suppose this regulation. I feel that over the years the inspectors at the particular garages during licensing time in lots of cases have been very lax and have taken the five bucks or seven bucks and given you a sticker without examining the particular vehicle.

I think that the problem with training, as to why we are having the accidents that we are having today, I think this can only



be corrected by having the proper training. You cannot deny a person getting a licence if you do not set the rules and regulations and the training for that particular person. I feel today that there is a number of people especially in our rural areas who are driving a car and a number of women who are driving cars but has very little knowledge about highway traffic regulations.

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Speaker, I thought I would just have one or two words on this subject because no doubt about it it is a very, very timely topic. As I look back over the years in this House when we discussed the estimates of the Department of Highways, I think one of the big things cropping up even in these days, back six or seven years, was the fact of safe driving on our Trans Canada Highway. I think that everybody agrees that when you are driving on the Trans Canada there is quite a difference in driving on secondary roads. We are inclined to get out there and just aim the car and let her go. I was quite interested in the remarks of the member for White Bay South because I recall mentioning some of the same things about the safety and I used to call the forty miles between the Salmonier Line and St. John's the frightful forty and I remember his dad one year was Minister of Highways and he became quite upset with me and he argued that the engineering was as good as you could get at the time. But I always maintain, and I do not know but the statistics will still bear it out, that the most dangerous part of our Trans Canada is that area from St. John's out to about the Salmonier Line, going up that way.

But nevertheless with driver education and so on and so forth, I think it is an excellent thing and anybody who has teenage boys become quite impressed. I know my two boys and I am not in the favorite class like the member for Bell Island refers, I am not a millionaire and I am not a lawyer so I only have one car and try to vie for it at nighttime with my two sons but what impresses me

is that as soon as they get in that car they fasten the safety belt, which I very seldom do unless I am out on the Trans Canada and I think it is a part perhaps of the training that is so essential that I think all the hon. members referred to.

Basically the need for a Royal Commission, frankly I do not see, not that I am against it

because of the fact that the other side brings it in. I am quite impressed with the educational films that are being shown, notwithstanding what the member for Bell Island says about them. The shots on T.V., I think they are quite educational, I think they sort of bring us face to face with the actual safe driving and make us aware of just what is happening. I remember some years ago there was a big discussion on automobile safety and so on and so forth and the question was asked; "what was the most important part that went into a car?" The answer was, "the nut that held the steering wheel." I still think that it is the human factor that contributes so much to accidents and quite frankly, I detest driving on the Trans Canada myself. No matter how fast you seem to go and you do not always drive within the limits, there is always someone who wants to get just a little bit ahead of you.

I think that brings me back again, I think it is to three years ago when the honourable member brought up in the House about policing of the Trans Canada Highway. I do not know if the member for White Bay South remembers this but he said he had made several trips to his district, I think, and he had not seen a mountie. I think within the next two or three months, the trips he made, he succeeded in getting a ticket every trip. Sometimes it is the better part of discretion not to mention or criticize any law enforcement rules as far as the Trans Canada is concerned.

I think quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that it places a terrific onus on all of us who drive cars. I am very happy, indeed, again with the inspection that is taking place and I was quite amazed at the statistics supplied by the honourable member for St. John's East. There have been a number of cars removed from the highway. What is happening and they tell me although I have never run into it, that the attitude is that some of these older cars just do not give a darn about accidents or anything else because there is not that much to lose. We are arriving at a stage of safe driving, perhaps it is defensive driving

that we are emphasizing today. You have to look out for the other guy too, so you have to be very careful.

I am very happy that this resolution was brought before the House. Again I will repeat, I do not see any necessity for setting up the trappings of another royal commission to investigate this but I am sure that everybody and every member of this House has a personal obligation to stress and assist the Department of Highways in their educational programmes as far as safe driving is concerned. It sort of makes you shudder when you read, and I get a bit of a bang out of the big controversy that arose over whether the license plates were illuminated or not. When you look at the accident that occurred two nights ago on highway 400, when you could not even see the car not to talk about the license plate itself, and the mayhem that occurred there, I think the official count was eleven although they did say that it was sixteen. Just what happens, and we strike it quite often on our own Trans Canada, you are driving along and you run into a flurry and you hesitate to cut down on your speed. I think where we are now in a position - what has added, of course, to the great hazard, is the number of large busses that are using the Trans Canada. I refer to the Canadian National busses and also the transport trucks that are using the Trans Canada today. Something will have to be done pretty soon. I cannot see us building another Trans Canada, but there is definitely a four-lane highway needed because all we have, basically, is a bit of updating on the old two-lane highway as we knew it, the old Topsail Road, and that has been updated somewhat.

It is a horrible thought and a horrible feeling when you do read pretty well every weekend where there are so many accidents. When the honourable member for White Bay South started off with his statistics, I said we have two of three choices, I think, condemn the automobile, permit no one under twenty-five to drive (these were the two choices I saw, according to statistics which are quite out of the question) I think again, that we must and I say this in all fairness; all of us must look up to the fact of the tremendous hazards that are

taking place on our highways. The more money we spend on highways, the more they cost us, the more lives they cost us. When we get a blacktop everybody wants to drive at least sixty if not seventy or eighty. On the old dirt roads you drove slower just to favour the old car itself so that it would not shake apart. With the paved highways becoming a part of our every day living, driving at excessive speeds is the practice now rather than the exception.

