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PRELIMINARY
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TRANSCRIPT

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
FOR THE PERIOD:
3:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.
THURSDAY, MAY 5, 1983

The House met at 3:00 P.M.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward):

Order, please!

Before we begin the Session

today I have been asked by the hon. member for Twillingate (Mrs. Reid) to read this to the hon. members of the House: 'On behalf of all the members of my family I would like to express my appreciation to Members of the Legislature for their kind words of comfort in the recent passing of my mother'.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, during this week the Hon. Giles Lamontagne, Minister of National Defence, visited the Province to convey the Federal Government's position regarding the presence of search and rescue in this Province.

The Provincial Government associates itself with remarks of the local Jaycees and other responsible groups that the Federal Minister's response was disappointing. It shows no intent to provide adequate search and rescue presence to cope with potential disasters in the course of Newfoundland's marine activity, especially in the offshore.

It will be recalled that a major reason for issuance of the Provincial order to halt winter drilling offshore in February of this year was the demonstrable inability of search and rescue to respond to

MR. MARSHALL: apprehended emergencies during the severe weather conditions of this winter. We indicated offshore drilling in Hibernia should not be permitted until there was adequate aircraft and helicopters in St. John's, which was the nearest proximity to our oil fields. The difference in response time, as demonstrated during the Ocean Ranger tragedy and the events of this February, afford irrefutable proof of necessity of such presence.

Regrettably, Mr. Lamontagne's visit to St. John's seemed merely for the purpose of defending the status quo. There is to be no improvement with respect to offshore. Neither is there to be an adequate meeting of the need for improved search and rescue in the Province generally.

While it is not my intent to engage in a debate with the Federal Minister concerning his statements, I must draw attention to his attempt to diffuse the situation by contending the fees for improved search and rescue facilities were political in nature and made to further partisan interests.

MR. MARSHALL: It needs to be pointed out that the lack of adequate facilities in the Province has been the subject of comments by commissions and enquiries into marine disasters over the years most of which were in fact commissioned by the federal government, Mr. Speaker. Furthermore, the need for special attention to offshore drilling activities, particularly during the severe Winter seasons experienced in the North Atlantic, has been strongly advocated by responsible groups and individuals whose concern cannot possibly be imputed to have been motivated for political or partisan reasons.

Finally, it is noted Mr. Lamontagne is reported to have employed as one justification of not making any change, his opinion that presence of greater search and rescue facilities in St. John's would have made no difference in the Ocean Ranger tragedy. While, as the minister indicated, this is a factor to be weighed by the Ocean Ranger inquiry itself, he is reported to have voiced this opinion.

With the greatest respect to the minister, I say this is not the issue. What must be of concern and the only acceptable position, is that the best possible measures be taken to protect the lives and safety of workers offshore. This can only be supplied through the presence of adequate fixed wing aircraft and helicopters in the closest proximity to the site. We have to say to Mr. Lamontagne, and the federal government, they are seriously in error in their justifications for not meeting their obligations to provide to this Province adequate search and rescue facilities as observed by many independent inquiries and demanded by responsible

MR. MARSHALL: citizens concerned with the welfare of offshore workers.

Mr. Lamontagne's visit then, Mr. Speaker, disappointingly shows continuance of inability of Ottawa to appreciate the understanding. I certainly hope he will come to understand the situation and, Mr. Speaker, that this understanding will not be purchased at the expense of another marine disaster.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of comments I wish to make on the Ministerial Statement just given by the hon Government House Leader. The only thing that I am surprised about with regard to this statement, Mr. Speaker, is that it took so long coming. Hon. members will remember when the minister sat in the Speaker's Gallery a couple of days ago I predicted that this criticism would come quickly and I have no doubt that it will be followed up by criticism in the House of Commons by Mr. McGrath.

Mr. Speaker, this has become a great whipping boy for the administration. The statement just made by the minister is provocative, it will accomplish nothing, it would be far better if the government, the administration here, calmly and quietly entered into negotiations with the Government of Canada to try to make their point rather than try to score political Brownie points in this House. Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lamontagne threw out a challenge to the provincial government, I believe and the minister did not mention that. He asked if the provincial government was prepared to become involved in -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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MR.SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!

MR.NEARY: - the air/sea rescue operations
on this coast. Another point that the hon.

MR. NEARY:

member did not address himself to was the drilling off Labrador and the shipping that goes on in the Strait of Belle Isle and off the coast of Labrador; Would stationing a fixed wing aircraft in this area help, for instance, drilling off the Northeast Coast, the Botwood operations and Labrador. And then there is another point that has to be made too, Mr. Speaker. It is about the responsibility of the companies. Will they be asked to contribute towards the cost of air/sea rescue?

At least one thing was accomplished by Mr. Lamontagne's visit and that was that he agreed to spend \$5 million to upgrade the services in Atlantic Canada. Mr. Speaker, we, too, on this side of the House are concerned about the air/sea rescue operations in this Province. We would like to see Newfoundland have the best, Mr. Speaker, but I do not believe this is the way to go about it. I think the minister merely made the statement for political purposes. It would be far better if they sat down and tried to negotiate a satisfactory air/sea rescue service for this Province behind closed doors at the bargaining table. Obviously, they are unwilling or unable to do that, Mr. Speaker.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward):

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Department of Education will continue the Dial-a-Tutor service for another two weeks.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:

The telephone tutorial service will be offered to high school students throughout the Province three hours each week day evening from 7:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. until Friday, May 20th.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, the reason for extending this free tutorial service is simple, it can help high school students. Remember, some high school students have missed eight weeks of school this year, most have missed three weeks. For many of these students now struggling to make up for lost time, tutoring is a welcome complement to regular teaching at school. Department of Education officials have monitored and evaluated the Dial-a-Tutor service since it was begun in response to a crisis on Monday, April 18th. They have concluded that the service was very worthwhile during the strike and they have recommended that it be continued, on a smaller scale, for another two weeks.

Approximately thirty-five qualified teachers have staffed the Dial-a-Tutor telephones.

MS. VERGE: Most of them are young people who recently graduated from university with one or two degrees, some with honours degrees. Each tutor is assigned to one of the following subject areas: Mathematics, Sciences, Social Studies, English and French.

The Dial-a-Tutor log-books indicate 1,645 legitimate calls were received from students all over the Province up to yesterday. Mr. Speaker, the calls came from students in communities on the Labrador Coast, on the St. Barbe Coast, the South Coast, the Northeast Coast, communities all around the Province. There were more requests for help in mathematics than any other subject.

It is estimated that the cost of continuing the Dial-a-tutor Service for three hours an evening will be an average of \$1,100 a day, excluding advertising. Government has already incurred a minimum expense of \$7,500 for Newfoundland Telephone Company services - installation and basic services for two months whether or not the services are used for two months.

Mr. Speaker, the evaluation of the Dial-a-Tutor Service will be ongoing. Adaptations will be made, if they are warranted.

Some people involved in the Dial-a-Tutor "whirlwind" experiment think the concept, with careful planning, can be used to advantage in future years.

I would welcome comments about Dial-a-Tutor from teachers, parents and students.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, may I remind students through their members of the House of Assembly that is students in Grades IX, X and XI that this evening and every week-day evening until May 20th they can get free tutorial help by dialing 1-576-2111.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CALLAN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward):

The hon. the member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN:

Mr. Speaker, as a former school teacher I want to comment on the Minister's statement. The last time, Mr. Speaker, that we had a toll free number to dial was the infamous Bob Cole Contract, a copy of which I have in front of me, and it was the same Premier, Mr. Speaker, who put an end to that as sits in the Premier's seat today.

Mr. Speaker, there may be some students around St. John's and surrounding areas who are perhaps getting some help from this Dial-a-Tutor Service, that is questionable. It has been noted that some students have dialed the tutor number and of course going back to school the next day they have gotten different responses or different answers from their teachers than from the tutor at the other end of the line at the Dial-a-Tutor Service.

Another comment that

MR. CALLAN:

can be made about this service, Mr. Speaker, is that among the teaching population, at least, it has been referred to as a Dial-A-Traitor service, because I think there are thirty-five -

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is low.

MR. CALLAN:

Well these are the comments made by the teachers, the same teachers who gave the Premier his report card yesterday or the day before yesterday, where he failed in all courses.

Because of the thirty-five and I assume there are still only thirty-five even though if Grade IX was included with X and XI, of the thirty-five I understand that at least thirty are prospective school teachers, teachers who will be going out hopefully into the classrooms and into the high schools and other schools next year where they will be mingling with the teachers, and of course they will be branded as traitors. They will be branded as traitors because they in essence, of course, were part of the strike-breaking process when they volunteered to work for their \$25 an hour on the other end of a Dial-A-Tutor telephone lines.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I would say that the number of students who are benefitting from this rather expensive and now unnecessary Dial-A-Tutor service are probably few indeed, a few people around Tory St. John's, I would say.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward):

The hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

My question is to the Premier in absence to the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Hickey). Certain regulations of the Department of Social Services were changed in October of last year,

MR. HISCOCK: including the regulations dealing with unwed mothers. If they were living in apartments and they had one or two children, the Department of Social Services would no longer continue to assist them. There was a meeting of a support group over in Corner Brook where about ten unwed mothers got together to pressure the government, and as a result of that about seven of them were allowed to stay in their apartments. The question I have, and I will direct it now to the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Hickey) who is back in his seat. Is this preferential treatment because there is a Cabinet Minister representing Corner Brook or is this now going to be the policy throughout the Province?

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether I should respond to that question or not, but I suppose if I do not I run the risk of somebody misinterpreting my motives. Maybe

MR. HICKEY: the hon. gentleman was up too late, I do not know what happens to someone who perceives decisions being made based on preferential treatment because of ministerial representation. That is the biggest bunch of garbage! As a matter of fact, it is insulting, Mr. Speaker, to a government and a department which bases all its policies on compassion, understanding and the belief in social justice. There has never been a policy by this government with regard to services to unmarried mothers which could in any way or remotely be interpreted as being discriminatory. What in fact was the situation was that there has been a great deal of representation, from both the taxpayers in the Province and some clergy in the Province, about the system being somewhat not as good as it should be and that the department should attempt to look at the situation and tighten things up a bit. That is all we did. I issued the statement and in some quarters where it was misinterrupted a statement of clarification was made. And that really is the situation.

MR. HISCOCK: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Supplementary, the hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK: Mr. Speaker, some of these unwed mothers are back in school, trying to get part-time jobs and trying to rebuild their lives, and some of these parents who have been living in this housing for four or five years find the rent is going up. They go back to Social Services and say, 'The rent is going up. Could you give extra then for us to pay it'. And they say, 'No, you have to pay it out of your food allowance, you have to pay it out of your clothing allowance or your heating allowance, etc.'. And as a result, if they move out of that apartment and take another apartment, then they are told by the social

MR. HISCOCK: worker they have to move in with their parents after having these benefits for the past five or six years. Is this going on in the minister's department?

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): The hon. Minister of Social Services.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of those things going on. I do not want in any way to be other than absolutely accurate in giving the House any information, but I am not aware of any such cases as that. I will say this, with regard to what the hon. gentleman refers to, the social assistance programme is not geared to provide rent equivalent to what the marketplace sometimes demands. The social assistance programme was never conceived, Mr. Speaker, at any time in any province in this country to provide all things for all people. We provide assistance. We provide an amount of assistance which this Province is able to afford to enable people and to help people help themselves.

MR. HISCOCK: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): The hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK: This is also concerning unwed mothers and the Transition House for battered women. Women find themselves having to leave because they are battered wives, and go into Transition House and because of the time limit on the house and the demand for it they find themselves having to leave and because of legality and taking such a long time to get it through the courts some of these women have gone two or three months without any financial assistance whatsoever from the Department of Social Services and as a result have had to take their children and go back into the same situation that they left. Can the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Hickey) tell this House if this is happening and why is he not providing some financial help and then collecting it after the court decision is made?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Social Services.

MR. HICKEY: Again, Mr. Speaker, I cannot pretend to interpret or read the minds of all my staff in the field based on their dealings with each and every case. Each case it dealt with on the basis of merit, and based on the individual circumstances. I can tell the hon. gentleman that the philosophy, the policy is clear-cut and has been articulated dozens of times. The policy of this department is simply this, that any lady, for whatever reason, has to leave home because of family violence, or whatever it might be, is not refused assistance simply because the court has not yet been able to deal with a case of payments by the father of her children, nor is there any case, to the best of my knowledge, and certainly there is no policy that permits or allows it, where a mother of children who had to leave home

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MR. HICKEY: because of family violence and
find other accomodations, is forced to go back to those
surroundings which she had left.

MR. HICKEY: Whilst we do not have transition houses all over the Province, not nearly as many as we would like, we have one in St. John's, we have announced another for Corner Brook, there is a need for one in Labrador, and I do not refuse in any way to acknowledge that. But on a number of occasions in discussing the issue that applies to Labrador, I have stated and my staff continue to state to people coming to them for services that pending the time when we are able to develop a transition house in Labrador, other accommodations are found; boarding houses or other accommodations with other families are found for those people who are at risk and who cannot continue in the accommodations which they left.

MR. HISCOCK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): A supplementary question, the hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK: I could quote names in all those instances but because of a respect for human dignity and their not wanting to be identified publicly, in the media and in the press, they would prefer that their names not be printed, but it is happening and these are real cases.

A question I would also like to ask the minister: With regard to students going to Memorial University and post-secondary education institutions, these students find themselves in similar situations where they are not getting very much money in student loans and they are referred now by the student loan officers to welfare officers to obtain money. Are there many cases where students are now being referred to Social Services for advances to help them with post-secondary education?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon the Minister of Social Services.

MR. HICKEY:

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the hon. gentleman's first comments and his question, I would like him to give me the names privately. I respect the fact that he cannot use them in the House per se, but I would invite him, indeed I would challenge him to give me the names of the cases that he refers to and I will see to it forthwith that they are investigated, and if they have not been dealt with in keeping with the policy as articulated by me in my previous answers, it will be done forthwith.

