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VERBATIM REPORT

TUESDAY, MAY 7, 1974

SPEAKER: THE HONOURABLE JAMES M. RUSSELL

The House met at 3:00 P.M.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

MR. SPEAKER: The Hon. Minister of Education.

HON. G. R. OTTENHEIMER (MINISTER OF EDUCATION): Mr. Speaker, I would like at this time to announce the government's policy with respect to financing school bus transportation for elementary and high school pupils for the school year commencing next September.

What I would like to do is to outline first the various policies so that one can see the whole matter in something of a chronological perspective. The first policy on school bus transportation for the province was included in the provincial government's, former of course, policy on centralized regional high schools and made known in the fall of 1953. Under that policy the province agreed to pay school boards seventy-five per cent of the cost of transporting pupils to centralized regional high schools. In 1954-1955 there were three school buses transporting 155 pupils, at a cost of \$5,700.

In 1954 the policy was extended to include certain small all-grade and elementary schools. Under this expanded policy transportation could be provided where in the opinion of the school board it was not feasible to operate a school in a particular community and the children could be enrolled at a larger school within commutable distance provided an overall savings could be affected. In cases such as this the government agreed to pay ninety per cent of the cost, provided that the cost did not exceed the salary of a Grade I certified teacher.

In 1956 the transportation policy for regional high schools was expanded to include central high schools, that is those with Grades VII and VIII as well. In the fall of 1966 what was known as an emergency policy of bus transportation was introduced and under those regulations any school board operating a small school which could not obtain the services of a high school teacher could arrange to have the high school pupils from that school conveyed by bus to a larger school, in such cases

government paid ninety per cent of the cost.

The policy of paying seventy-five per cent of the cost for transporting high school students and ninety per cent of the cost for transporting pupils under the emergency plan continued until 1971 when regulations were amended to make provision for paying ninety per cent of the cost of transportation of all pupils. Later in the same year, 1971, the year of no little importance in the history of the province, later in that year the policy was further amended whereby government agreed to pay one hundred per cent of the cost, the former government, the cost of transporting all pupils who live more than one mile from the school which they attended.

In 1972 the regulations governing school bus transportation were again changed and the policy whereby government paid a per capita amount for each pupil requiring bus transportation to and from school was implemented. The per capita grant depended upon the number of miles travelled and whether the road was paved or unpaved.

I would like to point out some of the financial implications which have resulted from the various changes in our school bus transportation policies over the last four or five years. In 1969-1970, government were paying seventy-five per cent of the cost of transporting high school students and ninety per cent of the cost of transporting elementary and/or high school students in what was considered emergency situations. During that school year, 1969-1970, there were 671 school buses operating, at a cost of \$3.1 million. This represented an average of \$4,600 per contract. In 1970-1971, with the new policy of paying ninety per cent of the cost for all pupils being transported, the number of buses increased by ten, to 681, and the cost for that year rose to \$4.3 million, which was an increase of over \$1.25 million from the previous year. The average cost rose to \$6,400.

In 1971-1972 the number of buses increased to 839, 158 more than the previous year, the school year 1971 - 1972, while the cost increase by \$1.5 million to \$5.8 million. It will be noted that this was the year in which government agreed to pay one hundred per cent of

the cost of school bus transportation. The result there is obvious, 158 more buses.

In 1972-1973 the number of buses showed a slight increase, from 839 to 850, while the cost increase by a little over a half million dollars to \$6.4 million.

For the year 1973-1974 there was again a slight increase in the number of buses, from 850 to 870, and close to three-quarters of a million dollars increase in cost, bringing it to approximately \$7.1 million.

It appears to be obvious from the statistical data available that any policy that lends itself to having one hundred per cent of the cost of transportation of pupils being paid by government creates an escalation in cost that is very difficult if not impossible to control. The fact that from 1969 to 1970 and from 1973 to 1974, the number of school buses have increased by approximately 200 or thirty-three and a-half per cent does indicate that. Of this increase the greatest amount occurred between 1970 and 1972 - the increase was over \$1.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, the matter of school bus transportation has been under study by officials of the Department of Education for some time now and every effort has been made to develop a policy that is both equitable and just to all school boards in the province. We have found in the past that while the policy of a per capita grant to school boards for pupils actually being transported to schools is quite satisfactory to a number of school boards, it is not satisfactory to others.

But studies undertaken by the Department of Education indicate two factors: (1) a system of financing school bus transportation through a per capita allotment for each student depending upon the distance covered and whether the road is paved or unpaved leads to certain unavoidable inequities. Road conditions are too diverse in the province for this system to function properly. (2) It is obvious that there is an enormous escalation in cost when the school bus transportation bill is paid directly by government. For example, in 1970-1971, when the former administration was cost-sharing school bus transportation on a ninety/ten basis, ten additional buses were added to the system. I

should point out that I am not here speaking of new buses to replace old ones but additional bus units. Now in 1970-1971, there were ten additional units. In 1971-1972, when the former administration assumed one hundred per cent responsibility, an additional 158 units were added. In the last two years an additional thirty-one were added. It is obvious that only by keeping a certain amount of local fiscal responsibility in the area of school bus transportation can costs be reasonably controlled.

I am pleased to announce government's policy on school bus transportation which will become operative next September. Government will assume ninety-five per cent of the cost of school bus transportation leaving five per cent of it to local school boards. This new policy will provide a certain local financial responsibility which will act as a control factor and at the same time be equitable and just to the school boards of the province.

MR. F. B. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, the minister's statement is a disappointment.

AN HON. MEMBER: Disgraceful!

MR. ROWE, F. B. We have been standing here for two years pointing out the inequities of the disaster plan that the former Minister of Education brought into this House in the very first year, as Minister of Education, a plan that was inequitable from one region of the province or one school board to another school board. They did not take the weather conditions into consideration. The distribution of the population of the students in various communities along a highway system or local road system was not taken into consideration, only whether or not there was pavement or dirt road.

Many factors, Mr. Speaker, were not taken into consideration with respect to the formulation of a school bus transportation policy. The policies announced since this administration have come into power with regards to school bus transportation have been regressive, have been a disappointment and have costs school boards in this province thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars and it subjected the students of our province to hazardous and dangerous conditions getting back and forth to school.

Mr. Speaker, my own feeling and I am sure it is the feeling of my own colleagues, although we obviously have not had time to discuss the minister's statement, is that the only fair way, the only equitable school bus transportation system was that which existed during the previous administration. That is that the school boards - surely God! Mr. Speaker, the school boards of this province can be trusted to call tenders for the operation of school buses. There might -

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. ROWE, F. B. Okay. The honourable member for Bonavista South, who is not in his seat again, Mr. Speaker, and should not open his yap at all said something about the tenders go to the school board employees or their own employees.

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. ROWE, F. B. I hope it is recorded, Mr. Speaker, that that comment came from the other side and in the public halls of this House of Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

There are a couple of things that seem to be going a bit astray. One is that the honourable Member for Bonavista South is not in his place. He is not permitted to interject. Two, the courtesy of replies to a ministerial statement is a courtesy that is extended by the Chair. The speaker in this case is the honourable Member for St. Barbe North. He should really confine his statements to remarks on the question of clarification of the statement made by the Minister of Education.

MR. ROWE, F. B. If there have been abuses, Mr. Speaker, of the school bus transportation formula, as indicated by the honourable Member for Bonavista South, I suggest that the government could quite easily modify the regulations in such a way that this abuse would not exist.

I would simply say in finishing off my few brief remarks, and I will certainly have more comments to make on it later, that surely heavens the school boards of this province can be trusted to call tenders for the operation of school buses! They realize that one hundred per cent of the cost of operating these school buses should be paid by the provincial government because even under this formula I would

suggest that there would be inequities from one region of the province to the other, from one school board area to another because all of these factors that I mentioned earlier; weather conditions, distribution and dispersal of population have not been taken into consideration. Mr. Speaker, we continue to have an increase in the cost of operating school buses and I note, Mr. Speaker, that in the estimates for school bus operation for this year, last year it was \$7,140,000 and this year it is planning to be \$7,797,000. So it is not a dramatic increase in the vote for school bus transportation. Sir, in closing, I find the ministerial statement with respect to school bus transportation a little hint that the honourable members on the other side are beginning to learn a little bit of what we have been saying for two years, but the statement itself is a very sad disappointment.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Labrador South.

MR. M. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, by your leave I would like to ask three questions for clarification by the minister. The first one is the matter of interpretation: Does the term school bus cover all vehicles or all vessels of conveyance used in the transportation of schoolchildren? I raise this because in one area of my district they are using boats in the summertime and snowmobiles in the wintertime.

Secondly, is the minister satisfied that the safety standards are being maintained? There is quite a controversy across the nation now regarding safety standards of school buses.

Thirdly, does the minister really know where the other five per cent that is suppose to be stood by the individual school boards comes from? Is it a fact that the government are paying the full one hundred per cent anyway? And if this be the case, has the minister looked at the pros and cons of owning and operating the school bus fleet entirely? Whether or not there is any indication that that would be more to the advantage of the public than calling tenders from private individuals?

MR. SPEAKER: Does the honourable minister wish to answer those questions now or wait until the question period?

MR. OTTENHEIMER: I would like to answer them now, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, the term school bus would include any vehicle approved for the transportation of schoolchildren. It may not, you know, in all cases be necessary that what one is looking at would be called a bus.

The safety standards: To the best of my knowledge there are four particular checks per year required by law to the vehicles and to the drivers. These are stringently enforced, without exception.

The third I think, if I caught the question correctly was where the other five per cent would be coming from. Obviously it would have to come from school boards' revenues whether it would be from assessments or taxes. I think that it was a question, I sort of understood also as part of a question. I am not sure whether it was that government had investigated a possibility of assuming one hundred per cent or operating our own buses, the government operating its own buses. Actually with both of them, you know, with the one hundred per cent we did obviously look at it. It was in operation not during the whole last administration, it was in operation about five or six months of the last administration, and the cost escalated tremendously because I believe there was no local fiscal responsibility.

From the point of view of the government running its own buses, I am inclined to think, you know, from the point of view of the safety factor and from every other point of view that when they are run by school boards, which are there on the spot in the area, rather than having this service which goes on in hundreds of communities, you know, run directly by a bureaucracy in St. John's, I think that there is much better control when it is done in the area because it would be practically impossible for persons hundreds of miles away to be familiar with every and all local conditions as they change.

MR. SPEAKER: It has been brought to my attention that we have thirteen students from the College of Trades and Technology with their teacher, Mrs. Knight. I would like to welcome these persons to the galleries today and trust that their visit here is most interesting.

PETITIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for White Bay North.

HON. E. M. ROBERTS (LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from Great Harbour Deep, in my District of White Bay North. May I say, Mr. Speaker, that in my years as a member of this House I have seen, as of all honourable members, a great number of petitions but I have never seen one that is better prepared, that is better argued or, in my view, more justified.

The prayer of the petition, Sir, is quite lengthy. It covers three typewritten pages but it is quite succinctly summed up in the closing paragraphs, if I might read them, Sir, they go:

"Whereas the building of a highway across the Northern Peninsula to our Community of Great Harbour Deep would create employment for the whole peninsula, would solve our problem of isolation and could lead to resource development with long term benefits;

"Be It Resolved that we the citizens of Great Harbour Deep draw up a petition to Her Majesty's Government of Canada, to Her Majesty's Government of Newfoundland with a prayer that they work jointly in providing this Community of Great Harbour Deep with a road to the main provincial highways and with a view to establishing resource development with long-term benefits.

"We the undersigned citizens of the Community of Great Harbour Deep, in the Province of Newfoundland and in the Dominion of Canada, humbly pray that Her Majesty's Government of Canada and Her Majesty's Government of Newfoundland hear our resolution and take joint actions to have a highway built across the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland to connection our community with the Northern Peninsula Highway.

We also pray that these governments take appropriate joint actions to develop the various potentials of this area."

They go on, Sir, Your Honour I know will appreciate this:

"We pray for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and for all Her ministers and legislators. As Her Majesty's humble servants it is our bounded duty that we shall forever pray."

I would think that is one of the few times in history, Sir, that a petition has been in the correct and proper form as laid down in our rules.

The petition, Sir, is signed by every adult citizen of Harbour Deep, approximately 190 persons. Everyone, as far as I can determine by checking it against the voters list from the community, has signed the petition.

It is supported, Mr. Speaker, by 894 names on these forms, 894 names signed by persons as far away as Toronto and St. John's and from Corner Brook and all the communities along the Great Northern Peninsula and supported as well by resolutions from the Roddickton Town Council, the Community of Belburns, the Town Council of Englee, the Local Improvement District of Flower's Cove and the Local Improvement District of Daniels Harbour.

The signatories to the petition and the supporting signatories, Sir, are most interesting. I will name only one, as it is the first time I think that I have ever seen this gentleman's name appended to a petition. The signature on this petition is the Right Reverend Gordon Legge, the Bishop Surrogate of Newfoundland. Bishop Legge, the Surrogate Bishop, the Anglican Surrogate Bishop, has signed the petition and a great number of other residents and citizens of Western and Northern Newfoundland have signed it.

Now, Sir, I support the petition wholeheartedly.

Harbour Deep is a community of about 400 persons. It is very prosperous, self supporting and a very fine community. Harbour Deep also, Sir, has access, or a road to Harbour Deep would give access to two great resources. The timber of the Mooney Block would be accessible by means of a road from Port Saunders, River of Ponds Area coming across the peninsula. I believe the Minister of Forestry has made some investigations of that and indeed the Task Force on Forestry Report recommends the Harbour Deep Area as the potential site, one of seven potential sites for the development of a fairly large sawmill, about five million board feet a year.

In addition, Sir, a road to Harbour Deep would provide access to the watershed of the great Cat Arm River which is one of the last hydro electric potentials undeveloped on the island. I understand that possibly a hundred thousand or more horse power of hydro electric power could be generated at a not unreasonable cost on the great Cat Arm River.

So for these reasons, Sir, I support the petition. I would hope that the prayer of it would be considered most seriously and would be granted. I realize the Mooney Block is privately held land. It is owned by the Price Newfoundland Company. It is a classic example of why we need a new forest policy in this province because as I said in the House many times, it has never been logged to any extent at all. I will wager, Sir, that not 50,000 cords of wood has been taken off the Mooney Block in the forty years that Price have owned it. It badly needs to be developed; it has much over-mature timber. A road, Sir, would provide that development and would provide 400 Newfoundlanders with access to the main highway network.

I would think in closing, Mr. Speaker, that aside from the Community of Burgeo and the Community of Ramea, the Community of Harbour Deep is probably the largest single community left on this island, and the Community of Ramea will never have a road, Burgeo is getting one now, the Community of Harbour Deep is the largest single community left on this island without any access to roads. I think, Sir, they

have a good case. I think the petition states it well. I hope it will be granted and I urge the government to give it every consideration in the hope that we will see a start this year on a woods access road into the Northern Peninsula timber and across to Harbour Deep and that that road will continue until the people of Harbour Deep do have access to the highway network.

I present the petition, Sir, and would ask that it be given the utmost of consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Twillingate.

MR. GILLET: Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from the residents of New World Island West. Now this includes Bridgeport, Morton's Harbour, Whale's Gulch and it also goes down to Tizzard's Harbour which I do not think is actually considered New World Island West. But the prayer of the petition is that the road from the pavement in Virgin Arm to the junction of Morton's Harbour Road, a distance of some six miles, be rebuilt and paved. Now this road, whereas it does connect all of the western part of New World Island, it is also the road by which you get to Tizzard's Harbour, although Tizzard's Harbour is as I say not on the western part but perhaps on the eastern or southeastern part.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, that a survey had been completed long ago and that the Department of Transportations and Communications have from year to year hoped for funds to reconstruct or build actually, to build a new, straighter road taking in naturally some parts of the older road, but to build a new road from Virgin Arm to this junction of Morton's Harbour.

Now this petition is signed by I would guess around 800. I went down through three pages and I got well up to 400, so I am very certain that we can double that, I would say about 800 residents of the entire area. Mr. Speaker, I can only add to the prayer of this petition once again the necessity of the road from Virgin Arm to Morton's Harbour. I have mentioned this if not three times at least twice in this honourable House and I trust Mr. Speaker, that the department to which this petition

relates will give it not only serious consideration but will carry out the prayer of this petition in this year, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SENIOR: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition on behalf of the majority of the residents of the Town of Badger. This petition was presented to me last week during a public meeting in Badger when several matters pertaining to the school system and the school bus transportation system were being discussed. We were able to resolve the situation regarding the school bus transportation, at least for the time being but there was another matter which was brought to my attention very forcibly which concerns the school system that exists at Badger at the present time and also the fact that all students, grades seven to eleven inclusive, are bussed to Grand Falls.

This petition, Sir, was circulated in the Town of Badger by the Badger Town Council and some of the background is that we have three different jurisdictions in this area, or schools operated under three different jurisdictions, the Pentecostal Board, the Integrated Board and the Roman Catholic Board of Education. The three school boards informed the council, back in 1972, that all the students in Badger from grade VII to XI, would be bussed to schools in Grand Falls - Windsor Area and these students would be housed in different schools. They must leave home at 8:00 in the morning and return at approximately 5:00 P.M.

Travelling to and from school prevents children from participating sufficiently in recreation facilities both in school and at home. The council also believes, and this was brought forward at the meeting, that for the physical well being, the emotional well being and so on of the children this is not in their best interests, the present system which they have there does not protect their physical and emotional well being, quite a few children are upset. So the prayer of the petition was to have a one-school system for the Town of Badger.

Now, Sir, I realize we are getting into a very delicate area and I am sure an area which has been discussed many times before in Newfoundland because of the type of school system that we have. But it was the consensus of opinion of the people at the public meeting and indeed

by the number of people who have signed this petition, and they were given three alternatives when they signed the petition by way of expression of their opinion and the majority of them expressed the opinion that there should be one school system in the Town of Badger.

Sir, I do not know if this means that they want a public school system for the Town of Badger or whether there is some way that the three boards of education can get together in some way to provide a single school system for the Town of Badger, but they are desirous of co-operating in every way possible to see that the students that are presently bussed from Badger to Grand Falls remain in Badger. The reasons for these, some I have outlined already, some of the reasons are the population of Badger is somewhere in the vicinity of 1700 people which is a fair size community. The distance travelling is approximately twenty miles one way and they feel that a community of this size which has several new schools already constructed, which has the facilities there, should be able to retain their students in that particular community.

So they have asked me to present this petition to the House of Assembly. Maybe it should more properly be presented to the school boards affected but I have done what they have asked me to do and I ask the Department of Education to take this matter under serious consideration because the people there are very seriously concerned about it and they are now at the point where they are prepared to demand that a comprehensive study be done of the situation, that they be given what they consider is their right in a community of this size, to have a proper school system operated there even if it means just having a single school system.

Sir, I would like to table this petition and refer it to the Department of Education and request that they take whatever action is deemed appropriate.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

MR. OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, I will certainly be pleased, when the petition in a couple of days is referred to the department, to synopsise the prayer

of it and of course to make copies of it available to the school boards concerned with educational facilities in Badger.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS:

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

MR. HICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce the following bills, a bill, "An Act To Amend, Revise and Consolidate The Law Respecting The St. John's Memorial Stadium," a bill, "An Act Further To Amend The Agreements Ratified By The Avalon Telephone Company Act, 1938."

ORAL QUESTIONS:

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bonavista North.

MR. THOMS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture. In view of the fact that some of our dairy producers in the province apparently have serious financial problems, has the minister or any of his officials in the department spoken with representatives of the dairy industry. If they have, what action does his department or the government plan on taking to alleviate this situation?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Forestry and Agriculture.

MR. MAYNARD: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we had talks with the dairy industry in the province and we are trying our best to come up with some solutions to their problems but I cannot say that we have come up with any definite answers as yet.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bell Island.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture if he would give us a report on an incident that took place in Gander I think it was yesterday or over the weekend involving a couple of moose that were hanging around Gander Airport and were chased with a helicopter for five hours until the cow moose, in calf, died of exhaustion.

MR. WM. ROWE: The bull moose.

MR. NEARY: The bull moose died. I thought it was the cow moose.

MR. MAYNARD: I do not know if the Minister of Tourism, who is in charge

of wild life,would be familiar with it.

MR. NEARY: I put the question to the wrong minister, I put the question to the Minister of Tourism. Would the minister care to give us a report of that incident there in Gander that is widely publicized?

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, I have a report which I just received about a half an hour ago on the incident, as follows: On Sunday, May 5, Mr. Forsey, our biologist, received a call from the Ministry of Transport, about 9:00 A.M., concerning the fact that two moose were loose on the tarmac in Gander. Before leaving Glenwood for Gander, he lives in Glenwood, he arranged to have a helicopter waiting for him there in Gander. On arrival in Gander, about 9:30 A.M. Sunday, the helicopter was already air borne, attempting to drive the moose from the runway area. The method was used to remove moose from this area in the past. About 11:00 A.M. the helicopter returned, not being successful in getting the animals out.

Mr. Forsey, together with Warden Bert, then prepared to tranquilize the animals. A subsequent flight failed to produce results. They could not chase the animals out nor could they get a good shot with the drug. These operations stopped about noon on Sunday. About 2:00 P.M. the same gentleman in another helicopter tried shooting the drugged needles once again. This time both animals were hit and immobilized. The female was removed but the male died within minutes of being drugged. The male could have died from an overdose of the drug or from the combined effects of an overdose plus the earlier harrassment. The animals had to be removed because of the threat they posed to aircraft landing and taking off in Gander.

This problem will occur again as the entire area around the runway in question is not yet fenced and until it is fenced, I understand it is in the course of being fenced, it is obvious that it is going to happen again as it has happened before. That is the extent, Mr. Speaker, of the report I have as of a half an hour ago.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Sneaker, my understanding was that the helicopter chased these moose for five hours. The helicopter was air-borne. The minister says no. Would the minister indicate if it is possible to get these moose off

the runway with a pickup or some other form of vehicle instead of chasing them with a helicopter?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please! I think perhaps the Chair was a little lax in the first place in allowing the question. I do not think it is the purpose of the oral question period to let that particular question indeed demand an urgent answer. The question perhaps was out of order in the first place. If the honourable minister wishes, I shall permit him to answer a supplementary.

MR. DOYLE: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make one comment. I first heard this on C.J.O.N. yesterday at 1:15 p.m. I heard the same comment, that the helicopter had been chasing the animals for five hours. This is what got me upset in the first place as well. We have had it checked out thoroughly and our information is, and this is supported by the R.C.M.P. in Gander, that the helicopter was air-borne no more than an hour and a half to two hours. That was the first time. The second time it was air borne for the purpose of trying to get a shot, with the tranquilizer gun, at the animals. Apparently there is no other way they can get them. They have tried over the years various methods to get them off the tarmac and they have not been successful. As I say, until the full runway is fenced, which we are told will be this summer, there is just no way to keep the animals from roaming on the tarmac.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I have a question concerning a different kind of wildlife in the minister's department. Would the minister care to inform the House, confirm or deny whether a professional was brought in from Las Vegas to assist in the Silver Anniversary pageant held out in Corner Brook over the weekend?

MR. SPEAKER: That question can be placed on the Order Paper.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what kind of professional it was. What kind of a professional this lady was and how much it cost.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please! Order Please! That question can be placed on the Order Paper.

The honourable member for Labrador South.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the honourable

Minister of Justice. I wonder if he can give us any indication as to how close we are to getting the Report of the Labrador Royal Commission.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Justice.

MR. HICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, all I can say is reasonably close. That précis has not yet been completed but every time I inquire it is almost finished. I would hope certainly within the next few days.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bell Island.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Manpower and Industrial Relations. Sir, would the minister indicate if the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in Churchill Falls have asked for a meeting with the minister or with the government to discuss the matter of the ratio of supervisors from the Mainland as compared to Newfoundland being completely out of line and what other problems they want to discuss with the minister?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Manpower and Industrial Relations.

