

PRELIMINARY

UNEDITED

TRANSCRIPT

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

FOR THE PERIOD:

3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 24, 1977

The House met at 3:00 P.M.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PRESENTING PETITIONS:

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today, Sir, indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour and a privilege for me to be able to present this petition on behalf of 2,400 citizens of this Province at large, no particular area, Sir, a petition signed by 2,400 voters of this Province over the age of eighteen years in support of the employees of the Waterford Hospital who are presently in dispute with the Treasury Board and with the provincial government.

Mr. Speaker, I will read the prayer of the petition. It is headed, Petition Of Support. "We, the undersigned, support the Waterford Hospital in their fight for a better pension plan, one comparable to the Firemen, Constabulary and Wardens, better working conditions and salaries." And then the signatures.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in presenting the petition I want to, first of all - we have heard congratulations going out from the Minister of Finance, from the President of the Treasury Board, congratulations going out to the various people who have volunteered their services so-called, and we find out they are getting paid and all kinds of fringe benefits. I want to now, Sir, take the opportunity to congratulate the employees, the workers, the members of NAPE who are on strike, for the way that they have behaved themselves during this dispute.

The strike now, Sir, is going on for approximately five weeks, and apart from one or two minor incidents here and there, Sir, I think that the workers have been well behaved and deserve the congratulations of members on either side of this House. They came in yesterday, Mr. Speaker, to see their Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROBERTS: He snuck up the back way.

MR. NEARY: They came in to see the Premier and their elected representatives. Last night, I think, fifty-three were arrested for

MR. NEARY:

loitering. And, Mr. Speaker -

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I must point out to the hon. gentleman that he is required to confine his remarks to the ~~material~~ allegation of the petition, not a general debate on issues which might well be related.

The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. NEARY: Well, Mr. Speaker, the people who signed this petition of course obviously feel very strongly that the workers at the Waterford Hospital should have a better pension plan. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, the member for Kilbride (Mr. Wells) last year presented a petition on behalf of the workers in at the Waterford. Unfortunately the hon. member for Kilbride (Mr. Wells) is not in his seat at the present time. But the member for Kilbride (Mr. Wells), Sir, who was always considered to be the champion of the working class people in this Province, up to recently, I would say, presented a petition, was asked and presented a petition, and the members on both sides of the House supported that petition, Mr. Speaker, for an improved pension plan, a restructured pension plan for the employees at the Waterford.

Then

Mr. Neary:

are told, Mr. Speaker, by the Minister of Finance, who admitted yesterday that there was a commitment in writing to the workers at the Waterford, and that obligation and that commitment, Sir, that promise has been broken.

So, Mr. Speaker, how could one do anything else but support the prayer of this petition, Sir. It is a legal strike. This House, Sir, gave these workers the right to go on strike; this House gave the workers the right to go on a legal strike and they are on a legal strike. And the Premier can have all of the second thoughts he wants about that, but it is the law of the land. These people have their rights, and they are trying to make a case. And I believe now, Mr. Speaker, the thing has dragged on long enough. And I think it is high time, Sir, that the Minister of Finance got down of his high horse, took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, and started to bargain with NAPE in good faith, with the Waterford workers in good faith, to try to resolve this dispute. It has dragged on long enough, and these people have suffered enough. So it gives me great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to support the prayer of this petition signed by these 2,400 people throughout this Province.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member from Conception Bay South.

MR. J. NOLAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the petition, and there may be others that may be coming on this, I do not know, and if there are others, by the way, and I am sure of that, on the same matter, then I will certainly withdraw, so I could speak to - I think, Mr. Speaker, if it is permissible, I do not want to speak twice on the item.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member from Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir.

MR. SIMMONS: Yes, we got our wires crossed, I was trying to signal to my friend here that I had the same heading, the same petition heading that the member from LaPoile (Mr. Neary) had just made reference to, and again another approximately 620 or

Mr. Simmons:

~~630 names~~ on the petitions that have been handed to me by some of the workers involved in the Waterford dispute. And as my friend from LaPoile has so well said, perhaps the first thing that needs to be said is that it is an honour to be able to present this petition which involves the very deep feelings and concerns of so many people, and which indirectly involves the feelings and concerns of literally the whole Province, because I am sure the entire Province is watching what is happening in this situation. It has a lot of implications, I need not have to tell the House.

The other point that the member from LaPoile so well made is the matter of restraint. I am very proud of those fellow Newfoundlanders who exercised such tremendous restraint under very difficult circumstances during the past five or six weeks. And I join with the member from LaPoile in saluting them for a tremendous display of contained disgust, I suppose, contained concern certainly for the set of circumstances in which they find themselves through no fault of their own.

Mr. Speaker, I had occasion once again to admire the gentleman from Green Bay (Mr. Peckford), as I so often had occasion to do in the past, when I walked down into the Lobby and saw him chatting with the Waterford people.

MR. WHITE: He was the only one of the crowd.

MR. SIMMONS: He has never been one to run away from a fight and I admired him yesterday. I overheard some of the things being said, and they were not always the things you want to hear, but he stood there like a man and took it, and I admire him for that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMONS: I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier would do this cause a great service if he would very simply go down and have a chat with those people, as his Minister of Energy had done

Mr. Simmons:

yesterday. The people are down there chanting for him, asking for him, and I believe that is the least the people of this Province can ask, that in times of real difficulty and frustration that their Premier go down and chat with them or hear what they have to say, he does not necessarily agree with them perhaps, but the least courtesy he could accord them is to hear what they want to say to him.

Mr. Speaker, one other suggestion in support of this petition: I believe the time has come for either the Premier or the President of Treasury Board not only to continue to answer questions during the Question Period but also to take an initiative and inform the House and the people of Newfoundland more fully what is going on, put it in perspective with a ministerial statement

Mr. Simmons.

tomorrow, or later this afternoon for that matter, a ministerial statement from the Premier or from the President of Treasury Board spelling out in full the situation to date as the government sees it, and the government's position on the matter. The issue is tending to get confused, and it would help all concerned if we had clearly, in some detail perhaps once and for all, the government's position. I know government will say it has been said in various ways on various occasions, and I do not deny that. What I am saying to government on this occasion on behalf of my colleagues is that what we have here is a very unusual set of circumstances, and the cause is not at all being helped by having it dragged out over such an extended period of time.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion it is my great privilege and pleasure and honour to support the 600 or so petitioners who have affixed their signatures here to this petition pledging their support to the Waterford Hospital in their fight for a better pension plan, and for better working conditions and salaries. I support the petition, and I ask that it be placed on the table of the House and referred to the appropriate department.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Conception Bay South.

MR. NOLAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the petition - is it the exact same one?

MR. SIMMONS: Yes, it is the same one.

MR. NOLAN: - so ably presented by the two hon. members earlier. This strike has now gone on long enough.

MR. ROBERTS: Hear, hear!

MR. NOLAN: It is time things were brought to a head, and it can be done only by men and women of good will. Now it is quite obvious to a number of people, Mr. Speaker, in referring to this

Mr. Nolan.

petition, that a gentleman for example in the government who in the past has associated himself very closely with labour disputes in this Province, the Minister of Manpower, has yet to address himself publicly, or otherwise that I know of, on this particular matter, and I think it is time that, with his negotiating skill, that he moved it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NOLAN: All members of government have certain particular strengths that others do not have. This is the way you have a balance in the House of Assembly and in the make-up of any government. And I suggest now, Mr. Speaker, that there are very uneasy feelings amongst the people who are presently on strike. They are now into their fifth week. There has been tremendous aggravation. It is all right to talk about the volunteers who went in there. We commend them. But do not think that I, for example, however good my intentions might be, can go into that institution tomorrow and serve those people well. The way to hell is paved with good intentions. I am not trained. I do not have the proper knowledge for psychiatric care. And these people obviously have that otherwise they would not have been hired in the first place. Now some of them have been there twenty-five and thirty years. Surely to God they have garnered enough experience and so on to know what they are talking about when they refer to the problems in that institution. Now I think that we on this side of the House have tried to be responsible in this matter. There have been those - I am sorry to say in the past, when there have been strike conditions in this Province, not too many of them are opposite now - who were always ballyragging, they were going to solve this and solve that. Now I am calling their bluff. Solve this strike now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NOLAN: Do not wait until someone is seriously injured and come in wringing your hands to save the poor people in there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NOLAN: I call upon the Premier of this Province to meet with those people downstairs. They are fellow Newfoundlanders.

PREMIER MOORES: Why?

MR. NOLAN: Why? Well, if for no other reason, perhaps they are voters. Did that ever occur to the hon. Premier?

PREMIER MOORES: No, I will send them to 'Doody' first.

MR. NOLAN: See them, talk to them. Surely that is not beyond the jurisdiction of the Premier of this Province. You can talk to people other than election time. Go down and meet with them. And the Minister of Health - I have never seen a minister in my life who has been so silent in a time of strife, in an area under his jurisdiction, and he said nothing.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I point out to the hon. gentleman that the allegation of the petition is with respect to improved pension and working conditions, and that remarks will have to be kept to that subject or very closely related to it.

The hon. member.

MR. NOLAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly respect and will abide obviously by your decision. I simply want to say that we support the prayer of this petition. We sympathize - anyone of us possibly could be on strike. I have helped form unions in my time, and I know what it is like and so have other members of this House. Now they are in a difficult position, and they need sympathetic and passionate consideration. I am not saying, not suggesting that everything they say is right, nor do many of them. But I think

Mr. Nolan.

now is the time. You have probably noticed, Mr. Speaker,  
I have not attempted in anyway to ballyrag the Minister of  
Finance.

MR. NOLAN: I believe he is taking it very seriously. We do not agree perhaps with many of the stands he has taken. But we do hope now that some way, some accommodation can be found to support the prayer of this petition, to get these people back to work. And I must also refer to the minister of Mines and Energy yesterday, who was down in the lobby and under difficult circumstances I think stood his ground, and he perhaps too might have liked to walk away or go out the back door, but the fact is he did not, and I compliment him for it.

MR. ROBERTS: Hear! Hear! Well said.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, the operative words in this petition as I have heard them are that the signators of this petition request better working conditions and salaries for the strikers.

MR. NEARY: Support it. Support it.

MR. J. CARTER: And I must say that this is a worthwhile and a worthy prayer. Twenty-three years ago, Mr. Speaker, I first went to work at that institution, and many of the people who are on the picket line are people who worked alongside me, or who I worked alongside of. They look rather older now; in fact they have aged rather faster than I have. It is not an easy place to work in.

The time I worked in there was the period when they introduced the new tranquilizers and so I was able to see the tremendous change wrought by these so-called wonder drugs. At that time the salary for a fortnight was \$95, the take home pay. It has increased a great deal since then, but I appreciate the difficulties that workers have in there and the frustrating type of work that it is, because although many patients are cured and improved and sent home, a great many of them never improve and it is the work you do today you have to repeat tomorrow.

MR. J. CARTER: Now unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, in this strike, I think myself as an onlooker, and I am only an onlooker in this matter, the bargainers for the union in my opinion have painted themselves into a corner, and I would like to see them become more flexible. I feel that there is a meeting ground somewhere along the line. So I would just like to say that I hope that fixed positions on both sides can become more flexible and I hope that there will be a quick settlement of this strike. And I would like to caution everyone connected with this strike not to try to make any political hay out of it because it is far too serious.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Windsor-Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the prayer of the petition so ably presented by both the hon. member for LaPoile and the hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir.

I too have had some involvements with strikes, but this strike again, going along with the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter), I am and I only pretend to be an onlooker in that sense as far as knowing the details. However, there are elements in this strike that must be more frustrating than in an ordinary strike.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have seen strikes where the only people affected were the people who were on strike. Nobody was coming in and doing their jobs. Their jobs were such that nobody had to do it. I recognize that in this particular case, in this particular strike, then obviously the service that was being rendered by the people who withdrew their services had to be replaced, I accept that and I think the strikers accept that.

But, however, it must only add to their frustration

MR. FLIGHT: to know that they have been on strike for five weeks and somebody else is maintaining the level, or some level of services. And looking down the road and having seen no more of - I do not know if there is a light at the end of the tunnel but there appears to be no end in sight for this strike. And the fact that their jobs are being done by somebody else, and they have no recourse in that sense, must be very, very frustrating, Mr. Speaker, and I agree with the gentleman who spoke before me, the time has come to end this strike. There must be a meeting ground. And it must be ended before we get into situations that this House and the Province will be sorry for.

Now I would like to echo my hon.

colleague from Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir that I too appreciate and congratulate the hon. Minister of Mines and Energy for his courage. It probably did not take courage as such, but certainly it could very easily have been avoided. He could very easily have avoided the people in that lobby yesterday. But he went in and he talked to them and he came in for some criticism but he stood there. And I recognize and appreciate his courage. And having recognized that, and having a great deal of respect for the abilities of the Minister of Manpower, I submit to the House that the present Minister of Manpower, Sir, outside

MR. FLIGHT:

of this Province has built an admirable record for his ability to cool it, to bring bodies together. And there have been very few strikes or very few labour problems in this Province since he has become minister that he did not very quickly get into and very quickly bring about some kind of an understanding. And he has got a reputation for that and I take my hat off to him. The question that remains is why this long, why five weeks, and as far as it would seem or appear that the Minister of Manpower has deliberately or otherwise avoided this particular issue. And I would suggest to the House and to the minister that it is time that he got involved and used those skills that it so readily conceded to him that he possesses. Mr. Speaker, I support the prayer of the petition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Bay of Islands.

MR. WOODROW: Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House of Assembly I stand to support this petition. I stand here because I am concerned about the people who are on strike and also because some of them have come to me and talked about it. I also, Mr. Speaker, supported the petition that was presented by the member for Kilbride (Mr. Wells) last year. Now I am not supporting it for any political reasons or any political gains because it is too serious a matter. Anybody who is supporting it for any political gains to my mind is not being honest and sincere about how serious this strike is.

MR. NEAPY: The member supported the petition last year.