Insofar as the second part is concerned, I am not aware that there are any great numbers of students at Memorial University being referred to my department.

MR. HICKEY: I am aware that there has been a few, I would estimate not more than five, six cases, to the best of my knowledge, in the last year which have been referred to my department and in each case, to the best of my knowledge, we have responded in the best way we could under the circumstances.

I hasten to point out, Mr. Speaker, that again the social assistance programme is not, has not, and, I suppose, never should be geared to provide one with allowances to enable them to obtain an education while the rest of the population works, and works their way through and gets the money by the sweat of their brow, so to speak, to get themselves an education. The social assistance programme was never geared to respond to that particular situation. But given special and extenuating circumstances, in certain situations we respond as always, compassionately, and in an understanding way and do whatever we can to enable the person to stay at university and to achieve their objectives and their goals by getting an education.

MR. HISCOCK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): A supplementary question, the hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK: With regard to supplying the minister with the names I have asked the people this and in the majority of cases they said that they did not want their names given to the minister because of repercussions from that department. And, also, in light of the last general election, the minister gave notice to all the social workers that they were not allowed to handle any enquiries from the Liberal Party or Liberal candidates at that time.

MR. HICKEY: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): A point of order, the hon. Minister of Social Services.

MR. HICKEY: I am not going to sit here and wait for the hon. gentleman to finish his question. If he is going to ask questions he should tell the truth. He should not court the truth. And if he is not able to quote things that I say accurately, he should not run the risk of quoting me inaccurately, or misquoting me. What I informed my workers of during the election was they were not to accept representations from any candidate of any political party, including my own colleagues, that was fair and square and just, until the election was over and while the election was going on. And I defend that, Mr. Speaker, I defend it and so does this government. That was not done by me, done as a conscious decision of government so that my workers in the field would not be unduly pressured during an election campaign. We do not need to apply pressure to our social workers to garnish support. We do not need to use the social assistance programme, Mr. Speaker, to garnish support on this side of the House.

MR. NEARY: To that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): To that point of order, the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: The hon. gentleman in raising his point of order accused my colleague of not telling the truth. Now I believe Your Honour recognized that right away as being unparliamentary. The hon. minister made the statement - three times he said -

MR. ANDREWS: That is a separate point of order.

MR. NEARY: No, it is not a separate point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am speaking to the point of order and at the same time I am raising this matter, the wording of the point of order, my hon. colleague was not telling the truth." That is unparliamentary, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. gentleman should be asked to withdraw it. But in the meantime, it is not a point of order, all the hon. gentleman did was take advantage of the point of order procedure to make his own point. Mr. Speaker, it is just a difference of opinion between two members. My colleague is just as right as the hon. minister is, as a matter of fact, moreso because we do know, we do have evidence of hanky panky and skulduggery during the election with welfare cheques, Mr. Speaker. You know that. So there is no point of order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, there is no point of order but in the meantime, the minister should be directed to withdraw his remarks about my hon. friend telling the truth.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

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

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, to that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): To that point of order, the hon. President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, if I could just respond. The hon. gentleman was referring to, really, a second point of order when he got up. I just want to draw to Your Honour's attention there is nothing wrong with anybody in this House saying that somebody is not telling the truth, is not factually true. If the hon. gentleman got up and said the hon. gentleman is a liar that would have been obviously contrary to parliamentary procedures. The hon. gentleman has made a comment that the hon. gentleman was not speaking the truth. There are many statements that come from the other side of this House that do not happen to be factually correct, Mr. Speaker, and if we get to the stage where we have to accept what the hon. gentlemen there opposite say is the gospel, we are in a sorry state in this Province.

MR. NEARY: You cannot say it by the backdoor, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: To the point of order raised by the hon. Minister of Social Services (Mr. Hickey), I rule that there was merely a difference of opinion between two hon. members. To the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition, I will check the wording of Hansard and rule later.

The hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK: The Minister of Social Services ended up saying that our society as a whole cannot contribute to do everything for those on social assistance. I would be the first one to concur. And the people on social assistance

MR. HISCOCK: would also be the ones to concur and they do not want to be on social assistance but due to the circumstances they are and they need now a helping hand, a compassionate hand, and as a result a lot of our younger people in this Province are now run out of their unemployment -

MR. MARSHALL: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): A point of order, the hon. President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, this is the Question Period and the hon. gentleman, in asking a supplementary question, is really making a speech. I would suggest that the hon. gentleman should be directed to get to his question, if in fact he has a supplementary to ask the minister.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, to that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: To that point of order, the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: That again, Mr. Speaker, is not a point of order. My hon. colleague is just merely making a preamble to his very interesting, very penetrating questions of the Minister of Social Services. We know it is embarrassing to the administration, Mr. Speaker, the way the social services policy is administered. We know they are denying young, single able-bodied Newfoundlanders, whose unemployment insurance is running out, social assistance. We know these things, Mr. Speaker. It is a source of embarrassment. But there is no point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!

To that point of order, the hon. the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) has been asking several supplementary questions. It has been ruled in this House quite often that on supplementary questions a preamble is not to be permitted. I would ask the hon. member if he would put his question.

The hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK: With regard to the young, able-bodied men who are now running out of unemployment insurance and applying to the Department of Social Services, is the Department of Social Services providing any assistance to able-bodied men who run out of UIC? And also, are they being told by these officials to 'Go West' and if they are being told to go out West, where there are no jobs either, are they being given a one-way ticket or a return ticket? And where are the 40,000 jobs that the minister and the Premier promised?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Speaker, in response to those fifteen questions asked by the hon. gentleman, first of all I hope I am given the latitude to respond to all fifteen of them. I will start off by saying, number one, the old cliché of 'Go West, young man, go West' would be more appropriately targeted to the Smallwood days -

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HICKEY: - when it was 'Burn your boats' and all the new industries, including, as my hon. colleague, who is not here said, something about the establishment of the rubber factory in Holyrood. Now, Mr. Speaker, my staff have not, do not and will not tell any single able-bodied

MR. HICKEY: person in this Province to 'Go West'.
My staff have and continue to assist the able-bodied people in this Province. I challenge the hon.gentleman to tell me they are not. As a matter of fact, I cannot give him accurate figures as of today but I can tell him that the numbers are in the hundreds, probably approaching 1,000 single,able-bodied people in the Province receiving assistance. It is just not true, Mr. Speaker, that this department or this government has any policy which just blatantly says - and this is what the hon. gentleman was trying to say - blatantly says no assistance because you are single and able-bodied. That is not so. The circumstances of the individual are taken into account and a decision made on the merits of each case.

I do not think the other questions require an answer.

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

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

MR. HISCOCK: The headquarters for Social Services in St. John's on Harvey Road is now being divided into three offices.

MR. HISCOCK: The reason for this, is it because the minister does not want to see line-ups and CBC reporting this in other provinces? Instead now, Mr. Speaker, of the 40,000 jobs we were promised we now have a 1,000 able-bodied men on welfare.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward) : The hon. Minister of Social Services.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Speaker, you know, it is absolutely astounding that I be asked such a question. It is too bad, because the hon. gentleman can have the figures, and the figures are available simply by a phone call to my department. Anyone will give them to him. As a member of the House, he has the right to such figures and could have them at the drop of the hat. If he just took that initiative, Mr. Speaker, to get the figures he would not have had to ask such a silly question.

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

MR. SPEAKER: A point of order, the hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK: Mr. Speaker, with regards to what the minister just said, I have called his office on numerous occasions and I was always told to go to the minister.

MR. MORGAN: That is not a point of order.

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

The hon. Minister of Social Services.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Speaker, I do not know, I will take the hon. gentleman's word if he says that has happened. If it happened there is no problem. My office number is in the book, and there is no problem for him to dial that number. There is no special licence required for that.

Mr. Speaker, let me respond to the question the hon. gentleman asked. The St. John's

MR. HICKEY: office was broken down into three parts, three components, for the right reasons, Mr. Speaker, to bring about a necessary increase and improvement in services to the people that that office on Harvey Road was serving - an increase in services. - This department, Mr. Speaker, has grown in leaps and bounds in this Province, not by what the hon. gentleman might like it to grow in in terms of cases of people on social assistance, no, not that, but in improvement to the service areas. Service to the mentally retarded, which were non-existent until this government came to office, and services to senior citizens, which were non-existent at the community level until this government came to office, services to the disabled, the handicapped, rehabilitation services, special child welfare allowances, services to foster parents. And, Mr. Speaker, on and on and on it goes.

Now let me more accurately or directly respond.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HICKEY:

Let me tell the hon. gentleman,

MR. HICKEY:

as opposed to my having any fear of line-ups in St. John's that while all across the country case loads are building-British Columbia with an unemployment rate of 30 per cent with a 40-odd per cent increase in social assistance cases-what can Newfoundland say? With the highest unemployment in the country, yet our people are finding ways and means, with our help, to look after their families. The increases in social assistance in this Province, Mr. Speaker, I would say to this day have not gone beyond the 10 per cent mark. Six months ago it was between 4 and 5 per cent, and whatever increases there has been since then is as a result of exhaustees. And when the NEED programme and the employment opportunities programme is applied to that the figures will come down. So, Mr. Speaker, what am I saying? I am saying that whilst the unemployment situation is the highest of any province in the country, which it always has been, nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, we have managed this department in a manner which provides jobs for people as opposed to handouts and cheques.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HICKEY: So the hon. gentleman does not know what he is talking about.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Premier.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please!

MR. WARREN: I have a question for the Premier, Mr. Speaker. In view of the answers that I received

MR. WARREN:

a lot of things going on at the Voisey Bay fish camp that the public should know about.

I would like to ask the Premier, considering that the fact not having been given to this House yesterday, would he consider setting up an inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act to investigate the whole aspect of the Voisey Bay fish camp?

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

PREMIER PECKFORD: This is the silliest thing! Members opposite are just trying to have the members of the press gallery to carry a whole bunch of foolishness again tomorrow, and they could not do it. We just heard from the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Hickey), who just devastated the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) in answering his questions, just devastated him.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: Now they are over there defeated and every time a matter is mentioned there has to be a public inquiry.

We told the hon. member yesterday that we would get the information together and provide it, Mr. Speaker, and that is what we will do. There is nothing secret or hidden or irregular about. That is the problem we have right now, Mr. Speaker, that some of the members of the press and some of the members of the Opposition are mosing around trying to find irregularities going on inside this administration, and they cannot find them and they are getting awfully frustrated. And once again, we find the Opposition talking about a little old camp down in Voisey Bay that nobody has been using, to which we have been trying to help attract some activity for the Native

PREMIER PECKFORD: groups and all the rest, to try to get something going down there in the way of char and so on, over the last few years but have been unsuccessful.

We are looking at trying to turn the camp over to the Native groups down there, and the Opposition are trying to create the impression that there is something irregular. There is nothing irregular. Everything is aboveboard, this is an honest administration.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: I challenge the hon. member to go back in the history of Newfoundland and find an administration any more honest than this one is today, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, that is not very hard to do.

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): A supplementary, the hon. the member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Yesterday, the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development (Mr. Goudie), in response to a question, said that last year's operation cost roughly \$20,000. I have figures to say that the salary alone was \$25,000. Not including the operation at all, the salary was \$25,000. So, Mr. Speaker, if the government cannot tell this hon. House -

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

MR. SPEAKER: On a point of order, the hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL: In a way the Premier deserves this. He created two members in that area of Labrador and they have proven this afternoon that if you rubbed the two of them together you would not get a half member.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman

now is debating an answer that was given yesterday.

There is a procedure in this House, with the Late Show this afternoon which has not been used in the past five weeks, that if somebody wants to debate an answer they are not satisfied with, they can do it. The hon. gentleman there opposite have not used it for the past five weeks at all, except on one occasion, so I invite him to put it in at 5:00 P.M. today. But what he is doing really now, Mr. Speaker, is, instead of asking

MR. MARSHALL: questions, he is debating answers that have been given on the basis of erroneous facts, albeit, but still debating them.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): To that point of order, the hon. member is asking a supplementary question and I would ask him to direct his question to the minister.

The hon. member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, I will debate anything on the Late Show, but I remember not too long ago the Premier was not even in his seat to answer the questions.

So, Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the Premier is now that untruths were told in this House yesterday, now that the House was misled yesterday, would the Premier now take it upon himself to supply the answers, in at least the next two or three days, on the whole operation of the Voisey Bay fish camp and let the public of Newfoundland know what is going on?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, I told the hon. member we will. And the allegation that the salaries are more than \$20,000, the minister just informed me that there is one employee in the camp and he gets paid about \$10,000 a year.

MR. WARREN: \$24,977.

PREMIER PECKFORD: That is what I was just told by the minister. But we will give you all the information. We are not trying to tell any untruths, we have nothing to hide. It is a tempest in a teapot, trying to create something where nothing exists. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) has tried over and over again to accuse me of this, that, and every time it fails. Instead of asking questions about substantive issues of policy on the fishery or the forestry or the mining -

MR. WARREN: Cover-up.

PREMIER PECKFORD: - to ask some tough questions of the ministry, what do we hear? Silly old foolishness about a camp down in Labrador and allegations of untruths that cannot be proven, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WARREN: \$500,000.

PREMIER PECKFORD: We are not going to listen to this foolishness over there. Come on, let us deal with it? Let us have a good Late Show and debate some of the issues of the Province that are so important to the people who are looking at us for leadership.

MR. WARREN: \$500,000

PREMIER PECKFORD: Let us debate some of the issues, not talk about this silly thing. I am glad to see the member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Roberts) in his seat because perhaps we will get some good questions and get some good debate in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, if we are going to debate things in this House it is up to the government to lay out the plans they have for the development of this Province and how they plan on dealing with the economy. The plans have to be put on the table by the government, then we will debate. But my question is for the Minister of Labour and Manpower (Mr. Dinn), Mr. Speaker. It has to do with the Marine Engineering Duties course, the MED course, that is being operated in this Province.

MR. DINN: You cannot even get the name right.