MR. ROUSSEAU: I have received a request from the IBEW in Churchill Falls to meet with me, I presume in my capacity as M.H.A. So if the member should think it is in my capacity as minister then he knows more about it than I do. But certainly we are going to meet sometime during the third week of May when they come down to discuss any problems that they have at that time, probably in relationship to the change in life style or any contemplated changes in respect to government's undertakings on the Lower Churchill and the Upper Churchill. So we will be meeting sometime during the third week of May.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, supplementary: Would this meeting have anything to do then with problems that have arisen as a result of the government take over of BFINC() or the Upper Churchill?

MR. ROUSSEAU: No. There are no problems. But anyway, any problems that they have to bring down, as they are going to meet us and whatever ministers or other people who are involved certainly will be most pleased to meet with them as we are most pleased to meet with anybody who wants to meet with us.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Labrador North.

May 7, 1974

Tape No. 1545

NM - 9

MR. WOODWARD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the honourable Minister of Finance, to ask

if the minister can tell the House if the Labrador Linerboard have arranged their shipping for wood from Goose Bay to Stephenville for this season. I understand now in Goose Bay (I have been told by reliable officials in Labrador Linerboard) that the shipment of wood will be delayed because they have not been able to get ships to start at the beginning of the season.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Finance.

MR. J.C. CROSBIE: I am glad the honourable gentleman reminded me, Mr. Speaker, that we need ships this summer. We are going to have ships. I am glad the honourable gentleman reminded me. Anyway I will set his mind at rest. There are chartered parties entered into for two vessels from Jebbens. There are two vessels and they are suppose to come on charter on June 15.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. CROSBIE: Well, these chartered parties were entered into months ago and the date in the charter parties is June 15. As they have in every charter party they have so many days each side of that date that they can come on charter. So they should certainly be there at least a month earlier than last year. We only hope the ice will be gone by June 15.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for St. Barbe North.

MR. F. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Education, regarding the ministerial statements. The minister has indicated to me that he will get the formula for last year but he announced that the government will assume ninety-five per cent of the cost of school bus transportation.

Now could the minister indicate how the cost of school bus transportation for certain school districts is going to be worked out, how the basic cost is going to be figured out, how is that ninety-five per cent going to be? What is it based on?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education.

MR. G. OTTENHEIMER: Yes, it will be based upon the total school transportation bill for all school transportation as authorized by the act and by regulations. So the total school transportation bill, ninety-five per

cent of it will be paid to the school boards by the government.

MR F. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question: Is the cost still figured out on a per capita basis, a student per capita basis?

MR OTTENHEIMER: No, on an aggregate basis, the total. The school boards are obliged to tender. Of course they were obliged to tender before. School boards are obliged to tender. They are obliged by law to award to the lowest tender. They cannot award to any but the lowest tender without the permission of the minister. The only reason it has ever been operative is when there is reasonable proof that any but the lowest tender can provide a safe or reasonable service. So it is on the aggregate, but they must tender.

MR F. ROWE: A supplementary question: What happens if the total amount of the bids is in excess of \$7,797,000? Will money be made available in that case?

MR OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, of course this is an estimate. Obviously if the costs authorized within the law, within the policy and programme, are in excess of that, then obviously they are covered. These are, as the honourable gentleman knows, only estimates of what this service will cost during the next year.

MR SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Education: Will he indicate whether any of the ground rules have changed? For instance, will the mileage still apply in terms of minimum distance from school?

MR OTTENHEIMER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the mileage, that is the same. What has changed is the formula for cost-sharing. The regulations with respect to a mile will remain. If that were changed to half a mile, three-quarters of a mile, whatever it was, obviously there would always be those who would want it ever closer and closer. Once we make any significant change there at all the costs would escalate tremendously and it could easily double, perhaps triple but easily double the cost.

What is affected is the policy for cost-sharing, the policy for paying but not the distance at which a person lives in order to get bus transportation.

MR SIMMONS: Another question to the Minister of Education: Mr. Speaker, in view of his ministerial statement and in particular the part which glorifies the importance of local financial involvement, am I correct in interpreting and deducing that the minister is against the government assuming the full fiscal responsibility for education at the elementary and secondary level?

MR OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, I do not see it as such. The government's policy, which obviously I share as a member of the government and as Minister of Education, is that we assume ninety-five per cent of the costs and that five per cent remains a local responsibility. I should point out that it was only a six months period when it was ever any other way. It was seventy-five and twenty-five for a while and ninety and ten for a while. It was one hundred per cent only for a very short while in late 1971. I would think that when - well, it is not that I would think - I mean the data that we have indicates that were there is no local financial responsibility then there is very little control on costs. The data that we have on costs during that period when there was one hundred percent assumption of costs, shows it got completely out of line. I would suggest that if we were to implement one hundred per cent policy the difference to the public treasury would not be the five per cent but the difference could well be very much more.

MR SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the minister is saying that there are not adequate controls, in his opinion, at the school board level to insure that the money will be spent wisely. Is that what he is saying when he says that the difference would be more than five per cent if the government were to undertake one hundred per cent of the cost? Am I right?

MR OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, the school boards, of course, can only deal with the tenders that they get; they do not tender themselves but they receive the tenders from those who do. I mean, it is human nature; if a final and total bill is to be paid directly by the government, very often we find then, indeed the data we have for the free period in which it was in operation indicated no control or insufficient control on costs. This is based on data that we have for that one brief period when there was one hundred per cent payment directly by government.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for White Bay South.

MR. W. ROWE: A supplementary as well, Sir, and it is an important subject stemming from the minister's statement. Can the minister tell the House how it can possibly happen that if school boards are required to accept low tenders in the competitive way, presumeably there is competition, presumeably he is not making any allegations of collusion among tenderers or school boards and tenderers, if school boards have to accept the lowest tender then how can it possibly make any difference whether the government pays ninety-five per cent or one hundred per cent? How can that in any way be a control on the expenditure on school bus transportation? Unless the minister, Sir, is stating further that there is some kind of either extreme negligence or collusion or some shady dealing of some sort. If the minister has data to that effect, would he give it to the House or explain it to the House?

MR. OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, I cannot explain during the one instance when there was one hundred per cent assumption of expenses by government, why there was inordinate escalation in costs. All I can report is the fact; the reason I do not know. Of course, there are areas where there is very little and perhaps some where there is no competition. There are areas where school boards call for tenders and only receive one reply. That does happen as well. There are areas where there is very little competition in that there might be two. There are areas in which there is no competition. Why the costs escalated during that brief period of one hundred per cent I cannot say. All I can do is report that they did in fact.

MR. W. ROWE: Is the minister then saying, Sir, that based on a six month period, no more, a six month period, that he is drawing a conclusion that it was because it was one hundred per cent, because of the fact that one hundred per cent of the cost of the school bus transportation was assumed by the government that the costs escalated? Is this the only reasonable conclusion that one can come to?

To me, Sir, if I may be permitted to make a statement,

it seems to be an unwarranted conclusion based on such scimpy data. Can the minister comment on that.

MR. OTTENHEIMER: Actually that one hundred per cent policy that I said was in operation six months, it was in operation for six months in the sense that about six months after it was announced another one was announced but it was in fact in operation for one school year. That particular school year is quite comparable with any other school year. There is absolutely nothing to suggest that there was anything unique about it or any reason whatsoever that it is not comparable with, let us say, two or three years previous to it or the two or three years after it. Based upon that data, for example, as I said, in 1970-71, under a ninety/ten split there were ten additional bus units. During the past two years there were thirty-one bus units. So we are talking about the two years after and the one year before. During that particular year there were 158 additional bus units.

We are comparing that period with the ones immediately before and the ones immediately after. Those are the facts.

MR. W. ROWE: If I may, Sir, ask another supplementary on it. Well is it not possible - I would like the minister's comment on this - that there were boards who could not afford earlier the ten per cent or the twenty-five per cent or whatever was the amount to be paid locally who when the government took over one hundred per cent of the financing then found it possible to open up new routes or to take on additional services, adequate services and therefore provide a half decent service to the school children? I mean is that not another warranted conclusion or deduction to be drawn from the fact that there was an increase in school bus transportation costs?

MR. OTTENHEIMER: Mr. Speaker, the data that we have would indicate that all who were within the regulations entitled to a school bus transportation the year or two before and the couple of years after did in fact have it. Taking a year or two period before this hundred per cent and the period of huge escalation in costs and the two years immediately after it, there is no indication that either previously or subsequently those who were

entitled to school bus transportation were not in fact transported.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, if I am hearing the minister correctly, I think he ought to elaborate because that is a very serious charge. What I hear him saying and I would like for him to correct me on this if I am wrong, but what I hear him say is that in the last year, the ninety per cent, according to his data, those routes which were warranted at that time were all ready operative, were all ready into effect and then suddenly there is fifty-eight new routes. Is he saying that there was something improper going on, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! The honourable member is proceeding to make a speech. In essence he rose to ask a supplementary question. There has been a considerable number of supplementary questions asked on this issue and a number asked after the minister had made his statement. If the minister wishes to reply to this question I shall permit him but I think we should get on with the other questions if there are any for the balance of the question period which is only some six or seven minutes.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Does the minister want to answer it?

MR. OTTENHEIMER: The question essentially was I think or the part I heard, was I am making a charge. I am making no charge. I am just giving statistical or factual data which I have.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. OTTENHEIMER: There were new bus units. They may not have all been, some of them presumable were new routes, some of them were using more buses for the same routes. There were all kinds of possibilities. There were 158 new bus units. It does not mean that they were all necessarily new routes. It could have been where there was a route with one bus, there is now a route with two buses. There are all kinds of possibilities. If there are further questions for statistical information on this, I think I would suggest that honourable members give notice because obviously I do not carry all of these statistics around in my head.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Bell Island.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister of Forestry and

Agriculture could indicate to the House whether or not there is any crown land available on the Gander River for summer cabins?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

HON. E. MAYNARD: I do not think it is a very urgent question, Mr. Speaker. I am sure if the honourable gentleman should go down to the Crown Lands Division he could look at the maps and find it out. I certainly do not have them here with me.

MR. NEARY: Would the minister undertake to get me the information or is the land just for a select few?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. E. MAYNARD: Make an application.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing undertook a few days ago to get me some information concerning contracts that had been let down at the Industrial Park. Has the minister got that information for me yet?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

MR. H.R.V. EARLE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to be able to inform the honourable member for Bell Island that all tenders called for work by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation are called under tender which are as usual with our department freely open for those who tender to come in and see the bids when they are opened. All work done has been tendered and the tender is awarded to the lowest bidder.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, that is not the answer to the question I asked.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister to give me a list of all of the tender calls and the contracts that had been awarded to work on the Industrial Park. The minister undertook three or four - Ah! I know why the minister does not want me to get the information.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Order, please!

MR. NEARY: The trucking down there might be embarrassing.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Order, please!

MR. NEARY: The Crosbies got her sewed up down there.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: The Crosbies got her sewed up again. Would the minister -

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! I will ask the honourable member for Bell Island to take his seat. On three or four occasions I called for order and the honourable member for Bell Island insisted on continuing his speech. I am sure he is aware that when the Speaker rises that all members are supposed to sit down. If he has a question to ask then I suggest that he get on with it.

MR. NEARY: A little hard of hearing in this ear, Your Honour.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Why does the honourable member not get his hair cut?

MR. NEARY: Would the minister undertake to get me a list of all the contracts that have been let down at the Industrial Park?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is too embarrassing.

MR. NEARY: No, Mr. Chairman, I am not asking the Minister of Finance.

MR. EARLE: Mr. Speaker, the question was asked the other day, "Were tenders called and if so were they awarded the lowest tender?" I gave the answer and if the honourable member want to ask another question of that nature which takes some time to dig out, I shall request that he put it on the Order Paper.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the fact that it takes some time to dig it out. Would the minister undertake to get it for me?

MR. EARLE: Order Paper.

MR. NEARY: Order Paper. Too embarrassing to the Minister of Finance and the family compact.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. EARLE: Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member for Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, last week I directed a question to the Minister of Recreation and Rehabilitation. He indicated he was going to get the answer for me. I wonder does he have it concerning the negotiations with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs with respect to the Conne Causeway proposal? I can repeat the question if the honourable member should want me to.

MR. T. DOYLE: I thought I answered that question last week, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMONS: I remind the minister I asked a question concerning what negotiations had taken place or if indeed there were negotiations taking place. The minister said something to the effect that there was something rather general going on by way of negotiations but he would have to check to see if there is anything specific with respect to the Conne Causeway.

I wonder if he could indicate now whether his department is indeed involved in negotiations directly on the matter of funds for the Conne River Causeway?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Tourism.

HON. T. DOYLE: No, my department is not involved directly with negotiations on the Conne River Causeway, Mr. Speaker. The involvement of my department in that regard is in the overall federal-provincial agreement which we have raised from \$1 million to \$1.5 million to cover the seven or eight locations in Labrador together with the Conne River area which was added to the agreement last year. We are not involved directly with any negotiations on the Conne River Bridge.

supplementary: Will any of the \$1.5 million - does the minister anticipate that any of that amount will be made available for the causeway project?

MR. DOODY: I will have to take that as notice, Mr. Speaker; I cannot answer that offhand. If that is the specific question that the honourable member is asking, I shall try to get an answer for him. I thought I satisfied him last week. I will try and get that information for him.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I have been on this subject for some time. I will try it another way.

Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier, I would like to direct a question to the Acting Premier. I would like to ask him if the government are carrying on any negotiations at present with the federal government for the purpose of obtaining funding for the Conne River project?

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. SIMMONS: Perhaps we should ask of the Acting Premier. I meant the question, Mr. Speaker, for the Minister of Justice.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please!

I am sure the Hon. Member for Hermitage is aware that any questions directed to ministers of the crown should be directed to a specific minister and some department.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that fifty per cent of the ministers are absent again today, Sir, from their seats.

MR. SPEAKER: I am sure the Hon. Member for Bell Island is aware that it is not the responsibility of the Chair to make certain that the ministers are in their seats.

MR. NEARY: Is there any obligation at all, Sir, on the part of the ministers to be in their seats during the question and answer period?

MR. SPEAKER: Again I am sure the Hon. Member for Bell Island is aware that it is not the duty of the Chair to make certain that they are.

MR. HICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, may I draw to the attention of the House that only forty per cent of the opposition are in their seats at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please!

The thirty minutes for the question period has now expired.

On motion that the House go into Committee of Supply, Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

MR. GILLETTE: Mr. Chairman, last night when we adjourned, I was just about finished. I was starting to compare, if one would call it, the departments and suggest that with only twenty hours remaining or some twenty-one hours remaining that we should, I believe as a responsible committee, get along with the business of the estimates.

The Department of Transportation, whereas I believe we all realize and appreciate the importance of it, as evidenced I believe in all the petitions that have been presented in this House, I suppose ninety per cent of the petitions are presented for the attention of the Department of Transportation.

The work of that department does result in a terrific income, a tremendous income to the treasury, in the gasoline taxes, the sales taxes, on automobiles and the other various incomes, not to mention the incomes from fines, speeding fines and whatnot.

However, Mr. Chairman, I feel personally that as important as that department is, we should satisfy ourselves that we have fairly well covered it and get on to some of the departments which, again I say in my opinion, do not only generate income but they also make possible employment opportunities as well as resource development and other very important departments dealing with the rank and file of people of our province; namely, the fishermen, the labourers and everybody in general. I am thinking about the Department of Fisheries, Mr. Chairman. I am thinking also of the Department of Manpower, a very

important department, particularly in view of the fact that we have been faced with so many illegal strikes. There is a great responsibility on that department. I would like to see something done with the estimates of that department so that some discussion can be conducted under the minister's salary.

Mr. Chairman, I think I should sit down because it is now 4:14 P.M. , but I would like to reiterate to the Minister of Transportation and Communications the needs of my district. A petition was presented today concerning one road in particular. There are others. I am sure he is aware of it. I am sure his officials are aware of it. I have been told of their awareness. I do hope, Mr. Chairman, that before too long, before many days actually, I should be able to pass along to the people of my district a favourable report, a favourable programme of roads rebuilding, of roads being paved, particularly the paving of the road around the harbour and the area of Twillingate itself.

Mr. Chairman, I suppose I would be out of order if I were to suggest that a question be now put because somehow or other I feel there might be some other speakers who might wish to contribute to the Department of Transportation and Communications. I know we have not heard from anybody on the other side, particularly the backbenchers, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering whether or not they do actually know what is going to be done in their districts. It causes one to wonder. None of them have spoken, at least on behalf of their districts.

Mr. Chairman, I will end by saying once again to the Minister of Transportation and Communications, because he has chosen not to reveal his programme publicly but rather that he will reveal it individually - I am going to hold him to that promise as far as my district is concerned, I can assure him that I shall be knocking on his door within the next day or two.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to address a few comments before this head passes. First of all there are two or three items which affect the District of Hermitage itself. I hope the minister, either now or privately, can give me some of the answers. None of the issues I am going to raise are particularly new to the ministernor to his colleagues in government because all of them, without exception, are commitments which were made to the people in various parts of the district last fall, during the Hermitage by-election. It is a complete coincidence, of course, Mr. Chairman, but that is quite beside the point here.

One of the matters I want to raise in this respect is the matter of upgrading and paving a section of road in the Community of Seal Cove, from the main road to the fishermen's wharf. This was a commitment made in November and one which I am having some difficulty to nail down since. It is a need improvement, and the minister is familiar with the details of it I believe. I would certainly like to read that one into the record so he can undertake to do something about it.

The second matter is the matter of upgrading the Harbour Breton Road which serves not only parts of my district but also parts of the Fortune Bay District. In the absence of any representation publicly by the Minister of Municipal Affairs whose district is affected, let me be doubly vocal on the point because the Harbour Breton Road which serves a number of communities is certainly in need of upgrading. Indeed again, Mr. Chairman, I do not want to elaborate these points because the minister and his government are well aware of this problem, having made that another of the promises last fall during the Hermitage by-election. One can only come to the conclusion in view of that, Mr. Chairman, that not only is the government aware of the needs but has established a set of priorities and has placed the needs I am mentioning here sufficiently high, and I feel that they warrant a commitment. This commitment was made. I can find all kinds of witnesses, hundreds of them, 400 in one hall alone in

Harbour Breton, not to mention some other hundreds in Hermitage, Seal Cove and so on. There are lots of witnesses to these commitments in case the minister's memory is forgetful or in case he was not there, as is the case. He was not there at all times when those promises were made, but they were made. The need is there. The commitment has been made. I call upon the minister to see that the commitment is kept this year with respect to the Harbour Breton Road upgrading.

There is another item in the same category, the category of a commitment, that section of road from Seal Cove to the Harbour Breton Junction, to the junction of the Seal Cove, Hermitage Road and the Harbour Breton Road. Once again the same comments apply. The need has been recognized by the government, as witnessed by the firm commitment made last fall. Since then I have been having considerable difficulty getting any indication when these projects are to start. I would say that common decency at this point requires that they be started forthwith and that they be started this spring. I would hope that the minister could indicate that to me.

I come now to not only another promise but a matter of some pretty vital concern to the people who live at Conne River. It is the much talked about proposed Conne River causeway. This promise was not only made verbally on a number of occasions but it is in writing. Mr. Chairman, as you know, having sat in this House for the last couple of months, you too have seen the runaround I have gotten on this one. Nobody has done the negotiating. The Minister of Transportation said that it was not his baby. The Minister of Recreation thought it was but now does not think so. All in all I cannot seem to get many answers from anybody on this subject. I am told from sources outside the House that indeed there is no request. There is not even a request to Ottawa at this particular time, notwithstanding the pretty complete runaround that I have gotten on the subject. There is no request, Mr. Chairman, I understand, to Ottawa for the funds to

build the Conne River causeway and thus connect the Communities of Conne River and Burnt Woods to the province's road system.

Mr. Chairman, there are a lot of needs that cannot be fulfilled overnight; I appreciate that. When a need such as the Conne River causeway comes to the point where it is promised verbally and in writing during an election campaign and then immediately after everybody passes the buck, nobody knows anything about it, "It is not in my department. It is another fellow's department." For two months or three months or more, since I first raised questions in this House on the subject, I have yet to get a satisfactory answer from anybody, from any minister or from the Premier or the Acting Premier. As was witnessed today I have yet to get any kind of an answer even an unsatisfactory one. I still do not know whether the government has done anything whatsoever about the Conne River causeway except to promise it last fall. I know they did that. I have that in writing. It is printed in their campaign newsletter. Apart from that, Mr. Chairman, there is not a hint, nothing at all.

Mr. Chairman, I would go so far as to say that a number of attempts have been made not to answer the questions that have been put. The answers are simple, Mr. Chairman. Either the government is carrying on negotiations with Ottawa or it is not. I cannot even really determine that. I can determine from outside sources. My sources are that the government is not carrying on negotiations but I am willing to have that contradicted because I would like to hear more than anything else that this government has made a request, an application or whatever for funds for the Conne River causeway. I would like for the minister to answer this point as well if he would.

The subject of road maintenance has been gone over so I will cover it very briefly. I just want to say that I am aware of the department's problems, equipment problems and personnel problems - I do not mean problems with present personnel but the problems of finding enough men to do the job. I am one who admires greatly the senior civil servants in the minister's department. What I am going to say should in no way be construed as being a criticism of any individual or individuals in that department. My relationship with them over the years has been good. The rapport has been quite satisfactory. When the minister or whoever responds to the comments I am going to make on the subject of road maintenance, I hope they do not drag in red herrings about how I am running down the officials of the department. That is not the issue, Mr. Chairman, and I am sick and tired in the last week or so of sitting here and hearing the red herring approach to many of the questions that my colleagues in the opposition have asked. These are questions which require answers. We do not expect the minister to have all the answers but we certainly expect him to either give us the answer or not give it to us straight without using the red herring approach.

On the subject of road maintenance, I am no authority on all the roads in the province over the past number of years but from my fairly considerable travelling over the past few years, this spring must really take the cake in terms of road conditions. Some of it can be blamed on weather conditions but there is still a lot of blame left to apportion elsewhere. I would suggest that a fair amount of it must relate to the bottleneck which has been created by the shortage of equipment which in turn is created by the numbers of pieces of equipment which have been in disrepair literally all the winter, sitting in depots in Grand Falls and elsewhere because somebody did not take the matter in hand and has not found enough mechanics to do the job. Whatever the reason, it is for the minister to address himself to.

Mr. Chairman, the state of roads around this province must be a record this year. In terms of their present state, it must be an all-time low. It must be the worst ever in terms of road conditions. I say some of it can be blamed on the weather conditions but a lot of it has to be blamed on the shortage of equipment. The minister would do the people of Newfoundland a great favour if he would indicate what he intends to do to cope with that problem so it does not reoccur again next spring.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to come very briefly to another matter which I believe has not been raised in the committee, although I thought the minister might have been alluding to it yesterday when he talked about a matter affecting working on holidays, (I believe this is a separate issue) Sunday work, working on Sundays. I understand that with the new shift arrangements that have been introduced in the past few months, a number of men are working as a matter of course or as a matter of their regular shift on Sunday. I have no beef with this. I think this is quite in order. If men have to be away from their families on a Sunday to carry out the necessary functions, well and good. I do understand that a number of people, including some in my district, for religious reasons, have objected to working regularly on Sundays.

Now, Mr. Chairman, let me make a distinction between regularly scheduled work and an emergency type of work. I believe the latter must be attended to when the emergency arises. Obviously I would say to the minister and his officials that there was another way around this particular problem. The way that it was solved has caused a number of problems for people who, for religious reasons, did not want to be on a regular schedule on Sunday. They stated quite openly in writing to the minister that they would be quite prepared to work when called on to do so in an emergency, but that is not what is happening. Right now there is a regular shift. Those

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people are performing chores such as filling potholes and that kind of thing, ditching and grading, which could certainly be scheduled during the week.

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To understand the issue, Mr. Chairman, it is worth pointing out that there is not a double shift on all days. If there were a double shift on all seven days, well there would be nowhere else to put the shifts; but there is now, as I understand, a double shift on only three or four of the days. I would suggest, on behalf of the people involved, that much of the work which is now being done on Sunday could be accommodated by a second shift on Thursday, Friday or Saturday.

