

VOL. 2

NO. 20

PRELIMINARY  
UNEDITED  
TRANSCRIPT

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY  
FOR THE PERIOD:  
3:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.  
THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 1983.

The House met at 3:00 P.M.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, if I may for a moment, I would like to draw to the attention of this hon. House the fact that this is the 43rd anniversary of the first 400 Royal Artillery volunteers, who sailed overseas some forty-three years ago today and tonight they are celebrating this anniversary with a dinner here in St. John's.

I would like to draw particular attention to it because I think it is a well-known fact that as the years go on perhaps the present generation do not fully appreciate the tremendous sacrifice and contribution that these people made to society and to this Province and indeed to the aims and aspirations of the free world.

We are heartened too, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to draw attention to the fact that amongst the 400 Royal Artillery volunteers is our own illustrious Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Cyril Kirby, and two of the commissioners -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. MARSHALL: - who so effectively take care of the traffic in the galleries and look after the visitors to this House, Mr. Fred Graham and Mr. Tasker Cook.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. MARSHALL: To these gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, I know that the members of the House, and indeed all of the people of the Province, would like to extend the best wishes

MR. MARSHALL: to the 400 Royal Artillery volunteers and express our appreciation to them and to say to them that we trust that they will enjoy their celebrations tonight and to convey the best wishes of this House to them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman and myself and we on this side of the House cannot agree on anything else, we certainly can agree on this, that these men who volunteered forty-three years ago did indeed make great sacrifices and did a tremendous job. And we want to join with the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) in congratulating the members of the Newfoundland Heavy Artillery on the occasion of their 43rd anniversary and we want to wish them well, Mr. Speaker, in the future.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Education.

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to read to hon. members of this House of Assembly the text of a letter which was delivered earlier this afternoon to the President of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association. This letter

MS. VERGE: is over my signature as Minister of Education, was directed to "Mr. Wayne Noseworthy, President of the Newfoundland Teachers Association, 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's: Dear Mr. Noseworthy: Mid-day today I met with representatives of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Home and School and Parent - Teachers Associations. With me at the meeting were the Executive Secretary of the Federation of School Boards and senior officials of my department. At the meeting the PTA's Federation presented me their recommendation for a moratorium to be placed on the NTA strike action. Government and the Federation of School Boards have welcomed this proposal and have indicated our willingness to enter into the following arrangement.

"Reopen schools on Monday, April 18, with teachers performing all their duties as usual and, in return, receiving full pay and contractual benefits. Give the collective bargaining process a chance to work to effect a settlement for a new collective agreement. Reserve unto the NTA the right to resume strike action, should a settlement not be achieved.

"I sincerely ask you and your Association to consider carefully co-operating in such a moratorium, for the sake of students.

"I await your reply."

I would like to table a copy of that letter Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I notice that the Opposition did not take upon themselves the opportunity that they could have availed of to respond to the ministerial statement by the Minister of Education (Ms. Verge).

For a number of days now the Opposition have been saying that the Minister of Education has not been taking any initiative to try to solve a very, very thorny issue between ourselves and the Newfoundland Teachers' Association. Now that she has, of course, the Opposition, unable to attack her, are not taking the opportunity which they have under the rules of this House, to respond to what the government has just done.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Under Ministerial Statements

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table in this House the following Telex that I have sent to Mr. William Hopper, President of Petro-Canada.

"On April 13th., the hon. William Rompkey Announced that the Labrador Group led by Petro-Canada had agreed to spend some 500 million dollars on a 10-well programme over the five-year period from 1982 to 1986. At our March 22nd. meeting, you informed me that while a 1983 drilling programme was planned that even a one rig 1984 drilling programme was very much in doubt, let alone drilling in 1985 and 1986.

"While I am pleased to see this evidence of your group's faith in the geological potential of the Labrador Shelf, I would appreciate knowing how your plans could have changed so much in such a short time."

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker, the reason my colleague did not reply to the letter read by the Minister of Education (Ms. Verge) it was too silly and foolish to talk about. We would not waste the time of this House commenting upon such a silly non-sensical piece of correspondence.

Now, Mr. Speaker, obviously the Premier is upset with Petro-Canada. Mr. Speaker, I would say that is too bad. Petro-Canada, the Government of Canada, are trying to create jobs, are trying to develop the offshore resources, are trying to stimulate the Newfoundland economy and the hon. gentleman gets upset. It is not the fault of Petro-Canada that there is no dialogue between this Province and the Government of Canada and Petro-Canada. It is the hon. gentleman's fault for sitting back and twiddling his

MR. NEARY: thumbs and sulking because the Newfoundland Appeals Court ruled that Canada owned the offshore resource.

As I indicated last night, Mr. Speaker, when we were here in the House in committee, as I indicated to the members of the committee, the provincial government now are like spectators at a hockey game, all they can do is sit there and watch the game being played, and they can either cheer or boo, in this case the hon. gentleman

MR. NEARY:

elected to boo Petro-Canada. But that is all they can do, just sit there and watch the game being played. They have no input, they are not taking any initiatives to create dialogue between themselves and the Government of Canada. And it look like that is the way it is going to be, Mr. Speaker, so I cannot blame Petro-Canada for getting on with the job, try to get the resource developed, create some badly needed employment in this Province and stimulate the economy.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the hon. the Premier. Could the hon. the Premier tell the House - it looks like the government have dug in for a long seige with the teachers - could the Premier inform the House how much money has been saved in the last three days to be devoted towards wiping out the deficit that the hon. gentleman has in current account brought about by the mismanagement of this administration? How much money has been saved by locking the teachers out, by forcing the teachers out of the classroom and by shutting the school doors to the teachers and to the pupils in this Province? How much has the hon. gentleman's administration saved to apply towards the current account deficit?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, this government is not interested in saving any money on wages for any person in this Province who gets money from the government. We are not interested in it and that is why, Mr. Speaker, we brought down a budget a couple of weeks ago predicting a \$28 million deficit on current account, and, obviously, on capital account,



PREMIER PECKFORD: obviously we borrow all that anyway. So, Mr. Speaker, we are not interested, not interested in the least. We have had long and serious meetings over the last six months with all the people in the bond market, with the credit rating agencies and, as the Minister of Finance and President of Treasury Board (Dr. Collins) has over the past few weeks indicated to this House, our financial integrity is assured by our management over the

PREMIER PECKFORD:

last number of years; that, unlike Nova Scotia and Quebec, which have both been downgraded, and warnings gone out to other provincial governments, there is no warning or no concern by the credit rating agencies over the financial management of this Province; that we are able to manage the budget in this present fiscal year that has just begun with a \$28 million deficit on current account, that we want to see no savings made on the back of anybody who receives money or salary from this government. It is not our intention, it is not our desire to do so.

In that light, today we have taken two initiatives to demonstrate to the people of this Province that we are not interested, that that is not our motivation. One, we have initiated a number of programmes through the Department of Education, which will cost money; two, we have indicated through a Ministerial Statement today by the Minister of Education (Ms Verge) that if the teachers through their association agree to go back on Monday as contained in the recommendation from the Parent-Teachers Association, we are prepared to go along with that proposal. Why would we go along with a proposal to have the teachers back in the classroom on Monday if we were trying to save money, Mr. Speaker?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NEARY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the Leader of the Opposition, a supplementary.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleague has a lot of questions to ask about the minister's ding-a-ling service that she announced this morning, but before he does, Mr. Speaker, let me ask the hon. gentleman a supplementary. If the hon. gentleman is not

MR. NEARY:

interested in keeping the teachers out of the classroom and the students out of school, why does he not agree to lift the lockout? It is not a strike, it is a lockout. The hon. gentleman should be prepared to admit that it is a lockout. Why does he not lift the lockout and get back to the bargaining table and negotiate with the teachers in good faith?

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

To that, Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear

PREMIER PECKFORD:

the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) pose the question in the way he did because that is what we are saying in the Ministerial Statement, that we are prepared to go back to the table with the Newfoundland Teachers' Association negotiating team and to have the teachers back in the classrooms on Monday to teach school in the normal manner in which school has been conducted in the past, Mr. Speaker. So, no problem here at all. We are prepared to live by the recommendation that has come forward from the Parents' Association of the Province. We are prepared to go back to the table, to resume negotiations, to go back to a normal state of affairs and then, if there still is not any agreement, of course, the Newfoundland Teachers' Association still has the right to go the ultimate route that they have under the legislation now and that is back into a strike situation. So, the boards and ourselves are quite willing, Mr. Speaker, to proceed with normal negotiations under normal circumstances and that is to have the teachers back in the classroom as of Monday morning performing their normal duties and the negotiating teams for both sides in this dispute can get back at the table and resolve and get an agreement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. S. NEARY: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: What the hon. gentleman is asking the teachers to do is to kiss the hem of his garment. He is asking the teachers to give up whatever little bit of bargaining power they have, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. gentleman in that regard is being very unreasonable. Now, let me ask the hon. gentleman again is he prepared to lift the lockout and allow the teachers to go back on the terms

MR. S. NEARY: and conditions under which they specified, that they not do the extracurricular activities, that they go back on these terms and then get to the bargaining table and negotiate with the government in good faith? Will the hon. gentleman

MR. NEARY: revert to that position and not ask the teachers to go all of the way and give up whatever little bit of bargaining power they have left?

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland Teachers' Association will still have this strike lever available to them as of Monday morning when they are back in the classroom. They still have that ultimate weapon in their hands, Nothing has been taken away from them and there is no conditions being attached to it.

Now the conditions that the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) is talking about are factors which are a part of the negotiating process.

MR. NEARY: Oh, I see!

PREMIER PECKFORD: We have a list of issues -

MR. NEARY: That is a new twist.

PREMIER PECKFORD: -the N.T.A. has a list of issues, and we have to resolve those at the bargaining table. And that is what we have been saying. So there is no problem there, Mr. Speaker, the strike weapon is still in the hands of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association.

You know, this is a proposal that has come forward independent of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, independent of the government and the Federation of School Boards. And it would seem to reflect, Mr. Speaker, the consensus of opinion in this Province today. It comes from -

MR. NEARY: Stop bluffing!

PREMIER PECKFORD: -parents of this Province.

MR. NEARY: What about the survey on T.V. last night?

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, now I kept quiet while the Leader of the Opposition asked a question and I

PREMIER PECKFORD: would ask for the same courtesy  
in return, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NEARY: Tell us about the survey on CBC  
last night?

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

PREMIER PECKFORD: Now it would seem to represent  
the consensus of the parents and of the people of this Province,  
and as such we are prepared to show our reasonableness and  
deep concern that we have for the students of this Province.  
So let us go back to a normal situation and let us begin  
bargaining.

However, in doing that the N.T.A.  
holds still the ultimate weapon of strike over us, And let us  
not kid ourselves; that is a weapon that they have, that is  
pressure that they can use against the government and sobeit,  
that is in legislation that was granted, that was provided by  
this Legislature and it should remain. So let us go back to  
a normal situation and let us therefore negotiate at the table  
like we were negotiating before and see if we can resolve this  
dispute and get on with having the students back in the classrooms  
permanently. And I think it is a fair and reasonable  
proposal.

And given the history, Mr.  
Speaker, just let me add one more point, given the history  
of the relationship between this government, and other governments,  
I suppose, and the

PREMIER PECKFORD: the NTA, I think that is a fair proposal. We have had, contrary to what has happened over the last year in the relationship between both sides, a very healthy relationship, a very productive, healthy relationship between the Newfoundland Teachers' Association and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

It has, and we can all take our own positions on this, it has for whatever reason, deteriorated. Some of the reasons might be ours, some of the blame might be ours. Some of the blame might be the NTA. Let us forget that. Let us be big enough today, and on Monday, let us be big enough to say, "Okay, we do have a problem in our relationship. How can it best be repaired? How can it best be put back on an even keel?" Let us both agree then that we are, as we say in our public pronouncements, interested in the students of this Province, and, if we are, let us go back to normality and start to negotiate and repair that relationship and get an agreement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. member for Terra Nova.

MR. LUSH: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Education. I can certainly understand the minister's willingness to go along with this recommendation for a moratorium because that has been her position for a long time. So, Mr. Speaker, I am wondering whether this letter today to the NTA represents a new approach because it is not very specific. The minister mentions, "Give the collective bargaining process a chance to work." Now that does not



MR. LUSH: tell us how the minister is going to go around this, whether she now got a commitment from her officials that they will negotiate because, from what I can gather, her officials have been saying there is no need to negotiate with the teachers because they do not have a strike vote.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister, then, is this a change in approach? Is she making a commitment to the NTA now that her officials are willing to sit down and negotiate without the NTA having what her officials had been saying, a strike vote.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. Minister of Education.

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, it has always been my position, as I have said repeatedly in Question Period, in this hon. House the last few days, and other members of government have said so, that the employer side of this dispute, comprising the provincial government and the Federation of School Boards, stand ready and willing to sit down and resume talks with the Newfoundland Teachers' Association.

Now,

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to deal with the allegation made by the Opposition Education critic (Mr. Lush), a statement that has been repeatedly made public by the NTA President, Mr. Wayne Noseworthy, that the NTA Executive called teachers out on strike simply because government would not negotiate unless teachers demonstrated their resolve by endorsing and taking strike action. Mr. Speaker, that was never true.

MR. NEARY: In other words, you are calling him a liar.