MR. WOODROW: Now I feel, Mr. Speaker, that - and I say this and I am not only hoping for it but I know - that not only this strike but the many strikes in the Province, it must really take a lot out of the members of the administration, especially the hon. Minister of Finance, whom I feel has the burden on his shoulders. It is not an easy task. I am only actually a looker-on, as my hon. colleague from St. John's North (Mr. Carter) is and many others. But it is to my mind a serious matter. There are people over there in fact from my district, and I am not only interested in the people who are there from my district

MP. WOODROW:

but in the people who are there from all over the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Whilst I feel, I know, I hope, and not only hope but I know that the administration are doing their best but I hope and pray - and I also said I will pray - that this will be settled in the not too distant future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MP. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Trinity-Bay de Verde.

MR. ROWE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my support to the two petitions that have been presented to the House. And I think it is worth-while pointing out one thing, and that is this, that the signatures on those two petitions did not come from the workers, I understand, at the Waterford Hospital. They are signatures of support from the people of this Province at large.

MR. NEARY: That is right.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROWE: And there are over 3,000 people supporting the strikers at the Waterford Hospital, and they must realize the gravity of the situation or otherwise we would not have had these two petitions brought before the House here today.

MR. NEARY: There are more to come, by the way.

MR. ROWE: And, Sir, as the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) suggests, there are more petitions to come and I could quite easily see why.

Sir, it is pretty obvious to me that the whole situation is a stalemate at the present time. It is absolutely stalemated. We have a group of frustrated people demonstrating peacefully down in the lobby of the Confederation Building this afternoon. And with a situation where you have huge groups of people and they are frustrated you can quite easily have a mob situation. Now I would like to commend the demonstrators down in the lobby at the present time for acting very responsibly, injecting a little bit of humour into their protest and calling upon the Premier - the hon. Premier may know the song they are singing down there, "Oh where, oh where can Frankie be?" It

MR. ROWE:

is a little bit of humour but they are serious and they are sincere,  
Sir.

MR. SIMMONS: It makes the point.

MR. ROWE: And it makes the point. I would suggest that either the  
Premier go down and talk with these people

MR. ROWE: to at least show some respect for their demonstration and their feelings.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

I must point out to the hon. gentleman, as I have pointed out to other hon. members, that the prayer of the petition is all that hon. members may comment upon, and all that the rules will allow me to hear them on. As I understand it the prayer of the petition is for improved pension and improved working conditions. I would ask hon. members to stick to the allegation and to relate their remarks thereto.

The hon. the member for Trinity - Bay de Verde.

MR. ROWE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will abide by your ruling but - no but. I should not say but - one way I would suggest to improve the situation and try to improve the pension scheme for the Waterford Hospital workers, is for either the Premier - and probably my close friend the Minister of Manpower and Industrial Relations -

MR. ROBERTS: Both of them?

MR. ROWE: No, just that one gentleman, I think, alone. If he left the Chamber this afternoon, after the Question Period, and brought the parties together I think that within forty-eight hours we might see a settlement to this particular strike. So I would recommend very strongly that the Minister of Manpower and Industrial Relations get together, with his skills and his experience in this kind of situation, get the parties together and try to straighten this thing out once and for all.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. CANNING: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the petition and in so doing I will give our experience in the old Liberal Party we talk about so often.

Mr. Speaker, early in the period of the Liberal Party, annually, I do not remember how many years, but the

MR. CANNING: private members of the government, the backbenchers, visited that hospital, went through it, talked with the staff, saw the conditions, came back and reported to the government. That was our attitude toward the Waterford Hospital. At that time, of course, anybody who was around knew that conditions were pretty bad there. There were improvements made but anyway we kept in touch with them. I fully support the petition.

Yesterday evening going out I asked if there was anybody there from my district. I did not find them yesterday evening, but I found them coming in today. I talked to them for awhile. All I told them was that I hoped that justice would be done. I simply said, "Well, the best of luck to you, I hope there is justice done to your cause." There were at least thirty of them shouted out, "That is what we want, Sir. That is all we want." It is my candid opinion that that is what these people are down there for. They were pretty peaceful, they were looking for the Premier. Why the Premier did not go in and have a chat with them I do not know. They told us his car was moved, his chauffeur came, but they did not see him go out. So I told them there were only two ways for him to go out and they should have seen him go through one door or the other and they should have gone and talked to him.

I think the Premier should have talked to them yesterday evening. They were anything but a rough crowd. As somebody just said, they were humourous, They did not act like people who were going to gut out the place or cause a riot. They were like the people who tried to get into the House of Assembly a few years ago, the same type of people who are doing the tough work of this Province. I will add that I have visited that hospital where unfortunately people must go, and I can tell you, in my opinion, it is a tough job. They have it pretty tough. It is one of the hardest jobs, I suppose, in the Province. There must be special people to carry out the duties. It is not easy to deal with, or cope with people who are unfortunate enough to have

MR. CANNING: deranged minds, mentally affected. It must be terrible. I often wonder if the staff and the nurses and whatnot are picked. You have to be a special type of person to go into that hospital and do your duty and cope with the problems that you find there, the unfortunate problem that human beings are afflicted with.

I think if there is a group of workers in this Province who need consideration, and good working conditions, and decent wages, and whatever they are asking for - because in one voice, I think, they said to me that they want justice done to them. I think it is the responsibility of the government to see that justice is carried out.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. SMALLWOOD: Mr. Speaker, I am not very familiar with the precise nature of the demands of the union that is.

Mr. Smallwood.

on strike at the Waterford Hospital. I am not in a position to say anything as to the rightness or the wrongness, the correctness, the justice or otherwise of their demands. That matter is in the hands of the government and particularly in the hands of the Minister of Finance. Generally speaking I take a very poor view indeed of strikes in hospitals. I have always taken a very poor view of strikes in hospitals, or indeed in any part of the public service. I do not regard the people of Newfoundland as being an ordinary employer, and strikes against ordinary employers are one thing, strikes against the people of the Province, another thing again. And I do not believe that it is right to have strikes against the public service, in any part of the public service. However, there are two things I can say. These petitions do not, I understand - I have not read them, but as I have heard them described - they do not go into the details of the demands of the strikers in this particular strike. They just say that they favour, these citizens of ours, fellow Newfoundlanders in different parts of the Province who have sent these two petitions and who, I understand, are going to send a lot more, and a lot more people will sign them. What our fellow Newfoundlanders say is that they favour a better deal for the workers in Waterford Hospital. Well who does not? And I would assume that the government, being Newfoundlanders, would be eager for them to have better conditions as far as it is feasible and practical to do it. And that is sometimes a matter of the budget.

Sir, having said all that, I noticed - yesterday I came in through the main entrance of the building, and again today, and yesterday I left, and they were still down there, and I was moved, I have to confess. Coming in now I was deeply moved, and I must say I have a lot of sympathy for them. I am against strikes in hospitals. But these are 500 men and women,

Mr. Smallwood.

young and old and middle-aged, a lot of young girls , and they are on strike. Well how can we fail to be sympathetic?

MR. NEARY: It is a legal strike. This House passed the law.

MR. SMALLWOOD: Well, I am not - it is legal, I know it is legal. It is a pity that it is legal, but it is.

MR. NEARY: It was the House who -

MR. SMALLWOOD: This House passed the law making it legal to have strikes in hospitals. I regret that that was done. I do not believe in strikes in hospitals. But nevertheless this is a legal strike under the law of the land, the law made here in this very Chamber. And so they are legally on strike. It is regrettable that they are. It is deeply to be regretted that there is not a more civilized way of settling these disputes. It is just too bad that youngsters have to march around and sing. It is too bad. If I were the Premier, if he would take a word of advice - I am not trying to get his job on him. He does not need to be afraid of me in anyway - if I were the Premier now today I would do what I have done before. There have been other groups down there, other strikes, and some bad situations, and I went down and mixed among them, and they were delighted. I would be surprised if the Premier does not go down and meet with them. He is not going to be bullied into it. I do not believe anybody can scare him or bully him into going, but I believe he will go down and say, Hello I do not think he will usurp the position of the President of Treasury Board, whose job it is, or the job of the Minister of Industrial Relations. He will not go down and start negotiating. That is not his job. But to go down and say hello to a bunch of Newfoundlanders, I believe he will do it. He has done it before, and I believe he will do it again. He does not have to enter into the pros and cons of the matter. That is in the hands where it is, and were it ought to be.

Mr. Smallwood.

I am in very warm sympathy with these 500 fellow Newfoundlanders, as I suppose all Newfoundland is indeed. But that is without regard to the merits or demerits of their demands. I am not too familiar with that, but I am in sympathy with them. And as for the prayer of the petition, better conditions, who is going to say no to that?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. George's.

MRS. MACISAAC: Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise to support the petition presented on behalf of those workers. I feel that a strike is a bad thing

MPS. MACISAAC:

wherever it occurs but certainly in a hospital or in an institution such as this. I know that the people who are on strike are suffering because of it, but I also feel that the people who are in that institution are suffering. I do not think that regardless of who -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MRS. MACISAAC: I think that regardless of who goes into that institution as volunteers to do the work of the employees, regardless of whom they are, they are not trained to handle a situation such as this, and the patients in that institution must be suffering. I make two appeals today, one to the government, to the minister, the President of the Treasury Board, and to the Minister of Manpower, to get back to the bargaining table and try and settle this dispute with the workers. They have been out long enough and they have, from what I can understand, just cause to strike. I think that they have to get back to the bargaining table. I do not think that putting the Premier on the spot and asking him to go down and say hallo to these strikers, I do not think that is going to solve the problem at all. It would be nice, very nice, but that is not where the problem exists. I think you have got to get back to the bargaining table to get this thing straightened out.

I certainly think that we should not only think of the workers who are out on strike, but give a little consideration and a little bit of thought to the people who are in that institution who need special care. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Finance.

MR. DOODY: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to support the petitions that have been presented by hon. members opposite, I cannot help but begin by saying that the prayer of the petition, which asks for improved working conditions and an improved pension plan and salary improvements, have already been offered to the unit who are presently on strike at Waterford Hospital.

MP. NEARY: That is not so.

MR. DOODY: That position has been put forward. Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) says that is not so. One of us has got to be wrong. I contend that I am not wrong, that we have offered a full package of salary improvements. We are willing to discuss working conditions and improve them where we can, and a pension plan improvement in two different sections was outlined by me in some detail yesterday in this hon. House. The first pension plan improvement that we offered was for workers who are employed in at the Waterford prior to 1960, and there were various other conditions attached to that including a five year final average and so on. That was unacceptable to the unit. They refused to sit down and talk about that. We went back to them again and said, employees who were there prior to 1965 with a three year average and then there was a percentage of salary involvement which we offered and which the unit refused to sit down and discuss.

And, Sir, to suggest that we should get back to the bargaining table is to suggest the obvious. It is something that we have been trying to do desperately for the past five weeks to the extent of spending Saturdays and Sundays. Two or three Sundays ago, I think, I met with Mr. Locking and his group in here in this building and went over this whole thing. And the position up to that point and up to yesterday was completely inflexible. The unit wanted - I quote - "The Warden's pension plan". You give us the Warden's pension plan and then we will discuss all other conditions and all other areas of contention.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have to contend in all honesty and sincerity that that is not collective bargaining. When you are a responsible group of people in charge of

Mr. Doody:

a very, very sensitive institution, and you have a very serious responsibility, and you are given by a government after very serious consideration the right to strike, and that strike weapon should be used with extreme delicacy and as a last resort, -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DOODY: - not as a tool or a weapon of coercion, -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DOODY: - not used as a lever to take the greatest possible maximum advantage out of government because they have been given this opportunity, despite the fact as I said there are 400 people in that institution; and maybe the hon. member from Twillingate (Mr. Smallwood) is right, maybe this government was wrong in giving these people the right to strike.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DOODY: Maybe that was an error we made. Maybe we were wrong.

MR. NEARY: That is not the issue.

MR. DOODY: The issue right now, Sir, I am well aware of what the issue is; I am far closer to it than the hon. member is. I have spent far too many hours working at this thing, thinking about it, sleeping about it, or sleeping without it, walking the floors and dreaming about it, having phone calls at 4:00 o'clock in the morning of the most vicious, and obscene kind imaginable. You do not have to tell me the abuse that my family is taking on this, and my wife is taking on this, and my children have taken on this.

MR. NEARY: Nobody is forcing you to.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DOODY: I am not going to be - Mr. Speaker, will you please ask the hon. Larynx from LaPoile (Mr. Neary) to control himself.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman has the right to speak without interruption, and when he insists upon its observance that it must be observed.

MR. DOODY: Mr. Speaker, this government, this administration, and I on behalf of Treasury Board, have offered everything short of complete capitulation on that one issue. Up to yesterday we have said we will sit down and talk about everything, but nobody can sit down under the guns of an ultimatum and say we will discuss the other items that you are concerned with, but only on condition that you give us the warders' or the Constabulary pension plan.

Now let us not forget this one very crucial point in this issue, Mr. Speaker, and that is that the firemen and the policemen in this Province of ours do not have the right to strike. They have given up that right, and they have certain privileges. The people at Waterford have the right to strike, but they are also a very sensitive and a very important unit. And I think it incumbent upon them to act in a responsible and a sensible manner. Now up to yesterday, as I have said, there was absolutely no give at all, despite all the efforts of Treasury Board and government, despite all the efforts of the hon. Minister for Industrial Relations and Manpower, whose name has been mentioned here frequently today and I know he himself has been personally involved in this thing, and he, I am sure, will speak to this himself; he himself made personal overtures to union representatives in an attempt to reconcile the differences and he received the same response we did. Yesterday, as I told this hon. House, Mr. Locking came to my office with a letter in which he laid down some other conditions which he suggested might be the grounds for further discussion. These grounds are now under consideration by government.