MR. ROBERTS: Marine Emergency Duties.

MR. NEARY: I

am told there is quite a line-up, that people have been offered jobs but cannot accept the positions because of the line-up to do these courses. One individual down in

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MR. NEARY: Eastport tells me he cannot be admitted to the course until sometime in September even though he has a job lined up now.

MR. NEARY: Could the hon. gentleman tell us what is being done to try to speed up these courses so that more people can take them and eliminate the waiting list?

MR. DINN: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DINN: That is probably the first question we have had this year that has any substance to it all.

With respect to the MED course, up to several months ago what we had on that course were approximately seventy-two people; it was doubled from thirty-five to seventy-two. The course is totally controlled by Canada Manpower, who have approximately forty seats; the other thirty-two seats are bought by industry. People they have jobs for they put them on the MED course. It is a requirement to have the course before they go working on the offshore. There is quite a line up for the course.

MR. NEARY: How many on the waiting list?

MR. DINN: On the waiting list? Well, I would say that we have instructed 800 or 900 people who have completed that course since the course came into being.

MR. NEARY: How many on the waiting list now?

MR. DINN: I can get the figure for the hon. gentleman. I can tell him also that there are over 10,000 people -

MR. NEARY: On the waiting list?

MR. DINN: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would wait a second he might get an answer.

There are over 10,000 people registered for the offshore, there are approximately right now about 800 or 900 people working offshore and onshore

MR. DINN:

directly related to that. For the hon. member's benefit, if there is a gentleman in Eastport that he knows who is looking for the course, I would suggest that he get to Canada Manpower -

MR. NEARY:

He has been there.

MR. DINN:

- because they buy the course.

We also have a mobile MED course where we have a mobile unit that will be going around the Province and doing the courses in other areas -

MR. NEARY:

How big is the waiting list?

MR. DINN:

- arranged by the hon. the Minister of Education (Ms. Verge).

MR. TULK:

How big is the waiting list?

MR. NEARY:

How many on the waiting list?

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker, there is a line-up for this course like no other course that we have in Newfoundland. Now, we have doubled it from thirty-five to seventy-two, we have put in a mobile unit so that people from outside the City of St. John's can have access to the course, and we have also increased the course again; I believe it is up now to something over 100 that we can do every fifteen days. Mr. Speaker, I would say if we were to have a true

MR. DINN:

waiting list, outside of all those people who have it, which would number about 3,400 total from the time it came in because people have come and gone; as a matter of fact some of the people who had our MED course are now working on rigs in the Mediterranean and other places. If we could supply the course to all of the people who needed the course, we would have to supply it to the 10,000 who are waiting to get jobs in the offshore, because that is how many we have on the registry.

Now, if we were to say how many people are on the course, the easiest way to do that, I suppose is I could do an assessment; you would have to check every Canada Manpower office in Newfoundland to see how many people they have. We did have some control last year because basically what happened last year was a person applied for a job, had a chance of a job, was promised a job and was approved by an oil company, and then we would see to it that those people who had the jobs got the course as soon as possible. But since Canada Manpower has taken over the course we have had some problems with the fact that Canada Manpower do it on a basically a queue priority basis. Whether a person has a job or not, they get the course, so we are now getting people trained who do not have jobs. So whereas we had some control before, we have very little control now because all seats basically are controlled through Canada Manpower, over half of them, and the rest are controlled by companies who have people that they want to put to work or are working on a rig; when they come in their days off are arranged so they can go on a course and they have the course when they go back.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is quite a line-up for this course. It is probably the best

MR. DINN: course there is for marine emergency duties and we are doing everything that we can in our power to see to it that as many people as people get on the course.

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce a bill, "An Act To Amend The Liquor Corporation Act , 1973", and also a bill, "An Act To Amend The Insurance Companies Tax Act And Insurance Premium Tax Act, 1978".

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. SIMMS: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Alyward): The hon. the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. SIMMS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table an answer to a question asked by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Neary) some time ago. It was one of those photocopied questions - names and salaries of executive assistants, parliamentary assistants and the like, not applicable to me in '79, '80, '81 and in '82 there were none.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of 44 residents of the community of Rigolet.

This petition, Mr. Speaker, deals with the hunting of caribou in the Northern section of Labrador. It says WHEREAS we are not allowed to hunt caribou in the Mealy Mountains and, WHEREAS the White Bear Lake zone is restricted and, WHEREAS there is no open season at all in the Western zone, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Federal or Provincial government compensate us for trips or open the Mealy Mountains district.

Mr. Speaker, the last part of the petition which asks that the Mealy Mountains section of Labrador be opened for commercial caribou hunting, I would think that would be the proper approach to take on behalf of these petitioners. I fully support this petition. I remember last year I presented a similar petition and at that time it was said that there were not enough caribou in the Mealy Mountains to entice a

MR. WARREN: commercial hunt. In talking with wildlife officials and biologists I understand that the Mealy Mountains caribou herd has, in fact, increased immensely during the past twelve months, and I am just wondering now if there are still not enough caribou there to have a substantial harvest. However, the minister should consider that if the Mealy Mountains cannot be opened up for commercial hunting, then probably - It is unfortunate that the Minister of Rural, Agriculture and Northern Development (Mr. Goudie) is not in his seat because it would come under his department - knowing that there was some \$400,000 left over

MR. WARREN:

last year from the native people's money, then surely goodness some of this money can be used to subsidize, to help alleviate the high costs incurred by hunters from Rigolet, who come under the Native People's Agreement, to go North and hunt caribou. Now I am sure it is not just up to the minister to say yes or no to this question, I think serious consideration should be given to it. When there is money left over from one fiscal year to the next, instead of putting it back into the pot, as we call it, maybe what should be done is that this money should be given back to the native people to carry out such a hunt as this.

As you remember, Mr. Speaker, just last week we had to get the Germans to bail out the people in Labrador when this government refused, and there was over \$400,000 that belonged to the people left in the Department of Rural Development's Budget. Rural Development wanted the OK from the councils to take money out of this year's budget. Mr. Speaker, I think that was a ridiculous request by the department, to ask councils to take money out of this year's budget for an organized hunt when there was over \$400,000 left in the budget from last year. So what the people are saying is why not use the money that was left over from last year, instead of putting it back into general revenue as the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) advocates. With that, Mr. Speaker, I place the petition on the table of the House and ask that it be referred to the department or departments to which it relates.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): The hon. Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth.

MR. SIMMS: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a comment on the petition. I have not seen a copy of it, I presume it is on the way to me as well, or a copy of it is on the way to me. But to my knowledge our department, at least my department, the Department of Culture, Recreation and Youth, its Wildlife Division, has never provided assistance for getting people into Labrador, or any area of Labrador for that matter, for hunting purposes or for the transportation of meat. It is accurate to say that no caribou population in Labrador, aside from the Georges River herd, at the present time is sufficiently large enough to sustain annual hunting. And it is our opinion that maintaining closed seasons in the areas other than in Northern Labrador will, we hope, enable the other caribou herds to increase over a period of years, to the point where at least annual harvesting will be possible. In the opinion of the Wildlife Division, and it is a general policy, general application, of course, any hunter, whether it is in Labrador or on the Island, as far as the Wildlife Division is concerned, is responsible for finding his own way to a hunting area, whether it is 10 miles, or 15 miles from his home, or 200 miles or 215 miles. So the other point that the hon. member made with respect to the agreement and so on, that is something that perhaps could be addressed by my colleague, but I hope the comments I have made will address the remarks made by the hon. member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): The hon. member for Eagle River.

MR.SPEAKER (Aylward): The hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR.HISCOCK: Thank you, Mr.Speaker.
The petition from Rigolet, of course, affects the areas of Cartwright and Paradise River which are concerned with the same issue. Last year I presented a petition on the same problem. The residents are quite aware that the herd is growing and they are also quite aware of the wildlife management that is going on. Still the bottom line is that food costs in that part of our Province are extremely high. The basis for their food supply was caribou and the further North you go the more this is so. The men of the area, the younger men, of course, do not even have that tradition bred into them, to go and hunt, because the hunt has not been carried out in the past several years. The Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development (Mr. Goudie) has suggested that when the caribou are in the Nain area that the people take the \$20,000 anyway and go in and kill extra caribou. The people in Cartwright and in the Southern area who are native Labradorians - they may not be aboriginal natives - also feel that they should get some of this meat. We have 350,000 or more caribou in the North of Labrador going back and forth between Quebec and I , for one, feel - I have written the ministers on this and the federal government to look at the possibility of airlifting some of the younger caribou so we could build up the herds that much faster. I also have to say that when the wildlife officers are needed, not only in Labrador but in other parts of the Province, when they are needed the most they are laid off, and I would ask the minister who is responsible for that department to make sure that wildlife officers are employed twelve months

MR. HISCOCK:

of the year and not on a seasonal basis. So with regard to the petition I support it, Mr. Speaker, but, also, the residents of Rigolet, of Paradise River and of Cartwright are quite aware of the need for wildlife management. But they still feel that some solution should be found by this government. For example, moose were put on the Labrador coast

MR. HISCOCK:

about twenty years ago and now they have a hunt of only ten moose in Labrador South and Labrador East. If the residents of Rigolet and Cartwright and Paradise River are given even the smallest assurance that there might be a hunt of twenty-five animals, at least they would be seeing some light at the end of the tunnel, but they have been told for years to wait and, as I said, their patience is growing thin. But I have to caution the residents of those three areas that patience is necessary if we are going to rebuild the herd substantially.

I would ask the minister to contact the Department of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development and the DREE officials, and see if it is possible to airlift some younger caribou from the larger herd up North down to the South. I know I got a reply from the deputy -

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. HISCOCK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, I have another petition from the same community of Rigolet. The prayer of the petition is as follows: "We, the undersigned residents of Rigolet are very much concerned about the high cost of goods at the store in our community. We request the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to subsidize the cost of goods flown in and furthermore we request the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to open a government store in Rigolet, as we are the only community in the Torngat Mountains district without

MR. WARREN:

a Northern Development store."

Mr. Speaker, as we know, the store in the town of Rigolet is a Hudsons Bay Company store, the same company, Mr. Speaker, that ripped off the people along the Northern coast of Labrador until the provincial government under the 'Joey' regime finally told the Hudsons Bay Company to move out, that the government would take over. What is ironic about it is that the Department of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development is inviting representatives of that same company to go up and look at the government-owned stores with a view to taking them over.

Now, Mr. Speaker, attached to this petition is a list of some items that are for sale in the Hudsons Bay store in Rigolet along with a list of the same items offered by a store here in St. John's.

I want to read, Mr. Speaker, ten or fifteen price comparisons for goods offered today in Rigolet and today in the Dominion stores in St. John's: grapefruit, \$1.44 each in Rigolet,

MR. WARREN: here in St. John's, thirty-three cents; potatoes - \$1.05 a pound, in St. John's - thirty-four cents a pound; salt beef - \$3.70 a pound, in St. John's - \$1.43 a pound; chicken legs - \$2.50 a pound, in St. John's - \$1.58 a pound; cabbage - \$1.29 a pound, in St. John's - thirty-three cents a pound; hamburger meat - \$3.93 a pound, in St. John's - \$1.18 a pound; ice cream, a two litre tub of ice cream - \$5.10 in Rigolet, \$2.97 in St. John's; fresh milk, everybody likes to have fresh milk, it is good, especially for small children, \$2.95 a litre and in St. John's - \$1.06;

AN HON. MEMBER: \$1.06 where?

MR. WARREN: \$1.06 in St. John's for fresh milk and it is \$2.95 in Rigolet. Eggs - \$3.45 a dozen, here in St. John's - \$1.59 a dozen, and they are extra large eggs as compared to small eggs in Rigolet. Hamburger buns, \$2.10 a package and in St. John's eighty-six cents a package. And there are other things, Mr. Speaker, too numerous to mention. But we can see, Mr. Speaker, that the cost of the goods is more than double. For example, Mr. Speaker, grapes - grapes are a very expensive fruit here in St. John's, you have to pay somewhere in the vicinity of \$1.99 to \$2.10 a pound for them, in Rigolet you pay \$3.46 for a pound of grapes. Now, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying earlier, before the hon. minister came in, these prices came from the Hudson Bay

MR. WARREN:

store in Rigolet. I have said in this House time and time again that the prices in the government owned stores for the products are too high, but their prices are good, their prices are excellent compared to the prices that the 300 residents in Rigolet have to pay for the fruit and vegetables that are flown in in the Wintertime.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. WARREN: Okay, Mr. Speaker, I will close by asking that the petition be placed on the table of the House and referred to the department to which it relates.

Thank you.

MR. GOUDIE: Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development.

MR. GOUDIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I apologize to the hon. gentleman for being out of the House when he began his presentation of that particular petition, but I am familiar with the area he is talking about and I am also familiar with the fact that it is serviced by the Hudsons Bay Company. There is no store there operated by my department as happens in other communities along the North Coast, although the community of Rigolet is covered under the Native Peoples of Labrador Agreement. What I would like to do, Mr. Speaker - and I do not think my department is the one to which it relates in terms of prices and so on, I would suspect that is more under Justice but there was a request, as I understand it, I was just informed by the member for Menihék (Mr. Walsh), a Parliamentary Secretary, for government to construct a

MR. GOUDIE: store in that particular community and operate that facility, I would assume. If that is the case then obviously my department would be involved in that, if that is the decision taken. What I would just like to point out now, and when I receive the petition, Mr. Speaker, I will address it more fully in writing to the hon. gentleman, is to suggest that it was announced, I think, about a week ago that a select committee has been set up to investigate prices in the Province and I am informed by the gentleman Chairing that particular committee that they will be travelling to Labrador specifically to investigate prices on the Coast of Labrador, North and South, and other areas I hope, and perhaps we can address ourselves more fully after that particular process. But in any event, I accept the petition and the sentiments expressed in it and will address the matter more fully when it arrives in my department.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I support the petition so ably presented by my colleague the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren). Mr. Speaker, I think we were all shocked. Every member on either side of the House was probably shocked to hear the prices that are being charged for food items in Rigolet. It seems to be a kind of rip-off on the part of the Hudson Bay Company. Now, there was one thing in the prayer of the petition that was different than some of the debates and the discussions that have been going on recently about

MR. NEARY: government operated stores in Northern Labrador. In this petition the citizens of Rigolet are asking government to consider the possibility of establishing a government run store in Rigolet. The minister has already stated the administration is taking a look at turning the stores already being operated in Northern Labrador over to private enterprise and this is a signal, Mr. Speaker, for the minister and the administration to go slow, to go very slow because Hudson Bay is a private enterprise, and the prices charged in their store are higher than the prices in the government operated stores, and the prices in the government operated stores are the highest in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, it is amazing that the people in Rigolet can survive at all. Is it any wonder that they petitioned in another petition to ask to hunt caribou in the Mealy Mountains to get some meat to eat in that community? They certainly cannot afford to buy it. Can hon. gentlemen just reflect back on the figures that were given by my colleague. Eggs in Rigolet, 29 cents each, \$3.45 a dozen, my hon. colleague said.