MS. VERGE: However, if it is genuinely the basis of the NTA strike action, the NTA and their members have obviously made their point, teachers have voted to strike and are now on strike. That is where we are now, that has led to problems for students across the Province. To try to get us out of this problem situation the provincial government and the Federation of School Boards have today very quickly responded to a recommendation made by an impartial group representing the parents of the Province, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Parent-Teacher and Home and Schools Association, that both sides in this dispute enter into 'a cooling off period', I believe was their phrase, that a moratorium be placed on the strike action by the NTA, that schools across the Province re-open on Monday coming, that students be back in the classroom, that teachers perform all their duties as usual, and, of course, in return received their full pay and full benefits derived from their collective agreement, that cooling off period giving the two sides a chance to talk, to work out the differences, to strike a deal for a new collective agreement. If that process does not work, of course, the NTA would reserve the right to resume that strike action. The NTA would have nothing to lose, the government and the Federation of School Boards would have nothing to lose,

MS VERGE: and their parents would have a lot to gain.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LUSH: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the member for Terra Nova.

MR. LUSH: Mr. Speaker, is the minister now telling us that the government negotiating team are willing to go back to the table without any preconditions? The Premier mentioned about wanting to make a new start, let bygones be bygones. So is this what the minister is telling us now, that the government negotiating team are willing to go back to the table without any preconditions and start negotiating in good faith?

MR. TULK: That is the real question.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Education.

MS VERGE: Well, Mr. Speaker, it has to be repeated that if we are going to achieve a settlement in this dispute, it has to be recognized and accepted by the Newfoundland Teachers' Association that there are serious financial constraints on the provincial government. We are dealing with an economy in recession. We are coping with major problems in our important resource based industries. We are coping with serious difficulties with our iron ore mining industry, our pulp and paper industry, our fishing industry, not to mention suffering the overflow of other general recessionary problems arising in the financial centres of the Western world. To put it bluntly, Mr. Speaker, there is a limit to what government can spend for teacher salaries and that limit has been defined. That limit is contained in the estimates for our new budget and there has to be recognition of this

MS VERGE: limitation and acceptance of it by the Newfoundland Teachers' Association if we are ultimately to achieve a settlement and ultimately end the current dispute.

MR. LUSH: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the member for Terra Nova.

MR. LUSH: It is very difficult to follow the logic of the minister. Every time she speaks she digs the deep hole.

MR. TULK: Give her a new shovel.

MR. LUSH: Mr. Speaker, I am wondering now how the minister can rationalize this letter today, this invitation - we would hope it is an invitation-to the NTA to start negotiations with the assurance, of course, that her own team have agreed to go back to the negotiating table. How does she justify this situation with this ding-a-ling service that she announced this morning?

MR. T. LUSH: So is the minister scrapping that programme, this service that she announced this morning - what was it - Dial-a-Tutor Service? So how does the minister now justify that position? Here we have it appearing that the minister is passing the olive branch to the NTA but in the meantime she has announced a ding-a-ling service this morning to prolong this lockout situation. So how does the minister justify that?

MS. L. VERGE: Mr. Speaker,

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the Minister of Education,

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, that is very easy to justify. All of this is being done for the sake of the students of the Province. If it happens, and I sincerely hope it does, that the Newfoundland Teachers' Association accepts the call by the provincial Federation of Parent/Teacher Associations to place a moratorium on the strike action and have schools reopened on Monday, then the investment that has already been made by the Department of Education and government over the last two days in having the Dial-a-Tutor Service set up will be a small price indeed to pay for having schools reopened and we will very gladly pay that price. In the meantime, while the strike lasts, and again I repeat I hope it does not last very much longer, while the strike lasts it is incumbent upon the Department of Education to partially meet the requests that we are getting from parents across the Province who have called the department expressing their worries about their children, especially highschool students, who are suffering because of missing time from regular classroom instruction, by offering on a stopgap basis some services to guide these students and their parents in their efforts to carry on with school work at home. What I announced this morning was the

MS. L. VERGE: institution by the Department of Education of a long-distance tutoring services called Dial-a-Tutor which would be acceptable by students outside St. John's by using a toll free number, the number is 576-2111, the service would be staffed by a number of qualified teachers offering assistance in the important subject areas. This service is being designed primarily for senior highschool students, young people enrolled in the levels 1000, 2000 and 3000 courses.

MS. VERGE: The second measure that I announced this morning is the changing of the programme content of the CBC Radio School Broadcasts which are aired each weekday afternoon at 2:30 so that next week, that would be starting Monday at 2:30, there will be a series of fifteen minute programmes offering guidance to students trying to study at home and complementing the Dial-a-Tutor Service.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. member for Terra Nova.

MR. LUSH: Mr. Speaker, that is a statement, by the way, that the minister should have made in the House so that we could have responded. That is the statement she should have made here instead of making it on the airwaves. But, Mr. Speaker, the question to the minister is can the minister indicate to the House now then whether the government, with their intention, the negotiating team, with their intention of going back to the negotiating table have dropped all of their preconditions including the precondition that the N.T.A must have a strike vote? Because that is what her officials have been saying, that there is no requirement for them to go back to the negotiating table because the N.T.A. did not have a strike vote.

But, Mr. Speaker, will there now, will the government now drop all their preconditions? Can the minister give us a definitive answer to that question? Will they now drop all of their preconditions to start right from scratch? And let us inform the people of this Province, let us inform the teachers of the Province of just what this invitation means.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Education.

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, the invitation speaks for itself and it is now in the hands of the N.T.A. President, and I trust that I will be hearing from him very soon. If he is not sure what it means I will be very glad

MS. VERGE: to elaborate. I would welcome a personal contact from him.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say for the benefit of all hon. members of this House and the people sitting in the galleries that it is absolutely untrue, false, completely wrong for the member opposite to say that anyone associated with the employer, the provincial government/ Federation of School Boards bargaining team ever at any time or in any place said to anyone from the Newfoundland Teachers' Association that the N.T.A. would have to go out on strike or get a strike mandate before the employer's side would negotiate.

Now that allegation has been made by N.T.A. executive members and members of the employer negotiating team asked the members of the N.T.A. negotiating team about that and am being questioned the N.T.A. negotiating team had to admit that indeed they did not know that it had ever been said either.



SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell):

The hon. member for Terra Nova.

Mr. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, we have to take with caution the things the minister talked about with respect to this contract. And I demonstrate by referring her to a question that I asked yesterday when I asked the minister if she had interceded to try and bring this dispute to a satisfactory resolution and the minister indicated that she had not but that the Deputy Minister of Labour and Manpower had been in touch with the parties in dispute - of course referring to the NTA - and said that the Deputy Minister of Labour had been in touch with officials of the NTA as recently as a few days ago. Now the minister knows what the NTA response to that was: The president of the NTA suggested that they had never been contacted by anybody in the Department of Labour and Manpower or anybody connected with the negotiations on the government official team, that they had not been contacted by anybody, and indeed he said that the minister was either trying to misrepresent or mislead this House. So what does the minister say to that? Under what circumstances did the Minister of Labour and Manpower (Mr. Dinn) contact the NTA? Who did he contact? Who is right in this situation? Are the NTA telling the truth or is the minister telling the truth or are they both telling lies? What is the situation?

MR. VERGE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the opportunity to clarify this situation. About a week and a half ago the Deputy Minister of Labour and Manpower came to see some of my officials and indicated that he would be in contact with the Newfoundland Teachers'

MS.VERGE: Association, and it was with that knowledge that I made by statements here in Question Period yesterday. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Minister of Labour and Manpower and all the staff of that department have an excellent record of aiding the resolution of labour-management disputes, including disputes between the Newfoundland Teachers' Association and their employers in previous years. And I call on my colleague, the Minister of Labour and Manpower (Mr. Dinn), to outline the services that his department have provided to aid the resolution of this particular current dispute.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No way. No way.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. member for Terra Nova.

MR. NEARY: A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, this is Question Period and my colleague has a line of questioning going and the Minister of Education (Ms Verge) has no right to call on a colleague to get up and lecture the House during the Question Period.

MR. MARSHALL: To that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the President of the Council (Mr. Marshall) to that point of order.

MR. MARSHALL: I thought the hon. members of the Opposition wanted the facts, wanted the information. The hon. the Minister of Education (Ms Verge) pointed to her colleague, the hon. the Minister of Labour and Manpower (Mr. Dinn), who could give a certain amount of extra information that had been elicited by the hon. member, but if hon. gentlemen do not wish to have the information, as they obviously do not, that is all we can do. It will only exacerbate the situation.

MR. NEARY: We do not need any lectures today.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

To that point of order, the hon. the member for Terra Nova (Mr. Lush) posed a question to the Minister of Education, who, during the course of her remarks, indicated that maybe the Minister of Labour and Manpower might answer the question. The procedure is a little unusual and the Chair did recognize the hon. the member for Terra Nova.

MR. LUSH: Mr. Speaker, I was just pointing out that the minister does not always give us reliable information and she proved that with this statement by the Minister of Labour and Manpower.

Now I will get back to another point. Yesterday I asked the minister whether or not the Newfoundland teachers had been afforded all of the channels of the collective bargaining process, and I referred to mediation and binding arbitration and asked what the situation was on that. The minister came out and said that the legislation does provide for binding arbitration to resolve the dispute between the Newfoundland

MR. TULK: Teachers' Association and their employees but, anyway, they did not want to do that.

Now, in a statement issued by the Premier on October 27 in response to a request for binding arbitration from the teachers, the Premier answered, "Government has rejected this request because it is inconsistent with legislation governing collective bargaining between teachers and the government." Now, Mr. Speaker, we have on the one hand the Minister of Education (Ms Verge), who is saying that binding arbitration is legal, that teachers have this right, and we have the Premier saying that they do not have this right. Now, Mr. Speaker, what is the right position? What is the right interpretation? Can the minister tell us? Did she make a mistake yesterday, that the teachers do not have this right for binding arbitration, or was the Premier right?

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. Minister of  
Education.

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, what is relevant to this present dispute is whether or not government did or should have, or should now refer this labour-management dispute to binding arbitration. There was a formal request from the Newfoundland Teachers' Association for binding arbitration. It was received, it was considered by the members of the provincial government collectively, it was dealt with, it was answered. The outcome is that that request was refused. There were good reasons which I have elaborated on on several occasions.

Binding arbitration, for a start, would be totally inconsistent with our wage restraint programme. I mean, on the one hand why announce a firm wage restraint programme limiting percentage increases for salaries for all public servants if a couple of weeks later you turn around and refer to an independent third group, over which government has no control, a group which is not accountable to the voters of the Province, the right to decide what percentage increases would be given to one of the largest public service sector bargaining groups in the Province. Totally inconsistent and contradictory, one very good reason.

And the second reason is that in any case the provincial government, comprising duly elected representatives of the voters and the citizens and taxpayers of this Province, would be derelict in our duty to those people who have placed their confidence and trust in us if we were to abdicate that such trust and responsibility by turning over control of such a large chunk of the budget of this provincial government, over a payroll estimated to total over \$260 million next year to a third group, an impartial group, people with no accountability to the voters of the Province, who have no

MS. VERGE: responsibility for any other government programmes or services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. member for Terra Nova.

MR. LUSH: The question, Mr. Speaker, is whether this Minister of Education knows anything about education, whether she knows what is going on? That is the question, Mr. Speaker, that is the question. Because this statement from the Premier goes on to say that 'the NTA did not want binding arbitration as part of their collective bargaining process and the government agreed with this position and therefore the legislation does not provide for it.' Now either the legislation provides for it or it does not. Now if the Minister of Education (Ms. Verge) cannot tell the teachers of this Province whether the legislation provides for it, who can?

MR. T. LUSH: Mr. Speaker, there is no point in trying to weasle out of it, either the legislation provides for it or it does not. Yesterday the minister said it did. Now does it provide for it or not so that the teachers of this Province know where they stand? Can they have binding arbitration? The minister said yesterday they could, the Premier said some weeks ago said they could not. What is the situation, straightforward?

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. the Minister of Education.

MS. VERGE: Mr. Speaker, again being straightforward, binding arbitration was refused by this provincial government to the NTA for the reasons that I have given. This dispute has to be resolved, I would suggest and I think it is in the best interest of both parties, through the collective bargaining process, with the Newfoundland Teachers' Association having the strike lever. I have invited them to put aside their strike lever, to put a moratorium on strike action, to give the collective bargaining process a chance to work but, of course, reserving onto themselves the right to resume strike action. Mr. Speaker, I find it very disappointing that the members of the Opposition are getting sidetracked into irrelevant legal fine points and technicalities instead of dealing with the real issues of the problems being faced by the students of the Province.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please! Order, please!  
The time for Question Period  
has expired.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

MR. J. DINN: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Labour  
and Manpower.

MR. J. DINN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the report of the Workers' Compensation Board.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please! Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

The Chair is trying to recognize the hon. the Minister of Labour and Manpower.

MR. DINN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the annual report of the Worker's Compensation Board for the year 1982.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. W. MARSHALL: Committee of the Whole on Supply.

On motion, that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole on Supply, Mr. Speaker, left the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON SUPPLY



MR. CHAIRMAN (Aylward):

Order, please!

We are on Head 2.

Council.