But I will suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, and to everybody involved in this situation, that nothing is going to be gained by more public outcry, by more demonstrations, by more inflammatory speeches, The hardening of positions is the easiest thing in the world to get involved in. You can box people into corners from which they cannot get out of, you can force people into positions which are immovable,

Mr. Doody:

you can put people into positions in which they do not want to get involved in, and that, Sir, is what we have been trying to avoid. I have no more intention, Sir, of getting involved into public debate on this issue, because it has to be resolved at the bargaining table and the more quickly the unit returns to the bargaining table the more quickly we can get the thing resolved and there is nobody more anxious than I to do it, and that is why, Sir, I support the petitions that have been offered and presented to this hon. House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. J. ROUSSEAU: Mr. Speaker, some two weeks ago I met with the union, I did not make any announcement on it, I do not think there was any public information given on the meeting, I met with them for some two to three hours with Mr. Locking, with the President and with the executive and members of the negotiating team to see whether there was a way out of this impasse. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, when sides become hardened it is very difficult to find some common ground. And I wanted to see whether there was a possibility of putting together some package that both sides could accept, to get both sides back to the bargaining table for bargaining in good faith, and good faith bargaining, Mr. Speaker, is merely the

MR. ROUSSEAU: ability to give and take again, as I mentioned yesterday when I was speaking, where one side does some giving and one side does some taking and vice versa.

I am certainly prepared, from the indication that my colleague has, to convene a meeting between the unit and Treasury Board, but only the assumption that there is some leeway on both sides. The last position I received from the unit was that unless they got the pension they were not prepared to talk about anything else, and government's position was in the other corner. And if somebody is not prepared to negotiate, it is not much good of putting somebody in the middle of it. But if I have an indication from the unit and from Treasury Board that both sides wish to negotiate, certainly I would convene a preliminary meeting and probably be with them with senior officials in my department, or myself if necessary, to try and bring about some resolution to this dispute and I think, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Locking knows me well enough, that he knows, I would hope he knows as other labour leaders across this Province know, that when somebody wants to get to a bargaining table and somebody has something to talk about and to negotiate and if his position has changed since he last saw me, that a phone call would be sufficient. And I would certainly explore the situation again if I find that there is some room there for manoeuvring on both sides. And I am certainly prepared as I say to convene a meeting between both sides, and hopefully to bring about a resolution to this unfortunate dispute.

I do not think the 500 people who are out there they believe in what they are doing, obviously very strongly. There has to be some room for manoeuvring between both sides, and as I say, if I have an indication from the unit and from Treasury Board that they are prepared to accept my office, or my designate, to sit between them to convene a meeting and there is going to be some give and take

PREMIER MOORES: upon concurrence with Mr. Colbourne was the 4th. of December, referenced in a conversation to the selling at Christmas; his reference, I think he was as confused as I was in the paper, that it was probably Christmas, It was in fact actually the 4th. of December, the date involved, and I just wanted to get that clear. It is not a major issue but I just wanted to make it clear to the House.

MR. ROBERTS: I will not argue that one. I will give you that one.

PREMIER MOORES: I was not here yesterday.

MR. SIMMONS: Two days later.

MR. ROBERTS: A bit late.

PREMIER MOORES: Certainly the first opportunity is being here in the House, Mr. Speaker, I would hope.

MR. SPEAKER: I understand that the Premier has raised a point of privilege and in fact made it and -

PREMIER MOORES: I have made the point of privilege. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to -

MR. SPEAKER: - is now going on to speak to the petition.

MR. ROBERTS: That is really more important.

PREMIER MOORES: Much more important, Mr. Speaker. On the matter of the petition, first of all I do not think there is any member of this House -

MR. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I have to hear a point of order.

MR. SIMMONS: I believe it is a point of order, I am not certain. The Premier indicated a moment ago that he would rather it were a debate. We would we, and if he wants to seek the consent of the House, Mr. Speaker, we would be happy to give it.

PREMIER MOORES: That is not a point of order.

MR. SIMMONS: We are looking for a full debate on the Waterford situation.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The hon. Minister of Justice.

MR. HICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I submit that not only is that not a point of order, but that is a specious, frivolous, vexacious interjection in a serious debate.

MR. ROBERTS: No. No. No. No. No.

MR. SIMMONS: We want a debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! There is no point of order before the Chair. The hon. Premier is speaking to the petition.

PREMIER MOORES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, regarding the Waterford strike it is a pretty serious matter, particularly to those people who are on strike,

PREMIER MOORES:

much more so I would suggest than those who do not have to suffer the traumatic experience of being five weeks in protest of a belief and in fact not having incomes. These people are without question suffering more than any others. The fact is that people do go on strike because of principle. And in supporting better conditions for them at the Waterford Hospital, I also can say that I am very sympathetic to people who work in circumstances such as the employees of the Waterford. I am also sympathetic of people who work in other institutions or other ways of life that are not the normal everyday society.

Sir, I suggest that, as I heard when I came in and since I have been here, that the chant is for the people in the lobby, some fifty, sixty or whatever it is, strikers to meet with me, I suggest, Sir, that the reasoning behind that is to hope for a help towards the settlement of the strike as opposed to any other type of social gesture. Obviously that is what the objective of these people is. And I suggest, Sir, as much as I would like to be able to do that, that that is impossible when the procedure for settling strikes between union and management is such as it is at this time. I have always seen delegations in the past, executives of unions, executives of groups, and I will not change that position. I always will.

But the fact is, Sir, do in fact the people from Waterford have any more right to have that sort of interference, which is what it would be, than if there was a strike in the zinc mine in Daniel's Harbour and they do not have the same access. Do these people not also have the same right? But there are procedures, Sir, to handle the strike and the labour negotiations situation.

MR. NEARY: The Premier stepped into a couple before, less serious than this one is.

MR. HICKMAN: Order!

PREMIER MOORES: Mr. Speaker, the one thing is that the difficulty of interference, as I have just said, is the fact that that will be taken

PREMIER MOORES:

as part of the procedure as opposed to the correct procedure. Now as I understand it the Department of Labour have made their services available from several weeks ago, that Treasury Board in recent weeks have made two offers which in fact were not considered worthy of sitting down at the table. I understand Mr. Locking was in yesterday with a counteroffer for the first time in a considerable length of time and that is presently being studied by Treasury Board and hopefully they will be sitting down and - now that both sides have eventually started to move - sit down and work this out in the manner in which it should be worked out.

Sir, I suggest that no matter what we decide, or what we would like to do as individuals, I do not think there is any individual in this House who does not feel very personally sympathetic to a situation such as we are facing. But the one thing, Sir, that as long as this institution is here and as long as we are part of it, we cannot have anarchy dictating what government or procedures in our society, what they normally do. We cannot have -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Where is the anarchy?

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

PREMIER MOORES: We cannot have settlement, Mr. Speaker, by demand.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

I must point out to hon. members that when an hon. member is speaking there cannot be interference. There certainly cannot be the kind of course of interference and what certainly would have led up to quite acrimonious exchange and debate. The rules are quite specific on that and I must point it out to hon. members.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. ROBERTS: On a point of order. I was not one of those who was raising my voice in response to the Premier, but I certainly was tempted to, Sir, because my point of order is that the Premier is entering into the realm of debate. Well, Sir, I would like nothing better than to be able to debate the Waterford situation or the

MR. ROBERTS:

government's handling of it -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROBERTS: - but, Sir, we are speaking on a petition and I would say, Sir, that the Premier's statements, that certain matters and certain occurrences in his view constitute an approach towards the state of anarchy, are certainly debate, Sir. They are certainly matters of opinion and certainly matters which are subject to debate.

MR. SIMMONS: Shame! Shame! Withdraw.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I have not finished the point of order if the Premier would resume his seat for a moment, please. I submit Sir, the Premier should be asked to withdraw those statements and to confine himself to a statement of matters such as is in order on a debate on a petition. Now if the Premier would arrange - and Sir, it is in the Premier's hands - a

Mr. Roberts.

word from the Premier and this House this day will debate this matter. Sir, I would like nothing better.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Premier.

PREMIER MOORES: Mr. Speaker, to that point of order.

My reference to anarchy was in the context of in order to give the benefits to the people at the Waterford Hospital, as is outlined in this petition, the method to do it is not by demand of any individual to go down and meet with a group, unscheduled, unsolicited. There are procedures set up in the governmental process, through the Department of Labour, through the negotiating committees, that do that only too well. And that was my reference to anarchy, Sir, as opposed to - it should not be done on demand by a rule of emotion. It should be done by the rules - I was leading up to the rules of what the various departments and responsibilities we have are. So it was not, Sir, as I suggest, any reference to a state of anarchy.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. NEARY: To that point of order, Sir. I would submit, Sir, that the hon. Premier's counter argument to my hon. friend, the Leader of the Opposition, Sir, was just a matter of opinion. It really was completely irrelevant to the point of order. The hon. Premier obviously in his few remarks got carried away and got a part of his -

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. NEARY: - anatomy caught in the wringer.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. gentleman is recognized to speak to the point of order, and he must do that.

MR. NEARY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I agree with the point of order raised by my hon. friend that the Premier strayed somewhat

Mr. Neary.

from the prayer of the petition, and I think, Sir, that if the Premier is going to speak on it, he should be relevant and not make wild, irresponsible statements like he did a few moments ago.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

On the particular point of order raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the substance of it certainly was that there should be no debate on the petition. He interpreted the remarks of the hon. Premier as debate. The hon. Premier reinterpreted or gave his interpretation of what in fact he meant, and obviously there was a difference of opinion as to, you know, the precise meaning of those terms. What I think has to be emphasized is that there can be no debate. As hon. members know Standing Order 92 points out that apart from the statement of the parties and the number of signatures, all that may be spoken on is the material allegation in the petition. This particular Standing Order makes no reference to a discretion in the Chair. It would appear, however, that the Chair has sort of assumed it, and it has given a fairly generous interpretation to material allegation, and has given that generous interpretation to hon. gentlemen to my right and to my left. And I would think, understanding the seriousness of the matter and the number of members who have spoken and the interest therein, and the fact that hon. gentlemen both to my right and to my left have used this broad interpretation of material allegation, that that is quite appropriate and understandable. It does not, of course, relate to debate. And while the term 'material allegation' is capable in certain instances of a generous interpretation, and this is something which has been in today's particular instance acquiesced in by hon. members to my right and to my left, that does not permit debate. I think

MR. SPEAKER:

that is the substantial point to be made. So I will repeat that debate is not permitted and the fact that a broad interpretation of 'material allegation' is being used by hon. members on both sides does not mean that they may debate the matter.

The hon. Premier.

PREMIER MOORES: Mr. Speaker, I did not mean to - I think it is too important to have this sort of nit picking back and forth, and I apologize if in anyway I strayed from it, and I will try to stick with the facts. But what I say, Sir, the way to solve this strike is for both parties to sit down at the table. The way to support the prayer of this petition is for both sides to sit down at the table. There are many possibilities. The warders' pension, that the warders and the police, as it has been said have given up the right to strike. But you cannot even talk about that unless you have sat down to talk about it with both sides. Compulsory arbitration, like the police have, but in order to get that the police gave up the right to strike, and maybe

PREMIER MOORES: that is what we should be talking about. Maybe we should be talking about compulsory arbitration, binding arbitration, whichever is the word, binding or compulsory, the hon. member understands.

The fact is that that is the sort of thing probably we should be talking about. Maybe it is settleable in its present state. But, Sir, what I am really getting up to say is that there must be a better way. We have already met on two weekends, one weekend with the presidents of several labour unions in the Province towards a settlement of this dispute and what can be done, the President of Treasury Board and myself and others. And now it is not that we have not been concerned, we have been very involved. And we have been very involved because we are very concerned. And the fact is, Sir, as the hon. member for Twillingate (Mr. Smallwood) said, it is all very well to go down to talk to groups, but there is one thing I would ask him to remember, Sir, is when the Leader of the Opposition and himself and the member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) were in the government these people did not even have the right to be in the lobby, they did not have the right to strike anyway.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MR. SIMMONS: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: I have to hear the hon. gentleman on a point of order.

Order, please!

AN HON. MEMBER: This is ridiculous.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

PREMIER MOORES: It is true.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. ROBERTS: It is the Premier who is afraid.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the Premier only a moment ago made a great sanctimonious statement in the House, he was not going nit picking.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The hon. gentleman must -

MR. SIMMONS: It is a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. gentleman will permit me? The hon. gentleman is recognized to state the point of order, and in this I make these comments for all hon. members on both sides. There has been certainly too much of a tendency to take advantage of the opportunity of being recognized by the Chair on a point of order to get into extraneous matters and debate, and hon. members when they are recognized for the point of order must state specifically what the point of order is, and any supplemental material must relate to that point of order and the arguments that they think validate it. But not any personal references or other debate.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I was just preambuling what is my point of order, namely that the Premier, like all of us, must stay relevant even with the broad sphere that Mr. Speaker has allowed today. He is straying into debate very - I do not know about very deliberately but very decidedly, Mr. Speaker. He is getting in the area of debate and he is also getting into the area of irrelevant nit picking, which is not only out of order but according to his comments a few moments ago should be beneath the dignity of this House, and I would suggest to him, Mr. Speaker, that he practice what he preaches -

AN HON. MEMBER: On a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: I am already hearing one and I cannot hear two at a time.

MR. SIMMONS: I would suggest he practice what he preaches and at the same time be relevant and at the same time not get into debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Order, please! I do not see that there is any bona fide point of order before the House. There is certainly

MR. SPEAKER: a difference of opinion between hon. members and the rules do not allow me to permit them to debate it now, but I do not see any specific point of order.

As it is quite obvious, whenever -

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. LUNDRIGAN: Listen, boy.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! - when a discretion is given and is exercised, when a discretion is given as has been given now, because it appeared that that was the wish of both sides and that there was an acquiescence therein, so a discretion is given and the term "material allegation" is given a broader context than it usually is, the House runs the risk then of entering into debate, and that Standing Order 97 saying that there shall be no debate, that being undermined by a broad interpretation being given to Standing Order 92, and that is what has happened here. A broad interpretation has been given in this specific instance to Standing Order 92, That does not affect the continuing operation of Standing Order 97, and I think to be fair to hon. members on both sides, all I can say is this, that if Standing Order 97, which prohibits debate, does, in my opinion, continue to be infringed upon, I will call, as I am entitled to, and as much as I would regret doing it, but I think it would be my duty to do so, I will call the next order of routine business.