MR. WARREN: One grapefruit \$1.44.

MR. NEARY: One grapefruit \$1.44. Mr. Speaker, the hens must be laying golden eggs. One egg 29 cents in Rigolet.

I had the honour of visiting Rigolet this past Winter, about a month and a half, two months ago, accompanied by my colleague, you could not find a better people, I suppose, in Newfoundland and Labrador than the citizens of Rigolet. And they are certainly entitled to better treatment than what they are getting, Mr. Speaker. We hear the Premier talking about regional disparity all the time, about how Newfoundland is downtrodden, Newfoundlanders are poor second cousins to Canadians, while right within our

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MR. NEARY: own provincial boundary we have
disparity from one region of the Province to the other. And
the hon. gentleman does not

MR. NEARY:

address himself to that problem at all. It is a big problem, Mr. Speaker. I have no faith in this Select Committee, by the way, because they have not been given a budget to hire research people, they have no guarantee, no assurance from the Premier that their recommendations will be accepted. Mr. Speaker, it could be a worthwhile exercise or it just could turn out to be a big farce, a gigantic bluff. I think the Committee should have been given some assurance by the Premier that any recommendations they make within reason would be acceptable. And they should have been given a budget so that they can travel the Province and hire research people, Mr. Speaker, to help them prepare a realistic report concerning the price of food and the high cost of living in this Province. I agree, if they are to do their job at all, that one of the first places they should zero in on is Northern and Southern Labrador and Western Labrador, where we have the highest cost of living in the whole Province.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. MARSHALL: Motion 1, Budget Debate.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Motion 1, Budget Debate.

I believe that the debate was adjourned on the last day by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: Your Honour believes correct

Mr. Speaker, this is the sixth day,

MR. SIMMS: Do not be saucy now!

MR. NEARY: I am not being saucy, Your Honour just said he believed and I said, Your Honour is correct. I am complimenting the Chair, I am being so astute and so observant.

Mr. Speaker, we are now into our sixth day of the Budget Debate, and I believe that I am

MR. NEARY: the only member on either side of the House so far to participate in this debate.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why?

MR. NEARY: Why, the hon. gentleman says? Well, I will tell the hon. gentleman, why. Because the government are in a hurry to close the House. If I give up the floor and take my seat, of course, we will revert back to half hour debates by members on either side of the House, and because we are only a handful on this side the government will grind us down, will wear us down, will use up our members and then they will be able to close the House, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman came into the House yesterday and read out, in a Ministerial Statement he told us he was making for the Premier, the number of days that the House, on the average, has been open in this Province since Confederation. One very important point the hon. gentleman omitted from the statement that he read, and the statistics that were attached to that statement, that in the good old days, the good old Liberal days,

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, when the budget came down there were two sessions, to daily sittings of the House, one in the morning and one in the afternoon and, if necessary, there is one at night. But as soon as the budget was introduced in the House, in order to consider the Estimates item by item, analysis of the Estimates, Mr. Speaker, there were two daily sittings of the House - the hon. gentleman conveniently overlooked that point, Mr. Speaker, - and so the sessions in those days were much more frequent than they are at the present time. I believe this is the thirty-sixth or thirty-seventh day that this House has been sitting so far this session and already we see that the Premier and the administration are exhausted and tired and they are over there slouched in their seats. They have not been able to produce any plans to deal with the horrible state of the Newfoundland economy, they have not been able to produce any plans for people who are unemployed, especially young people between the ages of, say, sixteen and thirty-five, they have not been able to do anything about the Buchans' situation, they have not been able to cope with the terrible situation in Corner Brook, they have not been able to do anything about the horrible state of the economy in Corner Brook, they have not been able to do anything about work sharing in Baie Verte that the workers down there would like to have. They have not been able to do anything about record unemployment, especially among construction workers in this Province, Mr. Speaker. they have not been able to get the fish plants opened -

MR. MORGAN: One point six million people unemployed because of the Trudeau government in Ottawa

MR. NEARY: - and they want to close the House. Well, Mr. Speaker, I will now give hon. gentlemen notice, I place the administration under notice, that I

MR. NEARY: have no intention of carrying on a filibuster, no intention at all. You can call it a marathon speech if you like but I have no intention of filibustering, Mr. Speaker. I had a number of things that I wanted to say in the last few days, I have had very nasty interruptions from hon. gentlemen there opposite. It was virtually impossible because of the noise and the ruckus from the government side of the House to complete my part of the Budget Speech as quickly as I wanted to end it, Mr. Speaker, and I wanted it to end two days ago. It is very unlikely with the material that I have, that I prepared, that I will be able to finish my speech today. But I guarantee hon. gentlemen that I am not filibustering

MR. NEARY: and I will tell the hon. House now and members there opposite that I will finish my speech tomorrow. I do not think I can finish today. If I can I will, but certainly, Mr. Speaker, I have no intention at all of delaying or obstructing the business -

MR. MORGAN: (inaudible) going to speak tomorrow.

MR. NEARY: That is a promise, Mr. Speaker. I will give the hon. gentleman his half hour tomorrow if he wants it. So therefore, Mr. Speaker, I may be criticized for this marathon -

MR. TOBIN: You will not be criticized, everybody is pitying you.

MR. NEARY: You see, Mr. Speaker, there is the kind of interruption that has delayed my terminating my few remarks. I know hon. gentlemen are embarrassed about the member for Burin-Placentia West (Mr. Tobin), he is so uncouth. That is the only thing he is good at, bad manners. I know they are embarrassed about that. But they have to live with it and if they cannot get a tight rein on the hon. gentleman, well, that is too bad, it is unfortunate.

MR. TOBIN: No spite with me, Sir.

MR. NEARY: But, Mr. Speaker, it prevents me from continuing the momentum and the continuity of my few remarks. So to avoid any unnecessary criticism -

MR. TOBIN: You were forbidden by your Leader to come into the House for a week and had to stay home.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if Your Honour could pull in the traces on the hon. member there for Burin-Placentia West. Haul in the reins and pull in the traces there, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TOBIN: So, Mr. Speaker, to avoid

MR. NEARY: any criticism over the fact that I am going to carry on this marathon debate beyond tomorrow I can tell hon. gentlemen now, I can assure them that that is not my intention unless, of course, I am interrupted, provoked and intimidated by hon. gentlemen there opposite and that will only prolong the debate. So, Mr. Speaker, government will eventually get their own way. After tomorrow each member will be allowed a half hour. I have no doubt but the traditional vote of non-confidence in the government - we are only allowed one amendment as Your Honour knows and one sub-amendment to the budget speech, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TOBIN: Did you vote for that?

MR. NEARY: I have no doubt but one of my colleagues will introduce an amendment which as hon. members are aware will entail a vote of non-confidence in the administration. That is our right, our duty and our responsibility and I have no doubt that that will be done. But even at that, Mr. Speaker, even if you take into account a vote of non-confidence in the administration.

MR. NEARY: with the course we are on now, the pressure that is placed on us from the other side, the responsibility on our shoulders, it looks to me like, in about twelve to fourteen days, the House will adjourn until the Fall. Because the government have no legislation of any significance on the Order Paper, no important legislation on the Order Paper. They may want to get through that Economic Council, they may want to get that passed before the House adjourns, Mr. Speaker, one or two pieces of legislation of that nature and then the House will adjourn; we will have the long Summer, the government will be under no pressure, they will be scattered to the Four Winds, they will be travelling all over the world and the problems of this Province will just be neglected and ignored as they have been up to the present time.

Let me say this again, Mr.

Speaker, so there will be no criticism, no doubt in anybody's mind, that what we debate in this House -and, by the way, I have to say it is my right and duty to speak as long as I have in the Budget Speech. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, it is also my responsibility that when I speak I address myself to the problems of this Province, the problems that are confronting the Newfoundland and Labrador people. Have I done that, Mr. Speaker? I certainly have. I have addressed myself to a number of real problems that are facing the Newfoundland and Labrador people. I dwelt at some length one day with the high cost of electricity rates, with the application presently before the Public Utilities Board, and I pointed out examples of gross mismanagement and incompetence on the part of Newfoundland Hydro and I was assured by the Premier and by his minion,

MR. NEARY: the Minister responsible for Energy (Mr. Marshall), that the Public Utilities Board could scrutinize applications and could look at Public Works' special projects undertaken by Newfoundland Hydro, Well, last night and today we discovered now that the Minister responsible for Energy is backtracking on that, he is backsliding, Mr. Speaker, In response to Mr. Wells down at the City Hall-and they had quite a discussion on this matter yesterday down at City Hall, and Mr. Wells who represents the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Mayors and Municipalities on making interventions before the

MR. NEARY: Public Utilities Board stated categorically that it was virtually impossible under law, under the Public Utilities Act, for interveners in these applications to scrutinize the captial works projects that are undertaken by Newfoundland Hydro. And then the backslider, the President of the Council (Mr. Marshall), responsible for Newfoundland Hydro said, "Well, if these people feel that way let them bring suggestions to us and we will amend the act." Backsliding, Mr. Speaker.

The other day he told us, "Oh, there is no question about it, we have reformed," he said, "the Public Utilities Board to the extent that there is no way that applications cannot now be scrutinized." Now he is doing a Bonaparte retreat, backsliding, saying, "Well, yes, maybe. Maybe that is so. Maybe what Mr. Wells is saying is true." Well, the hon. gentleman misled the House when he addressed himself to these matters in the House, Mr. Speaker, when I raised them during the Oral Question Period. The fact of the matter is that the consumers of electricity, the interveners in these applications, do not have a chance. They do not have a prayer or a hope of getting a fair shake from the Public Utilities Board, a group appointed by this administration. The consumers, Mr. Speaker, have not got a hope of getting a fair deal, of getting justice dished out by the Public Utilities Board.

It has been established beyond any doubt by a group of independent chartered accountants in this Province that there has been gross mismanagement and incompetence down at Newfoundland Hydro. There are reports down there that should be tabled in this House, that indicate that heads should roll at Newfoundland Hydro for their waste and extravagance and mismanagement of public funds.

MR. NEARY: One example I gave - and I have to repeat it again - is the fact that the Acres Engineering report indicates that if a powerhouse had been located a short distance from where it is situated on the river, it would have saved the consumers of electricity and the taxpayers of this Province \$26 million, and that ain't hay, Mr. Speaker! That ain't peanuts! No wonder they refused to table that report! So, Mr. Speaker, as I started to say, it is my right and privilege and duty in this House to raise such matters.

I am going to deal before I finish my few remarks with record unemployment in this Province, I am going to deal probably with the mismanagement of the fiscal affairs of this Province. But, Mr. Speaker, before I get into the heavy items, I want to deal with a matter that very much concerns us on this side of the House and that is the way in which the administration have whittled away at the responsibility and the authority of this House. They keep chipping away at it. Mr. Speaker, they have nothing but contempt and disregard for the people's House, for the House of Assembly. Now, why do I say that? Well, I will give hon. gentlemen a few examples.

Mr. Speaker, the administration a couple of years ago decided to restrict debate on the budget to seventy-five hours. The situation previously, as hon. gentlemen know, was that the budget would be analyzed in this House, it would be an item by item analysis of the budget in this House. Every member had an opportunity to ask questions about the items in the budget. Government successfully restricted the time. Not only did they do that, Mr. Speaker, because before that there was unlimited time, but they moved the estimates in the main, off the floor of the House of Assembly.

MR. NEARY: In other words, they removed the power of the purse from the Legislature and one of the basic reasons that the Legislature exists at all is to approve government spending, Mr. Speaker. That is the main function of the Legislature, to examine government spending to see that the taxpayer dollar is spent in a proper way.

MR. NEARY: And the committee system, Mr. Speaker, as we know, as any member of the media in this Province will admit, the committee system is not working.

MR. SIMMS: Not true.

MR. NEARY: It is true.

MR. SIMMS: It is not true.

MR. NEARY: Well, because old curly locks over there says, Mr. Speaker, 'It is not true' does that make him right? Does that make curly locks right, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SIMMS: You are not right either.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I was just informed - I wish to interrupt this part of my speech, my few remarks to inform hon. members, and I am happy to be able to announce, that the oil rigs are gone back on site, one has arrived and the others will be there tomorrow or the next day. So, it looks like I will save the minister the inconvenience of having to make a Ministerial Statement tomorrow on this matter, Mr. Speaker. I will deal with that a little later on.

So they have managed, Mr. Speaker, to cover up the Estimates. It is a neat little trick. It is a beautiful little piece of manoeuvring on the part of the administration, Mr. Speaker, to get the Estimates off the floor of the House, to get them hidden. Because they know that it is virtually impossible for the media to cover all the meetings, especially if you got two meetings or three meetings going on simultaneously. It is impossible.

MR. SIMMS: Never three.