The hon. the President of the

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman, we are now on the -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. MARSHALL:

If I could have order Mr. Chairman,

please.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please! Order, please!

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman, I think the

member for Terra Nova (Mr. Lush) is going into orbit over the fact that somebody has a petition from his district or something.

Mr. Chairman, what we have before the committee now is the vote under Head 2, which is Legislative, in Committee of the Whole. It involves the vote for the House of Assembly and for the Department of the Auditor General, the details of which have been tabled in the House. I would urge, and I would hope, certainly, that the Opposition - I once again, at the risk of being admonished by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) about lecturing the opposition about how they conduct their parliamentary affairs, I have to ask the Opposition if they will ask a few, perhaps, incisive questions.

MR. NEARY:

You will not give any answers.

MR. MARSHALL:

Are we on Legislative?

The hon. Leader of the Opposition asked what Head we were doing and the hon. Chairman had called out Head No. 2, Legislative. I would urge the Opposition to try to ask a few questions about the vote. The total of the vote is \$2.3 - odd million for the Auditor General, \$6.2 million for the Legislature and, Mr. Chairman, in anyone's judgement that is not small change. I would

MR. MARSHALL:                   urge the Opposition, in contrast to the way in which they have conducted Committee of the Whole heretofore in Consolidated Revenue Funds, that they might like to entertain and ask a few questions as to what the money is being spent for.

                                  There is one thing that I would like to deal with if I could, Mr. Chairman, under this Head of Legislative, because it has come up from time to time. The hon. the member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder), who is the Opposition House Leader, has a penchant from time to time of shooting me across letters, like somebody else I know, that land on my desk and two or three minutes later they get into the Press. So, obviously

MR. MARSHALL: he is not too interested in getting a response to his letter. So consequently he will realize now why, instead of wasting the time of sending him a letter, I reply to him publicly.

And this is in relation, Mr. Chairman, to the complaints that have been lodged with respect to the way in which the Estimates are being handled. I think I would like to put this at rest now, forever and a day, with the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) and members of the Opposition.

A few years ago in order to enable the Estimates, and in the hope that the Estimates would be considered by the House, which is a legislative function, in a more effective manner, to involve much more fully the private members of the House on the government side and the members of the Opposition, most of the Heads for the departments were referred off to smaller Committees of the House, consisting of seven people, at which Committees the minister in charge of that particular department would appear, questions would be asked. The virtue of it would be that the private members would get a greater appreciation of why the monies were being spent, there would be greater scope for asking questions and, consequently, there would be a fuller examination of the expenditures of the Province, which is really one of the basic reasons for the existence of the House of Assembly or any committee of same.

We implemented that. At the time we got it through the Leader of the Opposition then was the hon. Don Jamieson who agreed with it, agreed with it in its entirety. All members of -

MR. HODDER:

He sold us out.

MR. MARSHALL: It is a property, I know, of hon. members there opposite. They say it is a property of the Tory Party, but it is really the property of the Liberal Party, that once a Leader departs they eviscerate him, they eviscerate his memory. So he is talking about the hon. Don Jamieson as having sold out the Liberal Party and sold out the Liberal members and let that go out on record. I say that when the hon. gentleman was here, he made a great contribution to the parliamentary proceedings of this House and to the strengthening of parliamentary democracy in this House when the hon. gentleman concurred that the most sensible way to deal with the Estimates was through these committees themselves and consequently, as a result of this, this is what we found. Now to show about the inconsistencies of the hon. members, their love/hate for their leaders and their inconsistencies of their thought, whatever thought they have, early in this session the hon. member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder) wrote me a letter and he indicated to me that these committees were not working and we should go back to Committee of the Whole House as we are now - there are still a few of the headings that are heard in Committee of the Whole House - that this was contrary to democracy, Estimates were not being considered properly etc., etc., ad infinitum. He said that the only way to do it properly was in Committee of the Whole House. Now, in Committee of the Whole House what we have had, what we have seen this year, as we have seen in previous years, when Consolidated Revenue Fund was involved, the most important department of government bar none, which involves the provision of monies for the payment of interest on debts for borrowings that occurred, which requires payment of the absolute necessities and which squeeze out, as I have indicated from time to time in the debate, the scope which we have for dealing with other

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MR. MARSHALL:                      necessary expenditures such as  
in Education, Health, Social Services and otherwise, that  
instead of asking why the

MR. MARSHALL:

monies had been increased, why there was more money on interest this year, what was the total amount of the borrowings, how much was paid out on pensions, on ex gratia payments, etc., etc., ad infinitum, we were invited

to enter into a little gossip session with the hon. members when they spoke about nonentities. So, consequently, on the one hand the first letter I got from the member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder) this year, the very first letter on this was to complain. Now, Mr. Chairman, I want for you to understand, he wanted to complain that -

MR. STAGG: Did he table letters? '

MR. MARSHALL: No, he would love to table letters but I am going to explain the letters.

and I hope he is going to be embarrassed in vivid Liberal red by the time I am through with it. But, Mr. Chairman, in the first letter I got he was complaining about these committees. Then lo and behold, the other day, this was the letter I got, March 21st. "I am responding to your letter of Thursday March 17th," now that was in response to his original one when I talked about what a great democratic thrust this was, how the government agreed with the hon. Don Jamieson, how it very much improved the examination of estimates of the House. So he says he is responding now to my letter of March 17th relating to the committees on the estimates. "We cannot agree, it is too onerous for two committees to be sitting at the same time." Now, this is the first letter he wrote, "We cannot agree," he says, "It is too onerous." He says it was too onerous for two committees to be sitting at the same time. "The membership on the committee is proportionate to the membership of the House." This is my response to him. Then the other day what did the

MR. MARSHALL: hon. gentleman come in with but a letter, after scoring these committees, and he says as follows - and I am going to quote it in full, Mr. Chairman, and I am going to table it, because you will want to keep this letter, and I know you in your impartiality will like to be able to see this letter and judge as to the inconsistency and the hypocrisy of the hon. gentleman there opposite. It is not that he means to be a hypocrite, he does not do that, but it is just that he does not understand, he is not consistent from one day to the other. Anyway, March 12th, the other day, he says - addressed to me - "Further to your letter to me of March 21st, in which you state that the committee system enhances the ability of the House of Assembly to require greater accountability of government, I wish to make the following observation. At a meeting of the Government Services Committee on Monday evening, April 11, 1983, there were four government members and three Opposition members in attendance, discussing estimates of the Department of Transportation and Communications. This is a major department," he said, and it is major. What is this? "Debate was lively." In this little committee that was ineffective before," debate was lively with much ground covered

MR. MARSHALL: that would be of interest to the general public. Now, this is what we were telling the hon. gentlemen all of the time, in these committees this would occur.

"There was one flaw in that very productive meeting, however, and that is there was not one member of the press in attendance. I realize it is not essential that the press attend every committee hearing. However, committee hearings become a mockery when you realize that Hansard for these meetings is not published until six months after the hearing is held.

"When then is the accountability of government, when seven persons discuss estimates in secret without the benefit of an immediate transcript and since there were no reporters, no coverage for the general public?" He thought he was talking in secret, Mr. Chairman, he must have thought he was. "I would again urge you to place the Estimate Committees hearings back on the floor of the Legislature."

So can you not see - and no wonder the other hon. gentlemen fled from the benches when they saw I was going to read this letter of inconsistency, written by the hon. member. But can you not see, Mr. Chairman, the inconsistency of the hon. member in that? On the one hand the Committees were no good, now they were excellent. There was, to quote him, 'Much ground covered. There was a lively debate and lively discussion, just as we promised, but because the press did not happen to cover them we should X this out .

Now, you know, I mean, that is not a - I doubt whether the press is covering what I am saying today, because I do not think that they would want to show -

MR. NEARY: That is right.

MR. MARSHALL: No, I can understand. I do not think they would want the populace to know how inconsistent



MR. MARSHALL: was one of the elected members of the House of Assembly to write a letter of this nature to us. But the fact of the matter is—and he refers to Hansard, he has the consummate gall to refer to Hansard.

We have provided a written record of Hansard, I mean, this government and this party when it came to power. Does the hon. gentleman realize, and I do not like to get back in history, but I have to -

MR. NEARY: It goes back to 1956.

MR. MARSHALL: No, not 1956. When we came to power in 1970, Hansard, that is the written report of the proceedings of this House, was not published. Do you realize that?

MR. NEARY: It was published, and it was published on a daily basis.

MR. MARSHALL: It was cut out about 1958, I do not know the reason for it, probably the then Leader was embarrassed at something that the member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary) had said and he did not want it to get into the record forever and a day. I do not know what the reason was, but the fact of the matter is there was no Hansard.

Now, there is a daily Hansard, Mr. Chairman, of the proceedings of this House. There are Hansard reports taken of everything, and are transcribed, in those meetings and they are published as quickly as possible.

So the point of the matter I want to make is the inconsistency of the hon. member, to point out once again under this heading of Legislative, what an advance it was, what a forward advance it was and what an aid it was to the ultimate aims of democracy in this Province to bring the estimates into the Committees. Any failings of the Committees

MR. MARSHALL:

and I do not accept the fact that because the press were not there one day, that this should cancel them out, because they are fairly reasonably covered. But any deficiency that occurs in those Committees can be laid mainly at the feet of the hon. gentlemen there opposite, because they do not appear, they do not seem to have - they do appear sometimes and sometimes they do not; like yesterday, the critic for Mines and Energy - when my estimates were on they had to send in a substitute, the member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary), and he was the only person there at that particular time. So there is not a concerted effort in those Committees by members there opposite to make them the success that Mr. Jamieson envisaged them to be and that the government envisaged them to be. It is the best possible system for the examination of the estimates.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MARSHALL:

It is the type of system that is used in other parliamentary democracies and I really urge that the hon. gentleman, instead of inundating me with letters of great inconsistency, as he has given me during this session, instead of complying with the instructions of his present leader, he should emulate the example of his previous leader, that distinguished gentleman, Mr. Jamieson, and do what he can to see that this procedure -

MR. NEARY:

Are you on your nasty pills today?

MR. MARSHALL:

No, it is not nasty, this is advice - and do the best he can to see that the procedure which we forged together with Mr. Jamieson's co-operation operates properly, because that is the best way. As a matter of fact, maybe next year, in view of the way in which the hon. gentlemen have handled Committee of the

MR. MARSHALL: Whole on these estimates, perhaps we should refer all of the departments to the Committees.

MR. NEARY: They should be brought back to the House.

MR. MARSHALL: No, not back to the House, to the Committees themselves.

Now, having said that, Mr. Chairman, just before I take my seat I want to see if there are any questions that I would be quite happy to respond to. It would be an idea - I would suggest to hon. gentlemen, if they are interested in the expenditure of public funds, the limited public funds that we have, that they might like to address themselves relevantly to the questions that would occur. There is, for instance, \$253,000 in Administrative Support; the House Operations is there; there is a vote for Standing and Select Committees. There is an amount of \$225,000, by the way, being provided for the very Hansard that the hon. the member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder) indicated was not adequate. There is \$106,000 provided for the Legislative Library; the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, \$23,000. Under this comes, by the way, Mr. Chairman, the office of the Parliamentary Commissioner, who is the Ombudsman, and that costs the Province \$118,500. So these expenditures are all there before the hon. gentlemen. I invite them to ask relevant questions with respect to same and I certainly will be prepared to respond to them to the best of my capacity.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Aylward): Order, please!

MR. CHAIRMAN (Aylward): Before I recognize the hon. the member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder) he indicated he wanted to know how much time was available. There is fifteen minutes for the opening remarks, fifteen minutes to respond and then it will be ten and ten as we have been doing.

The hon. the member for Port au Port.

MR. J. HODDER: Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to take the full fifteen minutes, but I could not help but respond to the comments by the House Leader (Mr. Marshall) opposite. We on this side have tried our very best to make sure that those committees work. Unfortunately, the system is now in place. When the committees were put in place there was a different ratio of members on both sides of the House than there is now. We now have eight members, and I say without fear of contradiction that we have manned all of the committee meetings. And when the member opposite says that he attended a meeting recently where substitutes were present, well certainly, Mr. Chairman, we have members who are in their districts, we have members who attend meetings, we have members who have delegations who visit them, we have all sorts of business that must be taken care of. When you consider that there are only eight of us and there are meetings being held in the morning, the House is in the afternoon and then meetings in the evening, we have been able to maintain membership at all of those committee meetings and it must also be kept in mind that each member on this side of the House holds various shadow posts in which they pay particular attention to the minister's department, so that very often we find ourselves, while the committee to which we are assigned may be doing one set of estimates, we have to go to another committee meeting. So, that

MR. J. HODDER: is why we have substitutes. So the Opposition has decided that we will man all the committee meetings and that is what we have done to this present time. But, Mr. Chairman, the committees are not as effective as this House of Assembly for studying the estimates of the government. There was a time in this House when there was no seventy-five hour rule and there are still a number of Legislatures across the country where there is no time rule for debate of the estimates. And it is one place where the Opposition can dig in and look for information. For instance, we have been trying to get the Rural Development list of loans and grants, we have been trying to get that for years and years and years. We have never been able to get it. Under the system in many Legislatures we could hold up the business of the House until we got that particular list of loans and grants, which the government has refused for some reason. Any other business that goes on in this Province is made public. If a person gets a loan, or any business transaction, it can be read in Dun and Bradstreet, but yet

MR. HODDER: the government gives public money to businesses all over this Province, lends money to businesses all over this Province, and keeps it secret. And they have put a little artificial procedure there. And these are the things that we cannot get at in committees. We have no ability to force a minister, we are under the constraints of time all the time.