It did create a dilemma for a number of people and indeed, Mr. Chairman, as the minister knows, one individual in particular on principle had quit his job. He is not a bizarre sort of individual who is looking for an out. He is a very hard-working man. He now, as I understand it, has a job elsewhere. On the grounds of principle he did leave his job with the department, because he could not be accommodated without having to work Sundays on a regular basis.

I would like to comment for a moment, Mr. Chairman, on the matter of ferries, boat ferries, the Member for Bell Island had mentioned and other colleagues I believe. I am glad that the Member for Bell Island did remind the Premier of his promise of two years ago. I was less glad with the rather lighthearted way in which the Premier dealt with the promise. We on this side can remind the Premier of any number of promises, in the dozens and literally in the hundreds, certainly in the dozens as it relates to Hermitage but I would say in the hundreds as it relates to the provincial election in March, 1972.

We could remind him of hundreds that have not been kept. We can understand that some promises are easier to make than keep; some promises are made at a time when all the factors are not known. It is easy to make promises but once one investigates the details involved it is harder to admit that the promise cannot be kept. That is understood; that some promises cannot be kept for any number of reasons. But to sit in this House, as the Premier did yesterday, and just laugh at the idea and to acknowledge (1) that he made the promise and (2) that it has not been kept, seems to me to be baiting the public.

to be teasing the very people who voted for him, often on the basis of those promises. I say that that kind of treatment is not good enough.

I heard the Premier distinctly say, on a number of occasions I saw him quoted in the newspapers and my colleague, the Member for Bell Island, quoted from one of the press reports to the effect that the Premier considered that the ferry system ought to be part of, ought to be an extension of the highway network. I happen to agree with him on that point and I was rather happy when I heard it in his election platform two or three years ago. Sir, to hear him, two or three years later, treat the matter so lightly, as he did yesterday in the House, is somewhat of a disappointment.

I believe this government ought to realize at some point that it is not just good enough to sit and laugh at the promises that were made and not kept, that at some point the people of Newfoundland want to know whether these promises indeed were made with no intention of being kept later or whether the government indeed have some kind of a plan to include ferries in the highways system or whether the government have found for some reason it cannot do so. Be whatever the case, Mr. Chairman, the people of Newfoundland at least deserve an answer on this particular point.

I heard the Premier say yesterday, also in response when on this exchange about ferries, that it was all dependent again on Ottawa.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there were no qualifications two years ago. In the March election there were no qualification, there was no statement such as; "We will consider the ferry to Bell Island or the ferry to Fogo or the Ferry to Little Bay Islands. We will consider these ferries as part of the extension of the roads system; if we get money from Ottawa." There was no "If" in there then but lots of "IFs" now, Mr. Chairman. Every day we hear them, whether about roads or projects or any kind of projects. Everything now can be blamed on Ottawa and suddenly Ottawa become a scapegoat for all the promises that were made two years ago and which this government are not keeping.

The item of ferries, Mr. Chairman, is particularly important to me because another promise, another promise - you must be sick of hearing about promises, about the promises that were made in the Hermitage by-election, Mr. Chairman, but I will give you notice that you will hear about them

a lot yet because I made one promise in the Hermitage by-election too. I promised that for the first year or so, I would give first priority to seeing to it that the government kept every promise it made in the Hermitage by-election. That is what I intend to do. I intend to repeat them and regurgitate them and shove them down people's throat and remind them and remind them in writing, orally, every possible way I can.

I believe that if I can get the government to keep even twenty-five per cent of the promises it made in Hermitage last fall, I would have done a great service to the people of the District of Hermitage.

Another of the promises that were made, Mr. Chairman, was the promise that a ferry service would be provided by government between Hermitage and the Community of Gaultois which as you know, Mr. Chairman, is on an island, Long Island in Hermitage Bay.

This is a promise that had no "ifs" attached to it, not the kind of "if" we heard recently when we were talking about the subject to government officials, the explanation that we must wait until September, we must wait until we get an agreement with Ottawa, etc. etc. The promise was made in the presence of many of hundreds of people that a ferry would be provided for the Community of Gaultois this spring. I have quoted the Premier almost word for word "Would be provided this spring."

Well this spring has come and it is fast slipping away. At this point we are having difficulty getting any kind of a commitment from the Minister of Transportation or the Premier about the status of this promise or at what point it is going to be acted upon. I call upon the minister now or when I sit down to indicate what his department or his government intends to do on this particular subhead.

Mr. Chairman, what I have done in the last few minutes in referring to particular specific items is just another step in what my colleagues have done in listing a number of items requiring attention. In any respect it is by no means an exhaustive list. I had one that was more lengthy which I could have put before the Committee but in watching the pattern of events since these estimates came before the Committee I have been, to say

the least, very disappointed with the way things have gone. We on this side, my colleagues each in turn has stood and put to the minister a number of specific questions. Then I do not completely blame him. He is a man with party loyalties too but then for whatever reason and I suggest the reason is because he got his instructions, he stands up and demonstrates his amazing ability to say in an hour what can be said in ten minutes and at the same time avoid answering the very specific questions that have been put to him.

I say that is unfortunate and I say it is particularly unfortunate that he should get drawn into this but it has become the rather obvious government game of filibustering through, taking as long on these estimates as possible so we do not get a chance of getting through all of the departments and therefore do not have a chance of putting some pretty important questions in respect to the estimates of other departments.

Mr. Chairman, I heard the minister two or three days ago responding to a member on this side - I am not sure which member - it is not relevant to what I want to say. I heard him being asked about the government's road plans for this particular year. I was rather amazed with the answer, particularly when he finally said at the end, rather unequivocally he said that he was not going to tell anybody. Now this is the crowd, Mr. Chairman, who were going to tell it like it is. As somebody said before; "Tell it like it is and let it all hang out." They were going to be honest with the people, going to level.

Now the attitude is, if I can hear what the Minister of Transportation is saying, if I understand him correctly, now I hear him say, "Look, we know something you do not know and we are not going to tell you." That is the attitude. That is the arrogance. "We are not going to tell you." But he is telling some people, Mr. Chairman, he has told the Member for St. Georges about \$1 million worth of roads in his district. Let him deny that. If the minister had not told the Member for St. Georges, how did he find out? I maintain the minister had told him. I maintain that the minister has told the Member for Bonavista South, who indicated in the

Committee a few days ago, in response to a question from the Leader of the Opposition, he indicated that he knew what was going to be done in his district this year. I maintain that the Minister of Transportation told him. I maintain that the Minister of Transportation told the Member for St. Barbe South what was to be done in his district this year, the Minister of Forestry, who passed on the information to a person in his district and had it read out subsequently at a meeting of the Rural Development Association. Is that correct? At a meeting of the Rural Development Association?

Now, Mr. Chairman, we have heard denials of these items but nobody has given a reasonable, plausible explanation of where the information came from. Where did the Member for St. Georges get his information? Was he having one of his lightheaded moments and just thought up \$1.1 million out of thin air? Nobody put the figure in his mind or told him what roads were going to be built. He just dreamed it all up. Was the Member for Bonavista South just bluffing the Committee? Saying he knew what was going to be done in his district when in effect he did not know. Was the person in St. Barbe South who stood at that meeting of the Regional Development Association fabricating? Was that person telling a lie? Was she saying incorrectly that the minister had given her this information? Is the Minister of Transportation saying that all of these people are wrong and he is right? Or is he being caught in a bit of a jam? Have his colleagues let him down by being just a little too public?

He did them a favour, Mr. Chairman, he went to them as fellow caucus members and tipped them off as to what was going to be done in their districts. Then they let him down. Is that what happened? They went out and could not keep it in until the estimates came through, went out and spread the word in St. Barbe South, in Bonavista South and in St. Georges.

I do not care whether he did or not, Mr. Chairman, as long as we on this side get the same kind of treatment, as long as what the minister tells the House of Assembly reflects what happened in St. Georges and

in Bonavista South and in St. Barbe South. As you know, Mr. Chairman, up to this minute what the minister has said contradicts what happened there, because he tells us, first of all he does not know exactly what is going to be done and secondly he has not told anybody. Of course, if he do not know, he obviously could not have told anybody. I maintain he does know.

I also maintain, Mr. Chairman, that if he should not know, I do not know what he is doing as a minister, if he should not know in May month. I do not mean every last detail, Mr. Chairman, certainly there is a cushion in there for various reasons, the unexpected inflation and so on. But I just cannot believe, Mr. Chairman, that the minister, the first week of May, the minister who, from all my contacts with him and from all appearances that I know of, is in fairly good command of the situation as far as his department is concerned. It is something we could not at all say for the Minister of Rural Development, by the way.

I just cannot believe that in the month of May with the construction season upon us that he does not know what is going to be done with that money. If so, it puzzles me that he should come into this Committee with a set of estimates, apparently based on projects and estimates and cost analysis and so on, it puzzles me that he should come in with the figures down so pat, right to the last cent and still tells us that he does not know what is going to be done.

Mr. Chairman, I maintain that he does know what is going to be done. There is still one other possibility. If I should be wrong on that, there is one other possibility. Perhaps it is all one great big multi million dollar slush fund. Perhaps the minister is telling us the complete truth, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps he does not know. Perhaps that is the tactic. Perhaps there is no policy; as he has intimated at times. Perhaps it is one big slush fund. Who ever kicks the loudest or talks the most or whatever gets the funds. Perhaps no decisions have been made. Perhaps there is no overall plan, no overview of the roads problem this year. Perhaps instead it is one big slush fund to be distributed without any particular deferences to where the need is greatest.

Mr. Chairman, will the minister be just a little more clear on this particular point of road projects for this year? Will he tell us when he is going to let us know? Will he tell us when he will know himself? Will he tell us if the problem is that the road programme has not been determined yet for this year? Is that what he is saying? That is what he admitted several weeks ago in the House. Is that still the case in May month, that the road programme has not been determined for this year? Or is it that, as I said earlier, the minister is keeping a slush fund to be dispensed according to the occasion rather than according to the needs? Is he going to be governed in his decisions by whoever kicks up the loudest noise?

Mr. Chairman, we have been in this Committee now on Transportation for several days and these questions that I have asked have been asked in various forms by other of my colleagues on this side. I have yet to hear a satisfactory answer. I have heard the minister say in essence, "Yes, we know, but we are not going to tell you." I have heard him say on another occasion and I think I quote him fairly exacting on this, that he did not think it was right for someone to accuse him of having no policy because he did not announce it. Oh, Mr. Chairman, at some point, he is going to have to give some evidence that he does have a policy. If by his own admission he has not announced it, I am at a loss to know how it is: How do I know he has got a policy? He will not tell us.

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. SIMMONS: He says, "We are not going to announce a policy until we are ready." When is that going to be, Mr. Chairman? They have been in office now a couple of years. He is out of step with his colleagues on this one. His other colleagues are announcing everytime they can get hold of a microphone. The Minister of Education did not wait today until he had every "i" dotted and every "t" crossed on education policy. He comes in one day and he tells us about the policy with respect to bursaries, another day the policy with respect to bus transportation, another day the policy with respect to pupil/teacher ratio. I say this is a fair approach to things. As a policy gets evolved in a particular area, the Minister of Education comes into the House and announces that

policy to the House. We may not agree with it or agree with all he said but we can at least know what the policy is.

But here we are, Mr. Chairman, in reference to Transportation we do not have a click, not a clue, not the first clue what the policy is. The minister just will not tell us; He said that he will not tell us. Not that he does not know but he is not going to tell us. He is going to wait until he gets it all worked out. Mr. Chairman, did it occur to the minister that just as he gets it all worked out there is going to be another emergency somewhere? Or there is going to be something that is going to change the whole set of circumstances and he is going to have to start all over again working it out? What kind of double talk is this, Mr. Chairman? Will he just give us a broad hint, a kind of a general drift of the policy to date? What is the drift of the policy? Is it to concentrate on major arteries across the province? Is it to concentrate on local roads? Is it to concentrate on upgrading, on paving? You know, there must be some emphasis in the department. There must be some indication of what the government's priority is in this particular year. I cannot believe, just because I have too much faith in people, including the minister, I cannot believe that they do not have a click what they are going to do. I cannot believe that. I think they must have some general idea at least. I would go further than that, Mr. Chairman, that I think they had some pretty particular ideas too. I say it is less than honest to the people of Newfoundland and to this House not to indicate to the committee what plans are in store in terms of the roads programme in Newfoundland this year.

Will he indicate what his department is going to do this year? I repeat, Mr. Chairman, that is essentially the question that is being put to him by a number of people on this side. I have seen him give very long-winded answers on the subject. I do not particularly accuse him on that point. I think, as I say, he had his instructions and if somebody tugs you by the arm and tells you to play the game of filibuster I suppose there is a degree to which one is supposed to go along with it.

So I ask him now in the interest of, and I repeat, I echo what my colleague for Twillingate said, in the interest of our getting on to other government departments, I ask the minister to get up and give us a few straight answers to the overall questions we have raised about where the emphasis is going to be this year. What is the general government policy on the subject? And I ask him to quit this nonsense of teasing us, of saying, "Haw! Haw! I know something that you do not know and I am not going to tell you." Now that is basically what I have heard the minister say, unfortunately, on this particular subject and I say, Mr. Chairman, it is not good enough. If that be so well the whole business of estimates is going to be a complete mockery, particularly if the other ministers follow in the footsteps and the pattern of the Minister of Transportation.

If everytime we ask a question he is going to get up, he is going to get up and (1) use the red herring approach, which he is extremely skilled at from my observations of the past few days, (1) use the red herring approach and (2) keep saying I am not going to tell you anything until I get it all worked out. If that be the case, Mr. Chairman, let the government House Leader indicate to us that is the pattern. We will just call off the whole business and let the estimates go through. We are not anxious just to stand here and talk for the sake of talking. If there are going to be no answers, let the minister indicate this, let the government Leader

indicate this and let us get on with the task and do something more productive than just standing here and asking questions for which the government has decided that we are not going to get the answers anyway.

Now we are not asking any prying, embarrassing questions, Mr. Chairman. We are asking the kind of questions that it was not even needful to ask a couple of years ago when the acting minister came in with the list of projects. Now if the present minister cannot get it down that fine, if he cannot come up with a complete list of projects, that is understandable but certainly he knows some of the jobs that are to be done this year. He has a general drift, a rough idea of what is to be done and for him to stand in this committee, Mr. Chairman, and say that he is not going to tell us anything until it is all worked out, well that is a fine academic exercise. If he were up at the university writing papers, that would be a fine stance for him to take. "I am not going to do anything until I get my research all done," that is a great academic approach. But for a man who is involved in the day to day, the ongoing administration of a department, to stand here and consider a roads programme for the province as some kind of a term paper at university, something that he is going to polish up and do the final draft of and then get it typed and bring it in and say, "Now fellows, what do you think?" Does he not realize that in the meantime the province goes on, the needs are getting more pressing and the people want to know, rightfully want to know what is going to be done about roads in various parts of the province this summer.

It is not, Mr. Chairman, good enough, the stance that the Minister of Transportation has taken is just not good enough. In this debate so far on transportation there have been no answers on the subject. I am sorry to have to take - I am not sorry, because I am being honest in what I am saying, but what I mean, Mr. Chairman, is I regret having to take this particular approach because the reputation I have come to gain of the minister, what I know of the minister, his reputation is one of not being a **filibuster**, not one of talking through his teeth but a

fellow who tells it like it is, and this has been my private experience with him in meetings and so on. For some reason, and the only reason I can come up with is that it is part of the overall government filibuster on this subject, for some reason he has taken -

MR. MARSHALL: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I cannot stand it any more. The honourable member is talking about filibusters but it is obviously needless repetition. You know he has taken twenty solid minutes to ask the same question over and over again and he has the unmitigated gall to get up and accuse the government of -

MR. SIMMONS: What is the point of order, Mr. Chairman?

MR. MARSHALL: The point of order is quite briefly this, unnecessary repetition in its most ribald form that you can possibly get, Mr. Chairman, I mean, do they want to examine the estimates or do they want to make as big a fool of themselves in opposition as they did in government.

MR. SIMMONS: To the point of order, Mr. Chairman, I would concede that is needless from one standpoint. It should not be needed because we should have had the answers a long time ago. I repeat it because the minister obviously has not heard the questions yet and I shall continue to repeat it until he does.

MR. WILSON: Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak to these estimates.

MR. SIMMONS: Point of order, Mr. Chairman, I am waiting for a ruling on your point of order. Learn the rules boy, talk to witch-hunt.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please! Again the new rule concerning needless repetition is one that is very difficult to enforce and requires a great deal of perception, power to hear, decipher, categorize, catalogue a member's speech, I do believe that the points being made by the honourable member for Hermitage I have heard them before, made both by himself and by other honourable members. Whether they are in fact needless repetition is a question of judgement which I am not prepared to make at this time. However, I do believe that he was getting into a matter of policy which is irrelevant to head 1701-01. This might be better debated during the budget debate itself and consequently while he may not be needlessly repetitious, he may nevertheless have been irrelevant. So I suggest

that the honourable member might be more relevant.

MR. SIMMONS: Are you saying that I cannot discuss the general roads policy? Is that what you just said, Sir? That is what I was talking about at the time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Maybe the honourable member should listen more carefully to the ruling. He is getting into general policy statements which were not concerning transportation and communications.

MR. SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can only interpret from the concern of the Minister Without Portfolio that our answers to the questions will be brief and less than twenty minutes and I hope the Minister of Transportation takes that matter under advisement. We have had some longer answers than that in the past two or three days, or longer non-answers, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I was about to wind up by commending the Minister of Transportation but his colleague interfered with my doing that. I was about to say that I had come to respect him privately for his ability to get to the point and to not talk through his teeth but to give you the answers as he knew them but for some reason his tactic in this debate has been quite different. I suggest that it is because he has instructions to carry on a filibuster. I know that hurts the Minister Without Portfolio, to hear the truth. He knows because he is the engineer of that fact.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please! The Chair has already ruled on that point of order raised by the honourable the Minister Without Portfolio, now the member for Hermitage is dealing with the point of order, not with head 1701-01.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I understood that the minister had risen on a point of needless repetition, I understood you not to have ruled against me on that. Is that correct?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Hermitage I feel quite sure can understand what the Chairman is saying. At this point the Chair is saying that the member is being irrelevant, which is one of the rules which is not too difficult to enforce or to perceive. Consequently I suggest

the honourable member proceed with head 1701-01. The honourable member was proceeding to discuss the point of order raised by the Minister Without Portfolio, which point of order had already been ruled upon by the Chair.

MR. SIMMONS: I understand, Mr. Chairman, we are on the minister's salary and I am trying with some difficulty to talk about the minister whose salary we are talking about. Now are you saying that that is irrelevant too? I was of the opinion it was not. I will try it again and we will see what happens.

The Minister of Transportation has certainly, despite the fact he has not answered many questions in this debate so far, done far better than his predecessor, the Minister of Rural Development, on the subject, and for which he is to be commended. He has certainly been more knowledgeable of his department, for which he is to be commended. He has certainly been less arrogant in his approach than the Minister of Finance, for which he is to be commended. Now then if he would get to some pertinent answers to the questions that have been raised by me and by my other colleagues on this side, then we would get on with it and get on to some other department, which we would dearly like to do, but we would very much like to know what policy exists in this department and why it is such a state secret that we on this side cannot be told what it is all about.

MR. WILSON: I would like to speak in this debate. I quite agree with the honourable member for Twillingate. It is time for us to proceed and get on with the business of this House. I am sure that if every honourable gentleman who was mentioned on this side in this debate had used up so much time in this debate as the member for Hermitage is after using up, Mr. Chairman, we would have to put the plows back on the graders again to plow the snow, there would be nothing done on the highroads this summer with what time has been used on the other side.

I have a district too as well as all honourable members in this House. If we use up so much time as the honourable member for Hermitage has used up, we would have the snow on the ground.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please! With all due respect to the honourable member, the rule of relevancy has to be applied with fairness and equanimity and consequently while the points made by the honourable the member for Hermitage may have been more appropriate at the time the point of order was raised by the honourable the Minister Without Portfolio, I have to rule that he must either deal with head 1701-01, Transportation and Communications, or I may have to rule him out of order. But I suggest he probably has made his point.

MR. WILSON: Under the heading of 1701-01, as the honourable member for Twillingate has mentioned, that no one of this side of the House has spoke to, as I have said before, every honourable member here has a district. I have one. I know the needs that go into it as well as the member for Hermitage knows the needs. But if we have to spend our time here on one estimate alone to get through, what would we have done in this honourable House? We have districts to proceed to and have work done in them and if we do not allow the honourable minister to turn around and get on with the work and try to get something done, I am doubtful today that any roads will be done in our district or anybody else's.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Transportation and Communications.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member for Labrador North attempted to get up, I wonder if he has a question, I would hate to lose the value of what he might have to contribute. If he has a question that he wish answered I shall be glad to deal with all of them at the one time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The member for Labrador North.

MR. WOODWARD: Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the minister for allowing me the privilege to get up. A couple of questions, one that I have neglected to ask during the debate was the fact that I want to mention as I understand in the shopping list, the first DREE list that the minister's department did send to Ottawa, was included in that list a bridge for the Community of Northwest River. I understand there was a revised list or the list was amended and sent up again to

Ottawa for approval and it was not included in the second list. So I am under the impression that this bridge will not be built this year.

The other thing I would like to mention is the fact that we have made numerous representations through correspondence and delegations for upgrading of a road and paving of a road that was built in 1957 between the communities of Goose Bay and Northwest River. We have repeatedly asked to have that road upgraded and paved and maybe the minister, when he is speaking or if he cares to do it privately, can tell me this week or the next couple of weeks what plans they do have as far as those two projects, Sir, or if there will be any funding at all for those two projects this year.

Now I will not go on to any great length but I would like to get back again on the tunnel and the Trans Labrador Highway, Mr. Chairman. I would appreciate it if the minister would come up and give me the answers. Thank you very much.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to first of all deal with the comments made by the honourable member for Twillingate. Let me say, Sir, it is a pleasure, it was like a fresh breeze, a brand new atmosphere, what else can I say, Mr. Chairman, I do not know how to really describe it because it was a sensible approach, realizing certain facts and putting this whole issue of debate on those estimates in proper perspective. May I say to the honourable gentlemen we on this side appreciate, despite the fact that we have not been able to give certain information that has been requested of us, that someone can appreciate why and has the courage to admit it and say so.

Let me say to the honourable gentleman that it is my intention to visit his district during the coming summer, take a look at that causeway we have just finished, and I assure him that I would love to find a few shekels, if there are any around, to do something for him. He says that he is going to knock on my door within the next few days, Let me tell him, Mr. Chairman, that he is most welcome as any other honourable member is or all honourable members. Let me say to him however, I do not want to lead him astray. I may not be able to tell him

exactly that soon what will apply to his district. But as quickly as I can I will and if he does not visit me, I will be more than happy to make contact with him.

Mr. Chairman, in my early years I sold for an oil company. I did a bit of selling. I thought I was reasonably successful in getting a point across. But, Sir, I am the first to admit that if one can judge from the comments from the other side, I have failed miserably to convince honourable gentlemen on the other side just what the situation is with regards to a total roads programme or any detailed information with regards to a roads programme for the coming year.

Mr. Chairman, I indicated that right at the start, that I could not, for reasons which I believe are in the public interest and are proper, and would not give any detail with regards to the roads programme. At no time, Mr. Chairman, did I say I did not know what road programme we have. I said that I knew of a sufficient number of projects to spend over \$100 million, much less the approximate amount of the capital funds that we are requesting in those estimates today. Over \$100 million, Mr. Chairman, there is no end to the requests. There is no end to the areas that are documented in my department where road work is needed, where paving is needed, where bridges are needed, where new roads are needed and it goes on.

Mr. Chairman, for anyone to get the impression that we do not have a policy must be because we do not enunciate a roads programme. You know that is very shallow thinking. I am sure the honourable gentlemen opposite can appreciate that we have any number of projects. My honourable friend from Hermitage refers to the subject in a way that maybe I have a slush fund. Let me assure him I do not. We are asking for an amount of money, Mr. Chairman, that amount of money can be spent on any number of projects throughout this province and will be. What all of them are will ultimately be decided, Mr. Chairman, right up to the last minute.