MR. NEARY: Never three? With two it is impossible. It is impossible for the media with all the other things that they have to cover in this Province, to cover the House of Assembly, to cover two meetings of these committees. So, most of the Estimates just slide through, Mr. Speaker, without any examination and that is shameful, contemptible and a dereliction of duty on the part

MR. NEARY: of the administration. The system will never work, Mr. Speaker, and it should be dropped. It should be abolished quickly, because the people of this Province are not getting the information to which they are entitled. Now, yesterday, Mr. Speaker - well, let me first of all deal with another rule change that was made by this administration a couple of years ago concerning Private Members' Day. Now, I really believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Speaker made a wrong ruling back in 1981 on Private Members' Day. The rule change limited discussion on Private Members' Resolutions to two Wednesdays. Private Members' Day, as hon. gentlemen know, is every Wednesday. The rule change limits discussion to two days.

MR. NEARY: There was no mention made in the rule changes of amendments, Mr. Speaker. So back in 1981, when I challenged Your Honour's ruling as to whether members were entitled to speak on amendments, I was shot down by members there opposite. The hon. gentleman may be upset with my announcement but it is a very important, I am very happy to be able to announce that the oil rigs are returning, that the oil companies just thumbed their noses and treated the hon. gentleman like a school boy, paid no attention to him.

Mr. Speaker, I will have more information on offshore activity in due course, maybe after the weekend. It is a good thing that there is somebody in this House who is keeping his finger on the pulse of what is happening offshore. There is no dialogue, no communication between the administration and the oil companies and the Government of Canada - no input from this Province. People have to depend upon either the Government of Canada, Mr. Chretien, or somebody on this side of the House to provide the information.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in connection with amendments on Private Members' Day that I started to talk about, it is the only institution in the world, the only organization in the world where members are not permitted to debate an amendment to a resolution. I wrote the Premier on April 28 on this matter, Mr. Speaker, and I said, 'You are on record on numerous occasions applauding your promotion of democracy in your Party, Province and country, and I assume the cause of democracy, yet our Legislature is the only Legislature in all of Canada, and probably in all of the world that refuses to allow Opposition responses to an amendment of resolutions proposed by individual members. Our rules state that members have twenty minutes for debate on the original resolution, or twenty minutes on the resolution and

MR. NEARY: amendment in total, but not additional time for amendments.

'Such was the case on Wednesday, April 20th when unaware of any amendment I used up my twenty minutes of time on the actual resolution. I was subsequently refused time to speak on an amendment to my own resolution.' 'Is that your idea of democracy', I asked the Premier. 'Perhaps not. If not, would you please consider changing the rules of procedure in the House to henceforth allow for equal debate on the resolution and any amendment? That would prove that you are at least remotely interested in putting up some show that you might truly entertain the concept of democracy in this Province'.

Mr. Speaker, I received a reply from the hon. gentleman who refused to budge on this point, refused to budge.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me say that it was never the intention of those who

MR. NEARY:

debated these rule changes a few years ago to eliminate the possibility of members speaking on amendments. That was not the spirit of the rule changes, Mr. Speaker. And it is the only place in the world that I know of, in the Lions Club, in the Kinsmen Club, in the trade union movement, in the Board of Trade, and Chambers of Commerce, and Jaycees, legislatures, Mr. Speaker, it is the right and privilege of every member to speak to amendments that are made on motions and resolutions. The only exception is this House of Assembly and I urge hon. gentlemen there opposite to think about that, to think about it.

Mr. Speaker, that is a very grave and serious matter. Can you imagine, the only place that I know of under the British Parliamentary system where members are not permitted to speak on an amendment. I believe the ruling made back in 1981 was a wrong ruling, and if the government refuse to budge on this matter, I believe that the Chair should undertake to research carefully this ruling. We have had two now, one the other day.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas): The hon. President of the Council on a point of order.

MR. MARSHALL: The hon. gentleman is not talking about a position taken by the government as he indicated, he is talking about a position taken by government on a point of order. Mr. Speaker, there was a ruling given by the Chair with respect to that matter and that ruling was to the effect that a member could not speak a second time, having spoken in the main debate, to an amendment on a private motion during Private Members' Day.

MR. MARSHALL: Now, that happens to be a ruling, Mr. Speaker, and one of the rules of this hon. House and the hon. gentleman in debating there now, he is really debating the rulings of the House and is really out of order. I mean, we cannot have a member getting up, whether it is immediately after, or sometime afterwards, he does not agree with a ruling of the House, a ruling from the Chair, getting up and in effect once again debating the ruling of the Speaker, whether he does it ten days after the ruling has been given, or ten seconds after.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I am not challenging Your Honour's ruling, I am merely urging the Chair to undertake some research into this matter because of the serious nature of the problem, and I would submit to Your Honour that is perfectly in order, for me to ask that that be done.

MR. SPEAKER (Dr. McNicholas): To that point of order, there is no point of order. That matter has been decided already.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

MR. NEARY: So, Mr. Speaker, let it be noted that this is the only place in the world under our democratic system where members cannot speak to an amendment. Now, let us see what happened a couple of days ago, Mr. Speaker, to further indicate my concern about the decline of parliamentary democracy in this Province. Well, Mr. Speaker, back on March 23 I placed a question on the Order Paper addressed to the hon. the Premier to lay upon the table of this House the following information: A list of all expenses incurred by the public treasury to provide for trips by government employees or elected officials to London, England, Ottawa, Vancouver or any other location to discuss, lobby or otherwise put forth the Province's position in the debate over the patriation of the Constitution including airline fares, the names of persons travelling with the minister, elected officials, etc., the cost of receptions, banquets and other functions, the cost of any other form of travel and expenses charged by any person involved, the salaries of government employees involved, the cost of any material used to support the Province's arguments in the way of stationery or promotional materials. Now, Mr. Speaker, just listen to the answer. To answer the very detailed question put by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Neary, will require research into the records of four departments of government plus the Premier's Office. These records extending over two years, are no longer held in departmental files as many of the payment vouchers involved have been sent for storage and microfilming. It is difficult to estimate the

MR. NEARY: time and cost involved in extracting the information requested but it has been suggested that not less than a month's work for a researcher is involved plus checking to ensure accuracy of the material by a senior officer. The cost would vary somewhat depending upon who would be assigned the task but would be between \$2,000 and \$3,000 just to get the information. Government can supply the information, that is not the problem. However, in view of government's expenditure restraints programme I believe that it would be ludicrous to tie up a civil servant in this kind of endeavour that will cost the taxpayers several thousands of dollars. For example, trying to ascertain the cost of any material used to support the Province's arguments in the way of stationery, etc. is like looking for a needle in a haystack.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, is it any wonder that we on this side of the House express concern over the decline of parliamentary democracy in this Province? What is happening here, Mr. Speaker, is something that should concern members on either side of this House. I believe the doors are slowly being closed on the public's access to information on government activity. The question that I asked dealt with expenses incurred by the public treasury when the Premier and his officials of government were off on European jaunts, Mr. Speaker, promoting their political version of the proposed patriation of the Canadian Constitution.

The Premier's answer was that there would be no answer to my question because it was too much trouble and too involved to research. Now, Mr. Speaker, no question's asked especially questions on the Order Paper, should be too much trouble for the administration to answer. That answer is frightening, Mr. Speaker, when you consider that it comes from the same Premier who has on his staff a team of writers whose task it is to answer public criticism of the Premier and all those in his little ivory tower.

Mr. Speaker, we are told by NAPE that there are 2,000 employees on the government payroll who were not processed by the Public Service Commission - 2,000 political appointments, 2000 people on the payroll whom you might say are semi-retired, for instance, an Official Greeter, a job they found for a defeated Tory candidate in one of the elections, Mr. Speaker - and they cannot find somebody to go out and research answers to legitimate questions put on the Order Paper - 2,000 we are told.

Mr. Speaker, the President of the Council (Mr. Marshall) or some other minister

MR. NEARY: about these matters. The answer is frightening, Mr. Speaker, because it marks the end of the tradition of government answering questions, in the House of Assembly, placed on the order paper. It is frightening because the Premier has said to me and to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, 'Ask me no more written questions about what I am doing because from now on I refuse to answer them.' The Premier has now stated in his answer to me, the day before yesterday, 'I will do what I like with public money and public office and I will answer to no one.' Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday outside of the House, the only other regime that we know of on the face of this earth that does that is the regime they have in the Soviet Union.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me see how important Answers to Questions are in this House. I am not just making it up. It is a tradition of the House, Mr. Speaker, and a very jealously guarded tradition of Legislatures. Mr. Speaker, members, parliamentarians go to great pains to safeguard that tradition and that right and House, Mr. Speaker. if I were the only one in this House today who felt strongly about answering questions I would not mind. There are other members in this House who feel equally as strong as I do about getting questions answered and one of those hon. gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, sits right opposite me across the House. How do I know that? Because I remembered the other day the President of the Council (Mr. Marhsall), the present Government House Leader, the member for St. John's East, when he spoke in the House on April 1, 1971, April 1, 1971 according to Hansard, which is a verbatim report of the proceedings of this House, Mr. Speaker -

MR. CALLAN: It is the gospel according to Hansard.

MR. NEARY: - it is the gospel according to Hansard, it is an authentic report of this

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Tape No. 1812

MJ - 2

MR. NEARY: Your Honour could stake his life on this report. So am I the only one in the House who thinks that legitimate questions should be answered, Mr. Speaker? Am I the only one or are there others? Well, on April 1, 1971 let me read from Hansard, tape 169 -

MR. HODDER: April Fool's Day.

MR. NEARY: April Fool's Day my hon. colleague reminds me. And the statement may have been made by an April Fool I do not know. But it says, 'Mr. Marshall, of legislative reform that we would address ourselves to first is a matter of the Question Period. Listen to this, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Marshall, none other than Mr. Marshall says that of legislative reform we should address ourselves to first the matter of the Question Period. One of the biggest reasons, he says, for the existence of the Legislative is that the Opposition and the government can meet together for the Opposition to ask questions of the government and the government to supply answers and to give an accounting of its stewardship of the people's affairs. Mr. Speaker, did hon. gentlemen there opposite hear what I just said? Are they listening or do I have to repeat it again?

MR. SIMMS: Repeat it 'boy'.

MR. NEARY: This is Hansard. Repetez s'il vous plait.

MR. SIMMS: - Merci beaucoup.

MR. NEARY: One of the biggest reasons Mr. Marshall, questions on Order Paper should be answered, he said.

MR. SIMMS: Drag it out for an hour and ten minutes.

MR. NEARY: Just listen. No, we finish at 5:30 today.

MR. SIMMS: Well done. No questions on the Late Show again?

MR. NEARY: One of the biggest reasons for the existence -

MR. BUTT: You are not going on until 5:30?

MR. NEARY: One of the biggest reasons for the existence of the legislature is that the Opposition and the government can meet together for the Opposition to ask questions of the government and the government to supply answers and give an accounting of its stewardship of the people's affairs. Last year he said some 20 to 25 per cent of the total of questions were completely ignored and not answered, smart tricks, he said, in the answering of the questions that were answered. Now, listen, this is the self-righteous, the Mr. Clean I am quoting here, Mr. Speaker. 'Last year only 20 to 25 per cent of the total questions were answered'. Well how many have been answered this year so far, Mr. Speaker? Does Your Honour have any idea? Does Your Honour have any idea how many questions have been placed on the Order Paper, written questions, this year? One hundred and twenty-eight questions put on the Order Paper as of May 4, yesterday.

AN HON. MEMBER: The same question as last year and the year before.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I do not care if they were the same questions that were asked back in the 17th century.

MR. SIMMS: Not in the Smallwood days because there were none asked, you were not allowed.

MR. NEARY: Well, according to Mr. Marshall, in the Hansard, he was very concerned about that.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman should be very concerned about what happened the day before yesterday. So far we have asked 128 questions, as of May 4, Mr. Speaker, 41 have been answered. 41 out of 128. Not a very good track record is it? 32 per cent, or only one-third of the questions so far placed on the Order Paper, written questions, have been answered by ministers, by the administration, 32 per cent. That is just as bad as it was back in 1971 when the President of the Council (Mr. Marshall), the Government House Leader, bitterly, savagely complained about not getting answers, and the answers that he got he said, I would style the smart tricks in the answering of questions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, did he stop at that? Did he?

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

MR. NEARY: Well, let us see what else he said. Mr. Marshall, Tape 169, he said, "I think, Your Honour, that the rules should be changed to require that this House should be asked to change its rules to require that questions be answered." Now, Mr. Speaker, that is the Government House Leader speaking for the administration that yesterday refused to give us an answer to a written question.

Let me read it again, Mr. Speaker, just in case it has not registered with hon. gentlemen there opposite. "I think, Your Honour, that the rules should be changed," Mr. Marshall said, according to Hansard, "to require that this House should be asked to change its rules to require that questions be answered. Questions should be able to be tabled by members of the Opposition when the Legislature is not sitting." Just imagine, he wanted to carry it a step further. He wanted to go further, Mr. Speaker. All we are

MR. NEARY: asking for now is answers to questions. But what the Government House Leader, the present Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) said, "Questions should be able to be tabled by members of the Opposition when the Legislature is not sitting."

He says, "This is all that I am asking is a demonstration of good faith on the part of the Government towards the Opposition, Mr. Speaker." Listen, the present Government House Leader says, "all I am asking is a demonstration of good faith on the part of the Government towards the Opposition."

Well, did we get a demonstration of good faith from the Premier yesterday when he answered the question? He said, "You can play with words," the same gentleman, "you can play with words from one end of the day to the other but the point is that we want the information. It is absolutely imperative that government give it and if it is necessary to change the rules then they should be changed." Now, Mr. Speaker, that same gentleman who was so self-righteous and pious in 1971, is now sitting in the midst of a cancer that is rapidly closing the door on the people of this

MR. NEARY: on the people of this Province, the taxpayers, ever getting any information from the administration. Mr. Speaker, is it any wonder then that we are hearing about dissension in the ranks, on the government benches! Is it any wonder that we are hearing, for instance, that the member for Mount Scio (Mr. Barry), is just about to the end of his rope with the administration, will either leave political life or run in the next federal election, depending on the outcome of the leadership contest next month! Is it any wonder, Mr. Speaker, that several ministers are disgruntled on the benches there opposite, who are critical -

MR. WARREN: The Minister of Fisheries is one.