The other thing I want to talk about, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that the Hansards from those meetings should be made available to members and to the public as quickly as Hansards are made available in the House of Assembly. If these committees are the same as the House of Assembly and are as important as the administration opposite believes them to be, then they should be treated in exactly the same way, these committees should be treated exactly as the proceedings in the House of Assembly are treated and we should have an immediate transcript.

But, Mr. Chairman, on a number of occasions - that was not the first time that we had, as I termed it, a meeting in secret. On a number of occasions this has happened, where we sit there and talk back and forth, all sorts of information comes forward but no one has access to it until six months later. We receive those volumes six months later. All I have been trying to get the administration to do is to modify those committees. If we have to have them, and if the hon. member opposite is firm, well, then, let us try to make them work. Let us have one committee meeting a day, one a day. That can be done.

MR. MARSHALL: Would the hon. member permit a question?

MR. HODDER: Yes.

MR. MARSHALL: I did not hear the hon. member, I was outside. Did the hon. gentleman apologize yet for his slur against Mr. Jamieson?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. CHAIRMAN (Aylward): Order, please!

MR. HODDER: Mr. Chairman, I do not think that needs to be dealt with.

Mr. Chairman, were we to turn back the clocks I would tell the minister opposite, Mr. Jamieson - or no, Mr. Jamieson was our leader when the estimates procedures changed, but were we able to turn back the clock we would never have changed the estimate procedures, we would be doing them in the House. I can tell the hon. member that.

MR. MARSHALL: Well why attack him?

MR. HODDER: I think Hansard will prove that I made no such attack, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

MR. HODDER: Mr. Chairman, the hon. members opposite do not want to hear sense. The Premier and the minister without portfolio know that those committees are the best thing that ever happened to the government. The minister can come into those committees now, he has four little lackeys on the government side who sit there who never ask - I sat in one committee meeting last year, I called them a bunch of dummies, they sit around and they ask the minister nice little questions. They have the opportunity to sit down and say, 'Oh, Mr. Minister, what a wonderful thing you are doing'. That is what we hear. An Opposition member comes in, raises a valid point and suddenly he has government members cropping up everywhere defending the minister.

MR. BAIRD: A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Aylward): A point of order, the hon. member for Humber West.

MR. BAIRD: Mr. Chairman, for the record I just heard the hon. member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder) talking about the four lackeys at a meeting there last year of the Estimates Committee. I was one of those representatives at that meeting and it is very ironic that that same afternoon the hon. member came out complaining that we were asking too many questions and we were taking up the time of the committee. So I would like him to clarify that, please.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To that point of order, I rule there is no point of order.

The hon. member for Port au Port.

MR. HODDER: Mr. Chairman, for the past



MR. HODDER: two years now I have seen no indication from the government side that they want to improve those committees. If you want to improve those committees fix them so that there is one committee meeting at a time, one committee meeting a day so that all members of the Opposition, if they wish, can attend. I mean, we had a meeting last night at 9:30 in the evening, they are staggered at different times. Why not set the times for the committee meetings? If we have to have them let us do it properly and let the general public know.

MR. MARSHALL: There was one committee last night and there was only one member of the Opposition there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Where were the other seven?

MR. HODDER: Mr. Chairman, the same comment can go for the government members. There may have been one, that would - I would estimate, in proportion to the government side, one would -

MR. MARSHALL: We had six there.

MR. HODDER: Mr. Chairman, does that mean that if there were nine people from the government side of the House, that the minister who was giving his estimates last night was brought to greater accountability because he had nine lackeys from his own side there?

MR. HODDER: Well, I will tell the minister that in most of the committees there are three or four government members there usually, and there is usually one or two Opposition members there. And we are trying - I am just asking the minister would he change the times of those committees, and would he change it as such that - what is he afraid of? Why not have one committee a day?

MR. MARSHALL: We had one yesterday and there was only one person who turned up.

MR. HODDER: At nine-thirty in the evening? Perhaps some of us go to bed early, for crying out loud.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. HODDER: But, Mr. Chairman, all the members were there, the night before there were three Opposition members there. And perhaps there are other times when there are more Opposition members there. But at least we have been there and we have done the best we can. What we are asking the government, we are asking the government not to hold three or four meetings a day. We have had days when there were three meetings going on the same day. Not this year, we have had two going on this year. Last session we had -

PREMIER PECKFORD: Not this year now.

MR. WARREN: Two at the same time, this year.

MR. HODDER: We certainly do have two at the same time.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Not three.

MR. HODDER: We have had three.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Not this year.

MR. HODDER: Not this year, no, not this year, but we have had three. But all we are asking is that the government be a little less inflexible. We are already in this

MR. HODDER: situation, we would like to see them back on the floor of the House of Assembly, but what we are asking for is a little bit of justice and a little bit of fair play so that we can attend these meetings and do the meetings justice. Not only that, the member for Stephenville (Mr. Stagg) says that there were eight members there, I have never seen a government member prepare himself for one of those committee meetings. At least we sit down and try to find out, and ask questions. I have never seen a government member at any of those meetings come in except to praise the minister. I have never yet seen a government member at any committee meeting ever take -

MR. STAGG: You are not allowed into the library with us, boy.

MR. HODDER: I have never seen a government member take issue with any minister since the committee meetings have been in progress, never have I seen it. They sit there as if they have no accountability whatsoever, and the onus is on the Opposition, and we are asking for proper - a fair chance to do the job that we have to do under this particular system.

MR. BAIRD: And ask your usual type of question.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Aylward): The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: I cannot let this opportunity go by. We are talking about one of the most serious issues that involve this Legislature, and I want to address myself to it for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that back in 1979, when I got involved in leadership and all the rest of it, one of the things that I noticed in the time that I had been a member of this House, especially in the backbench, that I was not given the opportunity, because you had all the estimates being done here in the House, I was not being given the opportunity,

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PREMIER PECKFORD:                    because it became just a  
political football with the estimates, the estimates were  
not discussed, there were hundreds of millions of dollars  
went through here in five minutes at the end, when you would  
have all night sessions, it was a Mickey Mouse,

PREMIER PECKFORD: it was a real circus here in this House, and I committed myself at that time to try to bring some sense and sanity out of the way estimates were dealt with. Now, if you look everywhere around the world, as the President of the Council (Mr. Marshall) has so correctly said, you will find that any Commission of Enquiry or any committee that has looked at how the rules should be amended and changed have come up with the same kind of solution. It is not all that creative, but it is the only solution that is available and that is to try to get the members of the House of Assembly, the backbenchers and the Opposition members, more intimately involved in the estimates for the budget. I have been here nights, at 10:00 P.M. or 11:00 P.M., when \$40 million would go through in two or three minutes, \$40 million, \$50 million, \$100 million, and not one solitary question. So we decided to change it and we went, at the time to the Liberal Leader, who is now the High Commissioner for Canada to England, went and talked about it and we came up with the Estimates Committees. Now, Mr. Chairman, they are not perfect but they are a lot better than the system, - there are a lot of new members here who do not know how the old system worked but let me tell you, Mr. Chairman, any member of this House today, who was here several years ago, can vouch for the fact that it was a circus. There was no attempt by the Opposition, and there was a larger Opposition, seventeen and eighteen and so on members of the Opposition, to deal with the subheads of the particular department, to discuss the policy of that department and the various programmes. It was all just a political football, with no examination of the various items to be considered in that department's estimates. And I firmly believe that the system we have now is

PREMIER PECKFORD: much, much better. It is not perfect but it is much, much better. Now, the other problem we have, Mr. Chairman, that has come up since then, is that the Opposition ranks have been decimated. Now, Mr. Chairman, I was going to say that is not my fault but I suppose I bear some guilt for that problem, that their numbers have been reduced. Now, Mr. Chairman, that is part of the political process, that sometimes you have large majority governments and small Oppositions other times it will be different. Right now the Opposition only have eight members. We are trying to deal with it, Mr. Chairman, as responsible, democratically orientated legislators on the government side. We are trying to deal with it that way and we are trying to reasonable with the Opposition as a result of it. But it is a much, much better system and gets the individual private member in this House more involved in the operations in government than if the whole thing was done right here in the Committee of the Whole. And you can see it, Mr. Chairman, even with the few things that are left, that are done in Committee of the Whole, the few subheads that are left they are not dealt with. We had to force the Opposition the other day, on Consolidated Funds Services,

PREMIER PECKFORD: to focus their remarks , to focus their attention on asking constructive questions - Why is our debt load the way it is? Must it be as high as it is?- and the other items under the Consolidated Fund Services, rather than let them slide on through. And because, Mr. Chairman, and the various officers of the House recognize this, Consolidated Fund Services is a broad area, they can almost discuss anything. So they can get up and talk about the restructuring of the fishery or the close down of this mine or the reopening of something else. They never get down or you are not forced to get down and deal with the specifics of that particular subhead. And I think it is a critical, critical issue. And I would like to hear from some of the other private members on it. I would like to hear what they have to say, because it is not perfect, and it needs to be improved, but it is better than going back to a full Committee of the Whole which just makes a mockery out of the whole Legislature.

You know, if you look anywhere in the world where they have tried to revise and reform the rules - and that is why, of course, the Leader of the Opposition of the day went along with it, because he could not bring up any good arguments against it. Because in his experience, which was pretty extensive, in his experience of Parliaments, both in the House of Commons and other places in the world, and when he was External Affairs Minister he knew, he told me frankly, he knew the only way that you were going to get the private member really involved in the operation of Legislature, especially as it applied to the budget - the Throne Speech debate, is another thing, the Budget Speech debate is another thing, legislation is another thing. And we might have to look to getting committees established to examine the legislation too, not only the budget. That is the next step.

PREMIER PECKFORD: There might be some reform needed there. A bill comes in, gets first reading then it is referred to a Committee of the House for more debate and elaboration, and then the committee brings in a report, then it comes back to the House for a finite period of time to be debated by the whole House, then it is either passed by the majority or it is rejected by the majority of the members and on you go to the next piece of legislation. That might be the next step that we need to take to get the private member more involved.

But I think it is a crucial, crucial issue, and I do not think we play games with it. I think we are master of our own rules, we are master of our own House; it is the Legislature of Newfoundland and Labrador, we are the legislators, we make the laws, we make the changes to our own behaviour and how this place is going to operate over the next few years. So we should take it seriously and not lightly. And I, for one, Mr. Chairman, have been convinced, since I came into the House in 1972, that with the reforms we made in 1979 together,



PREMIER PECKFORD: We made them together, the Opposition and the Government, we made them together when there was a larger Opposition, that we were making significant steps towards making this place work a lot better than it had worked in the past and we have had some very miserable experiences, as I have said. Meeting all night long and all this sort of thing, it gets into an awful situation that nobody really wants.

MR. HODDER: We should go back to it.

PREMIER PECKFORD: No, we should not go back to it. I think the member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder) is totally wrong. And then, Mr. Chairman, let me just get a little political for a minute. Just imagine the audacity of the member for Port au Port complaining about - well, he has got to do this and he has delegations coming in from his district. His first commitment now that the House is open, the Legislature is open, and he as a member of the Legislature, is to participate in the workings of the Legislature. That is what the hon. member was elected to do and he is making complaints. He has all summer to do his researches, shadow member, from the statements that are made by the minister that he is shadowing and all Fall and Winter. We are only open - we are open now more than we ever were. This Legislature was opened more last year than any other year, I think, since Confederation. Talking about democracy, here is a majority government over here - 44 to 8, and right after our mandate of 44 to 8, we have five years to go before we go to the people again. What did we do in the first year? Right after our mandate April 6th, we kept the House open longer than any other time since Confederation. That is democracy for you, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: That is democracy for you. That is not bad. We introduced the Fall session that had not been around for quite awhile, to deal with legislation. The hon. member knows better than to get up here - I mean if there were any columnists in Newfoundland who just had a column, and it was a political column, and really listened to what the hon. member said, tomorrow morning in the paper he would be cut up in tiny pieces for what he just said.

He is getting paid well. Perhaps he should get paid more but restraint is on. He is getting paid well and making excuses. 9:30 is too late, people might want to go to bed early. Can you imagine? The House of Commons is open just about every night. Why cannot we have a committee of the Legislature open at 9:30 to deal with some estimates for an hour or so, before you have your cup of tea and go to bed? And making excuses about delegations and they are busy shadowing and all the rest of it. Just imagine if the Premier of the Province or a minister who has a heavy portfolio got up and made excuses like, 'I am too busy.' They would be cut up in little pieces. It is good there are no good columnists in this Province, because the hon. member for Port au Port would be cut up in small little pieces tomorrow in the paper.

MR. WARREN: Like you were last week.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Okay, it is not

PREMIER PECKFORD: perfect, but instead of just criticizing and going back to what did not work, let us put suggestions on the table of how the system can work better. Let us not just go back and bring it all back to Committee of the Whole where it was before. No, make changes to it. Make changes to it. Amend it, modify it and so on. That is what we need to do.

MR. STAGG: Turn up at the odd meeting.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Turn up at the odd meeting.