The hon. Premier.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Another point of order.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I believe since, then and this is a genuine point of order, Sir, I believe the Premier was straying somewhat from the prayer of the petition. I believe the Premier was being irrelevant, entering into the realm of debate, Sir.

MR. NEARY: The prayer of the petition calls for support of the employees at the Waterford Hospital in their fight to get a better pension plan and better working conditions. And to bring in red herring, Sir, such as whether or not the workers should have the right to strike, whether there is, you know - whether the government -

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Order, please! I have heard the hon. gentleman's point of order. As far as I can judge it is, although in different words, the same point of order as made by the hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Simmons),

MR. SPEAKER: and all I can say is very close to what I said before, The hon. gentleman is saying that by the Premier referring to the right to strike that this irrelevant. The right to strike was referred to by at least one other and perhaps several other hon. gentlemen in the House and -

MR. NEARY: I was not -

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Order, please! Order, please! I am not permitted, and it is not my intention, I am not permitted to enter into debate with the hon. member and he is not permitted to enter into debate with me as well. What I am pointing out is that the factors, areas covered by the Premier with respect to the right to strike and these related subjects, were to the best of my knowledge the object of comments by hon. gentlemen to my right, and -

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Now the Chair is in a position whereby it cannot, it is precluded by the rules of the House of entering into debate. It is also in the position that it cannot permit, not the individual but the institution of the House to be undermined by any hon. member who will insist on that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MR. SPEAKER: So I shall have to be, and will be, strict in that area and will fulfill my obligation in that area.

No debate is permitted. The area of material allegation has been broadened. Hon. members to both my right and left have been given a certain leeway in the broadening of that concept. I think if a kind of undue advantage is taken of that, and if then the House gets into debate, I shall have no choice but to call the next order of business. That is the second time I have said it and I do not intend to say it again.

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER MOORES: Mr. Speaker, I apologize if anything I have said has stimulated reaction, because I do think it is serious and I also, Sir, would like to say that I think the only way this particular dispute can be resolved so that the prayer of this petition is supported is for both sides to sit down at the table again.

Now whether there is a better way, and whether the strike itself is obsolete in some services, whether, as union leaders all across the nation say, that possibly there is another way out, that is something for this House to study at another time, but something I think that we very well could study as a non-partisan approach to what should be done in the way of labour in this Province.

But the fact is, Sir, what I suggest now, and what I appeal to Mr. Locking and his executive to do, is to meet as soon as possible, hopefully tomorrow, with the officials of Treasury Board, and let them get back at the table and see if this cannot be resolved in the normal way, even though emotions are high, in the normal way and with the normal conversations and bargaining that goes on at the table, but to get them back at the table and keep them at the table until reason and rationale and sympathy prevail, and I am sure that our people are only too anxious to do that.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Mount Pearl.

MR. N. WINDSOR: Mr. Speaker, I rise also to speak very briefly in support of this petition. I think perhaps that most of what needs to be said has been said by the hon. the Premier and hon. ministers and other hon. members. But, Sir, I would like to also express my concern. A great many of these striking workers from the Waterford Hospital are

MR. N. WINDSOR: residents of my district and have expressed their concerns to me, and I know that many of them, particularly those where both husband and wife are workers of that hospital, they are now undergoing great difficulties.

It has, Sir, dragged on for five weeks. It is most unfortunate. I think, Sir, there is room for concern for patients, with all due respect to the volunteers and the Police who are doing, I understand, a great service to these people, but I do not think you can replace the care of properly trained personnel.

Sir, I think there is room for compromise. I am sure there is in any strike condition situation. There always is room for compromise. I would hope, Sir, that the union executive and the Treasury Board officials can get back together, can sit down and hopefully come to a satisfactory solution, Sir, at the earliest possible date.

Sir, in closing I would like to say to the hon. member for St. George's (Mrs. MacIssac), and the hon. member for Twillingate (Mr. Smallwood) that I certainly appreciate it, Sir, the very non-partisan, the very sensible approach they took to this, Sir, and I compliment them for it. Thank you.

MR. SIMMONS: You were making a good speech.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker,

Mr. Roberts.

a number of members on both sides have spoken in this petition and much of what needs to be said has been said and so I will not repeat that. Even so, Sir, in speaking in support of the petition I think there are still some points which could usefully and relevantly be made, and I shall endeavour to do so.

First of all, Sir, let me say that the Premier asked rhetorically why the union would want to meet with him. I think the answer to that must quite simply be that the Premier, of course, is head of the administration and the administration are the group who may not be the employers of these people in law, but are the employers in fact. And we all know that no matter what the legal fictions may be, the reality of it is that the Treasury Board, Sir, and only the Treasury Board will dictate the settlement at least insofar as the employer is concerned. And so surely the most logical and proper thing for these people to do is to seek to meet with the Premier who is the head of the administration, the administration of which the Treasury Board is a part. I think they are right to do so. I regret that the Premier does not have either the wisdom or the courage to do it.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, when he spoke, made some reference to if only the union would act responsibly. Let it be said, Sir, that I for one - and I have not said a great deal publicly about this strike, although I have had a number of invitations to do so - I admire the way in which the strikers have conducted themselves. There have been one or two incidents. Of course, there have been. I assume there are some matters before the courts this afternoon growing out of the incidents here in the lobby of the building yesterday. But I think, Sir, they have conducted themselves admirably and I admire their determination. I think the whole Province admires their determination, Sir, even those, and there

Mr. Roberts.

may well be some, who do not agree with the cause in which these employees are striking, admire the quiet and determined way in which they have gone about conducting their strike.

Mr. Speaker, along those lines, too, and I have said this in the House in comment upon ministerial statements, I think the Minister of Finance early on in one or two of his statements, Sir, was unnecessarily provocative and inflammatory and I am very glad that he has no longer fallen into that trap, you know, if as I contend he earlier did.

Sir, the real issue in the strike - and the strike is a lawful one - the present administration made it so, and can hardly be heard now to complain about that. You know the Minister of Finance was close to complaining about it, but I mean the fact remains it is a perfectly lawful strike. It is not a breakdown of the collective bargaining process, Mr. Speaker. A strike is a normal and integral part of the collective bargaining process. If it cannot be settled by negotiation, it is settled by strike. And the strike in that sense, Sir, can hardly be considered to be anything other than what it is, the ultimate resolution, the ultimate peaceful and peaceable resolution in a bargaining process.

Now, Sir, I have every sympathy for the strikers at the Waterford, and I think the request of the prayer of the petition is a very sensible one and I support it. This is not the place to get into detailed comment. I wish we could and perhaps we will be allowed to in the debate. But, Sir, let me say that the issue in the strike, as I understand it now, is the pension plan in respect not of all the employees but in respect of approximately 300 employees, the men and the women

Mr. Roberts.

who are in contact with the more dangerous patients, and I think that is an accurate description. Now, Sir, I think that we in this Province should have every sympathy with these people. The issue of whether or not they can strike is a false one, because they strike lawfully because of the rights given them by this House at the request of the present administration. The fact remains, Sir, that we as a society ask these men and these women to be responsible for the care and for the protection, both from themselves and protecting us from the patients, of men and women whose mental illness is so great that they cannot be handled by any other institution, including in most cases the penitentiary. It is a fact, as I understand it, that when prisoners become impossible to be handled within the prison system, Sir, they are brought to Waterford and they are confined there, legally confined there, exactly as if they were in a jail, and the men and the women who must look out to them, Sir, must do so in conditions that the warders find beyond their capability. That being so, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me, both common justice

MR. ROBERTS: and right that these people should be given pay and pension benefits equal to those given to the warders. I think, Sir, that follows, I think it is as crystal clear as can be. I think, Sir, that the cause is just. I think the cause is right. I do not know the details. I do not know the details of the offers and I have no way to be privy to them.

But I think, Sir, if we as a society ask the men and the women who work in those wards at the Waterford Hospital to be responsible for the care of patients, to protect the patients from themselves and each other and to protect us from the patients, Sir, we have got to be prepared to compensate them on the same basis and in the same way as we are prepared to compensate the men who at the penitentiary - and I might add the penitentiary, Sir, is I guess a medium security institution at most. It is not a maximum security institution whereas many of the patients at Waterford are those who should be confined and can only be confined to a maximum security institution. If they are too dangerous to be looked after at the penitentiary we put them in the Waterford and I think that should be recognized, Sir.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the strike has gone on for five weeks. Neither side seems to have come a long way towards bargaining with the exception of whatever was in the offer that came yesterday. And I do not know what was in that offer. It has not been made public as yet.

Both sides dug themselves in early on, Sir, a danger which we attempted to point out, perhaps unavoidable in the circumstances but nonetheless a danger which has led to a very unsatisfactory state of affairs.

I wonder if the time has come to try to get both

MR. ROBERTS: parties back. The Clerk has reminded me, Mr. Speaker, that my five minutes has expired, but the Premier went well beyond five minutes, Sir, and I would ask by leave I might - the Premier went well beyond five minutes, and we did not object, nor should we have.

Mr. Speaker, the strike has gone on for five weeks, as I have said, and I wonder if the time has not come when we might see if we can find a way out of the fact that both sides have dug in. Until yesterday neither side seemed to have moved very far from their original positions. I do not like compulsory arbitration, and I even less like binding arbitration because it is not a solution, it is a breakdown of the bargaining process.

But I wonder, Sir, if perhaps the time has come for an independent enquiry into it. Let us settle for once and for all the issues as to exactly what can be done. All we are talking now is a relatively small amount of money. I am not suggesting the strike be postponed. These men and these women have stuck it out for five weeks of Winter. I think one could admire the determination and as long as they act within the law, and they are, then they should be certainly allowed and encouraged to carry on until they are satisfied.

I do not know if just getting the two parties together is going to work, as has been suggested, unless both parties are ready to bargain, and bargain means give and take. The union have apparently changed their position and are more amenable. I do not know whether the government have. I do not know whether there is any movement possible. But what about an independent enquiry, Mr. Speaker? What about a third party of some stature who could look at the situation and say, in an advisory way, I am not suggesting in a binding way, Yes, these men and women have a cause - which is what I believe - or alternately, No, they do not

MR. ROBERTS: have a cause. They should not get anything more than has been offered, which essentially is what the government have said up until at least today.

Mr. Speaker, that is not a binding solution, but in my view a binding solution is not an adequate one. It is a powerful force upon public opinion and in this strike, as in so many others, Sir, public opinion will be the final motivating force. The fact that the strikers have had such wide public support as is shown by 3,000 signatures affixed to the petition before the House, Sir, is surely evidence that they have a lot of support. It surely helped them to carry on, you know, to keep their morale up. They received a lot of support, and so has the hospital I guess with volunteers coming in, some of them being paid, others not, with the police in and so forth and so on.

But nobody will win the way it goes now. I think the Minister of Finance would agree with that. If there is any way to break the impasse, let us. The big question now is saving face, as so often in these cases. Perhaps an independent party of stature, who could quickly look at it, receive representations from both sides and say, "In my judgement, in my opinion, these men and these women do have a case and that case should be recognized."

I put that forward because I want to see it resolved, and also I say candidly because I think the strikers have a good case. I do not know whether you could go right up to the warders. Perhaps the problem came years ago when the warders' pension plan ought

MR. ROBERTS: to have been separated from the firemen and policemen's pension plan. That is something that was looked at when I was in the administration. The present minister of Justice, as I recall it, was in the Cabinet. We looked at it and for one reason or another we decided not to make the break then. Perhaps it should have been made. But it was not and it is not. But, Sir, the problem is that the Waterford Hospital is a hospital unlike any other in this province. This particular group of strikers surely have a claim unique, There is no other group in this province like it and I think, Sir, that that should be recognized. I support the petition, Mr. Speaker, and in so doing I hope that the discussion in support of it here in the House, not a debate, but the discussion that we have been allowed in support of it, Sir, under the rules will help to resolve it. I think it is much too important, I think it has gone on much too long. Nobody can win now. It is time we began thinking about the people of the province, patients at the hospital, instead of just the union and the government, the two sides, and a difficult and a long dispute.

NOTICES OF MOTION:

MR. SPEAKER: The minister of Finance.

MR. DOODY: I have a motion, Sir, relative to Supply. I hereby give notice Mr. Speaker that I will on tomorrow move that the Hon. House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider certain resolutions for the granting of Interim Supply to Her Majesty.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS:

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister for Rural and Industrial Development.

MR. LUNDRIGAN: Mr. Speaker, I have Question 164 by the member for LaPoile. Question 177, the member for LaPoile as well. Question 132 for the member for LaPoile. He must be writing a book himself. Question 133, the member for LaPoile.

ORAL QUESTIONS:

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

MR.ROBERTS: and grows out of the notice which he gave of Interim Supply a moment or so ago. An excellent editorial, by the way, in the Telegram. Excellent, excellent! In other words, I agree with it, Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us whether he has yet decided on the date on which he will present to the House his budget for the 1977-78 fiscal year, the year which will begin the first of next month?

MR.SPEAKER: The minister of Finance.

MR.DOODY: No, Mr. Speaker, regretfully I cannot give the date.

MR.SPEAKER: A supplementary.

MR.ROBERTS: I will not be long, 'Steve', it is just that I want to follow it through. Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us if he can give us any idea when he might be in a position to do it? We are now in a very unenviable position. I know the minister does not like the position he is in where he has to ask for Interim Supply, Supply on account without any indication of what the total expenditure will be. Can the minister tell us whether we might know within the next day or so when the budget will be presented?

MR.SPEAKER: Hon. Minister.

MR.DOODY: I do not think I will be in a position the next day or so, Sir, I would hope that I will be in a position early next week, but once again I cannot depend on that.

MR.SPEAKER: A final supplementary.