MR. ROBERTS: There are five on this side and only six on the other side. Could Your Honour ascertain whether there is a quorum?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Ring the bells

MR. CHAIRMAN (Mr. Stagg): Order please!

MR. EVANS: (Inaudible).

MR. CHAIRMAN (Mr. Stagg): We have a quorum.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I want to answer a couple of the remarks that the Member for Hermitage raised. Under normal circumstances a lot the honourable gentleman said was, as he indicated, repeating but there were some things that were said which require an answer. I want to set the record of the committee straight. Again for about the fifth time, Mr. Chairman, since last Thursday, as I have already said so many times; it is my decision that a detailed roads programme not be released. That is based on the experience we have had in this department. It is based on, Mr. Chairman, the experience we have had when we released a roads programme. In good faith, upon the request of the opposition, we released some sort of detail, not a full roads programme but some sort of detail with regard to a proposed programme one year. My department know only too well, Mr. Chairman what resulted. This administration acknowledged the request of the opposition and complied and made those details known. From that time, Mr. Chairman, we have adopted the policy of not releasing it.

Mr. Chairman, for the fifth or sixth time again in the last few days, I must repeat there never was a roads programme enunciated by the former administration during estimate time. Yes, Mr. Chairman, someone said a little while ago or a few days ago that there was in 1971 or 1970 or 1971, I am not sure. Of course, there was, in the Arts and Culture Centre, a platform, an election platform. Mr. Chairman, that is fair. That is what politics is all about. That should not be misconstrued as a detailed programme for one year's estimates. That programme, Mr. Chairman, could not be done in ten years. As a matter of fact I believe it might have been a ten-year plan.

Mr. Chairman, it is very wrong to suggest that we do not have a policy or we do not have a programme or we do not know what we are doing. On the other hand when the honourable gentleman says that he is sure the honourable minister knows about a programme and has a programme and knows what he is doing, he is arrogant or he adopts the attitude, "I know something but you are not going to know," Mr. Chairman, if that is the way honourable gentlemen accept my explanation, I am very sorry. I feel very sorry about that because certainly that is not the intent.

The Hon. Member for Hermitage said, "Tell it as it is." Mr. Chairman, that is exactly what I have been trying to do since last Thursday night, tell it exactly as it is. To be very honest with honourable gentlemen, I will tell them that up to the time the last contract is awarded during the coming year, there will be changes. It might very well mean a change so major as to cut out one project and do another. Mr. Chairman, that is not in any way connected with the game of politics. That is decided upon because of the factors in the construction industry, because of economics, because of availability of equipment and any number of other reasons.

Mr. Chairman, for the sake of the record again, that is the answer to that question as to why I will not enunciate a roads programme.

Mr. Chairman, the honourable member referred to certain issues, certain promises. Let me say to him that I have been in cabinet, I have been part of this government since we took office. I know of no issue, no promise that the Premier of this Province has ever made that he has reneged on. I do not know of one, Mr. Chairman.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. HICKEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, honourable gentleman can laugh all they wish. They must remember that this administration is but a little more than two and one-half years old. The fact that a promise

is made, the fact that a commitment is made, surely there is no date given in terms of the date of the month. Mr. Chairman, -

MR. SIMMONS: Would the honourable gentleman permit a question?

MR. HICKEY: Sure.

MR. SIMMONS: From what the honourable minister just said that no promise has not been kept, can I tell the people of Gaultois that a ferry will be provided this spring as promised?

AN HON. MEMBER: By the Premier.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I have yet to pin down the date that was given by the Premier. I was not there. I did not hear it. I am well aware of the fact that there was discussion about a proposed ferry for Gaultois. I am aware of that. Mr. Chairman, I am not aware of any date. If there were a date given, Mr. Chairman, is it such a major concern that that date is not kept? There are any number of reasons, Mr. Chairman. The kind of promises that I have heard the Premier make have been kept or certainly the intent is still with this government. This government is still determined to follow through.

Mr. Chairman, I have tried very hard in the last few days to stay away from politics, to try to answer the questions and to be as nonpartisan as I can. Mr. Chairman, it is very difficult. I suggested that if we were to go another day, I might become awfully political. Mr. Chairman, it is most difficult to sit here and to hear honourable gentlemen talk about promises, when this administration is but two and one-half years old. I heard, I listened and heard and listened to promise after promise after promise by the former Administration that were never kept. Mr. Chairman, not only that but when they were made, the honourable gentleman who made them knew they would never be kept; purely and intentionally to hoodwink the voters, to get votes, purely and intentionally to deceive the people.

Mr. Chairman, it is most difficult for one to contain one's self when it becomes such a major issue that this administration has not produced within a certain number of months.

Mr. Chairman, last night there was a reference made to free ferry service for Bell Island again with regard to a statement made by the Hon. Premier. Let me inform the committee (I did not deal with it last night) from the discussions I have had with the Hon. Premier on a number of occasions that that policy is still the policy of this government. Every effort is being made and will be made because the Hon. Premier believes that all ferries in this province should be free. Should one have to say, Mr. Chairman, that tied into any promise, any statement of policy, any commitment, should one have to give black and white figures, statements to the effect that tied in with such a statement is a cost factor? In most instances in this province, a poor province, one of the have-not provinces; a cost-sharing factor, does one have to spell this out every time we say that this administration is in favour of this, that or the other thing? Is that not assumed, Mr. Chairman? How many people are in this province today who do not realize that tied into so many things is the cost-sharing factor and the availability and the acquiring of funds from Ottawa?

Surely goodness when the Premier of this Province goes to any part of this province and says that his administration stands for and is in favour of a particular issue or a particular policy, it is normally and naturally assumed that the provincial treasury will not necessarily pick up all of the tab.

Mr. Chairman, I have faith enough in the people of this province also to assume that they know as well that those things are not brought about overnight and that they take a lot of hard work and a lot of hard negotiating. Let Ottawa provide some funds and we will soon see what will happen to the promises that the Premier of this Province makes. They will be carried out. Better again, Mr. Chairman, when the Premier of this Province makes a promise that promise is not going to be implemented on the basis of ad hoc policy,

not well thought-out, just for pure political reasons, it will be done when a sound policy is developed and when we know exactly where we are going and what we are doing with regard to the issue.

Mr. Chairman, as far as I am concerned, I can only answer the Hon. Member for Hermitage, with regard to any commitments that were made by the leader of this government, in a way such as this, that I know of no commitment, no promise, no statement by way of commitment that the Hon. Premier has made that he has backtracked on, intends to backtrack on or renege on. If they can go along with that statement then they can only assume that efforts are being made to fulfill any of those and all of those commitments.

There has been some discussion, Mr. Chairman, on the Conne River Bridge. The honourable member says that he is confused and he is not getting any information. Mr. Chairman, to my knowledge, if my memory serves me correctly, I stated the position with regard to the Conne River Bridge. The honourable member referred to it as the Conne River Causeway. The causeway section is but a small part of the expenditure that will be required for Conne River. Really we are talking about the Conne River Bridge.

Mr. Chairman, if he should look through the estimates, he will find that there is \$100,000 allocated for the Conne River Bridge as a starter and provincial funds have already been spent and are being spent on the causeway section. The project is ongoing. No one, including myself, has ever said that there will be no bridge across Conne River. No one has ever created any doubt that there would be a bridge. What is the honourable gentleman referring to? I do not know. Is it so important, Mr. Chairman, that the details of any negotiations that are underway between a federal department and a provincial government be spelled out at this point in time? Is that so important? Cannot the honourable gentleman accept our word?

I went to Conne River, Mr. Chairman, during the past year and I told the people of Conne River that they would finally have their bridge. Mr. Chairman, the people of Conne River have been played with and toyed with by the former administration about that bridge to no end, so much so that there was a point in time when I am not sure it was safe for any politician of any colour or creed to go there and they could hardly be blamed.

Mr. Chairman, this administration set the record very clear and very straight with regard to that project. The fact that we are not in a position to complete it overnight does not deter in anyway or does not mean in anyway failure on our part to provide that facility. Maybe, Mr. Chairman, I should give the honourable member a little more detail with regard to that project. What has to be done before federal funds are available is that a new agreement has to be made between the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Provincial Government, through the Department of Rehabilitation and Recreation, increasing the amount of money that is given under the ninety/ten arrangement.

Mr. Chairman, the fact that this is not all tied up and packaged up and completed, I can tell the honourable gentleman is in no way slowing up the process of that project. Work is ongoing as far as I am concerned.

Mr. Chairman, when that agreement is reached, when federal funds are available, we will be ready, our work will be done, we will be in a position to proceed.

Mr. Chairman, on that subject, I think the honourable member can rest assured that everything possible that can be done by this province is being done to bring that project to reality.

Mr. Chairman, the honourable gentleman referred to maintenance problems. He said what has been said in different ways by many honourable gentleman on the other side and what can be said, Mr. Chairman, and what is said to me by my colleagues on this side about roads throughout the province. Mr. Chairman, I have given

a detailed explanation with regard to this problem. "The roads are in an unusual state", it is said. The answer, Mr. Chairman, very quickly is that we have had an unusual winter, which I have repeated, repeated, repeated, repeated and repeated. The roads are in a very poor maintenance state, Mr. Chairman, and I have repeated until I am also blue in the face that we have very, very poor equipment that we have been trying to replace. This administration has and is making a valiant effort, a vigorous effort, to replace it with some \$2 million the first year, something over \$2 million the second year, \$2.4 this year. What more, Mr. Chairman, can any department or any administration do?

Now, Mr. Chairman, in spite of the fact that this administration has made all that money available, does that solve the problem?

No. Does that give us the equipment? No. We cannot get it. It is not available. Nobody can produce it. So what do I do, Mr. Chairman, when I have a grader that is a model 1949? What do I do with that? I get a mechanic to work on it, Mr. Chairman, and I keep praying and try another saint if the last one I prayed to did not work, that it keeps functioning. That is what I do. Who is responsible, Mr. Chairman? Now let us call the shots! The honourable gentleman referred to the phrase, "Tell it as it is". Well, let us tell it as it is because I am getting a little tired, Mr. Chairman, of taking the flak that is not mine.

The responsibility for the state of the equipment in this department rests squarely with the former administration who pumped in next to no funds in replacement of equipment over the years. Mr. Chairman, anyone that wants to challenge that statement let him and let him check the estimates. It is there in black and white for anyone to see. Yet I am continuously plagued with problems. I am not complaining. That is my job. I am continuously plagued by honourable members on both sides about conditions of the roads. I do not complain about that. That is their job. It is my job to deal with them and try and help them. I do so to the best of our ability.

Mr. Chairman, it is something else when it is suggested to me that it is something that we have not done or it is a lack of interest or it is incompetency on the part of any division or any part or indeed any member of my staff. That is another matter, Mr. Chairman, that we cannot take. We have equipment back-ordered since last year, Mr. Chairman. Would honourable gentlemen believe that, back-ordered since last year? We have equipment, Mr. Chairman, back-ordered for something like a year and a half that we cannot get. We had \$2.4 million or \$2.3 million this year, I am not sure of the exact figure. I can tell honourable gentlemen, in accordance with information coming from the industry right now, that we can place and in fact we have all ready in advance, because of the crucial situation that has developed we have placed orders long before. We have requested the House to vote on this particular set of estimates, placed orders, called tenders for equipment.

I can inform this honourable House now, Mr. Chairman, that we will not get the equipment we want this year. We will be well into next year before we will get it and probably not even get it all then.

Mr. Chairman, as many times as I have repeated the answer with regards to the maintenance problems I have only one recourse left. I have hesitated but, Mr. Chairman, I am going to refer to the sum of the equipment that we have. Maybe this will convince the honourable gentlemen opposite -

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: I will try, Mr. Chairman, to wash that down with a drop of water, tea.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: Tea, I like my cup of tea from the old country.

Mr. Chairman, in the District of Hermitage let me just quickly run through the equipment that is there: Four graders, Mr. Chairman, and the years, the model or the years of those graders are as follows: 1963, 1966, 1969, 1973. Keep their most recent years in your mind, 1973, 1969, not too bad. Loaders: four, 1958, 1964, 1972. Dozers; 1958, 1965. Trucks: eight, two for 1970, one for 1972, five for 1973. Pickups totalling two, 1972, and 1973.

Mr. Chairman, there is no district in the Province that is better off. A great number and a great majority are worse off. Now I know the honourable gentleman knows as well as I do why that is. It is because of the problems, the very difficult problems that we encounter on the Bay d'Espoir Highway.

In contrast to that, Mr. Chairman, let me give him a sample of what is in some of the other districts. Bonavista North, graders numbering four, 1949, 1955, 1962, the newest grader, Mr. Chairman, twelve years old. Loaders totalling three, the year 1963, 1964, 1965. Dozers totalling five, check this Mr. Chairman, 1949, 1958, 1960, 1962 and 1966. Trucks, Mr. Chairman, totalling twelve and in pretty good shape, four for 1970, three for 1971, three for 1972 and two of 1973. Pickups totalling three, two for 1972 and one for 1973. A grade-all, 1961, a very important piece of equipment. Crushers totalling two,

also essential to the whole operation of my department, 1958.

Mr. Chairman, that district has 120 miles of road for a total of thirty pieces of equipment as opposed to the district of Hermitage, 100 miles of road for twenty pieces of equipment and much newer equipment, later years and so on.

There it is, Mr. Chairman. I can go through every district in the Province and give you the models and the dates of the equipment and it would astound you. You would wonder why anything gets done on our highways for the reasons that I have all ready outlined.

Mr. Chairman, there have been references, on I believe, three occasions, to the fact that one of our trucks at the Gambo intersection had an accident. It was indicated in a roundabout way that I should not say anything about the CN buses or highway safety because of the fact that right on the heels of my comments with regards to CN operation one of my vehicles had an accident with a CN bus. That was all very strange and very funny at the time, Mr. Chairman, because I was about to make a detailed statement with regards to CN's operations on the very day we ended up having a accident with one of the buses - all very strange indeed.

There you are. That truck, Mr. Chairman, was a 1968 truck. It was operated by a man who has been with this department for a great number of years, a man who had a driver's license for twenty-five years, one of our better operators. So, Mr. Chairman, it is no reflection on this department at all. I should inform the committee right now, Mr. Chairman, that this department and this administration and the people who work in this department are pretty lucky. Because of the state that the equipment is in, we are indeed very lucky that there are not more accidents.

This is what we have inherited. This is what we are trying to wrestle with. This is the problem we are trying to solve by pumping more money each year into replacement of equipment, only to become frustrated by the industry, who cannot produce, who cannot deliver it to us.

So Mr. Chairman, please let us not hear anything else about road maintenance and the unusual conditions of our roads this year as opposed to any other year -- two very distinct good reasons for it neither of which Mr. Chairman, myself or my staff or indeed anybody else has the power to solve.

The honourable gentleman referred to another item which is a most important one, Mr. Chairman, and it requires an answer, a matter of employees, a couple of employees working shift work and who had strong feelings about their religious beliefs and could not understand why our policy was as it is. Well, Mr. Chairman, I recall a couple of incidents and it is probably the one which the honourable member for Hermitage has referred to. Let me just say, Mr. Chairman, very clearly let me say for the record, first of all far be it for me or anyone else to question the religion of any particular individual. That is what makes our country great, that is what makes our Province great, that it is free.

Mr. Chairman, the matter in question, however, is one where religious beliefs or factors pertaining to it cannot dictate policy. We cannot have two policies, Mr. Chairman, with regard to those who work on shift work and who operate the equipment or who are referred to as essential employees. We cannot say to three or four or two persons; "You do not have to work on Sunday because it is against your religion, because your religious beliefs will not allow you." What about, Mr. Chairman, if everyone else decides that they do not want to work on any other day of the week? Do we find five or six then who say, "Well it is against my religious belief to work on Fridays." Do we let them stay home? No, Mr. Chairman, obviously not.

It was with a great deal of reluctance that I had to refuse the suggestions made to me by a couple of gentlemen with regards to this very point. I explained to them in detail, Mr. Chairman, that our policy and our system, our shift system did not permit the granting of any special consideration to any particular group, that we operated an essential service to deal with emergencies, very often, that there had been a change in policy, that people had to be on the job Sundays and holidays and

nighttime to do this work and that I could not give special consideration to any particular group, be it for religious reasons or any other.

Mr. Chairman, based on that I believe one or two persons resigned their positions. I hope it is never said, Mr. Chairman, that they were forced to resign. I have heard it was said but I do not have any proof. If it has been said, Mr. Chairman, let me for the record of this honourable House state right now that no individual at any time was forced to nor was it suggested that they should terminate their employment, neither was it even said to them, "If you do not like the condition, go somewhere else." There has never been any such suggestion, Mr. Chairman. We tried very hard and looked good and long to find if there was some way we could accommodate those people in keeping with their feelings about their religious beliefs. We found, Mr. Chairman, that it would create chaos if we were to unilaterally say, "You do not have to work on Sunday because you feel you should not, for religious reasons."

The other thing, Mr. Chairman, we said was that if those persons could enter into an arrangement with their fellow workers, their fellow employees, so that the shift could continue, then fine with us. We would not object to it as long as the required number of people were on the job and as long as we were not discriminating against anyone for any particular reason.

Mr. Chairman, that issue, as far as I am concerned, is settled. It is very clear. There are any number of justifications as to why it came about and why it was dealt with the way it was.

Now, Mr. Chairman, one other, an answer to, unless the honourable member for Labrador North does he want to carry? Does he want an answer to his bridge club? Mr. Chairman, does the honourable member for White Bay South want me to continue for another hour explaining why I did not give him the answers to the questions?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I am not delaying the proceedings. I stated

first, the first words, Mr. Chairman, which I uttered in this debate, I suggested to the opposition that I would not take up the time of the committee. I would make no speeches. I would take my seat and I would answer the questions that they raised, provide whatever information I could. Mr. Chairman, I stuck to that. Any speeches, Mr. Chairman, I have made have been by way of detailed explanation by way of answers and detailed explanations as to why I could not give answers.

Mr. Chairman, the honourable member for Labrador North has two hangups, one the Trans-Labrador Highway and the one other the Northwest River Bridge. Mr. Chairman, we have dealt with the Trans-Labrador Highway. Let us deal with the bridge. He wants to know why it is not in the DREE Programme. I do not know, Mr. Chairman. Why does the honourable gentleman not ask someone in Ottawa? The honourable gentleman does not know why. The honourable gentleman, Mr. Chairman, has surpassed himself. He has excelled himself. He must be the only gentleman in this Province who can do such a fantastic job of stick-handling on the one hand or completely blind himself to the facts that he is in possession of. Sir, he himself knows why that bridge is not under construction or included in the agreement.

The honourable gentleman just visited my department a couple of weeks ago. Mr. Chairman, this is even funny. The honourable gentleman wants to know why we are not going ahead with the bridge when he visited my department a few weeks ago with a delegation and said, "We think we have a different plan. We have a different site. It will not cost as much money." The honourable gentleman is well aware of the delay.

Mr. Chairman, this department has absolutely no responsibility for any delay on the proposed Northwest River Bridge, none, not one iota, none. We have corresponded with Mr. Jameison. We have already made surveys, engineering studies. We have given an estimated cost. We have acceded to every request made by Mr. Jameison, and there is no bridge. The honourable gentleman has a problem. The only think I can say to him is, "See your buddy. Do not look this way. Just get in touch with your

friend and ask him why he did not include a million and a half dollars or close to two million dollars for that bridge.

In fact, Mr. Chairman, tell him that if he has a couple of million hanging around loose that he does not know what to do with, pass them along to us and we will gladly go along with it. Does that answer the honourable gentleman's question? Does he want more detail as to why it is not done? Is he sure?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: "Liberals imply" (Headline) "Liberals imply Jamieson building up his own riding with funds from DREE."

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: That was misquoted.

MR. HICKEY: Not right. Was it not the honourable member for Labrador North that said it?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

MR. HICKEY: Yes it was, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Mr. Chairman, that is what it says here. "Liberal whip Steve Neary in debating the estimates Monday for the Department of Transportation and Communications said DREE

funds for highway construction, should be more evenly distributed.

The honourable Member for Bell Island said that he did not begrudge the people of the Burin Peninsula the road construction which had been carried out in recent years. No, Mr. Chairman, we certainly agree with him. We do not begrudge him the road either but all we say, Mr. Chairman, is probably what should happen, probably what should be done. One way out is that the Hon. Minister of Regional and Economic Expansion provide two grants of money for the province for road work, (1) for Burin/Burgeo and one for the whole province. That would solve the problem. That is very simple.

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: Misquoted. Grossly misquoted, Sir, because the point that I was making is that the province should take the initiative.

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: The provinces, Sir, are the ones who have to take the initiative and persuade Mr. Jamieson and DREE that they spread the money around a little bit, not -

MR. REID: Over my dead body.

MR. NEARY: No, Mr. Chairman, I just want to set the record straight, Mr. Chairman. I do not want that to stand on the public records, Sir, and I want to say that I was misquoted.

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman,

MR. CHAIRMAN (STAGG): Order, please!

The honourable member rose on a point of order which I submit is not a point of order. However, it is a point of something or other. Probably it should have been raised at the earliest possible time after the Speaker was in the Chair. However, as is usual honourable members have made their points even though they may not be the procedural points on which they rose.

Shall 1701-01 carry?

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, I shall not delay the Committee. In the "Sunday Times" it is really much better than the minister. "Hunt for the girl with dark hair in great art robbery," it says. All I

want to say, Sir, is that we have witnessed for the last three or four days the most pathetic and inept spectacle of ministerial ineptitude that we have seen. Even by comparison with the gentleman for Trinity South and the gentleman for St. John's West whatever he was, was not pathetic and inept. He may have been a lot of other things.

My colleagues and I have discussed this, Sir, at some length, where we have come to the conclusion that the Minister of Transportation has no intention of giving the Committee or the people of Newfoundland any information whatsoever. He stood time and time again and went through the same tired, weak excuses. He pretends he cannot announce what the programme is. Already, Your Honour, he has called tenders through his deputy minister for seven miles from Fortune towards Lamaline, sixteen point six miles from Peters River to St. Mary's, twenty-one miles from Gros Morne - I am sorry - from the Deer Lake Interchange to the southern boundary of Gros Morne National Park. That interestingly enough, Your Honour, that tender call appeared in the paper the day before the Budget Speech of the Minister of Finance. On April 11, tenders were called for the same twenty-one miles. The minister has also called tenders for five miles of paving on the Cabot Highway.

It is obvious, Sir, the minister could give information but has no intention of doing it. It is equally obvious, Mr. Chairman, that the minister is engaged in a concerted plot, together with his colleagues the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Rural Development and other honourable gentlemen, to engage in dilatory debate, to filibuster, to delay the consideration on the estimates, to use up the scant time that is left before the ominous guillotine falls and chops off all public debate.

That being the case, Mr. Chairman, I shall not even attempt to reply to the few feeble points made by the minister. It is rarely, Sir, that I have ever seen a minister heckled by his own colleagues as he was in this Committee this afternoon. All I want to say, Sir, is that it is obvious that the minister is either unable or unwilling to give this Committee any information. He is delaying, he is trying to use up time. We have been trying to get information for the people of Newfoundland.

We have been trying to get some indication of what are the government's plans and I submit, Sir, the minister knows full well what plans there are this year. He has already called tenders for five or six or seven projects. He is just not going to give the Committee the information. That is his privilege. It is contemptuous of him. It is despicable conduct but there you are. We have no choice except to protest and let the people of Newfoundland judge, as they shall in due course.

The minister has admitted by his silence that he has made no request for DREE money for the Northwest River Bridge, no request for DREE money for anything on the Northern Peninsula Highway north of say Plum Point, no request for money for the Bonavista North Highway, no request for money for Labrador.

The Minister, Sir, -

MR. NEARY: This is what I was saying.

MR. ROBERTS: That is what my colleague for Bell Island was saying.

Well, Sir, to bring it to a point, my colleagues and I feel that since we have used our best efforts to try and get the minister to part with some information, instead all we have had - even the honeyed words of the gentleman for Hermitage, the honeyed and reasonable enticements, the allurements, the entrancements of the gentleman for Hermitage failed to coax a little information out of the Minister of Transportation.