And, Mr. Chairman, as far as research, as the shadow ministers go, I have to say, I mean, I frankly have got to say, as one member of the Legislature, that if the questions emanating from the other side of the House by the shadow Opposition members is evidence of research, well, boy, I am going to guarantee you right now they have a problem. Because I have not heard very many questions from hon. members opposite which showed that they had done very much research before they asked the question. It is taken out of The Daily News the same day, very often.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: Taken out of The Daily News the same day. You do not do your research. Most of you over there do not do your research, and do not tell me you do. Now and then, from time to time, you will find one hon. member who seems to have done a bit of research on something. Now and then, lately, the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) seems to have done a little bit of work, you know, he has come a long way in the last little while. The hon. the member for Torngat Mountains has come a long way since he came into this House and he seems committed, dedicated and it seems like he is doing a little bit of homework.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: Times have changed. People are not going to put up with the foolishness that the hon. the member for LaPoile, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) gets on with. They are out of date, they are obsolete. The member for Torngat (Mr. Warren) knows that, that is why he is doing it a bit differently. They are not going to put up with this little ping-pong dialogue and shallow kind of stuff to try to slip up somebody one day, they want to look at substance, you know. There is a wisdom out there. The member for LaPoile - I mean, I have a bit of sympathy for the member for LaPoile because he comes from the old school. But there is a new school, that is why he is over there and I am over here, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: And the quicker he learns, the better. But I do not think the Leader of the Opposition - I think he is going to retire anyway; and, you know, he has been a colourful politician around here for the last decade. So, you know, no problem, that is okay. But the member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder), I would say, wants to stay around a little bit longer. And if he is not careful, the member for Port au Port, and the member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) who does absolutely no research - and here is the fishery: the research that the member for Fogo has shown when he asks questions of the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan), every time the Minister of Fisheries answered a question so far this year, I think he has tied the member for Fogo up in knots. Not one day has the member for Fogo been able to win on Question Period.

MR. DOYLE: That is right.

PREMIER PECKFORD: So if they are not careful, the member for Torngat Mountains, especially -

MR. BAIRD:

Will be their next leader.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Yes. The member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) and a couple of the other members over there, if the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) would turn up now and then, will completely pass by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) and the member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder) just like that - v-r-o-o-m! Gone!

MR. CHAIRMAN (Aylward): Order, please!

PREMIER PECKFORD: And that is what is going to happen.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. member's time has elapsed.

PREMIER PECKFORD: But let us look at the process and let us try to make it work better.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, the old school that the hon. the Premier refers to is the school of practical experience and common sense. Now, that is the old school. The old school is build and reform and revolutionize. That is the old school the hon. gentleman talks about. Build roads, build schools, build hospitals, start industries and develop our natural resources, that is the old school. Now, what is the new school? The new school is one course of failure after another. That is the new school. So there is a big difference, Mr. Chairman, in the new school and the old school. The new school is confrontation. The new school is disagree with everybody, argue, do not agree with anything, blame things on somebody else, do nothing, sit back and argue and fight. That is the new school. The old school is the good old days when things are moving in this Province, when natural resources are being developed, the fishery is prosperous, the mining communities are prosperous, the pulp and paper industry is prosperous, people are working, construction workers can find jobs. Now that is the old school the hon. gentleman was just talking about and I will leave it to hon. members to decide for themselves which is the superior way of doing things. Is it to have a whole string of failures behind you, to have a bad track record, to do nothing, to be condemned by everybody, to turn the construction workers against

MR. NEARY:   you, turn the teachers against you, turn the nurses against you, turn the people who live in mining communities against you, turn the people who live in Corner Brook and in the fishing communities like Burin, turn them against you, turn fishermen against you, turn fish plant workers against you? Is that the new way of doing things, Mr. Chairman?

MR. TOBIN:   (Inaudible)

MR. NEARY:   That is the new way. Well, I would prefer the old way myself - common sense, straight common sense, experience, maturity and common sense.

MR. TOBIN:   You have neither one or the other.

MR. NEARY: Now, Mr. Chairman, the hon. gentleman should be the last person to stand in this House, in his place, and lecture my hon. colleague about his attendance in the legislature. The hon. gentleman is out of his seat again now because he cannot stand criticism. Mr. Chairman, every day, and I am sure the press must observe it and people who sit in the public gallery must observe that the moment the Question Period is over, the Oral Question Period is finished, the Premier scoots out of the House, down to his office. And then he turns on the PA system and he kicks his feet up, he lays back in his office on the eight floor and listens to the proceedings of the House from the eight floor, instead of being in his seat in this hon. House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, hon. members did not hear me interrupt the Premier when he was speaking and I would trust that I am entitled to the same courtesy.

Now let us look at the Committee system. I attended a meeting last night and there were nine Tories at that meeting and one Opposition member. This morning I was down in the Colonial Building, when we put the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan) in the hot seat, and there were seven Tories and one Opposition member for the longest time, and then my colleague from Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) arrived and that made two of us. Now how does the system work, Mr. Chairman? At the beginning of these meetings the Chairman stated that each member would be entitled to ten minutes and the minister would be entitled to answer after each member had spoken. So let us take this morning's meeting, six of us down in the Colonial Building, six Tories. That meant that the Tories would have six ten minute slots, that is sixty minutes, and I as an Opposition member would get ten minutes.



MR. HEARN: You had the right to have seven down there, too.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I did not have the right to have seven down there. And that is the way it would work, they would get one hour. And in the meantime, the minister would answer each one of them, so that would be sixty minutes for the Tory backbenchers and sixty minutes for the minister, one hundred and twenty minutes, and the Leader of the Opposition would get ten minutes.

Now, Mr. Chairman, is that fair? That is the way this system works. And what did the Tories do? Unlike the old system in this House, when the estimates were on the floor of this House, when members over here, and my hon. learned friend sitting across from me was over here, he would remember the old system and he should be able to make a comparison, because the hon. gentleman was a real chaw-bag when we were doing the estimates in this House.

MR. NEARY: He asked some very penetrating questions, very penetrating questions, and scrutinized the estimates like you would not believe, Mr. Chairman, but you cannot do that today. This morning and last night what the Chairman did, he said, we will have a general discussion on the Minister's Salary and we will call all of the items first - and all of the items were called. Just very mechanical, just call them all - and then we will go back to the Minister's Salary and we will have a philosophical discussion, we will talk about ideology and we will talk about everything under the sun, but you cannot ask questions about the items in the estimates.

Now, Mr. Chairman, under the old system the estimates were not hid away in the board room, the estimates were debated, the Budget was scrutinized item by item on the floor of this House. And that is the way it should be, Mr. Chairman. Because hon. members know that once you remove the power of the purse from the Legislature, the House of Assembly has lost whatever little bit of power it had.

MR. TOBIN: When was that?

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I told the hon. gentleman this morning, that I believe it is Mrs. McBride who is running a course on self-improvement, on etiquette and good manners, and I would suggest to the hon. member for Burin-Placentia West (Mr. Tobin) that he go and take that course, because I do not think Dale Carnegie could do anything for him.

MR. TOBIN: Go back to your bed on Waterford Bridge Road.

MR. STAGG: (Inaudible) in March 1972.

MR. TOBIN: Go back to your boarding house on Waterford Bridge Road.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, the old system was far superior to what we have now. We had an opportunity to ask questions under each subhead and the

MR. NEARY: press could cover, the  
-media could cover the questions and the answers, could cover  
the House. Now it is virtually impossible. It is virtually  
impossible for the eyes and ears of the people, which is the  
media, to attend these Committee meetings and to report to  
the people of this Province. It is shambles, Mr. Chairman,  
the whole thing is just a complete farce.

I can understand hon. gentlemen  
being in their glee about it, because they are getting away with  
murder, they are getting a free ride on the estimates. They  
have the estimates removed from the floor of the House and  
put into the various board rooms, down in the old Colonial  
Building and so forth and so on, and that is no way, Mr.  
Chairman, to examine the estimates in the great detail in which  
they should be examined.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I know  
the government have no intention of living up to their  
commitment that they made when they changed the rules of  
this House. When the rule changes were brought in the  
then Government House Leader, who is the present Government  
House Leader, made a commitment in writing that after a year

MR. S. NEARY: the rule changes would be viewed and if they were not working, then substantive changes would be made. The government, so far, have not lived up to that commitment and the net result of it, Mr. Chairman, is that the estimates are going through as fast as clock work with no real examination, even though my colleagues have done their utmost to try to keep things under control. Mr. Chairman, they have provided yeoman service to the people of this Province, There are only eight of us. You know, Mr. Chairman, do you know what it is like? It is like two hockey teams. These committees and this House are just like two hockey teams. One has forty-four members, the other team has eight members, now how can you win, Mr. Chairman? And in some cases with the committees, committees where you have nine Tories and one Opposition member, not only do you have to play nine members, but you also have to play the referee. How can you win, Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman, so they can get up and crow all they like. We know what they are up to now, they are trying to stall on Legislative so we will not get to Executive Council to find out about the Premier's luxurious apartment down in Tiffany Place. They do not want us to get to that, they want to use up the time now on Legislative. Well, if we are going to use the time on Legislative, let us talk about something sensible. One of the sensible items that I want to talk about is the location of the Parliamentary Press Gallery in this House. I was rather disappointed recently that I did not get the support of the government in asking to have the Parliamentary Press Gallery located in the center of the House instead of up over my head where the media representatives are gawking down at the government side of the House, day in and day out.

MR. HOUSE: Why did you not put it there in the first place?

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

MR. F. STAGG: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (McNicholas): The hon. the member for Stephenville.

MR. STAGG: The ritualistic speech that we have just heard from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) is reminiscent of his attacks on this committee system when it was introduced in 1979. But I would like to go back a few years beyond that, because even though I may appear to be very youthful I do go back a fair distance in this Assembly. As a matter of fact, I go back to 1972, which is some eleven years ago, and at time the estimates were debated entirely in the House.

MR. STAGG: Initially there was no limit on debate. The only limit that eventually was placed on the tongues of hon. members opposite was one of attrition, whereby the House stayed open morning, afternoon, night, early morning, and so on. We had these twenty-four hour sessions and so on that were very counter-productive. And who were the people doing all the speaking during that time? Well, I can name them. They are the member for LaPoile (Mr. Neary), he was relatively junior then. At that stage he had only had one year of experience ten times, now he has been here for twenty years, he has one year of experience twenty times. So he has refined it somewhat, but it does not get any better just because he repeats himself. But the member for Bell Island, as he then was, because he scurried out of Bell Island there in 1975 when they wised up, the people Bell Island wised up. Anyway he was prominent in the debate - he was not prominent in the party at the time, but he was prominent in the debate. The then Leader of the Opposition, who is now the former, former, former Leader of the Opposition, once removed, he was prominent in the debate. He is the member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Roberts). The then member for White Bay South, who was the Government House Leader at the time, he was prominent in the debate, and that was about it. The member for Labrador North -

MR. HODDER: Go back and watch your hockey game.

MR. STAGG: - the member for Labrador North, he was in the debate but he was not prominent.

Now, the member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder) is up to his usual tricks here. He is talking about the hockey games that I attended in Stephenville over the last couple of days, and he has attempted to indicate that in some

MR. STAGG: way I was shirking my duties to the Province by being out there supporting the Stephenville team as they attempted to bring the Allen Cup to Newfoundland and bringing honour upon the Province and upon the town.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. STAGG: The member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder), who by the way is a terrible athlete, the member for Port au Port has no athletic ability whatsoever, so anyone who exhibits either athletic ability or interest in athletics he casts aspersions on them.

But anyway I am going to make sure that the people of the area know that the member for Port au Port thought that I should have been in here rather than out there. And he may be called upon to explain it.

MR. STAGG: Anyway, I was dealing with the Estimates as they were debated from 1972 until 1979. It was not productive, Mr. Chairman. I was Deputy Speaker of the House at the time and Chairman of Committees. We reformed the rules, I believe it was in 1973, to make the limit seventy-five hours. And I recall being in the Chair for almost all of the seventy-five hours. The Assistant Chairman of Committees was reluctant to participate to such an extent as I did, because I thoroughly enjoyed the cut and thrust of it at the time. Anyway, I suppose I was in the Chair for sixty of the seventy-five hours and I was witness to the 'productivity', I put that in quotes, that the member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder) now reminisces about. It was not productive, Mr. Chairman. All we had was a group of speeches, speechifying, familiar speeches. As a matter of fact, the speeches were so repetitive that there is now a rule in our Rules of Procedure which does away with needless repetition. There was so much needless repetition in an attempt to use up the seventy-five hours, that we now have a rule that is designed to sit a member down if he is involved with needless repetition. As a matter of fact, I recall with great glee sitting the member for Hermitage, I believe it was, who is now temporarily in the House of Commons, Mr. Simmons. He was notorious for his needless repetition. The hon. gentleman was needless in many respects, but his repetition was even more needless than other aspects of his existence. But I recall having to sit him down on numerous occasions which, of course, did not go over too well with him. But this is the sort of thing that we were confronted with over these many years. And in 1979 the committees came in. I sat out from 1975 until 1979, but it came back into the House of Assembly in 1979.



MR. STAGG: And I must say that the committees initially, at least, had the whole-hearted participation of hon. members opposite. Now, there were eighteen of them then -

AN HON. MEMBER: Nineteen.