MR. NEARY: Yes, the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Morgan), for instance, who is also contemplating his political future in the realm of federal politics.

The Minister of Fisheries disgruntled, and may offer himself. Mr. Speaker, these reports and these rumors are rampant throughout the Province about dissension in the ranks.

MR. MARSHALL: Have you not got anything better to add to the debate?

MR. NEARY: Yes, I will add a few words because the hon. gentleman is back in his seat. Here is what the hon. gentleman said back in 1971 about Answer to Questions and now he is sitting to the immediate right of a gentleman who is shutting the door on information to the taxpayers of this Province. In 1971, according to Hansard, the hon. gentleman said 'I think, Your Honour, that the rules should be changed to require-that this House should be asked to change the rules to require that questions be answered'. The hon. gentleman said that, and now he is sitting there mealy-mouthed now he is a

MR. NEARY: backslider.

MR. MARSHALL: That was the time when we did not even have a Question Period.

MR. NEARY: I see, we did not even have a Question Period. Now listen to this, What else did he ask for? 'Questions should be able to be tabled', he said. Questions should be able to be tabled by members of the Opposition when the Legislature is not sitting. He said that is all I am asking is a demonstration of good faith on the part of the government towards the Opposition. That is all he is asking for. Now he is sitting there, Mr. Speaker, slouched in his seat, a backslider - what else can I call him within the realm of the rules of this House?

MR. WARREN: A hypocrite.

MR. NEARY: No, you cannot say hypocritical but, Mr. Speaker, he sits there while the Premier slams the door in the face of the taxpayers of this Province, and attempts to bar them from getting information, to which they are entitled, from this hon. House. That very same gentleman, by the way, that very same gentleman, Mr. Speaker, to show you how the pendulum has swung the other way - I have a few newspaper clippings - the hon. gentleman stands up day in and day out in this House and condemns

MR. NEARY:

members on this side for the way they ask questions, their behaviour in the House. Mr. Speaker, anybody else in this House, anybody, on either side, but the hon. gentleman to get up in this House and slander members.

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker, I have here in front of me a clipping from The Evening Telegram of May 1971, "Marshall Takes It On The Chin" is the heading. I will not read it, the hon. gentleman knows what I am talking about. I would read it, Mr. Speaker.

'Opposition members boycott Legislature'. Listen to this, Mr. Speaker. Now remember a couple of days ago the criticism that was levelled at this side of the House for remarks allegedly made about the Chair and about the Speaker. Do you remember that, Your Honour? Do you remember how self-righteous they were, how pure they were, how lily-white they were, Mr. Speaker? You would swear to listen to them talk that they had never, never dared to question decisions of the Speaker, above the Chair, especially the hon. gentleman immediately opposite, in his seat at the moment.

Well, what did they say? Mr. Speaker, what did they say about the Speaker back on June 1, 1971? What did my hon. friend, and learned friend opposite think of the Speaker then? Just listen, Mr. Speaker. There is a picture of the Legislature there, a picture of the Legislature on the front page of The Evening Telegram, Mr. Speaker, just listen to the heading, the headline, June 1, 1971, 'Opposition members boycott Legislature'. Now, why did they boycott the Legislature? Because they wanted, according to this article, "Want impartial Speaker or majority in House".

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward):

Order, please!

I have to interrupt the hon. member for a minute. This being Thursday I have to inform the House we have three questions for the Late Show. The first is from the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) to the Minister of Health (Mr. House) re the North West River Hospital. And the second one is from the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) to the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Hickey) re an answer put for unwed mothers was not satisfactory. And the third is from the member for Torngat Mountains, it is to the Premier and it has to do with his response to a question re Voisey River fish camp.

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

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, that was one thing that happened. They wanted to boycott the House because they questioned the impartiality of the Speaker. They wanted an impartial Speaker or a majority in the House? Then on June 1st, 1971, what happened? Blowup in House results in expulsion for three. Now who were the three who were expelled, Mr. Speaker? The reason I am referring to this, Mr. Speaker, is because every once in a while we hear the hon. gentleman stand in his place and squirt his venom and his poison across the House.

MR. CALLAN: In a sanctimonious way.

MR. NEARY: In a sanctimonious way he gets up and says, 'Well, you know, the hon. gentleman is trying to take the House on his back and this one is not conforming to the rules and someone is questioning the Speaker'. You would not know but the hon. gentleman never did it before in his life, when the hon. gentleman was over here. Who were the three who were expelled? John Crosbie, Leader of the Liberal Reform group; William Marshall, PC, St. John's East. Just imagine! Mr. Marshall declared his want of confidence in the Speaker. Just listen to this, Mr. Speaker. Now the hon. gentleman who gets all the mileage, all the press, gets his little darts in every chance he gets, just listen to what he says here about the Chair now—he has such regard and such respect for the Chair now, Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable, you would never say it was the same man, he must be born again.

MR. MARSHALL: It was great in those days.

MR. NEARY: It was great in those days, yes. Mr. Marshall then declared his want of confidence in the Speaker and left the Chamber as well. Is that not something

MR. NEARY: now? It is great to have a library that you can go to once in a while, Mr. Speaker, and Hansard that you can refer to once in a while. And then the government carried on; 'No Opposition, government pushes through major bills. Crosbie then denied the charge that he threatened the Speaker.

MR. NEARY: 'Immediately after the ruling, three members, Mr. Crosbie, Mr. Marshall and Mr. Earle, of Fortune, were suspended for declaring that Mr. Clarke did not rule impartially.'

Mr. Speaker, I happened to be in the House in those days and that is why I remember it. Mr. Speaker, if you want to see somebody take this House on his back, you should have been here when the hon. gentleman first came into this House.

And then we had that week in the House the expulsion of John C. Crosbie, Liberal Reform leader, William Marshall - "Mr. Marshall Tuesday night by the Premier" - well, he insulted somebody's mother in the House.

MR. WARREN: What?

MR. NEARY: I suppose about as low as you could stoop, Mr. Speaker, not only in a Legislature, but I suppose you could not stoop any lower anywhere, even if you were in a tavern, if you were downtown in a pub you could not stoop any lower, Mr. Speaker, than to insult a man's mother and that is what the hon. gentleman did. And then he has the face and the gall, the audacity to stand here day in and day out and chastize the Opposition. I hope I never hear again, Mr. Speaker - the history, the record is there. It speaks for itself.

And then, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wick Collins had a little dart at hon. gentlemen the week that was, on June 4 - 'Bill to limit government borrowing', Mr. Speaker; 'information slow coming in this session,' the hon. gentleman said.

MR. NEARY: I just told the members, so far out of 128 written questions, forty-one have been answered, one-third, 32 per cent. The hon. gentleman criticizing the government, 'information slow in coming,' he said, 'in this session,' back in March, 1971.

'House suspends Crosbie, Marshall and Earle.' Now, Mr. Speaker, the reason I am belabouring this matter is just to show how members there opposite - not only have they become arrogant, Mr. Speaker, but they have -

MR. HODDER: They have become sanctimonious.

MR. NEARY: They have become sanctimonious and self-righteous. Well, that goes without saying.

What is so frightening about all this, Mr. Speaker, - forget their arrogance; with forty-four, you would expect the leader of the administration to become arrogant and cocky, snarky and testy, especially if he does not get his own way. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, two hockey teams out on the ice, forty-four on one side and eight on the other,

MR. NEARY: and the eight are scoring goals and skating all over the forty-four, playing all over the forty-four, Mr. Speaker, what do they do? They off their gloves and they start fisticuffs. We almost had that a few days running in this hon. House. I had to write the Speaker about one threat that I had in this House from one hon. gentleman, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TOBIN: Is that right?

MR. NEARY: That is right.

MR. TOBIN: Well, you should not be getting on with your cowardly acts.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, anything I say or do in this House is said within the rules of the House otherwise Your Honour would ask me to leave.

MR. TOBIN: Why do you not go out and say it to the people out there?

MR. NEARY: Anything I say I say it within the realm of good taste and within the rules of this House, Mr. Speaker, and if hon. gentlemen think I am going to get down and roll in the mud with them, I have got news for them.

MR. TOBIN: You referred to the people at the Harbour Light as derelicts. If that is not cowardly, well I do not know.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, so here you have two hockey teams, forty-four on one side, eight on the other and the eight cutting rings around them, the eight getting the upper hand. They get frustrated and they resort to all kinds of innuendo and dirty tricks and now, the most frightening part of all, they want to restrict the activities of the Legislature. Look at the history, Mr. Speaker. I am not making it up, I have just given this House factual information. Editorial writers in this Province should take the government to task day in and day out until they answer that question that I asked. It was a legitimate question.

May 5, 1983

Tape No. 1819

MJ - 2

MR. TOBIN: Did you see the editorial in The Evening Telegram?

MR. NEARY: And the editorial writers and the TV and the radio if they are worth their salt, if they are doing their job, you will hear such a scream and such a howl from one end of this Province to the other about the government refusing to give the House information, especially on questions that are written and placed on the Order Paper, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ROBERTS: Information on microfilm, who are they trying to kid? It is down on the eighth floor.

MR. NEARY: That is right, Mr. Speaker.

So, it looks to me like they are planning, Mr. Speaker, to close her down,

MR. NEARY: close the House of Assembly any minute; the sooner the better, as far as they are concerned. And not only that, they get aided and abetted once in a while by the free-lancers who will say, "Well, if we have the same kind of thing that happened during the Question Period yesterday maybe they should close it down." I thought, Mr. Speaker, you had to have factual reporting from this House. I do not know if members of the journalists, free-lancers, people on contract or part-time, whatever they are, realize that they can be brought before the Bar of this House for slander and libel and contempt. This is the highest court in the land. You cannot say it about the Supreme Court of Canada, editorialize, can you? Well, why should you be allowed to get away with it when you are talking about this hon. House, the highest court in the land?

I make no apologies, Mr. Speaker, for yesterday. Sometimes the system works in a strange and peculiar way but it does work. If there is anything to take the place of democracy I have not heard of it. Sometimes members can be accused of being childish, reading newspapers, feet upon the desk, all sorts of things. They should visit the Mother of Parliament in Great Britain and see what goes on.

So, Mr. Speaker, this editorializing, maybe the thing to do is to close the House down because of what happened yesterday.

MR. STAGG: You do not agree?

MR. NEARY: No, I certainly do not agree. This House should be kept open until the real problems confronting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are dealt with in this session of the House. And that is one of the reasons that I have been forced to speak for my sixth day in a row, to try to keep the

MR. NEARY: House open in a hope that some plans will emerge to deal with the problems that are facing the people of this Province. But they are trying to get it closed down as quickly as they can.

Last April the Premier was in a fever to stir up the people's emotions about the most important issue in our whole history, as he called it. But now, Mr. Speaker, a year later, the man does not even want to talk about it. What happened? Well, he almost seems relieved, Mr. Speaker, that the courts have taken over. This is the Premier's favourite topic, or at least it was until he referred the ownership of the offshore to the courts and lost.

But, Mr. Speaker, we do not want this issue to die. It is an important issue. And in these trying times, when money is so desperately needed, and jobs are so desperately needed, Mr. Speaker, we feel that the administration should be negotiating. They have not negotiated.

MR. NEARY: The Premier has not called Ottawa lately, has not asked them to get back to the bargaining table because Newfoundland needs the revenue, needs money and needs jobs. He has done nothing and therefore, Mr. Speaker, we feel he owes an explanation of his failure to the 152,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who told him last April 6. yes, Sir, by all means go ahead and negotiate for us and get a deal. Mr. Speaker, we will stay here till doomsday if necessary to get those talks started again. The unemployed want the talks started and want an agreement, and the economy wants them to start again. And if the Premier, Mr. Speaker, ever expects the people of this Province to believe a word he utters ever again he had better start delivering. Otherwise, Mr. Speaker, people will really believe that he pulled the wool over their eyes last April 6.

Mr. Speaker, the offshore question has not only been placed on the back burner but this administration now appears as if they do not want to hear tell of it.

MR. BUTT: We want an agreement now.

MR. NEARY: The gentleman says, 'We want an agreement now'. Mr. Speaker, they are sitting over there now day in and day out like zombies. They have no more idea of what is happening offshore than somebody in the middle of darkest Africa. They cannot tell us how many rigs are going to be out there this year, how many jobs, what it is going to mean for the economy. COGLA has moved into Atlantic Place, has taken over. There is no communication, no dialogue, in input from the Province and they are planning on

MR. NEARY: Mr. Speaker, I had to laugh at the hon. the Premier yesterday. He says, 'The member for LaPoile ran away from Bell Island.' Well, let me remind hon. gentlemen there opposite that I ran away from nothing. As a matter of fact, let me say this for the benefit of hon. gentlemen, put Bell Island back as a separate district, as it was and I will take the Premier or any other member there opposite on any day in the week. Now, what happened was this, that the late Judge Higgins, who drew up the boundary changes, recommended that Bell Island be put in with the South shore of Conception Bay, Portugal Cove, St. Philips and so forth. But what did the Tory administration do? They gerrymandered it, put Bell Island in with Tory Harbour Main.

MR. TOBIN: And you ran out.

MR. NEARY: Oh, I see. Put Bell Island back as a separate district and I will take any member on the opposite side on.

MR. BUTT: You lost the poll on Bell Island the last time (inaudible).

MR. WARREN: He would not lose this time though.

MR. DOYLE: I will take you on on Bell Island.

MR. NEARY: So let us hear no more talk about that.

Mr. Speaker, I know all about the hon. gentleman's activities on Bell Island you need not worry about that. I am very well aware.

MR. DOYLE: They are all good.

MR. NEARY: That leads me to the matter of unemployment in this Province. I have been five days now trying to get around to the unemployment situation in this Province.

MR. DINN: It has been confirmed -

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Tape No. 1822

MJ - 2

MR. NEARY:
to good use too.

That is right. We will put them

MR. DINN:
Doyle or somebody is coming.