So, Sir, my colleagues and I regretfully, we do not think it is the way this Committee should go but in view of the circumstances we have no choice. The time is rushing by towards the great deadline. The minister is delaying and is using up time trying to do anything to delay the passage of this estimate, anything, Sir, in the hope that other things will be put off. Well, Sir, it has come to the point now where all these other departments, we have been treated this way in Rural Development, we have been treated this way in Transportation and Communications, Finance I think was a genuine to and fro, a mini-budget debate. Accordingly, Sir, we see no choice. I cannot even mention in detail, as I should, the need for roads in Harbour Deep, a petition that I presented today, St. Julien's and Croque, where the people there, through a delegation, believed the minister promised them a road this year. The

need for that road down to St. Anthony, the need for the road across to Roddickton and Englee, the need for guard rails on the road to Conche, the need for improved snow-clearing services, Sir, the minister will not deal with any of these, he refused the gentleman for Twillingate, the gentleman for Labrador North, the gentleman for White Bay South, the gentleman for Hermitage, the gentleman for St. Barbe North, the gentleman for Bonavista North, the gentleman for Bell Island and the gentleman for Fogo and I have all - and the gentleman for Labrador South I venture to say made some remarks on behalf of his constituents and got the same contemptuous reply.

The minister is quite able to give the information, he assures us. He is just unwilling. Well, Sir, we are going to protest, the only way we know how. We are quite prepared, Sir, to sit here and treat the minister with the contempt with which he has treated this Committee. Your Honour may proceed as fast or as slow as Your Honour wishes to call the rest of these items, Sir, my colleagues and I have agreed that we are not going to say another word on the Minister of Transportation and Communications. He has got no desire to help, no desire to do anything, Sir, so we are prepared to let these go without further debate because it is of no avail. The minister obviously is not going to produce any information, is obviously not going to do anything except make his weak, tired, hackneyed, spavined speeches.

So, Sir, Your Honour could call them and whatever Your Honour feels is the proper way so Your Honour will do. There will be no further comments, Sir, from any of us on this side. Honourable gentlemen opposite can say what they want but, Sir, we are not going to delay this any longer. We would like to get on with Education, Fisheries and Industrial Development and all the other things that should be debated, So, Sir, that is the last word we will say on this head.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. HICKEY: Now, Mr. Chairman, -

MR. ROBERTS: Further delay! Look at him!

MR. HICKEY: That is great, Mr. Chairman, we will be able to get off this vote now. That is good news to us. The honourable gentleman is well aware of the answers I gave, why I gave them. He tells me that I am

delaying the Committee. That is his prerogative and that is his opinion.

Mr. Chairman, with regards to the one point he made, with the tenders that have been called, honourable gentlemen opposite need no suggestion, no reminding from me of what tenders are called in the papers for highways. They consistently get up and refer to them. I could have told them about the projects that have been called. There are a few by the way that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition did not mention. I could have given him that information. That is old stuff. They read it every day. They know about it. What do they want me to tell them for?

The other thing, Mr. Chairman, is, before we carry, if honourable gentlemen opposite wish to treat me with contempt, that is fine. That is fine. Can I assume, therefore all the questions that they raise from now on, if I am not going to give them the exact detailed answer that they want, that I can just hold on to my seat, stay in my seat and treat them with the arrogance that I know so well, for so long, like five years when I sat over there? Now, Mr. Chairman, I suggest we pass this one.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN (STAGG): Shall 1701-01 carry?

On motion 1701-01 carried.

On motion 1701-02 through 1704-03-01 carried

MR. CHAIRMAN (STAGG): Shall 1704-03-02 carry?

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, 1704-03-02 - I would like to ask of the minister a question which I have been asking of several ministers over the last year, I think, this is the appropriate subhead to bring it up again, although undoubtedly I will have other chances. Local roads: There is a community in my district called Henley Harbour, which under the former resettlement programme was supposed to have been resettled. Because of someone's ineptitude Henley Harbour is now supposed to be and I say, "supposed to be evacuated. The fact of the matter is, it was Pitts Arm which was evacuated." Pitts Arm was the winter community for the residents of Henley Harbour, Henley Harbour being the summer fishing station.

The people of Pitts Arm moved to various localities around the Island of Newfoundland and continued to fish Henley Harbour in the summertime. Because they are officially wiped off the map, they no longer qualify for, amongst other things, local roads grants.

I would like comments from the minister on this situation and I would like a commitment that as least as far as his department is concerned and as far as local roads are concerned that Henley Harbour will be put back on the official list as a viable community.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I am familiar to a certain extent with the problem at Henley Harbour. When the honourable gentleman says he would like to see the community put back as or considered a viable community, he is not telling me that people live there all-year around. I am sorry, I was not aware of that. When the matter came to my attention or the information that I have is that people go there for the fishing season.

MR. MARTIN: The thing is that over the past one hundred or one hundred and fifty years people have moved to Henley Harbour in the summertime for fishing, for approximately six months of the year. As far as I know, as far as the local roads programme was in effect, they did every year get a local roads grant to improve the local roads in Henley Harbour.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (STAGG): Order, please!

It now being 6:00 o'clock I do leave the Chair until 8:00 o'clock this evening.

The Committee resumed at 8:00 P.M.

MR. CHAIRMAN (MR. STAGG): The honourable the member for Labrador South.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, when the committee rose at six o'clock I was trying to reacquaint the honourable Minister of Transportation and Communication with the situation at Henley Harbour under the local roads subhead. For his benefit and those of his colleagues who have already been introduced to this problem I will attempt to put the whole thing into perspective. In order to do that, I am going to have to digress slightly and to explain the situation at Henley Harbour and several other communities and similar circumstances in my district.

It has been a practice for as long as I suppose people have been living on the Labrador Coast to have two settlements, a permanent winter settlement at the head of the bays and a fishing station out on the islands or around the headlands. In the case of Henley Harbour, the permanent winter settlement was Pitts Arm, some six miles away. I might mention some others. There are Lodge Bay whose summer settlement is Cape Charles. There are some six summer settlements associated with the permanent settlement of Port Hope Simpson. Square Islands is the summer settlement for Charlottetown. There are seven or eight others I might mention. I just point this out to indicate what the problem is here.

Now, I think it was four or five years ago under the Household Resettlement Programme the people of Pitts Arm applied to the Department of Community and Social Development for resettlement. It was coincidental that the application was submitted in the summertime when they were temporarily resident at Henley Harbour. Their application was subsequently approved and the residents of Pitts Arm moved to locations in Conception Bay and to Corner Brook, Curling. Because somebody did not know the difference, the application read Henley Harbour instead of Pitts Arm. Consequently, officially Henley Harbour does no longer exist. Because of that they had amongst other things their local roads grant cut off.

They have continued to return to Henley Harbour to fish in the summertime as they did prior to the move from Pitts Arm. The fact that they are living in Curling or Chamberlains has not altered the pattern whatsoever. They still continue to fish at Henley Harbour as do some five or six other families who are permanent residents of other communities of Conception Bay.

Now, in this respect, Henley Harbour epitomizes what is wrong with this government's attitude towards Labrador. Henley Harbour is a microcosm because of the fundamental misunderstanding, if I may phrase it that way, of the situation. Government has been unable to come to grips with the Labrador situation. There has always been, since the institution of that local roads grant, an annual grant made to Henley Harbour up to the time they resettled from Pitts Arm. For the last two years at least we have been attempting to impress upon the honourable minister and his officials and others of his colleagues in the cabinet that Henley Harbour still exists as a viable community. We have been unsuccessful, to put it mildly.

I would like to say again -

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. MARTIN: That is right. The local roads grant at Henley Harbour is insignificant in the amount that is granted to them. There are eighteen or twenty houses and their associated stage and store facilities. No more than a mile all together. The roads grant is used to put gravel in the boggy places and to put a few culverts in and this kind of thing. Because Pitts Arm was resettled the roads grant has been cut off and we have not been able to impress upon the officials in this department that Henley Harbour still exists.

Now, somebody somewhere signed the paper saying that this settlement was on the inactive list. Surely, somebody somewhere can sign another paper saying that it is not on the inactive list. This is all we are asking, Mr. Chairman. I would like the honourable minister to assure us that of this \$1.5 million a couple of hundred will be spent on a local roads grant in Henley Harbour and action taken to put Henley Harbour back on the active

list.

MR. PECKFORD: Mr. Chairman, listening to the honourable member for Labrador South regarding a local roads grant for Henley Harbour, I can sympathize with what he is saying because I am fairly aware of Henley Harbour because I have been there on more than one occasion and have spent several nights there. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, I suppose I have been in every household that was there in 1964-1965 and in 1962-1963. Both years I was in Henley Harbour. I do not think that I have been there since.

If this kind of misunderstanding between Pitts Arm and Henley Harbour exists and if because of this misunderstanding the local roads grant has not been going to Henley Harbour, it is extremely unfortunate. I can only as a member on the government side support the views just presented by the honourable member for Labrador South and ask the minister concerned to take this matter under advisement and to quickly expedite matters in this regard.

I knew a fair number of people. Of course Henley Harbour is mostly "Stones" I think, the family of "Stones" down in that area. I am fairly familiar with quite a few persons who came from that place. Having been there, well I really sympathize with the situation that the honourable member just submitted. It was almost unbelievable to me. I would ask the minister that he talk to his officials tomorrow and have this matter resolved because anybody who is familiar at all with the Labrador South Coast knows not only as it applies to Pitts Arm versus Henley Harbor and moving from one place to the other, Mary's Harbour was always the same way. They went out to Mattys Cove and Battle Harbour and Trap Cove - I think I am right - in the summertime.

I have been in Mary's Harbour when there had only been about two to three or four families there. The same can be said of other places. Even in Port Hope Simpson, I think they used to move out to Sandy Hook and other places out in the bay to fish, and still do undoubtedly.

I believe it is true that there are officials in the

various government departments, the minister not having a full knowledge of that, he would not be aware of it, circumstances like that existing. I can only say to the minister of the particular department we are now discussing and any other minister who has any involvement with the Labrador South Coast that they take a good, hard look at it because being so familiar as I am with that coast, it is extremely unfortunate that a local roads grant of \$300 or \$400 or \$500 or \$600 or \$1,000 or \$1,500, - even one can go up to \$10,000 and it is still minuscule in relation to the overall budget for that given division of the department - that some allocation is not made to assist the people in Henley Harbour or in Fox Harbour or in Mary's Harbour or George's Cove or wherever down along the coast.

I just want to endorse the comments that the honourable member made and hope that the minister will look into it as quickly as possible.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, before we adjourned at six o'clock, I told the honourable member for Labrador South that it was my understanding from memory that the reason we did not assist by way of a local road grant was for a couple of reasons, one of which was that as far as my department was concerned it was felt that the community had been vacated under the Resettlement Programme and that obviously there would be some inconsistency if we were to just issue a road grant to a community where government, be it this administration or any other, had assisted people to move. I wish now to confirm that information.

Now very quickly I will run through a letter which I wrote the honourable gentleman in which we stated that. One paragraph of the letter says, "It would be improper for the government to spend public funds on services in a community which has been evacuated with government assistance under the Resettlement Plan. In this particular case we are prepared to give further consideration to this request if we are supplied with an explanation of exactly what work will be done and how this particular work will assist the fishermen to carry on their fishing operations."

An additional reason, Mr. Chairman, was the fact that the local roads board had been disbanded when or at whatever time it was indicated the people had moved on a permanent basis. Hence there was no chairman to send a check to or the vouchers to. The whole system of the Local Roads Board as they operate broke down upon the understanding the community no longer existed as a permanent community.

In my letter to the honourable gentlemen I explained to him and I indicated to him that even though the community is not a permanent or at least was not a permanent one so far as we were concerned, we were however prepared to give certain assistance if we had some indication as to what the money was to be used for. Let me say to him now upon the information that he presents to us at this time that I am prepared to take his word. After all, it is in his constituency. I have no doubt whatsoever about what he says. If he says that the settlement is a viable community at this point in time, with permanent residents, then we are certainly prepared to reinstate the grant. I would only ask him that he do whatever is necessary to have the people there form themselves into some kind of a committee so that we can deal with a particular person.

Motion Heads 03-02 to 03-07 carried.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, again I will raise a matter which was previously brought to the attention of the honourable minister. This concerning the highways depot at L'Anse-au-Loup. Two years ago I was informed by employees at the depot that a programme of reissuing safety equipment that had been instituted throughout that highways district - I think district is the correct term - somehow missed the L'Anse-au-Loup depot. Amongst other things they did not receive - as far as we could determine they were the only depot in that district that did not receive them - were safety boots. I believe this is in contravention of the Workmen's Compensation Act, amongst other things. I am wondering whether or not that situation

has been corrected and if the minister will give us a commitment that he will look into it. If it has not been corrected, to see that it be done immediately.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I do recall the issue the honourable gentleman refers to. It is my understanding that it has been corrected. I would certainly hope so. If not, I shall see to it that it is. I will check with my officials to determine and to confirm and I will certainly report to him on what I find out.

Motion Reads 03-08, 03-09, 17-05-07-01 carried.

MR. AYLWARD: Mr. Chairman, before 07-02 is carried, I certainly feel I should on this take another -

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: How about Little Harbour now?

MR. AYLWARD: Well, Little Harbour is one of the two but really, Mr. Chairman, I do not want to delay you and I suppose it would be almost considered contributing to adult delinquency to delay this any longer. I do want to bring to the attention of the minister the desperate plight of the people on the Cape Shore. I am referring to this piece of road from Point Verde to St. Brides and indeed right over to Branch.

Now I speak about this under this improvement and reconstruction because I think it is one of the most neglected areas of the province. I hope the minister returns now because I do think this is very, very important. We have I suppose from Point Verde to St. Brides approximately 800 to 1,000 people. That road, Mr. Chairman, is really a desperate piece of road. In fact I heard I think it was some gentleman say a few days ago that there was one other road almost as bad somewhere in the province. I do not know where that is but I give that man my sincere support in his particular plight.

This road is really desperate. It is shocking. While my honourable friends opposite nod their concurrence, these gentlemen must accept the fact that they were for a number of years in a position to have done something about that.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. AYLWARD: Well, obviously how unsuccessful - even my predecessor who is much more prominent and quite a significant member of that party - my predecessor, Dr. Frecker, I am sure he made strong representations to the gentlemen in cabinet. They were the strong men and obviously they did not support him because -

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. AYLWARD: Knowing that honourable gentleman as I do and knowing his dedication to the people, I am sure that he brought that matter before the honourable gentlemen on numerous occasions. Had he been successful in enlisting their support which they have indicated to give me, then probably something would have been done about that.

The honourable Minister of Education reminds me here that even the former Premier himself was a member for the district. So, with all that representation it appears that the district has failed to convince the government of the desperate need of the people in this area.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I could give you all types of statistics as to the number of vehicles and as to the quantity of fish and everything else that was brought over that road. I do feel in justice and in equity that these people really deserve to have that road upgraded and eventually paved. I am not going to be unrealistic and suggest that this road would be upgraded and paved in a year or even in two years but certainly a substantial start should be made this year to upgrade -

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about North Harbour?

MR. AYLWARD: I am going to come to North Harbour in a moment - to upgrade and pave that road because, Mr. Chairman, the sad part of it is this, that there was a decision made some years ago to upgrade or not to really upgrade but to construct a new road from North Harbour to Branch. Now, I am not familiar with the reasoning nor the philosophy behind that road. Whatever it was it seems to me to defy common sense, that a new road would be constructed a distance of approximately twenty, twenty-five miles where there

is not one individual living. I suppose there is hardly anything but partridge on the barrens there. There is not one man living between North Harbour and Branch.

The former administration again commenced that road. I understand that this administration continued it. I made my views known to the Minister of Highways, to the caucus, to everybody concerned. That is this: I feel myself that while the construction of that road from North Harbour to Branch has considerable merit, I feel that no money should be expended on that road unless and until the road from Point Verde to St. Brides is upgraded and paved. I do not think that there is any group of people, I do not think that there is any area of road in this province that needs consideration under this heading more than that particular road.

To think that now we have the Minister of Transportation and Communications who was the welfare officer at Placentia and who had himself to go back over that road -

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: The dirt is coming out now.

MR. AYLWARD: No, this is not dirt. This is good ammunition to support what is an excellent argument. I am sure that I am going to get support from the other side on this. Everyone is itching to get up to support this. Well, I do not expect the member from Bonavista really. Mr. Chairman,

but, Mr. Chairman, now I am after forgetting what I was saying.

HON. MEMBERS: Inaudible.

MR. AYLWARD: No, no, no, no.

AN HON. MEMBER: Well start at the beginning and it will come to you.

MR. AYLWARD: The Minister of Education has suggested that I start from the beginning but since we only have seventy-two hours, I certainly will not do that. I was about to make a very important point when I was distracted here.

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. AYLWARD: No, no, no, it is -

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. AYLWARD: I thank the honourable Member for Bell Island because he appears to be listening to me. What I was saying is - what I was saying was - I am fortunate to have in the portfolio of Transportation and Communications a man who should know something about the condition of that road because it was his lot -

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. AYLWARD: My is this not disgraceful, Mr. Chairman? Surely I am entitled to be heard in silence.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (STAGG): Order, please!

Honourable members seem to be in jocular mood. All honourable members know that the member speaking has the right to be heard in silence and while he may engaged and participate in a certain amount of banter or other types of exchanges, when the honourable member decides that he has had enough of that type of exchange, I think, all honourable members should give him the courtesy of hearing him out.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. AYLWARD: Thank you very, very much, Mr. Chairman!

Now the point I was making was this, the Hon. Minister of Transportation and Communications has personal knowledge of the condition of that particular road since he in his position as a welfare officer at Placentia had occasion to go back and forth to St. Brides and Branch. I suppose there is no member in this Committee, no member in this Committee now or perhaps

at any time who travelled that particular piece of highway any oftener than the honourable minister himself. I regret that his deputy, I have not been able to get him up there at all. I have had the assistant deputy and his predecessor but he has indicated to me that he will accompany me next week and see what he thinks of it.

But with the expert and firsthand knowledge that the Minister of Transportation and Communication has of that particular road, with the support I would imagine of the Hon. Minister of Education, since Branch is a part of that - certainly the residents of Branch use this particular road. Mr. Chairman, what people fail to realize is this, that the whole lifestyle of the people on the Cape Shore revolves around the Placentia Area, while it has been argued that they will in future use the North Harbour Road.

What I want the Committee to realize and particularly the minister that every time anyone gets sick on the Cape Shore, if they want to go to hospital, they do not think of St. John's, of course; they think of Placentia first. Every time they want a doctor, they want a priest or their first contact with the outside world is with the Placentia Area. Also as far as all of their fish that has to be transported throughout and around Conception Bay and Trinity Bay, it has all to go through Placentia.

So I want to again say to the minister that I again feel that no funds whatsoever should be spent on the North Harbour Road unless and until that Cape Shore Road is upgraded and paved. People today realize, a man from the Cape Shore who drives a piece of heavy equipment and he wants a job and he goes to work with any construction company in Newfoundland, with the communication as it is, he knows what is going on in other areas of the province, in other districts. They know themselves that this particular part of Newfoundland highway has been sadly, sadly neglected. I exhort the minister to see to it that a substantial hunk of this grant on improvement and reconstruction is spent on that particular road. In a jocular fashion, one of my friends here on the opposite side referred to Little Harbour Fase.

What I say about Little Harbour East is this again, the point I made before and all these roads in the District of Placentia East. Mr. Chairman, these communities accepted all the fishermen from the islands of Placentia Bay. Little Harbour East with a population of probably 200 or 300, one-third of the individuals in that community, of households moved in there within the last few years.

Now surely these individuals living in these communities have some priority and have some claim on the expenditure of public funds. I cannot over-emphasize how important it is that these particular communities be provided with top-notch roads and I am referring now to Little Harbour East, Fair Haven and Ship Harbour as well. They are only small roads but they serve a large number of people and they serve people who are obliged or whether they were obliged themselves to choose to resettle in these communities.

The government, both federal and provincial, have saved money as a result of not providing services on the islands to these individuals. So I say again to the Minister of Transportation and Communications that he owes it to the people of these communities to do something this year about these roads and not continue to neglect that was started by the honourable gentlemen opposite.

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, before that item carries, I cannot help but come to my feet, having heard the honourable member. May I assure him of the same kind of consideration that I offered gentlemen on the other side that their request will be given every consideration.

The comments of the honourable Member for Placentia East must now fortify my reasons as given the Committee and indeed nobody really knows what is going to be done in their districts this year with the exception of those people who have tenders already called or contracts awarded. I say to him that I acknowledge fully the criticism, constructively of course, as offered with regards to conditions on that road. May I also say that I also acknowledge full awareness of it, having travelled over it for so many years. I can say to him, the only commitment that I

can give him is what I have given the people of St. Brides, who have made strong representation as well as other people from the area, and that is in relation to the Cape Shore Road and the road to North Harbour that equal money will be spent. Whenever it is spent that we will not spend money on the North Harbour Road and ignore the Cape Shore Road. That road is certainly a road that has to be given a reasonably high priority. Certainly more people living on it than the one in North Harbour which was started by the former administration.

I say to the honourable member that we will do our best and do everything we can. More than that, I am sure he realizes what we can do.

MR. CHAIRMAN (STAGG): Shall 1705-07-02 carry?

On motion 1705-07-02 carried.

On motion 1705-07-03 through 1705-07-05 carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN (STAGG): Shall 1705-07-06 carry?

The honourable Member for Labrador South.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, I cannot let subhead on "Guardrails" pass without a comment. I am sure the honourable minister has in his mind already exactly what I am going to talk about. About halfway between the Pinware River and Red Bay on the Red Bay Road there is an area called the "Cliffs" and the "Sugar Loaf". On one side of the road, passing around the "Cliffs", there is a sheer drop of approximately one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet down. Last year we asked of the honourable minister's department that they install guardrails around that cliff. Up to this point there has been no guardrails whatsoever.

There is a peculiar problem here in that the winter seepage of water over the face of the cliff on one side flows across the road and freezes and creates an extremely dangerous turning around the cliffs. We ask that guardrails be put there to stop vehicles obviously from sliding over the cliffs on the ice. The answer we got back was a very peculiar one in that the road was too narrow to put guardrails on.

Now I would like the minister for the benefit of the record to explain why it is that a road is too narrow to put guardrails on when it is so obviously dangerous.

MR. ROBERTS: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I cannot say, this is getting to be a habit. I am aware of the situation that the honourable Member for Labrador South refers to, having driven over that road in Labrador South and acknowledge again the dangerous situation that exists there. The amount of money that is allocated for guardrail, the guardrail is divided among the four districts. It is usually based on whatever priority for the various areas as given by the field staff with regards to the erection of guardrails. That changes mind you from time to time when representations are made.

I am told by my deputy that whoever might have indicated to the honourable member that the road was too narrow that is a valid point to a certain extent. I am not sure if it applies as rigidly to the road that the honourable member referred to, as much as it does to some others, but I am told that three feet are required for guardrails to be erected. I assume that whoever gave him that answer probably took into account snow clearing problems which are encountered on that road. Putting a guardrail on and taking away an additional three feet from an already narrow road might well create problems.

Let me say to the honourable member that we certainly will take the matter up again and see what we can do. The only other explanation I have for him is that there could have been a short supply of guardrails. We did have problems last year. Even though we had funds to purchase, there was a short supply. I am not sure, maybe that might have been part of the reason as well. But we will take it under consideration and do whatever we can.

On motion 1705-07-06 through to 1706-03-03, carried.

MR. MARTIN: I am sorry I guess I missed 1706-03-04. I have no case. We do not vote on (03-04), is that right?

On motion 1706-03-05, carried.

MR. WOODWARD: 1706-03-07 Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister would tell the committee where this estimate of \$100,000 is going to be spent, on what airstrips?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, this amount of money is for the paving of

an airstrip in St. Alban's which is already committed. It is for installation of lights on the strip at Port au Choix and Bonavista.