MR. STAGG: - seventeen, eighteen, nineteen - they fluctuated from time to time - but I believe there were eighteen of them. They worked fairly hard. There was one notorious exception from this hard work - well, there were a couple of notorious exceptions actually. The present Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) boycotted the proceedings right from the beginning. And I believe that - let me see, we have had 1979, '80, '81, '82, '83, so this is the fifth year that we have had the Estimates debated in the committees and I believe he is making his first appearance this year. So he is a relative novice to it. He boycotted it for a number of years, so he does not know what he is talking about.

MR. HODDER: He appeared last year in Social Services.

MR. STAGG: He appeared last year. He made one appearance last year, did he not? So this was not his maiden appearance this year.

MR. STAGG: He is a sophomore now. He is not a freshman, he is a sophomore. The hon. member realizes that he cannot dominate one of these Committees in the same way that he can dominate the House so he is not in favour of them. Anything he cannot dominate he is not in favour of it. And the metamorphosis of the member for Stephenville - or the member for Port au Port, (Mr. Hodder) -

(Inaudible),

MR. HODDER:

MR. STAGG:

Yes, well, I do not know if

I am planning to resign or not.

MR. HODDER:

You may have to.

MR. STAGG:

Yes, well, I will give the hon.

member - I have invited the hon. member to that on many occasions. But I think of him as the member for Stephenville because he lives in Stephenville, he does not live in his district.

MR. SIMMS:

One of your constituents.

MR. STAGG:

He is one of my constituents, yes.

MR. HEARN:

Does he vote for you?

MR. STAGG:

Yes. In any event, I recall having conversations with him, and he is on record in the House as having said what a wonderful system the Committee system is.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Yes?

MR. STAGG:

I have talked to him privately and he has mentioned many times what a wonderful system it is.

MR. HODDER:

Not true.

MR. STAGG:

Not true? It is not true that the hon. member said that to me?

MR. HODDER:

Not true.

MR. STAGG:

I am lying, in other words.

MR. WARREN:

'It is not true,' he said.

MR. STAGG: You are saying that you did not speak to me indicating that the Committee system was a considerable advantage?

MR. WARREN: 'It is not true,' he said.

MR. STAGG: Not true. Oh, not true. Okay. Well, I am saying that the hon. member either has a very poor memory or he is deliberately mistaking what he said. So the hon. member, I allege, is on the record as having been in favour of the Committee system. Now this year, suddenly he is against it. Well, that is a familiar turn of events for members of the Liberal Party.

MR. HOUSE: He is following his leader now.

MR. STAGG: Following his leader, yes. His leader, by the way, seems to put a great deal of faith in Dale Carnegie - 'That is not the way Dale Carnegie would do it.' Well, we had a fellow who made a living with the Dale Carnegie system who ran for election here in St. John's in March, 1972.

MR. CHAIRMAN (MCNICHOLAS): Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. STAGG: His one and only foray into the political field and he did not make it. So we on this side do not have too much faith in the Dale Carnegie as far as it comes to making a success of politicians.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please!

The hon. member for Terra Nova.

MR. LUSH: Mr. Chairman, I had not intended to speak on this particular issue, but since it has been raised I do want to make a few remarks about it. First of all let me say that when the idea

MR. LUSH: and the suggestions -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. LUSH: Mr. Chairman, I was just waiting until - but it gave me a chance to collect my thoughts. When the idea and the notion was presented to bring about the parliamentary reform in this House, I was all for it. Naturally I am all for parliamentary reform and any change in rules and regulations which will refine the operation of the House, And any moves that will put it more in tune with the times, then certainly I am all for it. At that particular time

MR. LUSH: I certainly gave my approval for parliamentary reform and the rules as they were introduced to our caucus at the time. I will say though there were a couple of understandings that I accepted this with, one being that it was my clear understanding that it was for a trial period, that we were going to initiate this for sometime. I do not know exactly what it was. I have heard the Leader of the Opposition say it was for one year. That is not clear in my mind but the only thing that is clear in my mind is that it was to be for a period of time and then it would be reviewed again and if we found that some of the rules were not working we would make the necessary changes. Also, of course, we were not able to foresee, naturally, what would happen. That is always the difficulty when you try to initiate change or set up any kind of policy. We are not prophets, we can only work with the wisdom that we have and very often we make mistakes. Now, one of the things that we did not foresee was that the Opposition at one point in time would be down to the numbers they are now. And, Mr. Chairman, that is what makes the committee system in particular rather difficult. I think some of the changes with respect to the length of time and this sort of thing, were good changes. I do not object to these now, but the only thing that I do find a little bit out of order right now, or a little bit unsatisfactory is probably the better word, is the committees because we are down to eight people and that does not give us a lot of bodies to be able to spread around to the various committees to do the kind of indepth study that should be done on these committees. The other thing is, Mr. Chairman, I think if the government were a little bit flexible and had a little bit of understanding, I think that maybe the process as it now is could be a little more workable, and I refer to the scheduling, if

MR. LUSH:                   it could be arranged where we had one committee per day or every second day. You know, there is no rush to get through these estimates but for some reason or other the government sees a necessity to rush, doing two committees a day and doing committees every day. I think if there was some understanding on the part of the government in this respect, if they really wanted these estimates to be done in a thorough manner, and understanding the fact that the Opposition now is a much smaller Opposition than we have been accustomed to, when we were eighteen or nineteen -

MR. TOBIN:                   That is not our fault.

MR. LUSH:                   The hon. members can say it is not their fault but, again, if they were really concerned for the people of this Province, if they wanted the people of this Province to know what is happening with the fiscal and the financial policy of this Province, they would certainly make the appropriate

MR. LUSH:

arrangements to ensure that the estimates were debated thoroughly, and that the people of this Province would know what is going on.

Now, Mr. Chairman, again they can talk about the Hansard. Now, how widely published, or circulated I should say, is the Hansard? Not very many people get a hold of this Hansard, and when it comes out it is six or seven months old. And I think we have to - the hon. the House Leader (Mr. Marshall) tries to make light of the fact that there is no press present and it is not necessary because we have a Hansard. Well, Mr. Chairman, that is not the notion that people accept about parliaments today. Why is it that many parliaments are having their proceedings televised? It is so that the people can see what is going on. So, Mr. Chairman, where we do not have that kind of exposure it is certainly incumbent upon the government to ensure that at least they have made things as easy for the press as they can. And we realize today that many of the media people are not over supplied with personnel and it puts a bit of a burden on these people as well to attend all of the committees. And certainly we have to take into consideration, also, the consideration of the press, whether or not we are not making the schedule too tight for these people to come and cover the House, and whether by doing two and three committees a day, along with the House, whether we are just not presenting too much to be reported. But, of course, again that is what the government want, I guess. They do not want this stuff to get reported so they are showing no understanding, Mr. Speaker, or no inclination, or no propensity towards ensuring that the public will be informed of what takes place in this hon. House. And as I have said before, some members may differ, some people

MR. LUSH: some people may think that the estimates should be discussed on this floor, I do not know that I am so strong on that point. But I would certainly like for the provision to be made for flexible scheduling, scheduling that will give members the time to study and do the necessary research, and also to make the scheduling such a way that it will also be convenient with press members to attend the meetings. And I think these are concerns, Mr. Chairman, that should be heeded by this government, that should be taken into consideration very, very seriously. And when an Opposition has eighteen or nineteen people, well, then, I do not think it is so difficult because you have more people to spread around. But, also, we still have to be mindful about the position of the press. That does not help their position and I think we have to be, if we want the people of this Province to be informed, if we want what is discussed in this House, if we want the people of this Province to know about the



MR. T. LUSH: policies of this Province, then I think we should make every effort to ensure that the scheduling is flexible so that we can allow these people sufficient time to get into these meetings without making it too burdensome and too awkward. And, after all, that should be the desire of every government, to try and open up the process so that the people of the Province will know in detail what has transpired in their particular Parliament. And that certainly should be our motive and it should be our desire, to ensure that we make the House as accessible as possible to the press, and certainly to ensure that hon. members are given sufficient time to study and research the estimates that they have to deal with. So, Mr. Chairman, I guess what I am saying can be summed up from two points of view one, that I think that the government should consider now the position of the diminished Opposition, the diminished numbers that we have, and certainly appreciate the fact that with eight members we cannot have all of these Committees going on simultaneously or too close together, and, secondly, the consideration for the press so that they can give these committees and the House the kind of coverage that both deserve, and inform our people so that they can know what is going on financially, can know what the public policies of this government are. And that, Mr. Chairman, is what we should be doing. All hon. members should want to inform our public so that they know what is taking place. That certainly has to be a major consideration of any government. So, Mr. Chairman, it is not so much that the rules are all that bad, as I have said before

MR. CHAIRMAN (McNicholas): Order, please!

MR. LUSH: - it is a matter of the government being a little bit more flexible.

MR. CHAIRMAN (McNicholas): The hon. the member's time has elapsed.

MR. T. LUSH: If I could just finish two words, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: By leave.

MR. CHAIRMAN: By leave.

MR. LUSH: It is a matter of the government being a little more flexible and a little more understanding, and have a little more desire for the people of this Province to know what is taking place in these chambers.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. T. RIDEOUT: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. the member for Baie Verte - White Bay.

MR. RIDEOUT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to have a word or two to say on the topic that is being discussed here this afternoon. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, I think it is a very productive debate that we are having on the procedures underwhich we examine the expenditures of this Province.

MR. S. NEARY: You are trying to interrupt.

MR. RIDEOUT: I am not trying to interrupt anything, Mr. Chairman. If nobody from the Opposition had spoken the last time I would not be on my feet, as a matter of fact, I would have been quite happy to go to the next head and get into that. But there were some points made by the hon. gentleman who just took his seat that I think ought to be answered by us on this side of the House. Now, as a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, the government did, last year when we were striking those Estimate Committees, consider very carefully the diminished numbers of the Opposition. It is true that during the last House there were seventeen or eighteen and I think

MR. RIDEOUT: the numbers then on those committees were three Opposition members and four Government members. And we took that into consideration very carefully last year when we were considering striking those committees again. As a matter of fact, I believe most of the committees now are manned by two Opposition members and four, and in some cases five, backbenchers from the government side. So we have taken into account the diminished numbers on the other side and we have provided extra numbers from this side of the House so that the Opposition would not be bound to have three people on all those committees and thereby heighten and make the burden too great for them to bear. So the government has been very, very flexible, Mr. Chairman, in trying to improve the lot of the Opposition so that they could man those committees, and so that those committees could remain and be the effective tools that they have been since they were started in this House back in 1979. So it is not right, it is just not a fact for people on the other side to be able to say that the government has not been flexible, that the government has not done anything about helping the Opposition, because of their diminished numbers to improve and carry out the duties which, of course, remain the role of the Opposition.

There were a few other things mentioned today as well, Mr. Chairman. I heard the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary)-and it really boils me to a degree how the Leader of the Opposition can get up and say something that is not a fact and nobody seems to pickup and say anything about it. Now, anybody who went to the Estimates Committee last night knows, and the Opposition Leader made this

MR. RIDEOUT: statement in the House a few minutes ago, that he spent 120 minutes last night, because there were seven or eight government members there and then the minister had so much time to reply, that he spent 120 minutes and could not get involved in the thrust of debate and examining the estimates. Mr. Chairman, it is just not a fact. There was one person, one government member who spoke at that Estimates Committee hearing last night. And do you know the only other member of the House besides the minister responding who spoke? It was the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary). He had the whole night to himself. He could have asked what he liked, I assume he did, he could have made any statement he wanted to make, he could have done what he liked, and he did it. But then the same hon. gentleman, just to be critical, can get up in the House today and say, and, I suppose expect not to be brought to task, get up and say that with all the array of government members there it is a total waste of time, you have got to wait an hour, or over an hour before you can get to ask a question, before you can get to make a point. That is just not a fact and, Mr. Chairman, I, for one, cannot stand by and allow that kind of statement to stand on the public record without it being corrected. The only point that I did hear today, that I think bears looking at, and I am sure it has financial implications, was the point made by the hon. gentleman from Terra Nova (Mr. Lush) with regard to the Hansards for committee hearings.

MR. RIDEOUT: It is a fact, because the Hansard people have to do the Hansard of the House on a daily basis, that those Hansards are done later on, I suppose, after the House closes, and I agree. I agree that is a problem and I do not know if something can be done about that without incurring a heavy financial burden that we obviously cannot afford at this period of time in our history to incur. But I agree that is a problem and I would like to see something done about that, because it is good for all of us if, within a reasonable period of time, the Hansards could be available so that, you know, they are available for whatever you might want them for.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I just want to make another couple of points. I sat in today for a half an hour or forty-five minutes or so on a Committee meeting, and I do that periodically if I have a break down in the office. If I have it on and they are up here in the House, I come up every now and then, and sometimes I participate, but I just come to see what is happening at those meetings. This is talking about the role of government members now on those Committees. I mean, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) and the member for Port au Port (Mr. Hodder), were up calling them dodos and dummies, sitting down for hours and never opening their mouths or anything else. Again that is a statement that cannot be substantiated.