It has been confirmed that John

MR. NEARY:
what you said about him.

No, I will not tell your colleague

According to the notes that I have
hear on unemployment in the Province - I have statistics for
March 1983 and March 1982. So what I am doing is making a
comparison of March 1982 and March 1983: The Labour force
as of March 1982 was 213,000, the labour force as of March
1983 was 216,000; employed, March 1982, 178,000 Newfoundlanders
and Labradorians, employed, March 1983, 167,000 Newfoundlanders
and Labradorians; unemployed March 1982, 35,000 Newfoundlaners
and Labradorians,

MR. NEARY: unemployed March, 1983, 49,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians or 22.5 per cent as compared to 16.4 per cent in 1982; you might say, 50,000 Newfoundlanders unemployed. But here is the hitch, here is the rub, Mr. Speaker: The above Statistics Canada unemployment figures, do not include such categories of workers as inshore fishermen or people who are temporarily laid off and expected to be recalled for work. According to Statistics Canada, at the end of March there were 12,900 inshore fishermen who were collecting unemployment insurance in Newfoundland, but because of the different definitions of unemployment, this figure is not reflected in Statistics Canada unemployment figures for the Province that I just listed.

So, Mr. Speaker, you have to add to the 50,000 another 12,900 inshore fishermen who are unemployed, that is 62,900, and, in addition to that, people who are temporarily laid off.

The Daily News on April 12, 1983 noted that this is particularly significant as it relates to Newfoundland, where some operations shut down for weeks at a time and where there are thousands of inshore fishermen who normally collect unemployment insurance during the slow November through May inshore fishing season.

So, Mr. Speaker, the figure that we are getting of roughly 50,000 is not accurate, does not reflect the true picture of unemployment in this Province. But if it did, that would be bad enough, that would indicate record unemployment, the worst unemployment we have had in this Province since the Great Depression. But it does not reflect the true picture. So, Mr. Speaker, you are talking, as of March, I would say, of about 70,000 or 80,000 Newfoundlanders unemployed.

MR. NEARY: Now, what did the Premier say about this? What did the Premier indicate to the people of this Province? What hope did he hold out for those who are unemployed? Young Newfoundlanders who will graduate from school this year, from the College of Trades, the College of Fisheries, the vocational schools, what did the Premier say about these young Newfoundlanders? What hope did he offer to people who are unemployed, construction workers, carpenters, electricians, iron workers,

MR. NEARY: cement finishers, bricklayers, clerks, stenographers? Well, in a radio interview, Mr. Speaker, the Premier said when he was being interviewed on radio, 'A good answer', he said, 'is an honest answer and the honest answer is that we can do very little, government does not have the money to put into job creating programmes. So we cannot do a lot. We are spending as much as we can realistically spend.' But where is the money going to come from to stimulate the economy, to drastically reduce the unemployment rate? He said, 'I cannot borrow money that I do not have and might not be able to pay back. Nobody is to blame', he says, 'for the economy'. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman who leads the administration threw up his arms in despair and said, 'No, there is nothing I can do for the unemployed in this Province', Mr. Speaker, 'particularly difficulties that are being experienced by young people who are unemployed'. And I am told that the youth unemployment, between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four years, the number unemployed in that category is 21,000, 21,000 young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four years are unemployed, or 42.9 per cent of the total figure I gave are young people.

Mr. Speaker, this is frightening, very frightening indeed. In early December the Youth Commission released a study on youth unemployment, commissioned by the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Advisory Council. The minister who responded to this report, speaking for the administration, stated that unemployment among the Province's young people was one of the major problems facing them. I think I am quoting the minister correctly.

MR. NEARY:

In the December 7th, 1982, issue of The Daily News the hon. gentleman said that he would be taking the report to Cabinet and some recommendations are expected to be forthcoming. Now that is the hon. member for Grand Falls (Mr. Simms), the hon. gentleman who has a tendency to follow the example of the Premier and the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) in chastising the Opposition once in a while. The hon. gentleman made that statement. I will just remind him again because the report, I believe, was presented to the hon. gentleman in his capacity as Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth. And in The Daily News the hon. gentleman was quoted as saying that he would be taking the report to Cabinet and some recommendations are expected to be forthcoming.

Now, perhaps the hon. gentleman,

MR. NEARY:

Mr. Speaker, when he participated in this debate - that was back in December of last year, almost six months ago.

MR. SIMMS:

(Inaudible).

MR. NEARY:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have an idea, but the hon. gentleman told the people of this Province in response to the report presented to him by the youth of this Province that he would be taking the report to Cabinet and some recommendations were expected to be forthcoming. Now we are very anxious to find out what these recommendations are. When will they be forthcoming? What action has the administration taken on that report?

MR. DINN:

Sit down now and he will get up and tell you all about it.

MR. NEARY:

Yes, the hon. gentleman will have a chance tomorrow to get up, because I will be winding up my few remarks tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, on April 7, 1983 the Daily News reported the Chairman, the Chairman Brian Furey of the Youth Commission of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's a saying, 'That the danger with youth employment at current high levels is that young people will become turned off with the system. If we accept the premise that young people are the future of our society, then it is our view that all institutions must strive to ensure that as many young people who wish to work are given a viable opportunity to do so.' Rather than wait for the youth unemployment rate to rise even further, Mr. Speaker, I contend that this House of Assembly should appoint a committee to examine its social effects further.

MR. NEARY:

I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that a committee of this House be struck to take that report that has been lying gathering dust in the minister's office, and on the shelves in the Cabinet Room, that that report be taken and turned over to a committee of this House, a committee of this Assembly, that we appoint a committee to examine, Mr. Speaker, that report and its social effects further.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the problem of unemployment among our youth should be a matter of priority, it should be one of the items high on the list of priorities in this session of the Legislature. Mr. Speaker, we have been open now for thirty-six or thirty-seven days, have we seen any sign of plans to deal with unemployment among the youth, the young people of this Province? We have been chastized by the Premier, we have been criticized, the hon. gentleman has ranted and raved and frothed at the mouth, wild-eyed, goggly-eyed, criticizing, squabbling, fighting with

MR. NEARY:

everybody in sight. We are thirty-six or thirty-seven days here now, has the hon. gentleman laid on the table of this House anything that resembles a plan to deal with record unemployment in this Province, or has he laid on the table anything that deals with high electricity rates, crisis in the fisheries, implications of the closing of the Buchans mine, the situation at Corner Brook, the situation in Labrador West, unemployment amongst construction workers?

Mr. Speaker, let it be recorded now and forever and ever and ever, amen, that it is not up to the Opposition to lay plans, to bring plans before this House to deal with the real problems that are confronting the ordinary people of this Province. That is a job for the government and it is up to us to approve or disapprove or criticize. Mr. Speaker, if I do nothing else, if I can keep this House open for another two or three weeks maybe we will shame and force the Premier to deliver on the offshore agreement, the one issue that he had in the last election, the one issue that put forty-four members on that side of the House. It is crying out for agreement. The Board of Trade, the unemployed, the economy, crying out for a settlement of the offshore. At least if there was an agreement it would give us a psychological boost in this Province. And how the hon. gentleman can sit there, how his conscience will allow him - the man must have no conscience at all, Mr. Speaker, to sit there day in and day out, play little political games and ridicule and slander and libel everybody in sight and lay no plans out to cope with the real problems that are confronting the ordinary people of this Province. What kind of a conscience does the hon.

MR. NEARY: gentleman have, Mr. Speaker?
What kind of a conscience? No conscience.

Mr. Speaker, it is our duty
and our responsibility to raise these matters.

AN HON. MEMBER:

MR. NEARY: So what if I speak for another
day or so! So what! You have deputy ministers now
telling people, 'Oh, the reason you cannot get
this project or that project or get your money is because
Neary is delaying the passing of the Budget'. What
silly nonsense! For their pet projects they can
get Lieutenant-Governor's warrants while the House
is sitting and they have Interim Supply, Mr. Speaker.
So that is just another little gimmick, another little
example of their game playing.

MR. NEARY: What kind of a conscience does the hon. gentleman have, that he can slump in his seat day in and day out -

MR. SPEAKER (AYLWARD): Order, please!

MR. NEARY: - trying to manipulate this one and that one?

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

MR. NEARY: I move the adjournment of the debate, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: It being five-thirty on Thursday we have three items for debate. The first item for debate is from the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) concerning a question asked the Minister of Health (Mr. House) re the North West River Hospital.

The hon. member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

During this week, Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister of Health a very basic question. Knowing that he received a letter from the Labrador Branch of the Newfoundland Medical Association in response to several petitions presented in this hon. House, in fact, a petition signed by over 1,000 residents presented by the hon. minister who is the member for the district which includes North West River, and with those kinds of petitions and those kinds of letters all showing concern about the closure of the North West River Hospital, all they were asking for was for the minister to consider a study or to have a study into health care in North West River and Coastal Labrador before he decides to close down the North West River Hospital in November. This is basically what the petition was asking for, and to establish chronic care in North West River and to bring

MR. WARREN: the facilities in Lake Melville
up to standard.

So all they are saying is,
why would the minister be so determined -

AN HON. MEMBER: Probably he was happy to
close it.

MR. WARREN: No, I will not use the word
'happy'. I do not think the minister is happy to close
down the North West River Hospital. No, he is not pleasant.
I think he is as disturbed about it as I am. But why
should he be so determined? - I think the proper word
is determined - to go ahead, stand by his
guns and close down the North West River Hospital before
a study is completed. Now a study may be completed
before November. Maybe the minister could have some
kind of a committee set up, probably even members
from the House of Assembly, to do a study. The
minister has several things at his disposal and a study
could be done. Probably the study will determine
by November that the hospital should close.

It was my only question to the minister on that
particular day, and that is why I was not satisfied, because
the minister came back and said as far as he is concerned
he has all the information. The minister should have
all the information. Surely goodness, I would think that
by now the minister's

MR. WARREN:

department should have a large book compiled on the reasons why North West River should be phased out. Now the minister was arguing at every petition in this House that there is an all-weather road from North West River to Goose Bay. I think the minister got out of North West River about twenty-four hours too early last time because twenty-four hours after the minister got out of North West River we had a flood down there and it was eight days before the road was opened. So it is not an all-weather road and the minister should be aware of that.

MR. HOUSE: The first time it happened.

MR. WARREN: That is right. So we do not have an all-weather road when nature does take its course and it is quite possible that next year there might be the same thing again. So the minister cannot use the all-weather road as the answer to this problem. So, I beg the minister this time, I have done everything else so now I beg the minister to not drop the axe in November unless a study has been completed and it says it should close. If that is done, then, by all means that is what I will go along with, but would the minister consider having a study done and consider the wishes of the people?

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): The hon. the Minister of Health.

MR. HOUSE: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member seems to be never satisfied with my answers. I am going to suggest that he start changing the questions and then perhaps if he changes the questions I might be able to give the answers he wants. Last week he asked that we do a study to determine whether we should or should not close North West River. I think there has been ample studies done, there has been enough information gathered over the years to tell us,

MR. HOUSE: of course, that that hospital should not remain as an in-patient facility, and somewhere along the line these realities have to be met. He made a statement about the road washing out about twenty-four hours after we got out of North West River. I gather from my colleague it is about the first time that has happened. I want to point out to the hon. gentleman that these things sometimes happen elsewhere. I remember a year or two ago in the community of Placentia, where the hospital was right in the middle of the community, you could not get to it because of a flood.

MR. PECKFORD: And the Bay d'Espoir Highway.

MR. HOUSE: The Bay d'Espoir Highway is another case.

MR. HOUSE: There is a number of these kinds of cases. We do get storms in the Winter. You would have to build a hospital in Trout River every Winter, I suppose, because there are times you cannot get there. So you cannot base decisions on that kind of information. I understand that when the flood occurred a helicopter was made available and, of course, that would always pertain.

Now, we have to make these decisions. Let us look at the facts, Mr. Speaker, about the North West River Hospital. One of the briefs they submitted to us when we were there the other day stated that it was a forgone conclusion that the hospital would close. As a matter of fact, there was a commission ten years ago that recommended its closure then. Now, Mr. Speaker, that was ten years ago, when the occupancy was about 80 per cent and now it is down to 40 per cent, and all the people from the Coast of Labrador, where these petitions have come from, have been asking to keep it open because it is the hospital they use. I cannot say that is correct, Mr. Speaker, I am not saying it is wrong, they may go there, but they go to Melville and St. Anthony and sometimes here to the Janeway and the Health Sciences Complex. Because no surgery has been performed there for the last five years at least. The most the hospital has been is a place for recuperation after surgery or waiting to go home to the Coast after they have had surgery or other procedures at the other hospitals. Now, Mr. Speaker, what are we doing? We are giving these people the same kind of service at Goose Bay, we are providing a hospital there, and, of course, we are keeping the clinic opened for the people in North West River, and when I look at the number of people we are keeping there, a doctor full time and two nurses in that community for its population, I think they are going to be

MR. HOUSE: well served there. Now, on the Coast of Labrador they talk about their services being curtailed when never before have they had so many services on the Coast of Labrador. In ten years the number of people servicing the Coast of Labrador has doubled. It has gone from twenty-three, I think, to forty-six.

MR. WARREN: So has the population.

MR. HOUSE: No, the population has not gone up by the same amount. Besides that, of course, all the real medical problems are served in other centers.

So, Mr. Speaker, I gave the committee when I was there an outline of what we were going to do

MR. HOUSE: There are some problems, I will guarantee you that there will be some problems, but it is not related to the beds and it is not related to the Board. There are some other problems that have to be dealt with, and I did give the commitment that we would certainly be upgrading the Melville Hospital and ensuring that that is going to fulfill the service that it is meant to fulfill. And there may be some problems with that, but it is nothing that cannot be overcome. They are not problems of government, not problems of the Board, but problems that are germane to that particular institution right now.

MR. WARREN: (Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): Order, please!