MR. WOODWARD: Mr. Chairman, before the minister moves on, I would like to ask if he can tell us which district this money is being spent in because there are a number of requests made for money for airstrips in other areas. Maybe the minister can tell us what areas the three particular strips that he is talking about are in.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I was going to say the honourable gentleman told me last night he was not a Newfoundlander but now I am inclined to believe it. The honourable gentleman knows where Port au Choix is.

MR. WOODWARD: No I do not. I have not a clue.

MR. HICKEY: St. Barbe South. The honourable gentleman knows where St. Alban's is at, Hermitage, and Bonavista is in Bonavista South. I might say, Mr. Chairman, while I am on my feet, those are things that have been committed. It is not to be misconstrued that that is the only work that will be done. I have already informed the committee that discussions are underway with the federal people, with MOT, with the hope of an agreement of cost-sharing, and we are hopeful that something can be done on this. When it is, whatever provincial funds are required on any cost sharing arrangement will be forthcoming. I can assure the committee that if there be an agreement reached and we are hopeful, the province shall not hesitate to come up with its share to do additional work.

MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, I will accept what the honourable minister says regarding federal-provincial cost-sharing but this indicates to me something of the government's sense of priorities. There is not one airstrip in Labrador South, in fact there is not one airstrip on the Coast of Labrador with the exception of North West River which is well inside. There is a private airstrip in Red Bay. We have been asking for a small amount of money to put another 1,000 feet on it and if this be for the paving of an existing airstrip and the lighting of an existing paved airstrip, etc., then it points up what we have been saying all along,

that the priorities of Labrador are far, far down the scale when it comes to capital spending, that if we are going to get any money for any kind of capital works in Labrador at all, it depends upon the federal government.

I submit, Sir, that if we depend upon the federal government for that, then we may as well depend upon the federal government for everything. Let us call a spade a spade, if we are going to be a colony then let us call us a colony and place us where we belong, directly under the federal government in Ottawa.

MR. MOORES: Mr. Chairman, regarding those few very brief remarks but succinct ones by the member for Labrador South, I think it fair to say that the government policy whilst airstrips are important, while they should be identified for transportation, the fact is that I am sure it has been known by now that a helicopter policy has been adopted by the government. Helicopters we have found in the main to be much more efficient in getting to smaller communities so we can get to them all rather than just to one. Basically it is the principle and the policy of this government to develop a helicopter service that is totally adequate except for maybe potential major centres where a fixed-wing aircraft can land.

MR. F. ROWE: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could ask the minister a question regarding airstrips: What aircrafts can or cannot use these airstrips under the department's jurisdiction? I am speaking particularly of the Marystown I think it is called the Marystown airstrip or the airstrip near Marystown. What is it called?

AN HON. MEMBER: There is no airstrip in Marystown; Frenchman's Cove.

MR. F. ROWE: Okay, Frenchman's Cove.

AN HON. MEMBER: Winterland.

MR. F. ROWE: Winterland, the one near Marystown or close to that. I was in conversation with a number of people over the weekend, Mr. Chairman, and I was given to understand that that airstrip can only be used by the government aircraft. Now I was going to be supplied with some documentation but it has not arrived yet and that is about as far as I can go with it. But could I ask the minister that question? Can aircraft other than government aircraft use the Winterland airstrip on

the Burin Peninsula?

MR. HICKEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, most definitely, the provision of small airstrips throughout the province, wherever they might be, is not at any time geared to the operation only of government air services.

Indeed that would be secondary. The prime purpose is to provide a necessary link insofar as the third level carriers are concerned. I can assure the honourable member that whoever tells him that only the government aircraft can land on the strip at Marystown or the others is totally wrong and any aircraft used by a third level carrier, such companies as Gander Aviation, Labrador Airways and this type and I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, larger aircraft, but not the jet, those other aircraft certainly can.

MR. F. ROWE: Has anyone made representation to use that or any pilot made representation to use the airstrip in question and and been turned down on it?

MR. HICKEY: My department has no knowledge of any such request, Mr. Chairman, if there were we would like to know about it. The only qualifying statement I will make is that if in fact there has been anyone refused, unless it is because of the lack of a lighting system, because that air strip to which the honourable member refers is not in operation too long in terms of pavement, I am not quite sure if there is proper lighting on it but if that be the case, if the lighting is not installed then it is conceivable that private aircraft, unless under emergency situations, might be refused use of it. Except for that, Mr. Chairman, there is no reason why any aircraft in terms of the third level carrier, there is no reason in the world why those strips cannot be used.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding that Wing Commander Piercy in charge of the government's air force banished a gentleman off of that air strip down there. But anyway, maybe that is not the right question to put to the minister. What I would like to ask the minister if it is possible for any gentleman who is a third level carrier, as the minister refers to him, is it possible for him to build a hanger near these landing strips? Have there been any applications? These people who have small aircraft, they cannot leave them out in the weather all year round. Can they build a hangar there to store their aircraft in the wintertime?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, you know sooner or later one gets the drift of what is going on. I am well aware now of what honourable gentlemen are referring to. There has been one person who prior to our time was denied use of airstrips which were used primarily up to that time by government aircraft, was continued to be denied the use of the airstrip and subsequently denied permission to build a hangar.

In the first instance, Mr. Chairman, I think the refusal was on reasonably good grounds. It is my understanding of the case, and I have gone through it at least a half a dozen times, that the initial request did not conform with standards as laid down by MOT. There was a suggestion also that there was some question about the manner in which the private aircraft referred to by the honourable gentleman was being operated and at one point in time I think it is fair to say that the impression was given by Captain Piercey, or might have been given or whatever answer he gave might have led this person to believe that this airstrip was purely and solely for the use of government aircraft.

Mr. Chairman, that is not the case. Honourable gentlemen can take it from me right now, it is not the case. The isolated incident to which they refer, to my knowledge has been sorted out. Furthermore the fact that one person is denied is no reason for anyone to assume that other aircraft or other operators cannot use it.

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: Well Mr. Chairman, you know there are two ways to sort out a matter. One is to the satisfaction of the aggrieved party. It is also possible that the aggrieved party may never be satisfied.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, the minister still did not give me a direct answer to the question; is it possible for private operators to build a hangar? You know providing it conforms to MOT standards or provincial standards, whatever they are, can they build a hangar? If a flying club for instance were established down in the Burin Peninsula, would they be permitted to build a hangar there to put their aircraft in?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to be sucked in by this one. Let me inform the Committee, Mr. Chairman, that I am not familiar with the issue that is before the committee. The honourable gentleman involved, indeed is a distant relative of mine. Mr. Chairman, I have complete knowledge of the situation. I think it fair to say that I know all there is to know about it and to my knowledge the last time I had a conversation with him, things were about to be sorted out. There was a misunderstanding. I assured him that as far as government were concerned, we were clear in terms of what we would allow a person to do. However anyone who placed any kind of a structure on or near a landing strip, where public funds had been expended, must do so in terms of conforming with MOT standards and normal standards as known by our Air Services Division and accepted by all people in the air service.

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: If you do the right things. If you conform to proper standards.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Labrador North.

MR. WOODWARD: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the honourable minister if there has been a change in policy? One, I would like to ask the minister what portion of this money is being spent by the federal government in the maintenance of airstrips in Port au Choix, Bonavista and St. Alban's for the purpose of upgrading those airstrips for the lighting and the pavement of those airstrips and secondly, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister what policy? I will get back to policy, and I am very serious about policy when I think in terms of airstrips and expenditures of public funds being spent in this province in areas that are accessible by other transportation, other than air transportation, like Port au Choix, Bonavista and St. Alban's, when we have another portion of the province where we have areas and communities that are completely isolated, with population centres.

AN HON. MEMBER: Is there not an airstrip in Goose Bay?

MR. WOODWARD: We have an airstrip in Goose Bay but we do not have

an airstrip in Nain. We do not have an airstrip in Cartwright. We do not have an airstrip in Davis Inlet that have populations of - the Community of Cartwright in Labrador South has got a population of more than 800 people. The Community of Nain has a population of more than 800 people, that is completely isolated. We have asked repeatedly over the years for airstrips for those communities. We have a period, Mr. Chairman, and I would like to bring this to the attention of the honourable the Premier and the Premier's helicopter policy, that does not necessarily apply to Labrador because it does not lend itself to that type of terrain and that type of weather conditions.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why?

MR. WOODWARD: Because the range of helicopters is not sufficient to cover that long distances.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why is it BRINCO has four?

MR. WOODWARD: BRINCO has four to fly around Churchill Falls. But there is no helicopter that leaves the Community of Goose Bay and flies into Nain for a distance of some 318 miles, because they do not have the range and they do not fly that distance. We have had the experience, Mr. Chairman, we have had the experience in Labrador with a helicopter from Vancouver who has more experience in helicopters and helicopter operations than any other helicopter outfit in this country, barring none. They operated it for USAF for a period of three years. They lost a helicopter along with a complete crew in a lake in Labrador. They pulled out of the total operation. They had the Sikorsky helicopters, the 1960 or the 1961's, which is the biggest helicopter in Canada, bar none. They lost a complete helicopter and a crew in a lake and they were never found. They pulled out of the area. USAF with all their expertise in aircraft operations went back to the fixed-wing aircraft and today if you consult with the aircraft operators in this province and you talk to anyone, you can talk to the universal helicopter people and Mr. Chairman, when I speak of helicopter operations and when I speak of fixed-wing aircraft operations, I know of which I speak because I am very familiar with this type of operation. It does not lend

itself. The Grenfell Mission will not use helicopters for emergency services because they do not lend themselves to that type of operation. What they are looking for is an instrument aircraft that can fly and to some particular airstrip that has some sort of a beacon that they can home in on for emergency purposes.

We have asked repeatedly in this House for airstrips to cover the northern communities, not only for the purpose, Mr. Chairman, of upgrading the existing service that we have but we have asked them for emergency services.

MR. MOORES: You still need fuel oil.

MR. WOODWARD: The fuel oil is not a problem, Mr. Chairman. I can tell the honourable Premier of this Province today that he will not have a problem with fuel oil in Labrador. But he neglects to see the needs of the people in Labrador and his ministers neglect to see the needs of the people in Labrador, and his Minister of Transportation and Communications today has displayed here in this particular committee his arrogance as far as upgrading that particular service is concerned. When you think of paving the airstrip in Port au Choix, when you can motor down there in a period of five to six hours, when you think in terms of paving the airstrip in St. Alban's or when you can motor to Port aux Basques or Winterland in a period of two to three hours and those people are completely isolated. There is no possible way that you can get into those communities and then first we must pave, we must put lighting into those airstrips before we start to put an airstrip into those isolated communities and then the minister gets up and says I am not a Newfoundlander.

I have a number of reasons, Mr. Chairman, when I look at the government that administrates this province and I see the degree of discrimination, the degree of attitudes that are expressed towards this population then I have no alternative but to get up in this honourable House and speak the way I feel and this is basically the way I feel. If they are going to pave airstrips in this province out of provincial public funds and they are waiting on federal funds to put airstrips or construct airstrips in other areas of the province, I say, Mr. Chairman, that that is utter discrimination, and the minister himself has not seen fit to take

a look at that situation. So now I ask the honourable minister is it important, I know Port au Choix, I know St. Alban's, I know Bonavista, maybe equally as well, but the minister, it is unfortunate, Mr. Chairman, that he does not know Nain, he does not know Cartwright, he does not know Makkovik, he does not know Postville, he does not know Davis Inlet, in areas where those people are utterly isolated and you cannot get in by helicopter because the Premier's policy on helicopters is they will not fly helicopters under the conditions that exist. They have to put in an airstrip. They have to put in some type of instruments at those landing strips and then we hear today that we are spending \$100,000 on paving airstrips in the province, that are not needed, not for emergency or any other purpose.

MR. CROSBIE: Would the honourable member permit a question?

MR. WOODWARD: No, I will not permit a question.

MR. NEARY: Put it on the Order Paper.

MR. WOODWARD: I will tell the honourable Minister of Finance that I will not. If the Chairman of the Committee rule me out of order and asks me to sit down I shall sit down but I will not permit a question.

\$100,000, Mr. Chairman, for the Cabinet ministers to fly into Port au Choix. \$100,000 to use a government aircraft to fly into St. Alban's or to fly into Bonavista when there is no one else flying into there, at the expense of some 8,000 people who do not have emergency services on the coast. Then the honourable Minister of Finance can put on all the grins that he pleases and I will tell the honourable Premier of this Province that his helicopter policy is out the window because no one will fly a helicopter in that part of the country. He can fly easily from here.

MR. ROBERTS: What about Dr. Marteau, killed in a helicopter down there?

MR. WOODWARD: Dr. Marteau - ask Dr. Thomas at St. Anthony about flying helicopters across the Straits of Belle Isle, ask Dr. Thomas about flying helicopters on emergency missions from Goose Bay to Nain, a distance of some 380 miles. Ask USAF; they did it. They experimented with it, with the greatest helicopter operation in this country, and they abandoned

it. They abandoned it. They went back to fixed-wing aircraft and this is the reason why, Mr. Chairman, that I say here, if we are going to the extravagance of \$100,000 in expenditure to pave and put lighting into airstrips that are not needed in this province, then I would ask the minister what part he is going to play in developing airstrips for areas where we have no other means of transportation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The member for Labrador South.

MR. MARTIN: I feel compelled to say a few words in support of what the honourable member for Labrador North has said regarding the helicopter policy. I think the government probably have not put enough thought into this. Helicopters, providing they are of the right type, providing that the base units used for the guidance of helicopters are sufficiently equipped with sophisticated electronic guidance equipment, perhaps will work for the lifting of short-haul emergency-like loads, but Mr. Chairman, what we are looking for when we are asking for a policy on airstrips when we are asking for the construction of airstrips, what we are looking for is a safe, secure, permanent arm of transportation that is not now provided, not simply for emergencies but to back up our economic development of our isolated communities. If we are going to prove the economic viability of these communities, we must get them on a twelve month year basis and the only way we can do this is to be able to get in and out at any time. The only way we can get in and out with pay loads, and I must stress with pay loads, is to use fixed-wing aircraft and that means having first class airstrips equipped with electronic guidance devices.

MR. HICKEY: It is surprising, Mr. Chairman, how two people can put forward the same case, put it forward so differently. I find it so hard to quarrel with my honourable friend from Labrador South. My friend from Labrador North who throws the few digs every now and then in between, mixed in, like "the arrogance of the honourable minister." What arrogance? If I am arrogant I must say I am unaware of it. But if I am, Mr. Chairman, if

I am, it is quite conceivable that there might be a trace of arrogance in me. After spending five years facing arrogance, outnumbered thirty-nine to three, it is just quite possible there might be a slight trace of arrogance when I have to listen to such balderdash, such trash from the honourable gentleman.

MR. NEARY: The minister is paranoid.

MR. ROBERTS: He has reason to be paranoid, if they look -

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I know nothing about Labrador. I do not know where Nain is or Postville or Makkovik. I would lose the honourable gentleman in Labrador. Does he know that? Lose him. Spend the night on a river up there I suppose that he has not seen, up the St. Pauls River. Was the honourable gentleman ever up the St. Pauls River? Was he ever stranded up there? He was up there, was he?

MR. NEARY: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: No it was not

MR. CHAIRMAN (Mr. Stagg): Order please!

Before honourable members get carried away or carry one another away, I feel obliged to bring to the attention of honourable members that the honourable member who has the floor has the right to be heard in silence. While he may entertain certain comments or even provoke them on occasion nevertheless it is the Chairman's duty to keep honourable members from getting carried away.

MR. HICKEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I toured Northern Labrador especially the north, I toured all of it. I was quite familiar, Mr. Chairman, with the north while I was Minister of Social Services and prior to that. The honourable gentleman is very wrapped up in certain problems. I do not find fault with anybody putting forth his case but he should not just assume that he is the only one who knows anything about Labrador.

MR. WOODWARD: I am the only one who is concerned.

MR. HICKEY: The only one who is concerned?

What happened to the honourable minister, as I said yesterday, while he was minister? What did he do? What was he doing?

AN HON. MEMBER: He got an air service going.

MR. HICKEY: Big deal, he got an air service going.

MR. WOODWARD: (Inaudible).

MR. HICKEY: I do not remember this administration cancelling it or anything.

AN HON. MEMBER: Well they tried damn hard.

MR. HICKEY: Ha! Ha! Here we are, Mr. Chairman, we even got to listen to that.

This administration, Mr. Chairman, has done more and shown more concern for people with regard to air services, air subsidies than the former administration did for twenty-three years. If the honourable gentleman want some proof of that, I shall give it to him.

Take the people of Change Islands, St. Brendan's and Fogo, when did they get their subsidy and how many years were they looking

for it? How many years were they isolated? What was done for them? Nothing! There was a blind ear each time, whenever they would ask for it.

The people of Labrador South, did they have a subsidy? Did they get a subsidy? Granted the Hon. Member for Labrador South pointed out a few days ago that it was a bit late coming. I certainly do not hesitate to acknowledge that it was. Nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, it certainly does not give the Hon. Member for Labrador North the right to stand in this committee and mislead the people of this province and especially the people of Labrador that this administration do not care, that they do not know anything about Labrador, that they are not concerned about Labrador and that they are not going to do anything for the people of Labrador.

Since last Thursday, Mr. Chairman, since the debate began on my estimates and having listened to the Member for Labrador North, I have reached a stage where I am convinced that he wishes more than anything else that the Trans-Labrador Highway does not go through, that the Lower Churchill does not get off the ground and be developed, that this government does not do anything for Labrador. For what? So he can stand up in this committee this year or the year after or for however long more he is here and remind us of it. Is this his philosophy? Is he so obsessed with criticism of an administration that this is what he wishes? Mr. Chairman, he almost sounds (I will not be so uncharitable as to say he really feels it) like he would like for that situation to happen. Mr. Chairman, all this furor about \$100,000.

Mr. Chairman, in answer to a question, I gave the committee some information. They have been complaining since last Thursday that I have not given them any details, that I will not give them any details. Now I give them details and they go beserk. Is it that they are so use to not getting the answers they wanted for the last few days? Is that it? Has it affected their minds?

All I said, Mr. Chairman, in answer to the question as to what this money was to be spent for (I did not say that all of it was going to be spent on the items I mentioned, although it is not a great amount. I did not say that it would be all used for that) was that two airstrips would be paved because of commitments and because of an opportunity to pave them while we can get a low unit cost.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. HICKEY: If there are paving plants in a certain area, Mr. Chairman, we pave roads that heretofore we had not planned to pave so that we can get a low unit cost. We upgrade roads that we had not planned to upgrade. That is one of the reasons why the honourable gentleman was not given a detailed report on the roads programme for this year. That is exactly what I meant when I said that I could not, and would not give a detailed report as to what project was going to take place. Does he find fault with that, because we intend to get the best value for our money?

Mr. Chairman, the lights I referred to, to hear the Hon. Member for Labrador North talk about it, one would not know but we were going to light up the sky over Port au Choix and Bonavista. It is going to be all lit up, all colours, like a Christmas tree. One beacon light is going on both of those airstrips. Much ado about nothing, Mr. Chairman, is what this is. There is a whole lot of fuss about nothing in relation to that.

Mr. Chairman, I do not propose and I do not intend to minimize for a moment the importance and the argument put forward by both honourable gentlemen with regard to the necessity for airstrips in Labrador or other isolated sections of the province. I have said repeatedly, Mr. Chairman, that this administration is vigorously discussing the whole question of airstrips, air services and air subsidies with the federal government. I have said that we hope for a cost-sharing arrangement

federal/provincial for:(a) the provision of airstrips, air subsidies, the provision of lights and whatever necessary navigational aids that are necessary.

Mr. Chairman, because I do not stand here and enunciate in detail a policy on airstrips for Labrador; namely, where they are going to be, the honourable gentleman assumes that we are not doing anything about it.

MR. WOOWARD: (Inaudible).

MR. HICKEY: It depends on how much money we can get from the federal government and then we will match it with provincial funds. That will tell us how quickly we can solve the problem of airstrips throughout the province and in particular Labrador. Is that wrong, Mr. Chairman? The only reason the honourable gentleman finds something wrong with that is because he has been attached to an administration that has been in the habit of doing things on an ad hoc basis, no plan, no policy, just rush out tomorrow and like I heard on "Open Line" one day; "There is an airport. There! "

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. HICKEY: There was a road going to be paved, from the "Open Line Show". The decision was made on the "Open Line Show". Is that the kind of policy the honourable gentleman wants? Well, Mr. Chairman, if that is what the honourable gentleman wants, the people of this province do not want it. They indicated they did not want it, twice - October, 1971 and March, 1972. They did not want it, they do not want it, they are not going to get it. They are going to get policies which are well developed, well thought out and planned. Mr. Chairman, like every other sphere of activity in my department in terms of the overall question of transportation, in good time we will be in a position to announce a clear-cut, definitive policy on the provision of airstrips,

paved airstrips or what have you, air subsidies and whole bit and package. The honourable gentleman finds fault with that. Mr. Chairman, all we can do is just take it all in our stride I suppose and hope that something has sunk in to the honourable gentleman's mind and head.

On motion 03-07, carried.

On motion Head 1706-04 through to 1706-06, carried.

MR. HICKEY: On 1707-01, Mr. Chairman, a couple of days ago the Member for Labrador North told us that we have no policy on communications. He told us that we did no research on communications. The Hon. Member for Bonavista North questioned the reason or the value in having communications associated with this department. He did not see the value in having it attached. I informed the committee then, Mr. Chairman, that I would deal with it in a little more detail when we came to the appropriate heading. It is surprising, Mr. Chairman, how gentlemen opposite can make an assumption which by the time the words are uttered become an irresponsible statement. It was one thing to hear the Hon. Member for Bonavista North at least he did not accuse us of not doing anything. He questioned the sense if you like or the necessity for having communications involved. I think I answered them for him, I hope, at least that I answered it to his satisfaction.

Mr. Chairman, under the restructuring process, government did what is done in every other Province of Canada. I think it is quite safe to say that this field of communications is important enough in every province and that they do something about it. Some provinces have indeed not only attached it to a department but set up a new department, a minister who does nothing else but handle communications.

Mr. Chairman, this department has done a great deal of work in communications. Meetings are ongoing, as I believe I indicated earlier. The federal government are attempting to show their hand in areas where they do not have jurisdiction. They have jurisdiction in most areas. The problems that the Hon. Member for Labrador North referred to in Labrador, this government at the moment have limited control at best. In most instances, Mr. Chairman, the most we can

do is lobby with the federal government, discuss with the federal government, make representations to the federal government and so on. That is why, Mr. Chairman, this administration believe that communications are important enough to place some emphasis on, are important enough to attach to a department and to work at and do something with. Maybe, Mr. Chairman, I should very quickly go through some of the policies established by this administration insofar as communications are concerned.

Mr. Chairman, we have adopted various positions with regard to various items which are of concern:

It is the position of this government to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that no person is unjustly or unreasonably discriminated against in a matter of rates for basic and essential communication services.

It is the position of this government to develop criteria for the purpose of determining the desirable level of communication service standards, to use this standard to evaluate the level of service in each provincial region and to take corrective action where required. Already specific discrepancies have been identified and appropriate representation is being made.

It is the position of this government to adopt a policy of cost subsidization to ensure that a defined proportion of the profit on delivery of service to the economical areas of the province is used in turn to finance the cost of delivery or at least a similar or comparable level of service to the remote and rural areas. It is felt that this policy is mandatory if we are to ensure the expansion of adequate communication facilities throughout the province. However, it is realized that expansion can only occur over a period of time and that the policy must be administered in a reasonable manner so as not to inhibit the provision of services in the economical areas and so as not to prevent the provider of such services from realizing a reasonable rate of return on his investment. It should be further noted that this cost subsidization policy applies within type of service and requests further study into the area of cost separation.

It is the position of government to conscientiously develop an interconnection policy which best suits the current social and economic situation in Newfoundland. To allow interconnection would probably have the advantages of reducing the cost of certain specialized services, particularly in the well-populated areas. However, this cost saving would effectively and possibly significantly reduce the revenue of the common carrier, the same common carrier who was expected to provide services to the uneconomical or remote areas."