I was here sitting back quietly in the backbenches this morning for half an hour or forty-five minutes, while the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Newhook) was doing her estimates before the appropriate Committee of this House, and all the while I was here there was an Opposition member here. He could have participated but he did not choose to at the time I was here. All the while

MR. RIDEOUT: I was here the questions were being asked by government members- there were two who participated while I was there. There were questions about the vote for fire prevention equipment, about the emergency flooding vote, there were questions about everything. The member for Windsor-Buchans (McLennon) and the member for the Bay of Islands (Mr. Woodrow) were participating back and forth asking very penetrating questions, getting very excellent answers from the minister. And, you know, it is just not a fact, it cannot be substantiated that the government members go to those Committees and just sit down and let the estimates slide through. There were very, very penetrating, very good questions asked by the government members as I have seen it over the last two or three years on those Committees.

So those kinds of statements, Mr. Chairman, just cannot be substantiated and you cannot allow them to be made and nobody say anything about them.

And the last point that I want to make is that, yes, I have been in this House, too, since 1975 and I have seen the old way and I have seen the new way. I saw more than one year when there were only one or two departments passed in this House by the time the seventy-five hour rule was up. As a matter of fact, it occurred year after year. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, there were hours and hours, day and night spent on Minister's Salaries. And I bet you, Mr. Chairman, from 1975 to 1979, 95 per cent of the Budget went through without even getting off the Minister's Salary.

Now, that is what happened.

So there was no chance to ask ministers questions about what this vote was for, or to take ministers to task, or the ministry to task on whether that money was appropriately spent, it was just one political rhetorical debate after another. Minister's

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MR. RIDEOUT:

Salary, that was it. I remember  
one year, on the Minister of Forestry, I believe  
we spent twenty-one hours and never got off  
the Minister's Salary, Head No. I.

MR. HOUSE: Thirty-two hours in Education one year.

MR. RIDEOUT: Thirty-two in Education one year. And I would submit, Mr. Chairman, that none of us who participated in that exercise - I would submit to you and to this House that none of us who participated in that exercise did any benefit to the people who sent us here. It was no benefit to those people that we spent twenty-five hours and thirty hours and never got past the minister's salary.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Aylward): Order, please!

Could I interrupt the hon. member for a minute? This being Thursday and 5:00 p.m. I wish to announce that the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) was not satisfied with the question re health care services in Labrador, a question referred to the Minister of Health (Mr. House) which will be on the Late Show today at 5:30 p.m.

MR. WARREN: The answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is not satisfied with health care in Labrador, not satisfied with the answer.

The hon. member for Baie Verte - White Bay.

MR. RIDEOUT: Mr. Chairman, I basically made my points and in closing I just want to - again we are talking about the way the House works and talking about the decorum of the House and so on. I remember last week - not last week, of course, we were not open, but the week before talking about the Late Shows. Of all the disgruntlement and all the anger that the Opposition was talking about, the week before we closed for Easter there was not one question on the Late Show. Today with all the problems, you know, with the teachers' withdrawal of services, the teachers' strike and all of that, again



MR. RIDEOUT: we have two slots on the Late Show not being taken advantage of by the Opposition. Mr. Chairman, I say it is a shame. It is a shame that time provides for it, the rules provide for it. The people of the Province are expecting those people whom they have elected in the Opposition to do their duty and, Mr. Chairman, they are simply not doing their duty under the rules of this House.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Aylward): The hon. member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Chairman, I wish to say a few words in this debate. I would take a little bit of exception to the last remarks of the member for Baie Verte - White Bay. About two weeks ago there was a question on the Order Paper and the Speaker came and asked me, because the question was two weeks old - the budget had been brought down in the meantime, therefore the question was two weeks old and that was why I withdrew it. So that is the reason.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we are talking about the workings of the committees. Now to show that we are not afraid to have differences of opinion within our Party, I believe that - now I have only been here since 1979 and I do not know how the old system worked. In fact, I do not care how the old system worked. But I do care how this system works and this system can work better than it is working. This is a good system but it can work better. And, Mr. Chairman, in response to what the Premier was saying earlier, the Premier said that maybe we would make modifications to this system.

MR. WARREN: I believe that the President of the Council (Mr. Marshall), the Government House Leader, could have given a better response and could have come up with a better working of the Committee this year. To me I find the Committee works good, but the unfortunate part of the working of the Committee is when there are two Committees meeting at the same time. Now, I have heard this from government members, that they are attending one Committee meeting - take, for example, when the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ottenheimer) had his Committee meeting here. Because I had some good questions, I hope they were good questions, some concerns I wanted to express to the Minister of Justice, naturally I came here. But there was another Committee meeting on at the same time. It was one of my shadows, but unfortunately I could not attend that Committee meeting because both of them were on at the same time. And that is my only complaint about the Estimates Committees, that I am sure - well, it was the voters who decided that they would only send eight members of the Opposition back, that was the voters' decision and I buy that. But I think the hon. House Leader could also show respect for the voters of this Province by giving the people of this Province the opportunity to know and to have more information on what is happening in the Committees.

In fact my hon. colleague for St. Mary's-The Capes (Mr. Hearn), I can see from way he is looking at me and the way his eyes are penetrating that he agrees with what I am saying. He agrees that there should be only one Committee meeting at one time. And with that the media can be in one place. Whether they want to cover it or not, at least they have the option. Also, by doing that

MR. WARREN: I think we would solve the problem that the hon. member for Baie Verte-White Bay (Mr. Rideout) mentioned earlier, and that is that Hansard would not be -

AN HON. MEMBER: What do you think of the new Premier there?

MR. WARREN: He would make a much better Premier than we already have. Hansard would not be as busy, the crowd in Hansard would not be as busy

MR. G. WARREN: and furthermore they would be getting paid for the work they are doing. Right now the Hansard are the most overworked crowd in this building.

MR. G. TOBIN: Who?

MR. WARREN: The Hansard crowd, because they are trying to cover the House of Assembly and they are covering two committees in one day and it is practically impossible for them to do it. So I would make a suggestion to the hon. the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall); next year, not for the sake of the Opposition - I do not care what my colleagues say - but for the sake of the voters of this Province, that next year we seriously consider - and it can be done - having one meeting taking place at any one time. Now I will just throw over an example to the minister; from 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. for one department and probably from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. for another department. That way you have two meetings in one day but you have not got them happening at the same time. Or from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 A.M. and from 7:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. in the night. I do not go to bed 9:30 P.M.. Maybe some of the members do but that is fine and dandy.

MR. R. BAIRD: Ask your House Leader (Mr. Hodder). He likes to go to bed early.

MR. WARREN: All I am saying is that I do not mind having two committee meetings per day but not at the same time. I think the hon. the Government House Leader has that obligation to the voters of the Province, not only those who voted for the forty-four PC members but also those who voted for the other eight members. It is only natural that this is upsetting to some of my colleagues to have meetings scheduled simultaneously. That was not necessary this year. We could have met evenings. In fact, I would think probably by tomorrow evening, or within a few days time, all the Chairmen

MR. G. WARREN: of the Committees will report back that they have completed their estimates. I know you cannot do it by tomorrow because the hon. the Minister of Development (Mr. Windsor) is on holidays, we understand that.

MR. G. TOBIN: He was there when you were not there.

MR. WARREN: That is right but this House was not opened. While the House was not opened there was no business, right?

So, Mr. Chairman, my concern is, and I think the hon. the member from Baie Verte - White Bay (Mr. Rideout) does agree, that Hansard could be improved. If there is one meeting happening a day it could be accommodated by Hansard. Almost every government member that is on the committee is the same as me. Look, I think the meetings are going together and it can work better. And let me say in conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I think the Chairmen on those committees, in my estimation, are doing as good a job as humanly possible. However, there are some members on the committee

MR. WARREN: who do have good questions, good penetrating questions that could put the minister on occasion on the hot seat. However, the hon. member, because he is a member of the government party, hides behind his political affiliation on many occasions. This has happened and it is only natural. He does not give the minister the real darts that they deserve sometimes, so it is up to us and we are doing it. We are doing a fairly good job under the circumstances and under the rules and regulations of the committee. I say the committee can work if the minister would listen, would just take a little advice from the Opposition once in a while, and next year when the committees are discussed why not at least try it for next year and change it if it does not work. Try one meeting at one time and just see if it will work better.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Aylward): The hon. President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I would like to respond because, and I congratulate the hon. member, that was a reasonable contribution to the proceedings of this committee. I do not want to get him at loggerheads and competing with his leader, as contrasted with his leader who only could talk about was that the people of the press were looking at him from behind rather than face to face, That is the Leader of the Opposition.

I want to respond to what the hon. gentleman just said. First of all, he indicated that the present committee system is good but it could be better and there is always room for improvement on everything. We are certainly prepared to recognize that there is always room for improvement in anything and we are particularly prepared to listen to the reasonable suggestions that were made. Now the hon. gentleman

MR. MARSHALL: spoke in a very reasonable frame of mind and put forth some very reasonable positions that he has. But just because he puts them does not necessarily mean that they are superior, as I am sure he will be the first to recognize, to other positions. But I would just like to mention this because we are drawing near to the end of estimates consideration and I want to address myself solely to the item brought up by him. There are three committees that have been set up. The membership on these committees are obviously proportionate to the representation in the House. They reflect the House itself, which reflects a representation in the Province. When they were originally set up, the House had a bigger Opposition. The complement was four on the government side and three on the Opposition side. As a result of last year's election the numbers on the committees changed from five to two instead of from four to three. Initial concerns were expressed that under the rules all three committees could meet at one particular time.

MR. MARSHALL: The government met with the Chairmen of Committees and it was thought that really there should not be three meetings going on at the one time because of the fact that it would be unreasonable for all parties. Now you have to remember at the same time, while the Opposition have eight and they have to supply two members on each committee, the government backbenchers, or the government private members as we speak of them, have to supply five and ten members if there are two committee sittings. So you have to be sensitive to the concerns of all.

So what we decided was, perhaps the complaints that were made were legitimate, that there should not be three sitting at a time, so consequently we took steps to see that there were two committees sitting at a time. Up to now we have not seen that really too onerous for two committees to be sitting at any one time, in actual fact there are many times when only one committee does sit, such as last night. And I would again point out when one committee sat last night to consider the estimates of Mines and Energy there was only one Opposition member who showed up. I realize at the same time when I was saying that, there are times when committee meetings are held when not all the government members turn up. But the point I am trying to make is that it does not really appear, at this stage, to be too onerous for there to be two committees meeting at certain times within the fifteen days. If it turned out to be inconvenient for certain members of the Opposition, for example, the House Leader (Mr. Hodder) on the other side pointed out the fact that sometimes a member might be shadowing one department in another committee while they were members of a committee that was sitting and they could not be in two places at the one time - I pointed out that, you know, in the spirit of co-operation I felt quite



MR. MARSHALL: sure to the extent that it was possible that the committee chairmen would arrange to accommodate this particular situation. I have heard no complaints that this has not been done, or in fact that any request of that nature had been made.

The hon. member also brings up the point that Hansard could be improved. The people in Hansard do a yeoman service. You know, it is a very difficult job, as the hon. member indicated, and they reproduce the Hansards as quickly as they possibly can, When you come down to these considerations you are coming down to considerations really of dollars and cents, and certainly it would be nice to be able to have daily Hansards and ultimately I suppose we will have to aim to that both in the committees and in the House itself, but right now with the financial restraints we are in that might prove to be a little difficult.

So I hope I have indicated to the hon. gentleman that his comments were very well taken and certainly I thought they were very reasonable, constructive comments and I hope he will agree with the way in which they have been responded to. You know, you do not necessarily have to agree holus-bolus with everything the hon. gentleman said, but the fact of the matter is I have attempted to respond to him in the same manner and the same spirit that he voiced the questions.

On motion 2.1.1-01 through 2.2.1-03, carried.

On motion Head II, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Aylward):

Head III, Executive Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN (AYLWARD): The hon. President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, may I ask approximately how many minutes we have left or hours, however long it is? Don?

MR. STEWART: We have approximately fifty-nine minutes.

MR. MARSHALL: Fifty-nine minutes, have we?

AN HON. MEMBER: It is about an hour.

MR. MARSHALL: About an hour.

Well, Mr. Chairman, this is the final vote to be considered in Committee of the Whole. It relates to the Premier's office, the office of the Executive Council, the Cabinet secretariate, Treasury Board secretariate, Intergovernmental Affairs secretariate, Status of Women's Advisory Council and the Offshore Petroleum Impact Committees that are all under the heading of Executive Council. I do not think really that there is too much that I need to belabour the Committee with at the present time except to say that the imperatives of restraint apply to the Premier's office as well as to the other offices involved here. And there has not been any more than a commensurate increase in the total cost in the department.

Included in this, Mr. Chairman, of course, is Government House, the vote on Government House. Normally it is a matter of practice that passes automatically. The office of the Premier is included here with the Senior Policy Advisor which is covered in this and the Chief of Staff, the Press Secretary to the Premier. I just tell the hon. gentlemen that my own humble self is included in this particular department as well.

MR. OTTENHEIMER: The most important part of it, I suppose.

MR. MARSHALL: Certainly. Most definitely. The President of the Treasury Board and the matters pertaining to the Treasury Board and Secretariate of the Treasury Board, the Intergovernmental Affairs secretariate which played such an important part in this government particularly in recent times, that played such a leading part in the matter of the abortive or the offshore negotiations.

MR. OTTENHEIMER: They are not abortive now.