MR. HOUSE: So, Mr. Speaker, I will just say I guarantee the hon. gentleman that we are going to give a good service there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: The second question today is a question from the hon. member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock), to the hon. Minister of Social Services (Mr. Hickey) with regard to aid to unwed mothers.

The hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK: My question, as I said in Question Period to the Minister of Social Services, which I do not think he answered, he also ended up spinning off all the things that they are after doing in the past ten years. And I commend his department in many ways for the advances that have taken place in the past ten years. But with regards to -

AN HON. MEMBER: Oh, backing off, are you?

MR. HISCOCK: I am not backing off one inch.

But with regards to the economic situation at the time that we find ourselves in in this Province

MR. HISCOCK: and country, as the minister admitted himself today, there are 1,000 able-bodied men on welfare and more than that, I do not know how many unwed mothers and also other people. But I will go so far as to say there is an attitude, Mr. Speaker, in the Province

MR. HISCOCK: that is encouraging.
the government to cut down, not only to cut down but to cut back on help to those needing social assistance. As the minister said it is only to assist. But what we have in the Province is the attitude, well, if a young woman ends up getting pregnant then let the father or boyfriend end up looking after her or let her move in with her parents, or, if it is an able-bodied man, well, let him go out West.

All I am saying, Mr. Speaker, in the question today is that the minister has stated himself his department has gone over budget, I think, at least \$6 million to \$10 million in the past couple of years, if I am correct on that.

MR. HICKEY: As usual you are not.

MR. HISCOCK: Well, the minister can say, 'As usual'. Then I would suggest that he should not make statements on the radio and things on it. But as a result, Mr. Speaker, what is happening on it?

MR. SIMMS: If you do not want to hear him on the radio, stop listening.

MR. HISCOCK: And the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth (Mr. Simms) should be creating jobs for our youth instead of interrupting. What is happening, Mr. Speaker, is we are finding that those who need a helping hand now the most are not being given it. They are being told to go out West, our young men. This is the government that promised 40,000 jobs and now there are over 1,000 young able-bodied men on welfare.

So, Mr. Speaker, the answer to it - and I do not expect the minister to answer it now. But I will say that if we, as a society, cannot help the ones who are down now and help them for a couple of months so they can pick up their lives and start rebuilding

MR. HISCOCK: them, if we take the cold, callous attitude that this government is taking instead of a compassionate attitude and not taking the attitude of the general population of thinking that those on welfare are a bunch of lazy bums or those who are unwed mothers in whatever words you want to describe them, these are now people in very hard, dire straits who need help and it is not forthcoming from this government. I, for one, feel that it should. I think that the Premier himself has let down, moreso than anybody in this Province, he has let down the youth of this Province.

 The Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth (Mr. Simms) will probably say, 'Okay, we are creating 500 jobs.' That is not even one high school in this Province. As

MR. HISCOCK: the minister ended up stating before, of education, 144,000 young people, that is in the school alone, so at least 60,000 or 70,000 or them are in the high school, not counting univeristy or trade schools. And what this government is doing, this government is turning their backs on the young people of our Province and are putting the financial responsibilities of their incompetency on the backs of the young people. And I do not think it is good enough for the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Hickey), and it is happening, for his officials to tell them to go West and also taking the attitude towards the unwed mothers, and towards those who are needing help.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): The hon. Minister of Social Services.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Speaker, first of all the hon. gentleman might as well get off this issue of my staff telling people to go West. Now I asked him to give me the names of the social workers; any social workers who tell someone in those difficult times when there are no jobs out West to go West, will be dismissed.

MR. HISCOCK: I am not going to do that.

MR. HICKEY: No, that is right. So you want to have your cake and eat it too. You want to come into this House, Mr. Speaker, and crow about it and complain about it and when you get a minister and a government that is prepared to act, that is prepared to respond and act, even when the ideas come from the Opposition, what happens? Closemouthed You are going to protect and you are going to conceal the names, you are not going to give us the names so that we can correct the situation. So the hon. gentleman is making politics on the backs of the poor. He comes in, on the one hand, so righteous, so concerned about the poor, the unmarried

MR. HICKEY: mothers, the single men and women in this Province, and when I ask him to enable me to correct a so-called situation that he talks about, he refuses to give the information. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that is McCarthyism.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HICKEY: In other words, he accuses the administration but will not deliver the facts to allow the administration to correct if in fact what he says is right.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me deal with the hon. gentleman with regard to some figures. I gave him some figures, as I am in the

MR. HICKEY: habit of doing, and I know it is dangerous, off the top of my head. I said to him in response to one of his questions that as opposed to what is happening in other provinces, for a government who supposedly does not create any jobs, with the highest unemployment rate in the country, that the case load in my department some months ago increased between 3 and 4 per cent, that I would not be surprised if it reached a 10 per cent mark for a very temporary period, such as the month of May which is the worst month in the year for social assistance. I went to the department, Mr. Speaker, and I got the figures. What are that? Here they are. The percentage increase is 3.3 per cent. That is not a bad batting average, I said 3 per cent to 4 per cent. The increase for the month of March, 1983, over the month of March, 1982, was 3.3 per cent, 20,000 versus 20,700. And the hon. gentleman talks as though, you know, it had gone right out of sight. He just got through telling me that I had overspent my budget for two years in a row by \$6 million to \$10 million. Wrong again! The budget was overspent by \$3.4 million this year, Mr. Speaker, the first time that has occurred since I have been minister. And we all know why and we all know where the blame lies, not in this Province, but with a federal government that is insensitive, that has this Province on our knees and will not let us get up off of them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

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

MR. HISCOCK: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (Aylward): A point of order, the hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the \$6 million, as the minister said, one should never quote figures, and it is \$3.5 million and it is over. But I would say if it was not for the NEED Programme to look after social assistance and other cases and this government (inaudible) there would be more than 3 per cent added to it.

MR. HICKEY: All right, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: To that point of order, the hon. Minister of Social Services.

MR. HICKEY: The hon. gentleman walks in again only to be buried again. Let me tell him what the NEED Programme will contribute to my department this year; 100 jobs, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HICKEY:

What will my community development programme-provincial dollars-contribute this year? Twenty-eight hundred jobs,

MR. HISCOCK: Right. Put them on UIC.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Speaker, that is the year we are in now. Let us deal with the year the hon. gentleman is talking about. How many jobs created by the federal government? Zero. How many jobs created by the provincial government out of pure provincial funds? Twenty-five hundred and eighty-four—

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HICKEY: - so many, Mr. Speaker, that the Province of Prince Edward Island asked me to send three of my staff up—we always like to help and we did—and they borrowed our programme and they have put three times the budget this year than they had last year into our programme, Mr. Speaker, and it is working very, very well.

I gave the hon. gentleman, Mr. Speaker, just to wrap up, I gave the hon. gentleman some figures of other provinces with regards to increases in social assistance case loads, again off the top of my head. I checked and I find that Alberta, 43 per cent increase in their case load; British Columbia, 47 per cent increase in the case load; Ontario, rich Ontario, Mr. Speaker, the heartland of the country, Ontario, 39 per cent increase; little old Newfoundland, 3.4 per cent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (AYLWARD): Order, please!

MR. HICKEY: Now, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude by saying to the hon. gentleman when he talks about the compassion of this department and this minister, I will await and let history judge whether I am compassionate or not. But I will conclude with saying this, my job is

MR. HICKEY: made very, very easy for me
by a dedicated, committed and professional staff and
also by a government, Mr. Speaker, that has a social
conscience and that even in tough times can find
\$6.5 million in the year 1983 to put into job creation.
We believe in helping people who want to help themselves.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER (AYLWARD): Order, please!

The third question on today's
Late Show is a question from the hon. member for Torngat
Mountains (Mr. Warren) to the Premier concerning
Voisey Bay fish camp.

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

MR. WARREN: Mr. Speaker, I was not satisfied today with the answer -

AN HON. MEMBER: The Late Show is called the Funny Show, the Happy Hour.

MR. WARREN: Well, you are the clown anyway.
Mr. Speaker, I was not satisfied today with the answer the Premier gave. I asked was it possible to have a public enquiry into all aspects of the Voisey Bay fish camp from the start of construction right up until 1982.

Mr. Speaker, just going off of this subject for a second, we can see that if a particular contractor spends almost \$5.5 million on a water and sewerage system, there was a lot of hanky-panky going on. But this has nothing to do with this particular thing.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Water and sewerage in Makkovik?

MR. WARREN: Yes, it is the water and sewerage project in Makkovik. We know for a fact that there were boats built out of money that was supposed to be used for the water and sewerage project.

Now, Mr. Speaker, maybe it does not seem necessary to the Premier to have a public enquiry but if the Premier will abide - the hon. minister said that he is hoping to get the information - by what he said yesterday in the House, I would be quite satisfied. I will give him a list of things that I would like to have looked into, which I am sure the people of Newfoundland and Labrador would like to know about. They are: The number of visitors who went to the Voisey Bay fish camp from the year 1972 to 1982; the number of employees each year who were employed with the fishing camp each year; the cost of the operations including food,

MR. WARREN: travel and fuel.

MR. SIMMS: Toilet paper.

MR. WARREN: If you want to include toilet paper by all means - Mr. Speaker, when we include the cost of fuel and the cost of travel I think we will come up with a substantial amount of money. Also the amount of revenue. I am sure there was some revenue. In fact, talking to the caretaker a few years ago I know for a fact there has been some revenue generated from some visitors who went into the fish camp.

However, by the Premier's own admission yesterday - and he publicly said it in this House - the camp is a losing proposition, so why is the government keeping it there? The government never had any intention of turning it over to the Native associations until that was brought up in Question Period yesterday. I have been in contact with the Native associations and they have not been in contact with the Premier or anyone else on the government side. So I am just wondering when will a proposal

MR. WARREN:

from the Premier or from the government be issued to the Native associations or the Native associations asked if they are interested in taking over this camp? If they are not interested then, Mr. Speaker, I think the government should take the normal process and get rid of it. No way should it be, as the Premier said yesterday, an albatross around the necks of the taxpayers of this Province.

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

PREMIER PECKFORD: Mr. Speaker, I want to say, first of all, that I am very, very happy that the comments I have made and other members of the government concerning the improper use of time by the Opposition over the last while on the Late Show has been corrected, that we have motivated and stimulated the members of the Opposition to get involved in the Late Show, because it is very valuable. I am very pleased to see that finally the Opposition is taking some suggestions from the government and is using their time more wisely. It is long overdue. And talking about abusing the taxpayers and so on, here was a group over there who get paid by the taxpayers who were not even using the time of the House that has been provided for them to debate the public issues of the day. Talking about abuse of money of the taxpayers of the Province! So, Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that finally they are going to try to earn their keep and earn the money that they are being paid by the taxpayers of the Province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I said yesterday that the Voisey Bay fish camp was in a caretaker status. The hon. member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) mentioned, I think today or yesterday, that

PREMIER PECKFORD: \$25,000 a year was being spent on salaries. The hon. member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) is completely and absolutely wrong. The amount that was spend on salaries in the last year was \$11,000, and that to a Native, \$11,000 and not \$25,000. The total amount spent on the Voisey fish camp this past year was only \$17,000, \$6,000 was spent outside of the salary, \$17,000 was spent. I think the subhead in the minister's estimates was somewhere around \$20,000 for the camp and only \$17,000 was spent, \$11,000 of that on salaries. We have checked this out with the accountants within the department.

MR. WARREN: Not true!

MR. HODDER: (Inaudible) trying to give it to his buddie.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Well, we will see. Now let the press carry, CBC and all the other press, that a member of the Opposition made an allegation yesterday that \$25,000 was spent on salaries at the Voisey Bay fish camp, erroneous, incorrect, wrong and he should retract that. It is \$11,000 that was spent this past year. So that is incorrect. Now, let me also say to the member for Torngat Mountains, who alleged yesterday and again today that we had no intention of contacting the native groups in Labrador until the hon. member mentioned it -

MR. WARREN: Now, that is true.

PREMIER PECKFORD: Okay. And yesterday when the hon. member mentioned that-I got a bit of a memory-I looked at the minister responsible and he shook his head at the time because I remembered that last year, as I said yesterday, we had a very, very extensive discussion about the fish camp and I found out

PREMIER PECKFORD: that my memory was correct, that we wrote a letter last year to the Labrador Inuit Association about the Voisey fish camp and whether they were interested in participating in it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD: And it will be tabled. So the hon. member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) is wrong again. We have been having communications with the Native groups of Labrador to try to use more efficiently the fish camp that was put there in the beginning for these people.

So, Mr. Speaker, in summary, number one, I am glad that the Opposition finally is using this time, which has been made available to them, to debate the issues. I am very, very sorry that, as it related to the question that was asked of the Minister of Health, that the hon. member for the Opposition got devastated; they have not done their research. I was even more surprised when the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Hickey) so completely and absolutely slaughtered the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock). So now what you have to do if you want to use the time, please do your research and do it wisely.

Number two, \$25,000 is \$11,000.

MR. NEARY: \$25,000.

PREMIER PECKFORD: That is the great albatross around the necks of the taxpayers of Newfoundland, \$11,000 out of a budget of \$2 billion, Mr. Speaker. That is the great albatross.

And thirdly, and most importantly, we have been and we will table letters to the Labrador Inuit Association of last year, long before the Opposition brought it up, trying to get the Native Association to involve themselves in this fish camp so that it could be used for their benefit.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

May 5, 1983

Tape No. 1837

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MR. SPEAKER (Aylward):

Order, please!

That being the last question,
this House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, at
10:00 A.M.

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Answers to questions

tabled

May 5, 1983

Tabled by Hon. Minister
of Culture, Recreation &
Youth, 5 May '83

Mr. Neary, Leader of the Opposition, (La Poile)--To ask the Honourable Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth to lay upon the Table of the House, the following information:

List of names and salaries of Executive Assistants, Parliamentary Assistants and Public Relations specialists appointed to the Minister's staff for the fiscal years 1979, 1980, 1981 and 1982.

Answer:

- (1) For the years 1979, 1980 and 1981 - not applicable
- (2) For the year 1982 - None of the above have been appointed