MR.ROBERTS: By way of , I hope, allowed preface, the practice in this House, Sir, has been to table the estimates at the same time as the Budget is tabled, even if they are too separate matters in parliamentary practice. There is no rule requiring it. In fact, in many legislatures, including particularly that in Ottawa, the estimates are tabled and the budget comes in at a different time altogether. In view of the fact that we will not have the budget until into the next financial year, by which point we already have been asked to and presumably will have in fact voted Interim Supply, is the minister prepared to table the estimates Sir, the estimates of expenditure as opposed to the revenue side with which the budget deals? Is the minister prepared to table the estimates and expenditure now, or as quickly as they can be printed

MR.ROBERTS: and then we will have the budget when he is able to present it. I realize the pressure is on him. I realize that it will take him a few days yet to prepare and to present a budget to the House.

MR.SPEAKER: The minister of Finance.

MR.DOODY: I would like to be able to follow the tradition of the House and table the budget and the estimates together. If conditions are such that that cannot be done then I will certainly consider the hon. Leader's suggestion. But at the present time our intention is to do both simultaneously.

MR.SPEAKER : The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR.NEARY: Mr. Speaker, would the minister of Mines and Energy care to straighten the House out on this very serious, these very serious charges that have been made by the hon. Mr. Gillespie, federal minister of mines, in connection with the next move being up to the province as far as exploration for gas and oil off Labrador is concerned, and the

MR. NEARY: stringent regulations that have been put forward by the province?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, I find myself in a very difficult position on this issue for a whole bunch of reasons which are not funny or humorous either. I do not quite understand the position that the minister in Ottawa is taking. The Federal Government and the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Resources are not aware of the nature of our regulations. The regulations are still being discussed with major oil and gas companies who come down to St. John's most times and sometimes our people go to Ottawa or some central location. We are still on that kind of discussion. We are fairly well along the road. So therefore because Mr. Gillespie is not aware of the regulations, I find it hard to understand how he can make a value judgement based on them. These discussions are still ongoing. The major consortium that has been doing exploration activity off our coast, Labrador Coast, have not indicated to us categorically one way or the other whether they will drill. So therefore I find it very difficult to understand the statements originating from Ottawa on yesterday. But that is what the status of it is right now.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary by the original questioner.

MR. NEARY: Is the minister aware that Mr. Gillespie made a statement that the Federal Government, the Government of Canada, were prepared to give some assurances to Eastcan in connection with Federal regulations but that the province would not budge - as a matter of fact the province had not made any recommendations at all? Is this a fact or, you know -

MR. PECKFORD: I do not know if the hon. member understood my previous answer. I do not know where the hon. minister in Ottawa is getting his information and I can only say that discussions, as

MR. PECKFORD: was in the previous debate a few minutes ago on a few petitions, important petitions, as was indicated when two sides are still sitting down across the table that means that there is flexibility on both sides. And if you want me to be more definitive that means that there is flexibility on our side and that we are being flexible and hopefully that is why all the companies are still discussing this major piece of legislation or regulation with them.

So I would have to say that Mr. Gillespie's statement relative to our not being flexible, us being inflexible, is not true from the information that I know and the way that we are conducting these ongoing negotiations with the companies.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary.

X  
MR. NEARY: Sir, would the minister tell the House if anybody in the government, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs or the minister himself, has been in touch with Mr. Gillespie over this situation because - Is the minister aware that Mr. Gillespie is saying that Eastcan cannot wait very much longer and instead of spending \$60 million off our coast this year they will be spending \$30 million? Would the minister enlighten the House? First of all, has anybody been in touch with him to try and straighten him out?

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MR. PECKFORD: Yes, I can answer the question relative to that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Gillespie has phoned me and has wired me and we had discussions on the phone and he subsequently telexed me, but they were not on matters concerning the oil and gas regulations primarily because we are into confidential negotiations between the Government of Newfoundland and the companies concerned. They are on other matters dealing with hydro development and so on. So I just do not understand it. The negotiations are ongoing, or discussions ongoing with the companies. I think in the last three

MR. PECKFORD: or four days we met with British Petroleum, AMACO and Mobil, for example, for the second or third time and we believe that progress is being made. We are still trying to keep to a very tight timetable and things from our point of view are going fairly well. We remain flexible and we indicate this to the companies and where we are at right now is at the very guts and detail of the regulations. The first couple of meetings obviously would be preliminary, as all such meetings are over major items like these, and now we are right into the guts of the situation. We feel optimistic that we are going to be able to meet the kinds

Mr. Peckford.

of deadlines that we have set for this Spring. And the federal government to my knowledge - Mr. Gillespie has not - only on hydro development and other matters that are common to both oil and gas pricing and so on - there is nothing written nor nothing in conversations on the telephone only public statements from Mr. Gillespie on our regulations.

MR. NEARY A final supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: A final supplementary. The hon. member for LaPoile and the the hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. NEARY: Do I understand the minister correctly then that this is not a jurisdictional dispute at the moment as Mr. Gillespie is indicating? The government are flexible. Would the minister tell the House, reassure the House, that the minister has not dug in and is waiting for a supreme court decision on jurisdiction, that this is not the case?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. PECKFORD: No, Mr. Speaker, that is not the case.

The jurisdictional dispute hangs over all of it, of course, but we are working together with the Federal Justice Department for joint reference on the jurisdictional dispute. But because there is a jurisdictional dispute that means that obviously Newfoundland must be maintaining ownership. And if it is maintaining that kind of jurisdiction then, therefore, it must concretely and tangibly show that. And one way in which we not only must do it in principle, but if we really feel about it at all, is to go ahead beyond the jurisdiction stage and say, Here are the regulations that will govern this kind of activity which is within our jurisdiction as we have been maintaining all along.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. STRACHAN: Is the guts of the issue that you are referring to, is this dealing with the exploitation side of the development, that is the permits and so on which will be given

MR. STRACHAN:

to them to develop the wells rather than the exploration?  
I mean is the guts of the issue in the exploitation permits?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. PECKFORD: That is a very difficult question. I do not want him to get into detail, and I am sure the hon. member is not trying to get me into detail on regulations that are not published. But I know it is difficult for him to ask questions, and not sort of come close on the periphery of getting into the very area that neither one of us want to get into. After saying that which means very little - the guts of the regulations surround both exploration and production. And I do not know - if you had the saw-off I suppose it would be sixty/fifty in favour of production perhaps, or if you want to talk about production the thing also - the revenue scale also as being part of that. But it is difficult to answer a question, Is production more important in the regulations than exploration? Both of them are pretty important so I would not want to come down hard on either one or the other.

MR. STRACHAN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, the hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. STRACHAN: I have asked <sup>M</sup>him a number of times. I would love to get into it. But could the minister indicate to us when we could see these regulations? Because I think it is fundamentally important these regulations for this Province and I would like to see these regulations made public so we can all discuss them rather than just the government and the companies.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, I really want to respond to that, and I could not agree with the hon. member more. I could not agree with him more. And we have said publicly - I have said publicly, and government, on behalf of government and everything else that we will make them public and give everybody a chance, also, to get their input into it. I am sure the hon. member realizes and recognizes - and the reason why his questions have been ninety-nine per cent fair on this whole issue since it has arisen in this session of the House - that we thought it advisable, and I am sure all members agree, that with such major regulations that it was incumbent upon us to sit down, in the first instance, with the companies who have a lot of experience, and with some consultants, who are doing work for us, to get some feeling as to where we were in relation to the companies, and then make them public and then get other public reaction.

In short, briefly, succinctly as I can, we are still hitting a timetable for making them public and even having them law before the end of May.

MR. STRACHAN: One final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I will recognize one further supplementary and then the hon. member for Port au Port.

MR. STRACHAN: Could you assure us in some way that these are preliminary discussions and that there is nothing being conceded in these discussions which the Province does not know anything about - there is nothing being conceded in these regulations?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. PECKFORD: All the negotiations are taken into account, all the concerns, details, big briefs, whatever, and there is nothing to be conceded in these regulations until everybody has had a chance to have a crack at them.

MR. SMALLWOOD: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, the hon. member for Twillingate.

MR. SMALLWOOD: Will the draft regulations when they are finally agreed, if they are, between the government and the company concerned. Will they be brought before the House and will they be subject to approval of the House?

MR. PECKFORD: The regulations are to be made under the existing legislation which is the Oil and Gas Act.

MR. SMALLWOOD: So they will merely be tabled the next session.

MR. PECKFORD: Yes but what we are hoping to do before that time is to have them out in white paper and give everybody a chance to discuss them. I am hoping that before the House closes that then I can table them also in the House.

MR. SMALLWOOD: On white paper first though?

MR. PECKFORD: Oh, yes. No question, no question! In the same way if anybody, Mr. Speaker, I might just be allowed the license to say, would read the latest speech from, I think, the head of Tech Corporation in which he lauded the Newfoundland Government for the way that they have gone about their revamping of their mineral legislation over the last couple of years in contrast to the way other provinces have - that we want to maintain that kind of reputation within this country and why in the mineral acreage tax I have tried to follow that in the last month and will continue to do so through these regulations.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Port au Port.

MR. HODDER: A question for the hon. the Minister of Education. Is the minister aware of any move by Canada Manpower to cut down on the manpower seats in the BTSD programme at the Bay St. George Community College?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Education.

MR. HOUSE: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of that specifically. I know that the Manpower Needs Committee have been discussing the matter of the BTSD training for several weeks now. I do not have anything specific on that particular area but I will try to find

MR. HOUSE: out some details on it.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary.

MR. HODDER: I have another question on the same topic of the BTSD programme. Is it the policy of his department to move some of the seats out of Stephenville and redistribute them around the province? This is a rumour that I have heard. I ask the minister to confirm or deny it.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Education.

MR. HOUSE: Well that is a rumour yet, as far as I am concerned, but I will check into it because as I just mentioned there are ongoing discussions about it now. Last year we did distribute some of the manpower seats around the province but we have not gone into that detail yet and I will have that information when it is available.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Bellevue followed by the hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Health a question that I ask him last year. Is it the intention of the Minister of Health or the administration to bring in legislation, in this present session of the House, to change the rules and regulations whereby many, many people throughout this province can be permitted to obtain birth certificates? As the legislation and the rules and regulations now stand older people cannot obtain birth certificates. Is there a plan to change the legislation?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Health.

MR. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and myself have had several discussions on this and I know the problem which he refers to, and it maybe with the others, but the whole thing is being looked at in the department, and within the Department of Justice, and hopefully we can find the proper solution to it.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for LaPoile followed by the hon. gentleman from Stephenville.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. the Premier, Sir. Would the hon. Premier inform the House if the Roman Corporation have had any luck with the British banks in getting a ninety day option on the oil refinery at Come by Chance?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Premier.

MR. MOORES: To my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, there is no ninety day option on the oil refinery by anyone at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary.

MR. NEARY: A supplementary question. Would the hon. the Premier also tell the House if the Roman Corporation have a crude oil credit contract with Iran or any other country that supplies oil?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Premier.

MR. MOORES: I know of no firm contract, Mr. Speaker. I might say that the Roman Corporation people were in to see us before going over to see the British Government. They outlined what was, in essence, the bare bones of a proposal as to the way they thought they would approach, hopefully, developing the Come by Chance Refinery. But there has been no specific contracts or obligations or undertakings to my knowledge by ourselves, if that stops the other questions that are coming. That is the answer.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary.

MR. NEARY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister tell the House whether or not the Roman Corporation have entered into an agreement with

MR. NEARY: an oil company called E-l-f, Elf, a French company to manage the oil refinery at Come By Chance?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER MOORES: I have no idea, Mr. Speaker, but I doubt if they have entered into a contract to manage the oil refinery when they do not have the rights to operate it.

MR. NEARY: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary.

MR. NEARY: Would the Premier tell the House then whether or not the Roman Corporation have found any Greek money to operate tankers, in connection with the oil refinery at Come By Chance?

PREMIER MOORES: The same answer, Sir.

MR. SMALLWOOD: The answer is no.

MR. SPEAKER: I recognize the hon. member for Bellevue for one supplementary, and then the hon. member for Stephenville.

MR. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Premier. Can the Premier indicate to the House at what point in time down the road he may be in a position to make some kind of a definitive statement regarding the future of the Come By Chance refinery.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER MOORES: I have no idea what point in time down the road, Mr. Speaker, but as soon as we get the proposal that is beneficial to the people of this Province we will be accepting it and announcing it.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Stephenville.

MR. MCNEIL: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Since Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation does not come under The Landlord Tenancies Act, do any rent increases by the Housing Corporation need Cabinet approval? And if so when did it receive its approval?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs Housing.

MR. DINN: No, it is just subject to the approval of the minister I believe.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, the hon. member for Stephenville.

MR. MCNEIL: A supplementary, I did not get the answer. I did not hear the answer.

MR. DINN: They send the application to the minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

MR. MCNEIL: A supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary.

MR. MCNEIL: In this case what recourse do the tenants have for any rent increases, if it is just in the minister's hands?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. DINN: If they are approved by the minister they can meet with the minister, as they have in Stephenville's case, and discuss it. But there is no recourse as I understand it.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for St. George's.

MRS. MACISAAC: A question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Could the minister tell the House if his department is taking any action, or looking into the fees charged by consultants, specifically on water and sewerage projects?

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

MR. DINN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are always reviewing the fees with consultants and it is a continuous progress.

MRS. MACISAAC: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary.

MRS. MACISAAC: Could the minister tell the House if there is any investigation going on right now into the water and sewerage project in St. George's, with respect to engineering fees, consultant fees, or contract claims?

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

MR. DINN: Mr. Speaker, yes there is a departmental investigation.

MRS. MACISAAC: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary.

MRS. MACISAAC: Could the minister tell the House if there has been any withholding of funds for the reconstruction of the road in St. George's, replacing of pavement?