MR. MARSHALL: No, they are not abortive. really. They are abortive, as the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ottenheimer) reminds me, because of the federal government's intransigence with respect to it and we would certainly hope that that attitude will change in due course.

So anyway, Mr. Chairman, I realize that there is only a limited time available. So I shall take my seat now and give the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) his usual opportunity to repeat the same, as I know it will be, the same type of speech as he has made year after year after year on this as he does in all other governmental departments.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Aylward): Before I recognize the hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary), would you like to dispose of the Government House vote and start on the Premier's salary?

On motion, 3.1.1-01 and  
3.1.1-02 carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shall 3.2.1-01, the Premier's Office, carry?

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I hate to disappoint the hon. gentleman, I have no intention of making a speech. All I want is information from the hon. gentleman. I want to find out the number of employees in the Premier's Office at the present time. Could we have a list by classification, and their salaries, and any increases that they have had in the last year?

MR. MARSHALL: There are many employees.  
Which ones do you want?

MR. NEARY: Right in the Premier's Office on the eighth floor.

MR. MARSHALL: Okay, I can give you that.

MR. NEARY: How many secretaries? How many chiefs of staff? How many advisors? How many parliamentary secrets?

AN HON. MEMBER: There are no parliamentary secrets.

MR. NEARY: That is right. And the ones he has scattered around the Province.

MR. HODDER: The member for Bay of Islands (Mr. Woodrow) is probably among the parliamentary people.

MR. NEARY: While the hon. gentleman is on his feet he might also tell us where we can find the rent for Tiffany Place buried? Is it in this vote or is it in some other vote? And the hon. gentleman might also tell us what other perks we provide the Premier apart from the taxpayers giving him an apartment. What else do we give him? Do we provide him with his -

MR. TULK: Pretty heavy stuff for the economy of the country.

MR. NEARY: Yes, it is pretty heavy stuff, when you consider hospital beds are shut down and we have a large list of people who are sick, who desperately need surgery, and all the children out of school. This is pretty heavy stuff. Mr. Chairman, just an indication of how greedy the gentleman is who occupies the Premier's chair, when it comes to helping himself he is not exactly backward.

Now we would like to find out, there were a couple of hundred thousand dollars spent on Mount Scio House when the hon. gentleman was there, he had it redecorated to suit his own taste, he had paintings and wall to wall carpet, and new furniture, and china, and silverware and the like, Mr. Chairman, it would be interesting for the House to find out what has happened to all these things. We now know that the lawyers from the Justice Department are up there from Monday to Friday. They were moved from an office building downtown, and the Premier told us that when they moved it would mean a saving of \$60,000 to the taxpayers, but I am told that what the Premier did not say was that the same office space that was occupied by the lawyers from the Justice Department down in the Terpesta Building, that same space

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MR. NEARY:                      was then rented for a branch of  
the Department of Education. And not only was it rented to  
the Department of Education, but the rate per square foot

MR. NEARY:

was increased. And so we have the lawyers moved into Mount Scio house, we had the education people move in where the lawyers were, and the rate per square foot was increased. Now where was the saving? But anyway I would like to hear the answer to that, we want to find out what happened. Did they leave all of the things in Mount Scio house? And the lawyers are only there from Monday to Friday, and on weekends they rent it out for banquets, wedding banquets and the like? Is that what they do with it, Mr. Chairman?

MR. RIDEOUT: Do you want to hold the Liberal convention over there?

MR. NEARY: This is a very serious matter, I want to find out what has happened. What has happened to all of the things that were in Mount Scio house? Were some of them moved down in Tiffany Place? Where the paintings and the silverware?

MR. HISCOCK: All in storage.

MR. NEARY: It is all in storage.

My colleague says it is all in storage. Well if it is in storage we would like to find out where it is.

MR. WARREN: Is that the office space that advertised for under the Minister of Public Works that was just vacant storage space?

MR. NEARY: Well I do not know if that was what the hon. gentleman referred to yesterday when he told us he paid \$7.50 a square foot for storage space, if it was to store the silverware and the condiments and the beds and the paintings and the china and all the other nice things that the rabbit hunter likes, Mr. Chairman. He likes to live in the lap of luxury. An apartment from the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation would not do the hon. gentleman. The government itself has all kinds of apartments available.

MR. WARREN:

Yes, but they are only  
for welfare people.

MR. NEARY:

Only for welfare people! No,  
over at Churchill Square and Pleasantville and all these  
other places they have bachelor apartments. I believe  
the member for Exploits (Mr. Twomey) lives in a bachelor  
apartment. If it is good enough for him I would imagine  
it should be good enough for the Premier. If they wanted  
to give him an apartment, which they should not have done,  
by the way, without paying rent. Nobody else gets it,  
no other Premier in Canada, no other Premier in Newfoundland's  
history got a rent -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Mount Scio house (inaudible).  
He used to (inaudible) up there (inaudible).

MR. NEARY:

I doubt that very much.  
Mr. Chairman, I would  
like to get some answers on these and a number of other  
questions that I will be asking the hon. gentleman  
later on. But while we are on the Premier's salary,  
Mr. Chairman, I think it is only fitting that I should  
talk about the propaganda machine that he has down on  
the Eighth Floor, the brochures



MR. NEARY: that are continuously coming out of the Premier's office, the pamphlets. Mr. Chairman, also it is only that we should talk about the hon. gentleman's lack of leadership, the Premier's lack of ability to administer. He is good at playing little political games but not much good at administering. He cannot govern. What he has not been able to do is stop electioneering. He forgets that once the election is over that in between that and the next provincial election you have to govern the Province, you have to deliver on your promises, you have to provide plans and policies and proposals to develop the natural resources and to develop the Province. The Premier has managed successfully to turn off just about every group in the Province. He has attacked, outside of the churches - and I would say they are on his hit list next - outside of the churches I think he has tackled every group in Newfoundland. The fishermen are opposed to him. The fish plant workers are against him. The Board of Trade, the business people are opposed to him. The construction workers are against him. The teachers are against him. The nurses are against him. The university students are against him. The public service is against him. Just about every group that you can mention he has turned off.

AN HON. MEMBER: How do you know that?

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, how do we know that? Well, look, I will just give the hon. House an example. I will read one letter that I received today before I came to the House addressed to the Premier. It is from Jackson Walsh School System Staff, Western Bay. Dated April 13, 1983.

MR. NEARY: "We, as teachers and members of the districts of Carbonear and Harbour Grace, are highly insulted by the treatment our association is being given by the P.C. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador during the negotiations of our overdue contract. We have within the past year elected very capable men to your government and throughout the Province teachers in most districts have contributed greatly to your success in the last election.

"However, as good as our candidates may be the tide has again changed and we will not forget your ingratitude for our past support. If your government cannot deal fairly with the teachers of this Province we will be unable to help you in the future. Teachers will discontinue to support you and your arrogance." And it is signed by a Mr. Hodder and Wallace Hollett who represent the Jackson Walsh School System Staff in Western Bay.

MR. MARSHALL: I assume you are going to table that.

MR. NEARY: I will gladly table it if

MR. MARSHALL: It does not matter if you are glad or not, you have to under the rules of the House.

MR. NEARY: As a matter of fact I have it marked here, tabled in the Legislature April 14, 1983 and my name is signed on it.

MR. MARSHALL: Anyone sign (inaudible).

MR. NEARY: No doubt their names will be put on a black list I suppose. That is why the hon. gentleman wants it tabled, of course. It is no secret. It was sent to the Premier so why should I not table it?

Mr. Chairman, that is only one example of the dozens of letters that flow into our office every day addressed to me and members of the Opposition.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Aylward): Order, please! It being five-thirty on Thursday the committee is to rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, Mr. Chairman left the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): The hon. member for Kilbride.

MR. AYLWARD: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered the matters to them referred and reports the passing of Head 11 and made other progress and asks leave to sit again.

On motion Committee of Supply has considered the matters to them referred and asks leave to sit again on tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: On the Late Show today, I understand there is one question, a question posed by the hon. member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) to the hon. Minister of Health (Mr. House). I recognize the hon. member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Yesterday in the hon. House I asked the hon. minister a fairly straightforward question and I asked him, I think, the same question about a week and a half ago, it concerned the closure of the North West River Hospital. I am sure since I asked the minister the question the first time that the minister has had the opportunity to read statements directed towards him and his officials concerning the drastic action that the minister's department has taken. And what is so unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, is that the minister's department did something against the philosophy of the Premier of the Province. And that is, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has advocated that since 1979 when there were any decisions to be made - and I will repeat it again, it was in August 1979, when the Premier said that it is important that a consultative process be assigned to meet the needs of all concerned be developed as soon as possible." He said there will be

MR. WARREN: "consultation with the people concerned will be advocated before any decision would be made."

Now, Mr. Speaker, what has the minister done? The minister has closed down a hospital that affects the whole Coast of Labrador from Black Tickle to Nain and including North West River and to a degree Happy Valley - Goose Bay.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to read some of the comments that Dr. Catherine Blackie Pottle has made and I am sure the minister has heard those comments. And here is what -

MR. STAGG: Is she a doctor?

MR. WARREN: Yes, she is a doctor. She is practicing medicine at North West River at the present time. Yes.

MR. STAGG: I did not realize that.

MR. WARREN: I know you did not realize. You do not even realize you are a member of the House by the way.

Dr. Catherine Pottle said "There were massive outcries" - listen to this, "There were massive outcries in the 1960s because the government had the gall to relocate complete communities." There were massive outcries in 1960 when the government decided to have this resettlement programme. However, that was an outrage to the social, mental and the economic aftermath, Now history is repeating itself. History is repeating itself but with a differnt government in the driver's seat.

Mr. Speaker, this minister said yesterday in a response he said the department has information it has received from various groups. I would like for the minister

MR. WARREN: to get up now and tell the House if he received information from Dr. Peter Roberts, who wanted to save St. Anthony instead of Goose Bay.

MR. STAGG: Your colleague's brother.

MR. WARREN: Or has he received it from the International Grenfell Board, which nine members in telephone calls to me, have told that they have not been consulted about any decision made concerning a board that they are members on. The report by Dr. Sarsfield, a report that the Executive Director of the International Grenfell Association has received, it has somehow gotten into the minister's hands and it still has been kept quiet. It has been kept quiet.

MR. WARREN: by Dr. Sarsfield. Dr. Sarsfield was the author of it and this report has been kept quiet because it says that health care is worse than ever along the Labrador Coast and there should be improvements made to the hospital facility, instead of downgrading it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (RUSSELL): Order, please!

The hon. member's time has expired.

The hon. Minister of Health.

MR. HOUSE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member wanted to debate this this evening because he was not satisfied with my answer a couple of days ago. I am not overly enamoured by his questions either. But I am just going to state exactly what has transpired. You talk about Dr. Sarsfield's report, I do not know anything about Dr. Sarfield's report. Dr. Sarsfield is not in Labrador now. He is in the North West Territories. I do not appreciate, Mr. Speaker, the reference and the insinuations applied to the Board and the present Director of the Grenfell Board, Dr. Peter Roberts. Dr. Peter Roberts is doing a very excellent job and the board is representative of Northern Newfoundland and the Coast of Labrador and the Goose Bay area. We depend on these people, the information they get, for the smooth running of the service. The Board has only been in existence for, I believe, it is two or three years and we knew it was going to have growing pains. But I think they are doing a great job to this point in time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the reference was made a couple of days ago, that booklet that the hon.

MR. HOUSE: member showed, that is information that was gathered at a meeting as a result of this, as far as I can gather. The report that he referred to yesterday or two days ago was an in House report done by the Board that was never commissioned by me or the department but it did relate to the North West River hospital. And the fact of the matter is, if you talk about the North West River Hospital, everybody knew that that had to close as an acute care institution. Its occupancy has dropped by half in the last five years. The admissions are gone down now to 39 per cent occupancy.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is no way of justifying maintaining that hospital when there is another one sixteen miles away I believe, I believe that is somewhere around the approximate mileage, on paved road and there is no justification. I was reading the Northern Pen the other day and somebody was commenting on that very thing and they said something like this, 'It is not that it is going to close. Why the heck has it been open so long when



MR. HOUSE: when you have got a fairly good facility right in Goose Bay. And, Mr. Speaker, that is going to be upgraded. The fact of the matter is the chronic care people are going to be looked after. The person they did the documentary on a couple of nights ago, on television, is going to be looked after right in the hospital, nearer his home that he is now as a matter of fact.

So closing this particular hospital is not going to have an ill effect on the people of that area. As a matter of fact I am certain that it is going to improve, because basically the hospital in North West River was more of a dormitory than anything else.

So I want to reassure the people of Labrador that the board, which references were made to today, and the director, are doing an excellent job in delivering health care, that there is no such thing as somebody wanting to save St. Anthony, St. Anthony happens to be a good secondary care institution, with good qualified doctors, who are serving the Coast of Labrador. There are not enough people in that part of Labrador to sustain top quality specialists so it has to be coupled with Northern Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, I know there is going to be a social impact because there will be some jobs lost. Some of these people will be transferred to Goose Bay, but we just cannot keep hospitals open to create jobs. Hospitals are basically a nursing - nurses and doctors are to deliver health care and I am totally convinced, as is the department, with all the information that we have, that health care will be enhanced by the steps that we are taking.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (Russell): Order, please!

On motion the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, at 10:00 A.M.