That, Mr. Chairman, applies directly to the territory, the area that the honourable gentleman refers to.

Thus it is our belief that it is in our best interests to have a no-interconnection policy until the desired provincial level of basic service is attained in which the position may be readjusted so as to accrue the benefits of this form of competition.

It is the position of the government to adopt the policy which allows for competition between major carriers of long-haul telecommunication services most notably, CN, CP and TCTF. It is for this reason that we have supported an application of Newfoundland Telephone Limited to build a second microwave facility from St. John's, Newfoundland to Sydney, Nova Scotia. We will similarly support any application of CN, CP, to build a competitive system into Labrador. Our position on this is well-documented and is available.

There are inequities in the level of telephone services being provided by the various telephone companies, between the franchise areas and in fact between exchanges, depending upon the size of the exchange. Newfoundland has the highest rate in Canada for residents' private lines and the second highest business private line rates. Many of the factors contributing to the undesirable position are justifiable. Nevertheless, certain corrective action can be taken: (a) It is the position of this government to review and revise existing legislation so as to bring about to the extent possible the standardization of regulatory controls; (b) With regard to telephone subscriber service within the province, to centralize this regulatory control within the

province; to give particular consideration to the consequences of planned capital projects within this regulatory control and to participate to the extent possible in the determination and regulation of long-distance interprovincial rates in addition to interprovincial.

It is the position of the government to take within its power any steps necessary to ensure an acceptable level based on pre-defined standards of radio and television reception in all populated areas. We are quite concerned that there are currently areas of the province which receive none or at most poor broadcast reception. We are concerned that approval has only recently been granted by the CRTC to operate FM broadcasting stations within the province and then only on one application. While we generally agree to support CBC's plan to establish french language radio and television in the province, we are very concerned that these

plans appear to have taken precedents over the provision of adequate English broadcasting throughout the Province. Does the honourable gentleman wish me to continue? Has he got enough?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who wrote it for the honourable gentleman?

MR. HICKEY: Who wrote it for me? It is too bad my Deputy Minister is not permitted to speak. He might tell the honourable gentleman that nobody wrote it, that this is a copy of my speech, off the cuff, mind you.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: At Moncton.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: We are paying \$28,000 are we? Let me inform the honourable gentleman -

MR. CHAIRMAN (Stagg): Order, please!

MR. HICKEY: Let me inform the honourable gentleman that we are not paying one single cent.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Stagg): Order, please! If the honourable minister will permit, honourable members are again drawn to the rule oft repeated and oft neglected that the member who has the floor has the right to be heard in silence. Other honourable members, if they wish to participate in the debate have every opportunity to do so when the member speaking resumes his place.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member for Bonavista North who was so concerned about that \$28,000 and who made reference to it in a comparative way yesterday, I should inform him that we have not yet been able to find a man to fill the post of Director of Communications. Hence we have not spent one single cent on a salary for anyone.

This is a sample, Mr. Chairman, of what honourable gentlemen opposite see as an issue and automatically always have to continue to think the bad thing.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: George McLean.

MR. HICKEY: George McLean did not apply for the job.

MR. P. THOMS: Mr. Chairman, the Division of Communications in the Department of Transport in my information is a complete waste of the taxpayers money. I fail to see why this division is there. I fail to see what it is doing. Mr. Chairman, apparently it is not doing anything because here down in communications we are only spending \$1,000.00 but in order to spend that \$1,000.00 we have to spend another \$27,500.00.

So whether or not we have a Director of Communications, the Minister of Transportation and Communications is planning on spending it because he is asking this committee for it. If he has not got a person to fill this post then he does not need that. So therefore, Mr. Chairman, I move that the vote 1707-01 be reduced by \$25,999.00.

MR. HICKEY: I have heard some garbage, Mr. Chairman, in my time. I have heard a fair amount in this House too. Mr. Chairman, I am speaking to the motion. The honourable gentleman refers to \$1,000.00. He did not ask or if he did he did not give me an opportunity to answer what it was for. That \$1,000.00, Mr. Chairman, is in no way related to the whole subject of communications as we know it.

That \$1,000.00, Mr. Chairman, is for the necessary repair and maintenance of telephone in our vehicles. Does the honourable gentleman not want us to be able to operate telephones in our cars, our highway vehicles for our supervisory staff? If he is talking about no benefits from communications, he does not want cable T.V., not going to want anything to do with that. He does not care about where the rates of telephones go, how high they go, who controls the rates. He does not give a darn about that either. He does not care about telegraph. He does not care about radio.

Mr. Chairman, the communications, for the benefit of the honourable gentleman, covers a much wider scope than what he has apparently been able to determine. It covers postal problems, newspaper, radio, T.V., telephone, telegraph, cable T.V. Did the honourable gentleman ever hear of the wired city? Did he ever hear about the wired city? Would he like an hour of dissertation on that? Garbage, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Labrador South.

MR. M. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, the honourable minister opened up this bag of worms so I am going to see if I can throw a few more into it.

Out of the dissertation I got one phrase that stuck. He mentioned a no-interconnection policy. Sometime at a later date outside of the House I am going to ask him to explain that but it brought to mind two very vexing situations which we have been trying to have corrected for at least the last four years. It really is a no-interconnection policy. If we are talking about a communications policy then in this instance I will ask for whom that policy?

Let me give you two specific examples. In the summer community of Seal Islands there are approximately twelve or fourteen families who fish Seal Islands in the summertime and move back to Cartwright in the wintertime. A mile and a half across the run from Seal Islands is a fishing station called Frenchmans Island which is simply a bunch of fishing rooms, operated - it was formally Hudson Bay Company, now operated by Fishery Products Limited, a Newfoundland company. At the Fishery Products Limited rooms is located now a Newfoundland telephone, formally Bell Telephone installation. radio installation connecting up with L'anse-a-Loup exchange.

We have repeated attempts to have either another telephone, radio telephone installation installed at Seal Islands, a mile and a half away or to have that one moved. We have been told that it is there for the conduct of fishery products business. The situation is that during emergencies or when it is stormy weather the people of Seal Islands have no communication link whatsoever. They are not able to get across the rough waters to use it. It is stated policy that that particular installation is for Fisheries Products to conduct their business.

This is a communications establishment for the benefit of Newfoundlanders who spend only four months of the year on the Labrador, similarly in Snug Harbour. In this case Snug Harbour is the fishing community for the Wards of Norman Bay. In fact Ray Ward has the telecommunication installation in a portion of his house. That is similarly

operated only during that season when Fishery Products operate their fishing rooms at Snug Harbour. When Fishery Products move back to Newfoundland that telephone is closed down and the people who remain on the Labrador for the next eight months of the year do not have any telephone communications. That is a telephone installation for Newfoundlanders and it is closed down once the Newfoundlanders have gone back to Newfoundland.

Now I would like to know how that jives with the no-interconnection policy?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, the situation the honourable member refers to is under investigation. Newfoundland Telephone have assured us that they are investigating it and they will attempt to do something about it. I think it is fair to say that we have a reasonably good relationship with that company. They have promised to do something about it. They have also promised to make certain improvements in Labrador, in other areas.

Maybe I should just take a minute without delaying the committee too long to explain to the honourable gentleman what I meant when I said our position is that we have a no-interconnection policy. What I meant by that was simply, to explain in a little more detail, that if we were to have an interconnection policy we would be fair game as is many other areas in Canada for manufacturers to sell at a very good profit, in some instances a very high profit. A great number of attachments for telephone make their profits and move on or carry on, putting nothing into the overall service of providing the necessary communications system.

If we were going to allow it at all, Mr. Chairman, our policy is at the moment and unless we are given some real strong reasons to deter from this policy, it will continue to be, if we were going to allow an interconnection policy we would prefer that the common carrier or the telephone company who is providing the services and in some instances providing it in uneconomical areas we would allow them to cash in on this. It might well be argued that if there be any additional revenue it should not go to the manufacturing firms who make those instruments and attachments. If it go to anybody within this Province, we say we should give consideration to giving it or allowing the common carrier to cash in on it so that

they can use that revenue to either lower the rates overall or expand their services and improve their services or update their services, whatever the case may be, possibly put in a dial system in an area which heretofore would not have one.

So, Mr. Chairman, this is exactly what I mean when I say that this Province adopts a policy of no-interconnection at the moment. If and when we do adopt one at this point in time it would seem as though we would favour the common carrier or common carriers, whatever the case may be.

MR. M. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, I just have one last comment to make on this. As of last week when the honourable member from Labrador North and myself met with officials of Newfoundland Telephone in separate meetings. I might explain, we were told that the policy regarding the upgrading of service on the Labrador Coast was held up pending the tabling of the Labrador Royal Commission Report. I would bring that to the minister's attention and ask him if he could possibly get hold of that section of the Commission Report dealing with telephone services or telecommunication services and make representation to Newfoundland Telephone, I think he could speed up the implementation of their new programme.

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to, under 1707 - Communications, to communicate to the House that the Boston Bruins are leading the hockey game, two to nothing nearing the end of the first period.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, the line of communications is wide open. There is nothing like it. May I tell the honourable member that I will be glad to meet with himself and the member for Labrador North if necessary, if he so wish, to discuss this. It might well be that Newfoundland Telephone would obviously like to see what is in the report on Labrador. This is only natural. Our understanding, Mr. Chairman, is very clear with regards to commitments made by Newfoundland Telephone and indications as to what they plan to do.

They have a programme which is developed, pinned down and developed, a budget in terms of costs and the whole bit, all outlined to us. The latest information I have on it is what I gave the member for Labrador

North a couple of days ago - that they wish to get together with my department to determine some priorities, as I indicated to the committee earlier, I certainly intend to do.

Now it might be wise for the honourable member for Labrador South and the honourable member for Labrador North and the honourable member for Labrador West, my colleague, the Minister of Manpower, to get together to determine what their views are in terms of priorities for that whole region.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion is that this vote on 1707-01 be reduced to \$1.00.

I declare the motion lost.

On motion Heading 1707-01, Heading 1707-02 carried:

MR. WOODWARD: Mr. Chairman, before we move off of 1703 I would just like to make a few brief comments and I will be very brief in this respect. I think that the \$1,000.00 that is in the vote here for communications, radio communications is specified that it is probably pertaining to radio in aircraft or radio communications of some other nature.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: In cars.

MR. WOODWARD: In cars, is it? I would like to bring to the minister's attention and maybe the minister can give some input into the committee as to the type, what policy or jurisdiction his department has over radio communications. Getting back to the radio communications as well as television communications maybe, Mr. Chairman, I will be permitted to speak on the two items when I talk on this subhead.

We have in my area particularly a number of coastal communities stretching all the way from Nain to Postville where there is absolutely no radio or telephone or television communications. Now we are fortunate enough through the high powered frequencies of Moscow radio that we have the opportunity at times to pick up Moscow radio on the Labrador Coast but it is very unfortunate that our people are not in a position or do not have Russian interpreters that can interpret the news for them.

So maybe if the minister were in the area maybe he could serve in this capacity. In this respect when we are dealing with radio communications the minister can tell the committee what his department is

doing with regards to having radio communications CBC, or private radio, whatever his department is trying to promote, to bring communications to that particular area as well as television, whether it is through a microwave or if it is through Telsat or some other means of communication, what his department is doing or if this particular vote represents a person or what type of expenditure there is, what type of administration or what this \$1,000.00 is going to be spent for.

Maybe he can tell the committee just what his department is doing as far as bringing radio communications, which we have nil, television communications, of which we have nil, to that particular part of our Province, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, with regards to the \$1,000.00, as I have indicated it is primarily for the service and maintenance of radios which our vehicles are equipped with. So far as the radios the honourable gentleman refers to in terms of jurisdiction, it is under the control of M.O.T.

All we can do is make representation, at the present time.

MR. WOODWARD: What representation has been made?

MR. HICKEY: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. I did not hear the honourable gentleman. Would he repeat that question?

MR. WOODWARD: Could the minister tell us what representation has been made to the M.O.T.?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, the honourable gentleman asks me what representations were made. We are continuously making representations to the federal government in every regard to the whole area of communications. We can do very little.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: In writing?

MR. HICKEY: In writing. I have just started to outline the well developed policy that this administration has in regards to communications. I asked the honourable gentleman if he had enough or if he wanted me to go on and he said that he had enough. Now, I will read another section for him, covering this particular item.

It is the position of this government to take, within its power, any steps necessary to ensure an acceptable level based on pre-defined standards of radio and television reception in all populated areas.

MR. NEARY: On a point of order. I understand in this honourable House, Sir, that unless one is prepared to table a document, he is not supposed to read from it. I hope, Mr. Chairman, that I never hear "Mr. Nastiness" again on radio saying that the opposition is delaying the proceedings of this committee and wasting the seventy-five hours we have at our disposal to discuss the item by item analysis of the estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN (MR. STAGG): Does the honourable minister wish to address himself to the point of order? Does anybody else wish to speak to the point of order?

I suggest that the honourable the minister may have been referring to some notes that he had made at some other time. I do not think he was reading a prepared speech to the extent that it would fall within the rule prohibited by the Standing Orders. He

may have just been quoting from his copious notes.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, if it be the wish of the honourable gentlemen opposite, I will be more than happy to take my seat and say nothing further, answer no more questions. I indicated that last Thursday night and I have not been permitted to do so since. Now, when I go to outline policy, I get this kind of blarney.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: The minister is wasting time.

MR. HICKEY: It is too bad, Mr. Chairman. I am not the one who wastes the time. It is the garbage that we have listened to. It is very unfortunate, Mr. Chairman, that I find it necessary - unfortunate for the honourable gentlemen opposite - to defend this administration when they make those irresponsible statements and accusations.

Let the honourable gentleman from Labrador North check with his colleague, the member for Bell Island, get permission to ask a question. If both of them agree, let them have a meeting. If both of them agree that they do not mind my answering, I will. Otherwise, keep their mouths shut.

Motion Head 17-07-03 carried.

MR. NEARY: Off they go into the wild blue yonder. I wonder if the minister could give us some information, Sir, on what is happening under this vote, what the jet set are doing these days?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, did the honourable gentlemen get together? Did they decide now that I am not wasting the time of the committee? Do they really want an answer?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Do not be so rude.

MR. HICKEY: I am not being rude. I am just being co-operative. There is no more co-operative minister in the House.

The honourable gentleman wanted to know what about the jet set, something like that. Was that it? I have no idea what the honourable gentleman is talking about unless it is EPA or Air Canada. If it is, we have made all kinds of representations about the service with regards to those people. I have not the slightest notion of what he is referring to with regards to jet sets or the

word jet in any way where it is applicable to government air services.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, under this vote there is a substantial amount of money for salaries and aircraft operations. My understanding, Sir, is that this is only a part of the aircraft operations, a part of the expenditure incurred by this administration. I believe there is about almost another million dollars worth of airtime, Sir, used in helicopter service, all of which incidentally, Mr. Chairman, was undertaken without calling public tenders, to my knowledge. I think that Universal Helicopters is the company that is being commissioned by the administration.

I do not know what this time was used for, Sir. That is a substantial amount of money. There must have been a lot of flying time involved. It is spread out over various other departments of government. I would like for the minister to inform the committee why public tenders were not called for this service. What the helicopters are being used for? How many helicopters are under contract to the government? What Crown corporations. What agencies of the government are using these helicopters?

I would like for the minister also to inform the committee - maybe not tonight because he may not have the information with him but would the minister be prepared to table the log of the government aircraft? I do not know if it is a jet or not. Sir. It is? What is it they call it? A turboprop. That is the next thing one can get to a jet. I understand that the administration are thinking about purchasing a jet. I would like to find out what this aircraft is being used for, how many hours it has been aloft, the names of the passengers who are conveyed in that aircraft. I do not know if there are any streakers aboard it.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: No, Sir, I did not. I said that there may be stewardesses in hot pants, Sir, but I did not say anything about streakers. There may be streakers on the aircraft. I would certainly like to know how much the bar bill is aboard that aircraft, Sir. I would like to know

who is participating in the service of this aircraft. Is the aircraft being used just inside the province? Is it being used outside the province? Will the minister be going up to Ottawa tomorrow or Thursday in the government aircraft?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

MR. NEARY: No. Going on the conventional airlines? I would like to hear the minister tell the committee, Sir, whether or not it would be less costly, less expensive for the government to dispose of this foolish illusion of grandeur that they have of owning a big executive aircraft and use the conventional airlines in this province. Sir, EPA have a pretty good service in this province. They go all over the province. There is hardly an area of Newfoundland that one cannot get to today by EPA, both on the island and in Labrador.

What about Air Canada? They have a pretty good service from here to the Mainland. Is it necessary for the government to have this luxurious aircraft? Who is using the aircraft? Is it just being used by ministers? Can the back-benchers on the government side use it? Is it being used to fly tourists around the province? To take people off on fishing expeditions? Give us a few facts about this aircraft. Tell us the amount that is being spent on the bar aboard that aircraft.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: There is no bar.

MR. NEARY: There is a bar aboard of it, Sir. Maybe the Minister without Portfolio has never had an opportunity to ride on the aircraft. Well, Sir, there is a bar aboard. I can tell him that and I have never been on the aircraft but I have been talking to people who have been on board of it.

Then we hear Squadron Leader Piercey coming out once in a while and saying, "Oh, the aircraft is used for emergencies. Just brought a stretcher case in from Stenhenville." Trying to leave the impression, Sir, that this aircraft can be used and is being used practically on a day-to-day basis for flying sick people around this province, which is just not true. That aircraft can only land on the big landing strips in Newfoundland. It cannot land on some

of these landing strips we were talking about tonight, my colleague was talking about.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: It can land in Bonavista? I have my doubts. It can land on all of them?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: No it was not. The stretcher case, Sir. I heard on the radio one day. EPA brings in more stretcher cases in a week than that aircraft brings in in a whole year. Half the time one cannot get it anyway. If one should need it, the ministers are up with their heads in the clouds, going off in the wild blue yonder. No wonder we cannot get any decisions made on the ground, Sir. The ministers are airborne most of the time. One can hardly look around down at Torbay but one does not see the government aircraft taking off.

I understand now that some sort of a deal is being worked out with a big industrialist in this province to purchase a big jet, providing that the government will use this jet on a contractual basis. I am told the government's pilots have been down practicing landings and take-offs.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Both?

MR. NEARY: Both, yes. Sometimes with some of the ministers on board, I only wish that they would take off and not land.

Sir, this whole operation - I know this includes the fire protection here - but the whole operation is costing what? Less aircraft operations, well almost \$2 million. That is a substantial amount of money. Mr. Chairman, I would like to have a few details from the minister. I would like to ask the minister to table the log of all the passengers that have been carried in the last twelve months in that aircraft. That is all I want. Will the minister undertake to table the log in this committee of all the passengers that have been taken aloft aboard that aircraft?

MR. HICKEY: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: Well, that is all I want. If the minister will undertake to table that log, that is all I want. When can we expect it?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: How many years?

MR. NEAPY: Just for the last twelve months.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEAPY: Look, if the Minister of Industrial Development does not keep quite, Sir, he is going to get a few flicks from me when we get to his estimates. He has been feeding me candy for the last couple of days, Sir, trying to soften me up. If he should keep that up he is going to get the works before the night is over, Sir.

Seriously, will the minister undertake to table that log of all the passengers that have been carried in that aircraft in the last twelve months? Agreed? I take my seat because I want to get back to the hockey game.

MR. HICKFY: Mr. Chairman, the honourable gentleman does not want any detail on the staff or anything like that, does he? We have it all here if he should want it. That is fine if he do not want it. That is good.

The matter he raised with regard to the helicopters. Mr. Chairman, we could not possibly get a price as good as the one we got from the existing operators. They provided excellent service.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. HICKFY: Universal. They know this province inside out, well established. It is based on that, a savings of money, that the contract was renewed. With regards to the honourable gentleman's comments with regards to getting where one wishes to go by commercial airlines, I am sure he agrees with me that Air Canada has a job to get into St. Anthony, Port au Choix, St. Alban's and places like that.

Mr. Chairman, the government is determining about now and have been investigating and comparing the operation of the government air services versus the operation of Atlantic Aviation when they had it. A decision will soon be made. It will soon be determined which is more profitable, either for the government to do it or for private enterprise to do it.

With regards to the grandeur the honourable gentleman refers to, Mr. Chairman, I am not aware of any. This aircraft is

a good aircraft. It can fly in bad weather. It can fly at something like 17,000 feet. It has all navigational aids. It is a most serviceable aircraft. It is fast. It is the best aircraft of its type and for the kind of operation that the government needs it for.

Who uses it? Civil servants, Mr. Chairman, getting them where they want to go, on very important trips, very important business for the province and ministers, people who visit the province in relation to government business, industrial development and so on, members of the opposition when they want to use it.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

MR. HICKEY: Yes. I personally approved the use of the aircraft on at least three occasions for the opposition. I know of one occasion when it was used. I am not sure of the other two but if they did not use it, Mr. Chairman, it was no fault of the government. The government approved it and did not hesitate to approve it. The aircraft is owned by the government, by the people of this province.

Mr. Chairman, for the last time, for the one thousandth time, it is not a jet. It is a turboprop. It is the same type of aircraft as the Twin Otter in terms of engines; the turboprop. Mr. Chairman, the honourable gentleman referred to waste. The whole idea of the government having its own aircraft for the efficient operation of the government was conceived by the former administration.

MR. NEARY: That was before roads.

MR. HICKEY: Before roads where? It is a long time ago I saw the former Premier landing in Gander, and they have roads a long time, Mr. Chairman. They used to pop back and forth there. I will tell the honourable gentleman another things too. One's tongue would be out, one would be gasping for breath but about the only way a member of the opposition of that day would get aboard that aircraft would be under the disguise of an air-ambulance mission. Yes, that is true. Only one time, Mr. Chairman, that the opposition used that aircraft, with the exception of the former Leader of the Opposition

the now honourable Minister of Education, my colleague - I believe on one occasion, on the approval of the then Premier I recall, and the aircraft was going there, it was on the same flight, the same route, in fact I believe it was a dual function, some kind of a dual function.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: It was coming back from the opening of Marystown.

MR. HICKEY: There we are, Mr. Chairman.

MR. OTTENHEIMER: I had car trouble. There were four of us on the aircraft, Mr. Smallwood, Mr. Curtis, Mr. Vardy and myself. The car broke down and I got a ride back.

MR. NEARY: The honourable minister was travelling in pretty distinguished company.

MR. OTTENHEIMER: No doubt.

MR. HICKEY: I was at Gander on a couple of occasions, Mr. Chairman, and for all the then Premier knew I was walking to St. John's. Walk I would have before given a ride on that aircraft. Not so today, Mr. Chairman, things have changed. That aircraft is for the use of the government ministers, the Premier, the civil servants who have to use it and the opposition. I do not think anybody can be more fair than that. As I said before, it is public funds, it is an aircraft owned by the government, operated by the government. It is only fair.

With regards to the log, Mr. Chairman: I do not know what the honourable gentleman wishes the log for. He is not going to. I assure him, find anybody travelling on that aircraft that should not be on her, that have not got a legitimate reason for being on her. He is not going to find that aircraft being used for anything other than public business. I do not know what he would want the log for. I do not know what the policy of any air service is, whether it is customary to table the log, if there are no objections. I do not have any objections but I do not know what the situation is or what the decision would be as regards to the gentleman who runs the air services. It is the man who is in charge. If he recommend to me that the log may be tabled, then I shall be quite prepared to table it.

I do not know of any area in the country where the log of a government aircraft is tabled. Certainly

any attempt to get the one in Quebec has failed, failed bitterly, would not hear tell of it. Mr. Chairman, if it is possible to make it available, if it is not breaking or setting a dangerous precedent, if it is not breaking any rules, it is fine with me.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, if the minister be correct and they have not broken any rules and they have nothing to hide and nothing to be ashamed of, well why not table the log?

MR. HICKEY: I would be delighted to.

MR. NEARY: Well, will the minister undertake to make a commitment to the committee?

MR. HICKEY: I cannot say that.

MR. NEARY: Why not? Who is in charge of the department, the Director of Air Services or the minister?

MR. HICKEY: I am.