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

MR. DINN: I will have to take that one as notice, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Windsor-Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. Would the Premier comment on the statements, both public statements, printed and verbal, that the refinery at Come By Chance is rusting to a point that the rusting and deterioration at this point would - it is gone to a point where it could adversely affect the eventual sale of that refinery?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Premier.

PREMIER MOORES: Mr. Speaker, that is news to me and it is news to the government. We have had no report to that effect whatsoever.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir, followed by the hon. member for LaPoile, and the hon. member for Bellevue.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Tourism, he is not around. Perhaps the Premier in the absence of the Minister of Finance, I had a question for the Minister of Finance, if he is within the hearing of my voice, although it is a question that I am sure the Premier may be familiar with I would think. A question to the Premier, in October 1975 the government, specifically Treasury Board, I believe, prepared a debt profile, I believe that was the first time it had been done. It was quite a volume and gave a fairly comprehensive profile of the government's debt position. I am wondering if such a document has been prepared since? That one document was prepared in October 1975 which is now, you know, a year and-a-half ago and would therefore not be completely up-to-date, has a document been prepared since such as that or is one in the stages of being prepared?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER MOORES: Mr. Speaker, as I assume the hon. member knows, prospectus in every bond issue is a pretty thorough document these days when you go to the financial market, prospectus of the Province itself. As far as

PREMIER MOORES:

the document he is referring to, whether that has been updated very recently. I will have to take notice of the question and ask the Minister of Finance to answer it.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. the Premier. Would the hon. the Premier tell the House what is happening now in connection with negotiations with the United States authorities in connection with the Northside of the Argentia Naval Base?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Premier.

PREMIER MOORES: Mr. Speaker, as the House knows the negotiations regarding the Northside have been very slow because of the tri-parted, three government's involvement in trying to get the thing sprung loose. I understand the end of this month, within a few days, representation will be going to Ottawa to meet with officials there to start formalizing and finalizing the eventual disposal of the property.

MR. NEARY: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary.

MR. NEARY: Is the Premier saying then that the United States authorities have turned the property back to the Government of Canada and it is only a matter now of working out the details with the Province?

PREMIER MOORES: I think it has reached the stage, Mr. Speaker, where negotiations are reaching the final stage and this is why we are going to Ottawa, to try to bring that into a finalized position. As soon as we come back we will gladly give the House a report. But I know the hon. member realizes how confused and complicated those negotiations have been at all levels, and all departments, because there have been many departments, MOT, External Affairs, many groups have been involved in these particular negotiations. I think finally it is getting down to where definitive steps can be taken.

MR. NEARY: A final supplementary, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary, the original questioner.

MR. NEARY: Would the Premier tell the House if this Province, the

MR. NEAPY:

government, have asked the United States authorities to put a freeze on demolition, on tearing down all the buildings on the Northside until the negotiations are complete?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Premier.

PREMIER MOORES: I will have to take notice of that, Mr. Speaker, I do not know that.

MR. FLIGHT: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary. The hon. gentleman for Windsor-Buchans and then I will recognize the hon. member for Bellevue followed by Conception Bay South time permitting.

MR. FLIGHT: Would the Premier indicate if the properties that the hon. member is referring to, the United States properties, is involved in the proposal that the Minister of Transportation has set forth with regards to rerouting the tractor-trailer trucks from Port aux Basques to Argentinia?

PREMIER MOORES: I do not think so, Mr. Speaker, no.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Forestry, has any consideration been given to changing or extending the dates during which cutting permits, the cutting of fire wood and so on, are being issued or will be issued. Right now I think the deadline is March 31. Is there any thought given to extending that or changing it?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Forestry.

MR. MAYNARD: No there is no thought in changing it at this time, Mr. Speaker. If the hon. gentleman can come up with some specific reason why, I would be willing to consider it.

MR. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker -

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary?

MR. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker, I am dissatisfied with the answer and I want to debate it on Peter Gzowski.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Conception Bay South.

MR. NOLAN: A question for the Minister of Transportation and Communications,

MR. NOLAN:

Mr. Speaker. In view of the current mail strike in this Province I am wondering if the minister is in a position, Mr. Speaker, to provide us with some information regarding motor registration. That is I understand the cutoff date that we all have to have licenses is about the twenty-eighth, I believe, of this month. And in view of the mail strike, and so on, licenses I would think and plates are tied up in the mail. What contingency plans or extensions, if any, does the minister have to cope with this current situation?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Transportation.

MR. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the three day old postal strike in St. John's is definitely going to have an effect on the registration of the motor vehicles around the Province and particularly the rural outport areas of the Province who have to mail their applications for licenses or registration. So I am watching the situation closely. I am hoping that the postal strike or wildcat strike, whatever it is, here in St. John's will be over tonight. But if not tomorrow we will have to make a decision with regards to the deadline, whether or not they are extending the deadline beyond March 31 or the possibility of arranging a means whereby a person can show evidence that they have made application by means of money order, etc. to using that as authority to operate a vehicle or drive their vehicle.

So pending on the outcome of the strike situation in St. John's, the postal strike this evening, tomorrow a definite decision will be made by the department as to what will be done with regards to the registration.

MR. NOLAN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: A supplementary. Original questioner.

MR. NOLAN: Just as a matter of clarification. Is the minister saying that there will be an announcement here in the House tomorrow on this situation?

MR. MORGAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the House will be informed tomorrow

MR. MORGAN:

afternoon or tomorrow morning whichever sitting we have what the decision is of the department.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. CANNING: Mr. Speaker, I have a question about questions to be directed at the Minister of Public Works.

MR. CANNING: Last year I presented several questions to the Minister of Public Works at that time. I did not get any replies, but the situation was that the minister was ill during most of the session. On Tuesday, February 8, of this session the questions appeared again on the Order Paper directed to the Minister of Public Works, and my question is, of course, do I expect an answer? Has anything been done on those questions? Does he have his officials looking up the statistics that I have asked for, or the information I have asked for? If so, when does he expect to have the answers come to the House?

MR. ROUSSEAU: Is the hon. member speaking about one particular question or all the questions that he has asked? There is more than one, is there?

MR. CANNING: All the questions I asked in relation to the Department of Public Works.

MR. ROUSSEAU: Yes, the officials are doing them and as soon as we get them - it looks like we are trying to answer all the questions for the hon. the member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary), but that is not the case. As they come to the minister's desk, of course, they are tabled.

MR. NEARY: You are only answering the easy ones.

MR. ROUSSEAU: I do not know. I know the hon. member asked one question about the civil servants, the names or the classifications and that, which is not in the Department of Public Works. The only possible way that could be done would be through the Department of Finance and those questions would then be forwarded to the appropriate departemnt. But as soon as the questions arrive on any minister's desk they are tabled in the House immediately. As soon as I have the answers to any one or all of the hon. member's questions, they certainly will be tabled in the House, yes.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER MOORES: I would like permission of the House, and I know it is late, I was not here, unfortunately, when the Ministerial Statements were given. It is regarding the seal hunt and an action, I think, that we as a House should take, and as a government. But I need the unanimous consent before I can say it.

MR. SPEAKER: Do hon. members agree?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Agreed.

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER MOORES: Mr. Speaker, I think most newspapers and most people feel very seriously about the fact that the seal hunt, even though it is reaching a conclusion, in preparation for next year and to offset the adverse publicity that is particularly happening internationally, the groundwork has to be started for it now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER MOORES: I have set up a group to bring together a programme covering all aspects of it and when I do get it I certainly, together with my colleagues and Opposition members, I will gladly pursue the approach that that should take.

But in the meantime, Sir, there has been, in the House of Representatives in the United States, a unanimous resolution passed condemning the seal hunt and I am sure that was done without the people of the U.S. House of Representatives realizing what ramifications and exactly what it is they were involved in.

On the strength of that I today wired the President, Mr. Carter, Senator Kennedy and the House Leaders of the two Houses and other relevant people, and I can table this or I can read it into the record or whatever the House -

MR. ROBERTS: If the Premier would read it into the record -

PREMIER MOORES: Okay!

PREMIER MOORES: "The purpose of this telegram is to express my concern and the concern of my government that the resolution approved by your House of Representatives condemning our seal hunt on the East Coast of Canada is based upon a totally inadequate understanding of the facts.

I would be grateful if you will arrange for this communication to be tabled in your House of Representatives and in the Senate.

I wish to place the following observations on the record so that the issues surrounding our seal hunt can be better understood.

It should be recognized that the seal hunt has a long history of tradition in this Province and that the great controversy surrounding the hunt has been perpetrated by individuals and groups whose intent is mischievous to say the least.

It is my intention to deal with the management of the resource, the economic importance, and the need for the hunt, and the method of killing.

One, on the question of management it should be noted that scientific advice is provided by internationally recognized experts in the fields of seal biology and population dynamics.

In undertaking an assessment of the resource, our scientists in Canada work very closely with their counterparts in Norway and Denmark. In addition, management advice has been sought from an independent committee which is composed of scientists, veterinarians, and various members of humane societies.

The total allowable catch for 1977 has been set 167,000 seals, in view of the fact that this level of harvesting will not damage present seal stocks. It is important that the seal stocks be kept within manageable size in relation to the fish resources upon which seals are dependent for food.

If the number of seals is allowed to increase with no killing, or without other constraints, then there

PREMIER MOORES: will be an imbalance in the eco-system between seals and fish.

You will appreciate that the fishing industry is extremely important to our Province, and that seals are a predator of fish.

Excessive international fishing efforts in our waters has severely depleted our fish stocks so that it is imperative that

Premier Moores.

seal stocks be kept at levels which will allow regeneration of fish stocks. (2) It is impossible to assess the importance of sealing in Newfoundland without also considering the social and economic conditions which exist in this Province. You must realize that our population is scattered over thousands of miles of heavily indented coastline. This resulted from the fact that people settled in those areas with the greatest access to the resources of the sea. From an economic standpoint our fishermen depend upon the freedom to engage in a number of different fishing activities in order to achieve an acceptable standard of living. Sealing is pursued at a time of year when it is virtually impossible for our fishermen to engage in other fishing activities. There are few alternative employment opportunities, particularly during the period of the seal hunt. The contribution of over \$2 million which the seal hunt makes to the Newfoundland economy is therefore more highly valued than the cold statistics would suggest. Indeed this contribution provides the necessary income supplement for more than 5,000 seal hunters

(3) There has been a great deal of controversy with respect to the question of killing methods and the main reason as well if the method of killing is humane and whether it brings a quick and painless death to the animal, with the absence of psychological stress or fear. A variety of methods have been tried and the most humane method which has been found for the killing of seal pups is clubbing with a wooden club. I am pleased to report that the Canadian seal hunt is now the best supervised and regulated animal killing operation in our society. This fact is acknowledged by reputable humane groups and societies in Canada. Seals are killed with clubs especially designed for this purpose and death is instantaneous. It is my firm conviction

PREMIER MOORES:

that the controversy which has arisen concerning the seal hunt has been deliberately created by self-interested groups. These groups are deliberately using the attractive physical appearance and the emotional appealing characteristics of the baby seal in their endeavour to arouse public sympathy and to finance their own pockets.

I am calling upon you to question the motives of those who are appealing to our emotional instincts in order to further their own material interests without giving due consideration to the slander thereby inflicted upon our fishermen, and indeed upon this Province. I am asking you to reconsider your resolution and I hope that this communication will enable you to weigh the issues concerning the seal hunt from a more balanced perspective."

Mr. Speaker, that was the telegram that has been sent to these various people.

MR. ROBERTS: They may hold that as collateral.

PREMIER MOORES: The balance of payment problem may be with us, Sir, but the telegram did go. And I did want to bring to the House's attention that the preparation for next year's controversy, if you like, I think we all have mutually together the responsibility to start to prepare now. But this particular even in the US, I did not feel it should go without being challenged, and that is why I restimulated the telegram.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Dr. Collins): Order, please!

If the hon. Leader of the Opposition will permit me -

MR. ROBERTS: Yes, of course.

MR. SPEAKER (Dr. Collins): - as it is five o'clock and according to Standing Order 31 I have to inform hon. members of the

Mr. Speaker (Dr. Collins):

matters to be debated on the adjournment. Three subjects have been received, and in order of their receipt the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) wishes to debate with the hon. Minister of Finance concerning the government's refusal to fund the pensions of its employees and set them under a trusteeship with contributions and benefits established on sound actuarial principles. The second one, the hon. member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan) wishes to debate with the Minister of Recreation and Rehabilitation with regard to the government's programme, or lack of it, surrounding the building of and financing of stadia throughout the Province. And the third one, also from the hon. member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan) debate with the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture concerning the issuance of cutting permits.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

X  
MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the Premier was making a ministerial statement that we, in effect, had reverted, and so I would like to make a comment or two on it. I want to begin by saying I think the statement was a very good one, and a very welcome one, and I think the Premier in acting as he has, has expressed the consensus of the members of this House, and I think of the people of this Province.

The Minister of Justice is eating. I do not know what it is they are giving out over there. They used to give out less solid nourishment on the other side. But what is it that the Minister of Justice is eating?

PREMIER MOORES: The only sweetness he is getting is cereal.

MR. ROBERTS: Well that could be, and there is more to come I can assure the Premier. What is the Minister of Justice eating? It must be toffee. He is speechless.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, in any event, to come back to the more important matter of the seal hunt. The Premier has done the right thing. I understand the member for Grand Falls - White Bay - Labrador in the House of Commons, Mr. William Rompkey, had already sent a similar message to the American authorities. I hope it went, among others, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, because it is very fine to send it to the President, Mr. Carter, very fine to send it to other people but it is the Speaker of the House of Representatives Mr. O'Neil, Mr. Thomas (Tep) O'Neil, from a gentleman from Massachusetts who is the Speaker of the House. And, of course, in the American Legislative setup, Mr. Speaker, the Speaker is in a far different position than the Speaker in our House. He does not preside as the impartial chairman, as our Speaker does, but instead he presides as the Chief Officer a combination, in a way, of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, an unusual and perhaps a very salutary combination.