Mr. Speaker, I see no harm in this resolution being brought in and quite frankly I could not vote for a royal

commission because I think everybody feels that it is going to be rather unwieldy but I certainly hope that the Department of Highways keeps up its educational programme as it is doing at the present time and that when we are driving ourselves that we show others that by saving a life we are doing the province a good turn.

MR. F. B. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the two honourable members from St. John's Centre and St. John's East really agree with this particular resolution brought in by the member for White Bay South. For the most part in their speeches they agreed with practically everything that has been said by the member for White Bay South except the actual setting up of the commission itself.

Sir, it is not such a horrible thing or a bad thing for honourable members on the government side to admit that something brought in by the opposition is a good thing. It is not such a horrible thing for them to go one step further and support this particular resolution, particularly in light of the statistics that were so ably presented by the member for White Bay South.

Sir, I think there are really two reasons that have not been mentioned to this point, two reasons why we should see such a commission of enquiry or a royal commission. One is this, Sir, the member for White Bay South suggested that people are pretty complacent, pretty blasé about highway accidents, about car and truck accidents and this sort of thing, not only in this province but in many other areas of North America. You hear about somebody dying with a disease or somebody dying in an air crash and it gets all kinds of publicity, a motor car accident with deaths is mentioned in one news bulletin and then that is the end of it.

Sir, the other aspect of this is that there are many, many injuries suffered by people in motor car accidents. Injuries which those people have to live with in all too many cases for the rest of their lives. This is not dramatized, while these people are suffering. So, Sir, I think what we really need here, if for no other reason, is a royal commission for the

reason simply to dramatize and make people more aware of the existing dangers on our highway and the sufferings that are caused to many of our citizens.

Sir, another point mentioned by the member for St. John's East was that really he agrees with the concept except that the Highway's Department is trying to do its best now with three films, driver education programmes and what have you, and that more will be done when funds become available. Well, Sir, at the present time we have a situation whereby the Newfoundland Safety Council and people generally speaking are concerned about driver safety in this province, whether they are in the university or whether they are in schools or whether they are members of councils or whether they are members of the House of Assembly or whether they are people down in the Department of Highways or any other branch of government, they come up with a brilliant or a bright idea, more far-out idea, and it just filters up through somewhere. It may or may not get to the Minister of Highways, it is a flash in the pan sort of a thing, some publicity may be given to it overnight but once again it dies. In other words, there is sort of a scatter gun or shot gun approach with respect to trying to draft up what should be done with respect to highway safety in this province.

Sir, a royal commission would go around this province presumably and it would dramatize and create public awareness of the problems on the highways and it would also consolidate, bring together all the information relating to the dangers on the highway as well as the many recommendations that can be made by many of our citizens in this province. So, therefore, these two reasons alone creating a public awareness. Consolidating, bringing this stuff together in the form of a report I think

Mr. Speaker, these are two good reasons why we should support this particular resolution. Now, Sir, a few weeks ago (I cannot remember whether the hon. Minister of Finance passed this information out in this honourable House or whether he did it through the news media) the hon. Minister of Finance was talking about the progress in this province over the past year, the economic progress of this province. One of the indicators he gave for the great economic progress in this province was the number of new vehicles that were bought in this province over the past year. Now, Sir, I cannot remember the exact figures that the minister gave but he did suggest that there were more new vehicles purchased in this province over the past year than any other year in our history. In fact he gave the impression that there was an actual increase in the rate of new vehicles being purchased in this province. Now, Sir, this obviously means one simple thing, that there are simply more vehicles on the highways of this province and on the branch roads of this province.

My colleague, the member for White Bay South, mentioned the dramatic increase in new drivers. I believe it was something like 15,000 per year or this year over last year in this province. We have had a dramatic increase in the number of new drivers and a dramatic increase in the number of new vehicles on our highways. Now, Sir, I do not want this to be taken as a bit of political partisanship but I do have the figures here for various expenditures in the Department of Highways as presented in the last estimates brought before the House last year.

Sir, winter maintenance for the year 1971-1972, \$5 million. This present year \$4.5 million which means, Sir, that there was a decrease last year as compared to the year before on the amount of money spent on winter maintenance.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).



MR. F. B. ROWE: They may be increased. We have another month, that is correct. I mean this in fact may go up or it may not. The important point is that it represents the intention of the present administration with respect to winter maintenance work on our highways.

Now, Sir, there is no doubt about the fact that a lot of the accidents caused in the winter can be attributed to the lack of sand being put on some of our highways, some of the community roads and what have you. All I am simply pointing out here is that with increased numbers of drivers, increased numbers of cars on our highways and a decrease in the vote for winter maintenance has to contribute towards less safety on our highways for that reason.

MR. MURPHY: (Inaudible).

MR. F. B. ROWE: Well we can talk about snow clearing. We can talk about - there was a car in my district there several weeks ago. A chap left Flower's Cove to go to St. Anthony and he was unheard of for seventy-two hours. He got stuck on the highlands, which is about thirty or forty miles of nothingness. The highway is almost nothingness too, I might point out.

Mr. Speaker, it looks like the clock is approaching six o'clock so I will move the adjournment of the debate.

On motion debate adjourned, carried.

MR. SPEAKER: It now being six o'clock I do leave the Chair until tomorrow Thursday at 3:00 P.M.



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