MR. NEARY: Well then the minister should be man enough -

MR. HICKEY: In full command.

MR. NEARY: The minister should be man enough to give an undertaking to this committee to table the log showing the number of trips, the purpose of the trips and the number of people and the names of the people that are carried aboard this aircraft. That should be public information, Mr. Chairman. Sir, it is the first indication that I had, tonight, that this aircraft was available to the opposition.

MR. HICKEY: That is a fact.

MR. NEARY: Well, Sir, it is not a fact. It is not a fact.

MR. HICKEY: It is a fact.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Where does the honourable member want to go?

MR. NEARY: I do not want to go anywhere. I would not get aboard the aircraft. I am afraid I would be shot down. They might put sand in the gasoline.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: Sir, I do not want to use the aircraft. I do not think the minister is correct. That has not been the policy. No, Sir. Not it has not.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Is the honourable gentleman telling me that I am deceiving the committee?

MR. NEARY: I am telling the honourable minister, Mr. Chairman, that that must be a new policy that he announced tonight.

MR. HICKEY: No, Mr. Chairman, I have -

MR. NEARY: Sir, to my knowledge the only gentleman on this honourable side of the House, Sir, -

MR. CHAIRMAN (Stagg): Order, please! Order, please! We cannot have two honourable gentlemen standing even if only one were speaking. We certainly cannot have two honourable gentlemen standing and speaking at the same time.

MR. NEARY: I think I have the floor, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Stagg): Yes, the honourable member for Bell Island has the floor.

MR. NEARY: Sir, I think the administration did undertake to treat the Leader of the Opposition on the same basis as a cabinet minister. That is the policy so far, but not the ordinary rank and file on this side. We have not had access to that aircraft.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: When does the honourable member want it?

MR. NEARY: I do not want it. I am only telling the minister what the policy is up to this moment. The Leader of the Opposition was given equal status with a cabinet minister but not the back-benchers on this side, not the ordinary rank and file.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. ROBERTS: Not even that is new.

MR. NEARY: Did the honourable member know that before?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: No, of course not.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: I know the minister would probably like to send me one way. Sir, that is the first indication we had of this. Where has the minister gone now? He has gone running out to the common room. Sir, I have another

piece of news for the minister too. Not this past winter but the winter before when the ice was in the Tickle between Bell Island and Portugal Cove and a group of people were stranded down here at Torbay Airport for two or three days, sleeping on the benches down there, I could not get ahold of the minister but I got ahold of the Director of Air Services and I could not get the use of a government aircraft to get these people home and some of them had come out of hospital. I called up the Director of Air Services, "Oh, no, no! We cannot set a precedent," he said, "We cannot use the government aircraft to fly passengers back and forth to Bell Island." They are only the taxpayers. They only pay for the machine. They only pay for the gas and oil that is used in that machine. You cannot let the poor, old lowest form of life, the taxpayers, on board that aircraft. All they have to do is pay for it, that is all, and keep it airborne and keep the ministers flying around the Province and around Canada."

I had to call up poor old Bill Bennett of Gander Aviation. I could not even get a subsidy out of the administration. I called him up and he sent an aircraft in from Gander. She got about half the way in and she had to turn back again.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Poor, old Bill Bennett -

MR. NEARY: Well, Sir, as far as I know he is a fellow who came up the hard way and I do not know if he is on his feet yet or not but he is making a pretty good job of it.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: I am not running him down. I am just talking about the poor, old fellow trying to do a favour for the people of Bell Island. He got the aircraft half way in and she had to turn back because of bad weather. The next day he finally got her in. When she got in the ice went out of the Tickle and the boat started to operate and he lost his shirt, lost his shirt, Sir. I doubt if I will ever get Gander Aviation or Mr. Bennett ever to provide a service to Bell Island again.

There are times, Mr. Chairman, and I would like for the minister to explore this a little bit, as I have run up against it, about every second year we have ice in the Tickle. The ferry cannot operate sometimes for as

much as five or six or seven or eight weeks. Will the people be allowed to use the government aircraft? Is that only for the select few? It is only for the select few, not for the taxpayers. Well will the minister tell us if they have a policy in mind to subsidize these air operations when communities become stranded, such as Bell Island? We did not have any ice this past winter. Nine chances out of ten we will have it next winter. What do the people do? What happens in case of an emergency? I know we have a hospital over there now but we still have situations where blood has to be brought over to that hospital.

These are the kinds of questions, Sir, that I would like to get the answer to. I would like for the minister to stand up on his hind legs and say, "Look, I am running this department. I do not have to consult with anybody. I will table the log and I will give the opposition a list of all the trips that aircraft made, where she went, what was the purpose of the visit and the names of the people that were transported on the aircraft." Why does the minister have to consult with the hired help to give us that information?

He was telling us there, I think it was yesterday, how he asserted his independence as a minister in that department, how he used his influence, how he laid down the law, he was running the department. Now, let us see if he is running this particular branch of his department, air services. The minister did not tell us why public tenders were not called for this helicopter service or the number of helicopters that they have chartered.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: Well let me hear it again because I certainly -

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: I heard the minister say that it was not possible. I would like to know why it is not possible to call public tenders.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: - ear plugs in the honourable member's ears. -

MR. NEARY: Sure I will. I am looking for information, Mr. Chairman, that is all.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I have told the honourable gentleman from time to time that I am prepared to do almost anything for him. Now I will

even attempt to grow some hind legs so that I can get up on them, get up on my hind legs and tell the director - let me say, Mr. Chairman, with regards to my staff, I run my department. Let there be no mistake about that. I do not abuse people. I do not disregard recommendations just for the sake of disregarding them or just for the sake of doing it. That day, Mr. Chairman, is gone. I have people in my department that I respect who have lots of experience and who are good people. I listen to their recommendations, Mr. Chairman, do not always accept them, do not always if I see a good reason for not. They do not think they are always right. We do not always agree on everything but, Mr. Chairman, I do not run my department like a Gestapo operation.

That is why I will not tell the Director of Air Service, "Release that log irrespective of how somebody feels about it." No way, Mr. Chairman. What I did say was that I would be glad to talk to the Director of Air Services about it. Then I will make the decision, based on what that gentleman says in terms of precedent and in terms of why it should be released or why it should be tabled. I can assure the honourable gentleman that there is absolutely no reason in the world why that log should not be or could not be released, not should not be, I do know that. There is no reason in the world why this administration could not, no reason why they would have the slightest fear of tabling that log or releasing it.

It might be, in fact, Mr. Chairman, there is no might about it, I can state a fact that it would be much, much more interesting if I were to table the log of the twin otter, much more interesting. We have nothing to fear, Mr. Chairman, nothing to hide, nothing to fear. I am not going to set new rules just because an honourable gentleman wishes to peruse a log with the hope of finding somebody who travelled on that aircraft and say, "Why?" I can assure him that that aircraft, Mr. Chairman, has been used on government business only with the exception of air ambulance which I suppose can also be said to be government business.

Mr. Chairman, the honourable gentleman mentioned the helicopters.

He must not have heard me when I gave the explanation. I have already informed the committee that we obtained a price from Universal Helicopters that we could not upon the advice of the Director of Transportation who knows helicopters and who knows air service like nobody else does in this department or in this administration and based on his recommendation, having gone over it, he informs me that is the best possible price, that we could not touch it by calling public tenders and furthermore he informs me that the service provided by Universal has been excellent, that the people who operate and who pilot those helicopters have a very enviable record in terms of safety, in terms of operation and that their pilots know this Province like no one else.

Mr. Chairman, I think, and based on that, Mr. Chairman, I cannot think of a better reason for continuing with that contract or extending that contract.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The member for Labrador South.

MR. M. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, it is highly unusual. I do not dispute facts, what the minister says about the quality of service and perhaps even the prices really but for an administration that came to power on a policy of tendering on everything. I find it highly unusual that on the recommendation of one man, however qualified he very well may be, on the recommendations of one man they break their own rules and refuse to call tenders or at least neglect to call tenders.

Now, I have four questions I would like to ask the minister regarding this very matter. First of all, could he put it on record why no tenders were called. What is the contract rate the government is getting now from the contractor? When was the last contract signed? How long does it run? Finally, when this contract is run out whether we are going to have tenders called on the other one?

I have two more questions with regard to the government aircraft which I would like for the minister to answer after. The government aircraft, yes or no, is it possible, is it physically possible to get a stretcher case, who is lashed on to a stretcher, into that aircraft? Secondly, if it is to be used as an air ambulance, is it possible to

use that aircraft in a place where you can only get in and out with either floats or skis? Can it operate in any other place other than a hard surface runway? Is it or can it be equipped with skis or floats for ambulance operation to outport communities?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I do not have all of the information the honourable gentleman wishes. I can certainly answer some of his questions right now. I can tell him that yes, you can get a patient in the aircraft on a stretcher, at least that is according to my information.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Strapped on a stretcher.

MR. HICKEY: Strapped on a stretcher. Mr. Chairman, my information is that this aircraft had certain changes made to it to make it much more usable than the Twin Otter that we have. A number of problems were encountered. Apart from being able to take an additional patient we had many other problems with the Twin Otter with regards to air ambulance missions. Certainly, although honourable gentlemen may not realize it, this aircraft is used extensively for air ambulance missions. I can tell him -

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: That is what the honourable gentleman wants. Let me see. Emergency medical operations are conducted on a continuing basis throughout all parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, fleet of helicopters in conjunction with the King Air, the Cansos and commercial operators located at strategic points assure immediate attention and rapid transit to any emergency medical situation which arises. Adverse weather conditions are the only deterrent to a delay in completing a mission. During that past ten months the government have conducted fifty-two flights with fixed wing aircraft, carrying fifty-five patients for medical attention plus ninety-five flights using helicopters, carrying ninety-five patients. Total air ambulance operations have therefore been 147 flights carrying 150 patients.

Mr. Chairman, that is what the honourable gentleman refers to as the luxury aircraft. Mr. Chairman, I would ask the honourable gentleman how he would put a dollar value on one life, not ninety-five, Mr. Chairman, or not 155; one? How does one put a dollar value on a life?

MR. NEARY: Does the honourable minister want me to answer that?

MR. HICKEY: Sure, by all means.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, what the minister is saying is that the helicopters are used to bring the patients into places like Gander or Stephenville or Deer Lake. The helicopters are used for that purpose Sir, or to bring them in to St. Anthony for that matter. Then the patient is taken and put on an aircraft, because that particular luxurious aircraft the minister is talking about cannot land anywhere in Southern Labrador.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: It cannot. Where?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: In Blanc Sablon. In Quebec, in the Province of Quebec, not in Newfoundland.

MR. HICKEY: Who told the honourable member that?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: I am trying to correct the wrong impression that the minister is trying to leave. Mr. Chairman, if the government never had an aircraft to its name, these emergencies would still be taken care of and probably much more efficiently than they are at the present time.

MR. HICKEY: Does the honourable gentleman wish that we discontinue the air ambulance service?

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, they could do away with it, not the air ambulance service. Mr. Chairman, the minister is twisting what I am saying, twisting and turning.

MR. HICKEY: No I am not. Black is black and white is white.

MR. NEARY: I would say, Sir, if that particular executive aircraft were taken to the scrap heap tomorrow it would not make any difference as far as emergencies are concerned.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: 140 flights.

MR. NEARY: 140 flights, mostly by helicopter. The Grenfell Mission, as my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, points out, make more flights

than that in one month in Southern Labrador.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: It is a flying -I was going to say something. I better not say it. It would not be parliamentary for me to say what it is, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, the minister is over there. He has a few figures supplied to him by his air services people, trying to leave the impression that if they did not have this aircraft that somebody would have died in this Province. That is not true, Sir, that is not so.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: How does the honourable member know that?

MR. NEARY: I am sure of it. Most of the sick people that are brought into St. John's, Sir, are brought in by E.P.A. They probably brought in more than that themselves

EPA did, hauled them in. The helicopters brought them in to Deer Lake or Stephenville or Gander.

MR. ROBERTS: Ask how many trips the helicopter made from Gander Airport to the Gander River last year.

MR. NEARY: Well this is the kind of thing I want to find out. I want to find out how many trips the helicopters made down to the Gander Lodge, how many trips the helicopters made taking people off fishing? This is why I want to get the list of all the trips that this aircraft made. Sir, that is the only way we can get to the bottom of it. I cannot go down and sit down in Torbay all day long and see who is getting on board and getting off that aircraft. But I have been told, Mr. Chairman, that there are some strange looking characters getting aboard that aircraft and getting ashore down in Torbay, some odd looking characters. They tell me it is not big enough to get George McLean on board. He has to buy two seats with Air Canada; could not get him aboard.

MR. ROBERTS: What about the airplane being sent up to Gander just before the Hermitage Election to carry a Tory campaign group?

MR. NEARY: That is right. That is what we want to find out, Sir. Who paid for all the helicopters that were used down in the Hermitage By-election, Universal, was that tacked on to their bill?

MR. ROBERTS: Sure it was.

MR. NEARY: I would like to see if the bill were passed into the Tory Party or if it were tacked onto this contract that my friend here wants tabled. Is the minister going to table that contract?

MR. HICKEY: I will answer it.

MR. NEARY: When is it due to expire? When was the last time the helicopter people were asked to submit tenders? How long ago? Was it a year ago, two years ago? Who said this is the best price?

MR. HICKEY: We did.

MR. NEARY: He did.

MR. HICKEY: We did.

MR. NEARY: "We did." Are "we" the experts? Look, Mr. Chairman, we have before

the House now a bill, Bill no. 67, "An Act Respecting Tenders For Public Works. This is a great boast of the honourable and nasty member for St. John's East, always talking about calling public tenders. Well why not call public tenders for the helicopter service? They cannot do it? Why not? Try it. Put an advertisement in the papers and find out. He might be surprised. He might save the taxpayers of this province a few dollars. My honourable friend here is on to something, Sir. He is on to something. I would like for the minister to table that contract if there is indeed a contract. Or is it just an oral agreement they have with Universal?

This is the kind of information we want to get, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MORGAN: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: Sure, let the minister get up and give it to us. Never mind making vague general statements, give us the facts. I will sit down and give the minister a chance to answer the questions and answer the five questions, five plus two more that are coming from the member for Labrador South.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shall 1708-01 carry?

MR. MARTIN: I am still waiting for an answer from the minister.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, the lease on the helicopters is for a one-year period. There is one based at St. John's year round, for use of various departments of government, with priority given to air ambulance service where it is necessary. Two based at Gander for government service, again wherever necessary air ambulance service. One based at St. Alban's during the winter for air ambulance service and at Goose Bay for forest fire servicing during the summer. One based at Pasadena -

MR. ROBERTS: The aircraft now based at St. Alban's and Goose Bay in the summer, is that the idea?

MR. HICKEY: After the strip is paved. One based at Pasadena year round for use of various departments of government. Again as always with all aircraft, Mr. Chairman, priority given to air ambulance service. One based at Bishop Falls year round for the exclusive use of the Newfoundland and Labrador Power Commission.

Mr. Chairman, it should be pointed out that the King Air while

used by the Premier and ministers and the opposition when it is required, top priority is given to air ambulance again.

Mr. Chairman, it is rather difficult to fathom the thinking of the honourable gentlemen when he gets all upset about the use of the government aircraft or the use of this particular aircraft that he is referring to. Like I said before, Mr. Chairman, for an administration that instituted the service, saw the need for it, instituted it, used it, used it in many different ways, Mr. Chairman, used it in ways that this administration certainly has not used it for and we are well aware of this, Mr. Chairman, it is inconceivable why the big outcry. In his talks he refers to the Gander Lodge. Who set up the Gander Lodge, Mr. Chairman? This administration? Certainly not. What was it used for then? It was used for a much better purpose during this administration, from the time this administration has been in office. Industrialists and people who come here, they are the only people let go. I suppose it is not a crime for a minister. Let us say, for example, if it were the Minister of Industrial Development or the Premier or any other minister who is meeting with people from abroad, is there something wrong with them meeting at the Gander Lodge? After all it is a government institution. It was created by the former administration. Are we to tear it down? Are we to dispose of it?

MR. ROBERTS: It was not used by the former Premier.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, it is inconceivable. If some member of the public were saying this but who is telling us, who is complaining about this, Mr. Chairman? Some of the very gentlemen who were part and package of that administration that founded it, conceived the idea and developed it.

Mr. Chairman, again the honourable gentleman belabours the point about the log.

AN HON. MEMBER: About what?

MR. HICKEY: About the log for air services. I recall, Mr. Chairman, when I sat on that side of the House I wondered about some things as the honourable gentleman does. When you are over there you think that kind of

way. That is the name of the game. Try to get whatever information you can. Take your luck. Hope for the best. You know, hope you will hit something, Mr. Chairman, hope you will hit something to embarrass the government on. I can assure the honourable gentleman that he is dealing in the wrong quarters when he talks about the log for those aircraft. Let me assure him of that. As the minister responsible, I accept full responsibility, Mr. Chairman, for every single trip of any aircraft that is part of government air services and I stand here and defend every single minute that those aircrafts have flown.

I do not know, Mr. Chairman, what one can do any more than that. But, Mr. Chairman, I assure the honourable gentleman that he has been provided with more detail tonight than we were provided with in regard to the log that we asked for when we were over there. How come it was not tabled then?

AN HON. MEMBER: It was too embarrassing.

MR. HICKEY: It was too embarrassing.

MR. MARTIN: I would like to have one more try at it. Could the minister give us information as to what the contract rate is for a one-year lease? Or if it is more than a one-year lease, how long is the lease. What is the full contract rate? What date does the present lease expire? Will tenders be called for a new contract?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry, I believe this is possibly the first question that I have not had that detail on. I will attempt to determine the figure for the honourable gentleman. I can tell him that the lease is for a one-year period. I believe it is due to run out within a matter of some months, sometime this summer I believe. I have no reason to say that tenders will not be called. Certainly there would have to be one awfully good reason if they were not called. I have given the reason why they were not called in this particular instance and I assure the honourable gentleman while I acknowledge his comments and I think they were reasonable, with regards to the policy of this administration maybe Mr. Chairman, I should take a minute and explain to him that the awarding of contracts

without tender is not new or is not peculiar only to air services.

In my department we award contracts from time to time for road works, although we are very, very exact and very particular about calling a tender for even the smallest amount of work to be done on any given road or any project.

But, Mr. Chairman, if I can just explain. We extend contracts and all we did here with regards to the use of helicopters was to withstand a contract for another year because the price was very attractive, as well as the service was good, as well as the reputation in terms of the operations, in terms of the pilots, their familiarity with the province as a whole was such that it was felt in the best interest, both from an economical point of view as well as a service point of view, to extend that contract.

It is not like we took a company and just brought them in and said, "Here is a package for you," We extended it. They had serviced us before.

Now, Mr. Chairman, that is along the exact lines that we award contracts for road work. We will extend contracts and there was reference made in the Auditor General's Report, Mr. Chairman, I defend that policy and defend it strongly because to deviate from it would mean an expenditure of funds in any given year. I suppose it could total \$1 million or more. We get prices, Mr. Chairman, when we are able to extend a contract for road work which cannot under any circumstances be obtained if we were to call tenders. It is just unbelievable, the difference. We have sampled it. We have compared it and my deputy minister is here, who is one of the strong believers in this system. It is not a policy necessarily established by this administration. It is a policy which was developed over a period of time by the staff of my department, a well-developed policy and it is a very worthwhile one. It is for that reason, Mr. Chairman, and it is only this kind of situation wherein we award any contract for any work, be it air services or road work, without calling a public tender.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister would tell us how much this King aircraft cost the taxpayers of this province? What was the cost of it?

MR. HICKEY: What was the initial cost?

MR. NEARY: No. What was the total cost, buying that aircraft, that King Air?

MR. HICKEY: I do not have the exact figure, Mr. Chairman, I think it is something like \$700,000.

On motion 1708-01 through 1709-04, carried.

MR. NEARY: 1709-05 Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister if the Safety Council requested additional funds this year and if so why their request was not granted? This is an item, Sir, the Safety Council of Newfoundland, if they did ask for additional funds?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I have no specific request from the Safety Council for additional funds by ways of grant. I do recall a request which came to me as a result of the possibility of a LIP grant being discontinued. This administration, Mr. Chairman, has been most co-operative with the Safety Council. Last year it gave an additional-

MR. NEARY: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: It gave an additional \$2,500 to the Safety Council. It has involved itself in driver education. I know of no specific request at this time. We have, I think it is fair to say, the best programme of driver education, of attempting to make the highways more safe for the travelling public. I think it is fair to say it is the best programme that this province has seen.

On motion 1709-05, 1709-06, carried.

MR. NEARY: (1709-07) Mr. Chairman, we have to get a breakdown on this Silver Anniversary of Confederation. \$14,000, what is that all about?

MR. HICKEY: The minister knows all about it, Mr. Chairman, he attempts to get the final detail, the final detail so he can cross all the "i's" and dot all the "t's", being very co-operative with the honourable gentleman. Did the honourable gentleman not fix the sticker to his windshield when he got his licence?

MR. NEARY: Inaudible.

MR. HICKEY: He should, Mr. Chairman. Shame! Shame! Shame on him!

Shame!

Shame! A Silver Anniversary sticker -

MR. NEARY: Is that what it is for? \$14,000 for that?

MR. HICKEY: No! No! No! Hold on now! The honourable gentleman is rushing. There is an amount of money, Mr. Chairman, for those stickers, which are included with the stickers for the new licences. In other words you get two stickers. You get three stickers. One for the front of your car, one for the back and one for the Silver Anniversary. There, try and beat that! There is an amount of money included, Mr. Chairman, for the operation of a flat bed.

MR. NEARY: A what?

MR. HICKEY: A low bed, a vehicle which is a truck, a truck with a body which is flat.

MR. NEARY: How about a water bed?

MR. HICKEY: For certain exhibits. The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing I believe are developing a very practical, a very attractive exhibit and that is to be mounted on a flat bed then hauled here and there.

MR. NEARY: I suggest you get a big pothole and mount that and haul it around the province.

MR. HICKEY: If the honourable gentleman can get one large enough.

MR. NEARY: I can get one. Go down on the Cape Shore.

MR. HICKEY: I told him, Mr. Chairman, so many times that I am as co-operative and he knows it, as ever he has seen. Does that satisfy the honourable gentleman?

MR. NEARY: It does not satisfy me, Sir, but what can I do? The money is already spent, is it not?

MR. HICKEY: No. The flat bed has not been used yet.

MR. NEARY: Well what about the stickers, part of this \$14,000 is for stickers.

MR. HICKEY: If the honourable gentleman wants to reduce the vote, there is still time.

MR. NEARY: There is still time to reduce the vote? Well, Sir, I move Mr. Chairman, this vote of \$14,000, to haul a flat bed around this province. be reduced to \$1.00 -

MR. HICKEY:- What about the stickers?

MR. ROBERTS: Send the stickers back.

MR. NEARY: And that the savings be used to buy milk to pass around free to the school children of this province.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion is that 1709-07 be reduced from \$14,000 to \$1.00 and the money so saved -

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! Order please! I think while all honourable members can have a certain amount of levity with this and certainly the Chair is not adverse to having some as well, we now have to put the motion in serious form. The motion is that head 1709-07 be reduced from \$14,000 to \$1.00. Those in favour "aye." Those against "nay." The "nays" have it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On motion 1709-07, carried.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, there are only fifteen minutes left and perhaps we might call it eleven o'clock. I would just like to point out to the opposition before we do though, Mr. Chairman, before I rise the committee, words of sage advice to the opposition.

MR. ROBERTS: (Inaudible).

MR. MARSHALL: We can take the time off now.

We now have less than one hour per department left and I would hope that between now and Thursday that the honourable gentlemen on the other side could at last surprise us and organize themselves in such a manner that they can deal more effectively with the few more departments that are left and have to pass. With those wise words, Mr. Chairman, I ask that the committee rise, report progress.

On motion that the committee rise and report having passed certain items of expenditure within the Department of Transportation and Communications, all items, and ask leave to sit again, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

On motion report received and adopted.

On motion committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: This House stands adjourned until tomorrow Wednesday, May 8, 1974 at 3:00 P.M.