Mr. Speaker, I did a little checking this morning when we got the news of this American Resolution because I was quite frankly shocked that the House of Representatives, which is a sovereign - Mr. Speaker, the noise around the House and outside of the House is even louder than normal. We are really going to have to do something. I can yell as loudly, Sir, as any member there is nothing wrong with my vocal chords, but it does not do anything, I would submit, for the dignity of the House to have to -

MR. SPEAKER (Dr. Collins): Order, please. Would the hon. members please give the hon. member the Leader of the Opposition the silence he wishes and I would ask the constable if he would make sure that those in the galleries and in the hallways similarly maintain silence.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. ROBERTS: Thank you, Sir, it is not the galleries, it is in the alleyways members of the House who do not realize - I am guilty of it on occasion - how loudly our voices carry from the lobbies behind each of the two sides of the House. The point is Mr. Speaker, that the

Mr. Roberts.

American House of Representatives is a body which we must take seriously. It is one co-equal part of their Congress, co-equal with their Senate. I was somewhat shocked to learn that a body of such stature had adopted this resolution. I did a little checking. I find in the American House of Representatives - their procedures of course are completely different from ours - they do not follow the parliamentary system. It is a different system. They have literally hundreds of these resolutions that go skating through in any given week or any given month.

MR. HICKMAN: With about five members sitting.

MR. ROBERTS: Well, my friend the Minister of Justice says about five members sitting, well that is not completely unknown to us or to other legislative bodies. But the fact remains that they pass resolutions very lightly. We often hear, for example, Mr. Speaker, items are put in the Congressional Record as if some of that were sacred. Well, any member of Congress, and there are 535, has the right to insert material in the Congressional Record which on some days looks like that, about six feet thick. You know, they avail of anything, not as our Hansards are, what is said in the House, or material that is tabled in the House, but you can go up to the printing office and you can run in a speech or anything else you want.

MR. HICKMAN: There is some merit in that.

MR. ROBERTS: Well, my friend from Grand Bank says there is some merit in it and I agree, certainly in respect of some of his speeches, if we could just take as read we would be okay.

But, Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that no matter how carelessly it was done, and I am sure that this resolution that was adopted by the American House of Representatives in a careless way without any study of the issue, without any realization of what was involved, some member put it on the Order Paper, it was adopted by a voice vote without debate and I understand several others were adopted at the same time, it is still something that we have to take seriously. To me, Sir, it shows again the need for the Government of this Province, and the Government of Canada to reach out to, carry outside of this country the campaign

MR.ROBERTS: against those who would campaign unfairly and I believe viciously against the seal hunt. So let me make a suggestion. The province is always ready to send people all around the world on missions, some of them, in my view, not so useful as they ought to be. Let us send a delegation, let us send word first to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Congressman O'Neil to ask if a delegation from this House will be allowed to appear before the American House of Representatives or before a committee thereof - to appear before the House is a great honour. The Prime Minister of Canada was there recently and made a magnificent speech, the President of Mexico was there a little earlier on - but before a committee of the House to tell them the truth about this, to get some attention and to ask their House, in fact, to rescind that resolution. I do not believe they had any business passing it anyway. It is the internal business of Canada, what goes on inside our 200 mile limit. We must have, in the words of the American Constitution, a decent respect for public opinion. Let us ask them if they will receive a delegation from this House. If they agree to do it Sir, then let us get a delegation representing both parties in this House. Perhaps the Premier, and myself, perhaps other hon. members, a delegation representing the feeling of this House, let us go down to Washington, let us tell the American Congress the truth about the seal hunt

MR. ROBERTS:

the truth about the seal hunt. Let us tell them what it means, that it is not cruel or inhumane. And let us ask them, Sir, to set straight this action they have taken. I believe they have taken carelessly, almost negligently, I am sure without debate or without thought, and let us ask them, Sir, to remove this resolution or rescind it, because I believe, Sir, that as it now stands it is a blot upon the name of Newfoundland and Labrador and a blot upon the name of Canada, and I do not think we deserve and I do not think we should put up with it. So I make that suggestion, Sir. The Premier has done the right thing. He has taken a positive step. Good! But it is not enough, Sir. I think we can go the step further and let us send word off. Perhaps the House could send word off to the Speaker of the House there asking would he receive a delegation, would it be permitted to appear before the appropriate committee of the Congress to make our position known and to ask them to take the action that I believe is appropriate. I think that, Sir, is a positive suggestion. I put it forth in the hope it will be acted upon. X

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

.....  
MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

X MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 23 I ask leave to move the adjournment of the House to debate a matter of urgent public importance and I ask this, Sir, in the light of developments within the past twenty-four hours with respect to the strike at the Waterford Hospital. The matter I wish to debate is the imperative need to take positive and appropriate steps to resolve the strike in an equitable manner.

Your Honour, I have a written statement. I fear it is in my handwriting which is certainly not very good. As Your Honour is aware, the rule now requires Your Honour to decide whether the matter is first of all urgent in debate. It is not the urgency of the matter, it is the urgency of its debate. And if it is so found by Your Honour then Your Honour is required by the rules to put it to the House and

MR. ROBERTS:

if twelve members stand then the debate goes on in the normal way.

Your Honour, simply in support and very briefly, I think it is urgent in debate. The Throne Speech will not be called today. There will be no opportunity to debate this matter in the House today, Sir. It is obvious in the light of the fact that there have been grave matters, there have been arrests of some fifty people. In light of the discussions here in the House today, the matter is urgent in debate. It is urgent in itself, Sir, but there is great urgency of debate and so I ask leave to adjourn the House to discuss this matter.

MR. HICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, if I may comment very briefly on that.

The hon. gentlemen are aware that we today in this House spent very profitably, I would suggest, well nigh on one hour and thirty minutes, true, not in debate because the rules preclude debate, but most assuredly commenting very incisively upon matters dealing with the continuous strike at Waterford. And I also direct Your Honour's attention to what is also a fact, that for the last five weeks almost daily there have been during the Oral Question Period a great deal of discussion and information and an admonition that words be chosen carefully in answering questions, more carefully than in debate so as not to provoke any untoward events with respect to that strike. I do submit that the urgency of debate has not been made out in this case.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, if I might for a brief moment. The government House Leader, Sir, in my opinion, has not submitted anything that is relevant to the urgency of debate. Sir, he has simply said that it has been discussed in a petition - and so it has been - and that the matter has been discussed, the subject of questions and answers in any number of Question Periods in the last few days. That simply shows, Sir, the importance of the matter. It shows, Sir, there has been no debate on the matter in this House. It cannot be debated this day because the government are not going to call the Throne Speech. They are going to call debate on legislation. And I submit, Sir, in light of the events of the recent twenty-four hours there is need for

MR. ROBERTS:

urgency of debate, Sir. This entire incident has taken a very different turn within the past twenty-four hours. On one hand we have had the administrator of the hospital, Mr. Burnell, cited for contempt of court, and on the other hand, Sir, we have had approximately fifty of the striking workers arrested and I believe they are facing charges under the Criminal Code of loitering in a public place. I submit there is urgency of debate, Sir, and accordingly I submit Your Honour should give leave.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (DR. COLLINS): Order, please! As the hon. Leader of the Opposition has pointed out under Rule 23, the request he has made is in order, and the Chair must determine whether it is a matter of public urgency, whether it has been raised as an urgent matter that needs debate. I have to rule that as far as the Chair is concerned the Address in Reply is still before the House. There is no indication to the Chair as to what business will be called next, and it is therefore within the opportunity of the House to call the Address in Reply, or at least it is the government's opportunity to call the Address in Reply. I have no indication that they will or they will not, and in that circumstance I would rule that the possibility to debate this matter could come before the House -

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I am not challenging Your Honour's ruling, but has Your Honour taken into account the fact that the business of the Address in Reply is a particular sub-amendment on a very narrow point indeed and of course the only debate which would be relevant would be on the sub-amendment. As I recall the sub-amendment relates to certain political contributions and with respect thereto. I do not challenge Your Honour's ruling, but Your Honour has not completed the ruling and I wonder if Your Honour has taken that particular point into account, that the Address in Reply debate at this point is a very narrow debate indeed, because of the sub-amendment which is before the House.

MR. SPEAKER (DR. COLLINS): I was still addressing the House. I would point out that until the Speaker has completed his remarks it is out of order to interrupt and I would request hon. members would in future wait until the Speaker has completed his remarks and then of course further comment can be raised with permission.

MR. SPEAKER (DR. COLLINS): However, clearly the Chair cannot ignore what has been heard in the House, and before completing my remarks I think it would be wise for me to consult in more detail with those who can advise the Chair, and for that purpose I will call a brief adjournment.

MR. NEARY: Has Your Honour adjourned the House?

MR. SPEAKER (DR. COLLINS): Just for a few minutes.

MR. SPEAKER(DR. COLLINS): Order, please! In considering this matter there were a number of points to be considered, one of which I did mention before at leaving the Chair briefly and that is whether this matter could be - if it was possible to debate the matter under a procedure already before the House. Having looked into that situation, there is some doubt that that could be done under the matter precisely before the House.

Now going on to a second point - and I need not go into this in great detail but I will just mention that the matter under this particular ruling must be an urgent matter and also there must be an urgency of debate. I do not think there is any doubt whatsoever that it is an urgent matter, a matter of public urgency. So one therefore must consider whether it is urgent that the debate be held at this time. The motion before the Chair is that in light of developments in the past twenty-four hours call forth an urgency of debate. In the Chair's view the events in the past twenty-four hours have been part of a continuing situation which has been present for approximately a month, or somewhat longer than a month. They maybe of somewhat different kind than other happenings during this whole situation. They may have been somewhat different but they are not necessarily different in total nature, and that they do comprise part of the urgent situation which has been present for all that period of time.

Therefore the ruling of the Chair is that there does not appear to be urgency of debate and that the matter therefore cannot be ruled in order.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I move that the regular orders of business of the day be postponed to debate a matter of urgent public importance namely, Sir, the postal strike and the devastating effect it is having on families in this province who cannot get

MR. NEARY: their cheques delivered and to determine what the province can do, if anything, to help the postal authorities to get cheques delivered to widows, unemployed, veterans, old age pensioners and so on at an early date as possible. I realize that the post office, Sir, is federal jurisdiction but the main point of my motion, and I would submit to Your Honour that there is urgency of debate here, is to get the province involved in helping - with the army of public servants including welfare officers and so forth that they have all over this province -

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

Mr. Neary.

all over this Province -

MR. SPEAKER (Dr. Collins): Order, please!

I have to call to the hon. member's attention another part of Standing Order 23 that is subsection (f) which reads as follows: "The right to move the adjournment of the House for the above purposes - that is the purpose to adjourn on a matter of public urgency - is subject to the following restrictions: (1) Not more than one such motion can be made at the same sitting." Therefore, I do rule the hon. member out of order.

It now being 5:30 P.M., the hon. member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) wishes to debate the following matter, the government's refusal to fund the pensions of its employees and setting them up on a trusteeship with contributions and benefits established on sound actuarial principles.

The hon. member for LaPoile.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, the reason I was not satisfied with the response of the Minister of Finance to my question on Monday concerning employees pension is that I have a very firm impression, Sir, that a great deal of the trouble we have now, and will have in the future in dealing with employees, arises from their just apprehensions and concern over their post employment security. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, in the past, pensions, especially in the government service for the rank and file employee, have grown like topsy out of grudging, short-sighted, actuarially unsound responses to employee demands. It is high time, Mr. Speaker, that this House took a look at the total pension picture in this Province to see what the alternatives are in providing an actuarially sound and properly funded and controlled pension plan not only for those, Sir, dependent directly and indirectly on the public treasury

Mr. Nearv.

but also for those who are pinning their faith on employee plans in the private sector and on the just expectations of those who have no pensions coming to them at all, apart from the universal old age pension and possible participation in the Canada Pension Plan.

Mr. Speaker, Canada's pension system is considered the worst among industrial countries in terms of the extent of coverage and final pensions paid. One quarter of our old age pensioners live below the poverty line and only forty per cent of our paid labour force are members of private pension plans. But, Mr. Speaker, even those covered by pension plans may well face poverty upon retirement for usually, Sir, the benefits are only a fraction of the salary received in the last days of employment. And, Mr. Speaker, as only a handful of pension plans are indexed to the cost of living, the amount received by people diminishes progressively.

Mr. Speaker, I feel, and I am certain that the great majority of the ordinary people of this Province feel with me, that our government has a direct responsibility to get its feet wet in the business of developing pension plans suitable and actuarially sound for both the private sector and the public sector of our economy. Mr. Speaker, there is no time to be lost. The Minister of Finance should assume the responsibility for setting in motion the machinery to provide a pension plan at least adequate to our needs, and responsive to the demands of our people. Unless, Mr. Speaker, this is done, we shall have nothing but turmoil in labour relations in the years ahead.

MR. SPEAKER (Dr. Collins): The hon. member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan) wishes to debate the government's programme or lack of its surrounding the building of and financing of stadia throughout the Province.

MR. SPEAKER (Dr. Collins): The hon. member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, some hon. members may remember that I brought this topic up last year, and at that time I asked three questions and I asked them again today regarding the building of stadia throughout this Province. And these three questions which I asked last year and which I will be asking in just a moment again, they raise the larger question pertaining not only to the building of stadia

MR. CALLAN:

but to the emphasis or lack of it that the government is placing on the Department of Recreation, or on Recreation and Rehabilitation as well in this Province. Mr. Speaker, if I might go back to 1972, on January 18 the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) I think it is, the man who is commonly referred to and affectionately referred to as a big overgrown galoot, he was named Minister of Education and Youth at that time. That was on January 18 in 1972. I remember quite well when that gentleman was minister because at that time I was the president of the Trinity-Placentia Stadium Commission. I held that office for five and a half years as a matter of fact until that stadium was finally completed last Fall. I resigned a year after I had become a member of this House.

I remember one occasion when we met with that minister and I suppose because the road conditions, and the Trans-Canada not being completed and so on way back in 1972, that the hon. minister arrived one morning in helicopter and landed on one of the fields there in Whitbourne to hold a meeting with us. So the situation has not changed. The helicopters are still being used today as they were then, as taxicabs so to speak.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CALLAN: That was on January 18. On December 1 of 1972, about eleven months later, another minister was named to that portfolio, and then on April 23, 1973, approximately four months later another minister was named to that portfolio. Then on May 2, 1973, which would be less than two weeks later, 1973, another minister was named to the portfolio. How many ministers we had there is quite obvious from the facts and the figures that I am giving.

Mr. Speaker, the three questions that I asked last year and that I asked again now are these - by the way, in answering the questions last year the minister who answered, who responded, in the place of the acting minister, who was not here at the time, the Minister of Rural Development in answering my question last year said - and this is the only sensible thing that he said, I believe -

MR. CALLAN:

he said, "I think-referring to me - I think he has presented a very good case today. I think he is on the verge of going to law school if he has not already been there."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciated that comment from the member. But the other comments I did not appreciate because they did not contain much in answer to my questions. The questions were these: Is the government going to be consistent in its stadium building programme? We have heard promises at political rallies and elsewhere of stadiums that were supposed to be built and have not yet been built. We had budgets, two successive budgets which named nine areas of the Province and some stadiums have been built in spite of government through the efforts of the local people, and of course others, where the nine areas were not named at all, other stadiums have been promised and are being built.

The second question I want to ask, Mr. Speaker, is, Are statements or promises made by individual ministers outside of the House to be considered a commitment of government? That happened back in 1975. The Premier made the promise in Placentia and the former Tom Doyle made the pledge in Ferryland.

MR. ROBERTS: Former minister.

MR. CALLAN: Former minister.

AN HON. MEMBER: There is only one Tom.

MR. CALLAN: No, he is Thomas now.

MR. MURPHY: There is only one Tom Doyle.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CALLAN: The third question, Mr. Speaker, which I will repeat: Is it necessary for government to carry out projects for political reasons rather than for priority and of course have a sensible and reasonable approach to the building of stadiums. Now, Mr. Speaker, last year I asked the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the former minister who is now Minister of Mines and Energy, I asked him about the building

MR. CALLAN:

of the stadia and so on. And in his answer the Minister of Municipal Affairs said the whole stadium policy is one that has been developed by the Department of Recreation and Rehabilitation rather than the Department of Municipal Affairs. Well,

MR. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is this, - as a matter of fact I know that the minister was wrong. My question is how come that Whitbourne Stadium and the stadium at Mount Pearl and others are hung up because they cannot get satisfaction from the Department of Municipal Affairs - it is handled by the Department of Recreation?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Recreation and Rehabilitation.

MR. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, if there is one singular programme which this government has every right to be proud of it is the recreational programme which has been introduced since this government came in office. Mr. Speaker, I do not have the figures with me now because I was not aware of the fact that this was going to be debated, but I can bring the figures in here to show that in the past five or six years there has been more money spent on recreation in Newfoundland than in any other province in Canada or any other State in the Union - more was spent than ever was spent in Newfoundland than all the years of its history.

But, Mr. Speaker, if I wanted to talk about stadiums we can go around the Island to the stadium - the hon. gentleman asked a question a few days ago about the operation of stadiums. The stadium in Port aux Basques and the stadium in Stephenville and the stadium in Corner Brook, two, the stadium in St. Anthony, the stadium in Labrador City, the stadium in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the stadium in Baie Verte, in Badger, in Buchans, in Grand Falls, in Bishops Falls, in Botwood, in Lewisporte, in Gander, in Bonavista, the one out in Whitbourne, one in Harbour Grace, five in St. John's, and I do not know if that is all of them or not, Mr. Speaker, but there are twenty-six or twenty-seven of them altogether -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. COLLINS: which is a considerable number of stadiums for a

MR. COLLINS: province of this size. I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that none of those stadiums would have ever been constructed had it not been for the very, very good programme which has been offered by this government, and over and above the most generous capital grant structure which we offered, over and above all that, Mr. Speaker, we also provide seventy-five per cent of the electrical costs of the operation of a stadium, which is the major cost in the operation of any stadium anywhere in this province. Our programme, as the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs knows and every hon. member in this House knows, our programme today whereby we will provide up to seven hundred thousands of dollars to any municipality towards the construction of a stadium shared between Municipal Affairs and ourselves, with certain regulations built into the Municipal Affairs Regulations as it pertains to town councils financing that, Mr. Speaker, is one of the best programmes was ever conceived - in fact it is too rich for our blood-but the fact of the matter is that we have managed to do it and we are providing in my opinion a very good service, a service which is well appreciated by the people of Newfoundland notwithstanding what the Opposition might think.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! A point of order!

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, the minister in rhyming off the stadiums or stadia has given some misleading information. I know he did not do it deliberately. He is much too honourable a fellow for that. This government had nothing to do with the stadium at Buchans and the minister knows that -

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, he gave the House misleading information.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! I must insist that when the Chair intervenes that any hon. member then take his seat. The debate under this procedure is between an hon. member who asks a question and states he is dissatisfied with the answer, and then the hon.

MR. SPEAKER: minister or one speaking on his behalf and on the subject matter of the question, and only two people can participate in the debate.

The next subject matter for debate involves the hon. member for Bellevue arising from a - I will finish what I am saying and then I will hear the additional point of order. The next matter for debate arises from a question asked by the hon. member for Bellevue to the hon. Minister of Forestry and Agriculture and the subject matter is the issuance of cutting permits.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order.

MR. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I did not make myself awfully clear, because the minister and I have a way of admiring each other all the time. Mr. Speaker, I distinctly heard the minister say something which I know to be wrong information. I do not think the minister entered it deliberately. I am not suggesting that. He did give, Mr. Speaker, misleading information. I believe the information had to do with Buchans. This programme had nothing to do with it. I think he should withdraw or correct that item.

MR. SPEAKER : Order, please!

If the hon. gentleman gave information, statistics, data which the hon. gentleman thinks is incorrect, then there is a difference of opinion, but there is not a point of order or a point of privilege. There is a difference of opinion on what the data is, what the statistics are, or what the facts are. But there is not a question of order, there.

The hon. member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker, this item of cutting permits might seem perhaps a little bit trivial, especially to members on the other side of the House since they all represent urban districts and so on, but those of us on this side who represent the rural districts of this Province know, Mr. Speaker, that many people in this Province cannot afford the high electrical rates that they have to pay for heating their homes.

MR. NOLAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order.

MR. NOLAN: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman from Harbour Grace (Mr. Young) continues to make loud noises while the hon. member is attempting to make what he considers to be, and we consider to be, relevant points. So I would think, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member can be heard in silence.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: If hon. gentlemen will cease speaking in loud voices, there is no further reason to interrupt this debate.

The hon. member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, many people in this Province, especially in the rural areas are going back - and I am one case in point - who are going back to the old-fashioned wood stove because of the price of oil and the price of electricity. Also many people are going back to the old-fashioned wood furnace that they have in their basements and so on. Mr. Speaker, under the present system, cutting permits are issued for effective the 1st. September up until the 31st. March. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have had many calls in the last week or so from people, from men who work with the Department of Highways, Transportation and Communications. They will be getting laid off on the 31st. March. They have been working all Winter so they have not had the opportunity to go in and cut the wood that they want, you know, for next Winter and so on. So they are wondering why the cutoff date is the 31st. March, especially when you consider, of course, that April is not a dry month. We assume that the reason the cutting permits are not issued - or it is closed between the last of March and the first of September is because of hot weather. I do not know if that is the case or not, but this is what most people assume. I think most people would agree, Mr. Speaker, that it is much easier to start a forest fire, and the fire hazard is much higher in the months of September and October than they are, say, in April, for sure, and perhaps even May.

So, Mr. Speaker, these people, employees with the Department of Highways, as I have said, who like to get in the woods now, in April month, after they get laid off

Mr. Callan.

because then they can go in - most of the snow is gone - they can cut their wood, leaving low stumps, not having them two or three feet high. They can let their wood stay there, dry out during the Summer, and then in the late Fall or early Winter they can haul this wood out and then, of course, again in April they can go back and cut more wood to be taken out of the woods when the wood is dry and, of course, they can bring out much more in a much shorter time.

So, Mr. Speaker, the question that I want to ask is, Is it possible to have these permits extended in what I consider to be extenuating circumstances? Or would the ministry give some consideration to changing it, you know, and have the cutoff date the last of April? I do not know how much time I have, Mr. Speaker. If I have another couple of minutes, I would like to -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: By leave!

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman has a minute left.

MR. CALLAN: Okay, fine.

- I would like to state another case of an extenuating circumstance. Mr. Speaker, I cut twenty-five logs myself last Winter to put a fence around my house. When I went into the woods in mid-Summer in a motor boat to get these logs, I discovered that some unfortunate gentleman had a far worse need for logs than I did, and so he borrowed six of mine. As a result I had to cut six more. When I landed these logs on the wharf, all twenty-five of them, the six new ones, which were freshly cut,

MR. CALLAN:

an hon. gentleman who said, "That is not a very good example for a member of the House of Assembly, cutting wood out of season, so to speak." So I explained to him that most proverbs are correct but in this case the old proverb which says, "Two wrongs do not make a right," here was a case that two wrongs did make a right. Number one, it was wrong for the fellow who stole my logs to take them. It was wrong for me to cut them, but by me cutting these extra six every-thing was okay because I had the desired twenty-five logs that I needed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CALLAN: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. minister has the two questions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. MAYNARD: I must say, Mr. Speaker, the logic of the last argument escapes me a bit but -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MAYNARD: As I understood the question that the hon. member asked originally during the Question Period was whether or not we would extend the present permits, domestic cutting permits, beyond March 31. My answer was no unless the hon. member could show a reason why they should be extended. There may very well be extenuating circumstances where permits could be extended but it would not be an extension of permits as such, it would be a new permit. I do not know why March 31-April 1 was picked as the end or the beginning of the fiscal year or why we tie permits into that but somebody decided on that date a long time ago. Our permits cut off at March 31 and then if there is any cutting to be done after that the person must obtain a new permit.

Now if the people in your area or in another area where permits are required for domestic cutting can show us that there is a need up until the time the fire season starts for a new permit to be issued after April 1, then we will certainly give it every consideration.

MR. MAYNARD:

We have to have in certain area of the Province very strict control over the issuing of permits because of the fire hazard and because of various other forest management techniques. But we will not prevent anyone or put anyone through undue hardship by denying them permits for firewood especially.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The motion before the House is that the House do now adjourn.

MR. HICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, I move that this House on its rising do adjourn until tomorrow Friday at ten of the clock.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is that the House do now adjourn until tomorrow, Friday at 10:00 A.M. Those in favour "Aye". Contrary "Nay". Carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Friday at 10:00 A.M.

I N D E X

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

TABLED

MARCH 24, 1977

Question #164 on Order Paper #17/77 Dated March 1, 1977

Mr. Neary (La Poile) - To ask the Honourable the Minister of Rural Development to lay upon the Table of the House the following information:

QUESTION: (a) How many new jobs were created as a result of the Federal-Provincial ARDA 1972 Agreement involving an expenditure of some sixteen million dollars?

ANSWER: The Agreement under reference while signed for by the then Minister of Community & Social Development was for a "Newfoundland Agricultural Programme" and named the Department of Mines Agriculture & Resources as the Department responsible for its implementation. As such all records pertaining to the program are with the Agricultural Department and it is suggested the requested information should be sought from that Department.

QUESTION: (b) How many jobs have been created indirectly as a result of this Agreement?

ANSWER: See (a) above.

QUESTION: (c) What notable increases have been recorded in Province's agricultural production resulting from ARDA since 1972? (List products, such as turnips, broilers, greenhouse tomatoes, strawberries, blueberries, potatoes, cabbage, etc., separately.)

ANSWER: See (a) above.

QUESTION: (d) Have production targets outlined in the program been met by March 31, 1977, and if not, why not?

ANSWER: See (a) above.

QUESTION: (e) Provide the House with all reports on the program including any charges made in production targets.

ANSWER: See (a) above.

QUESTION: (f) Supply the House with details of expenditures on the Program to date.

ANSWER: See (a) above.

QUESTION #177 On Order Paper 19/77 Dated March 3, 1977

Mr. Neary (La Poile) - To ask the Honourable Minister of Rural Development to lay upon the Table of the House the following information:

List of all loans made by the Rural Development Authority outstanding as of September 30, 1975.

Give in each instance:

QUESTION: (1) Date Loan made -

ANSWER: Various up to date under reference.

QUESTION: (2) Amount of Loan -

ANSWER: 736 loans to a total amount of \$5,047,036.00

QUESTION: (3) Interest rate -

ANSWER: Nil.

QUESTION: (4) Schedule of payments -

ANSWER: Varies - 1/4 - 1/2 and yearly.

QUESTION: (5) Security held -

ANSWER: Various, i.e. equipment, property, mortgages, etc.

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The following information is supplied by the Honourable the Minister of Industrial Development in reply to Question #132 asked by Mr. S. Neary (LaPoile) as appearing on the Order Paper of February 21, 1977.

Q. Does the Newfoundland Government hold shares in North Star Cement? If the answer is "yes", what dividends have the Newfoundland Government received since March 31, 1968?

A. Yes. Governments involvement in North Star Cement Ltd. is defined in "Government - North Star Cement Limited Act" Act 17 of 1972. From March 31, 1960 to date 22,503 preferred shares have been redeemed at a value of \$2,250,300. Since March 31, 1968, 8,978 preferred shares have been redeemed at a value of \$897,800.

2 March, 1977.

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The following information is supplied by the Honourable the Minister of Industrial Development in reply to Question #133 asked by Mr. S. Neary (LaPoile) as appearing on the Order Paper of February 21, 1977.

Q. Does the Newfoundland Government own any shares or have an investment in McNamara Industries Limited? If the answer is "yes", what dividends have been received from the Newfoundland Government's share investment since March 31, 1968?

A. No.

2 March, 1977.

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