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**VERBATIM REPORT**  
*(Hansard)*

*Speaker: Honourable Patrick McNicholas*

Thursday

15 May 1986

The House met at 3:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):  
Order, please!

ooo

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

MR. SPEAKER:  
A point of order, the hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:  
I will take just a short moment, Mr. Speaker. This is an issue of some great concern. As the House will know, there is a forest fire raging in Windsor and at least twenty houses are threatened. I have just been informed that my own home has been evacuated, my family has been moved out. I have no doubt about that, and I would like to have the minister's assurance that the fire-fighting capabilities of the Department of Forest Resources and Lands Water Bomber Fleet, or whatever, is engaged to make sure, in this emergency situation, that the well-being of the people and their property is protected.

I notice the Minister of Justice (Ms Verge) is not present. Maybe some other minister could assure the House that the resources of the Emergency Measures Organization is available to the people in that area to help with evacuation and to help guarantee the safety of people involved in that very serious situation in Windsor.

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

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands, to that point of order.

MR. SIMMS:  
Those questions would be very appropriate during Question Period, I guess. I have a Ministerial Statement that I am about to make, and I advised the hon. member's colleague, the Forestry critic, a half an hour ago by phone that I was going to do so. But, if I may, the point of order, which is not a point of order, I would like to address in a Ministerial Statement, Mr. Speaker, and then perhaps there can be questions if somebody wants to ask questions.

MR. SPEAKER:  
There is no point of order.

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

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

MR. BARRY:  
I was informed by the member for Stephenville (Mr. K. Aylward) that a Ministerial Statement was on its way. I was not aware that it was anything relating to the specific Windsor - Buchans situation. I do not think there is - is there? In that statement there are certain steps that the minister is taking. He was kind enough to mention to me that he has seen that special measures are being undertaken to deal with a serious fire on Bell Island and I would like to ask the minister if he could, in the course of his statement, refer to that as well?

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):  
There is no point of order. The

hon. the Leader of the Opposition took the opportunity of stating his point of view.

### Statements by Ministers

#### MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

#### SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

#### MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, it is really unfortunate, first of all, that I have to announce that because of the extreme forest fire hazard in the Province, a total ban on campfires or any other kind of open outdoor fires will be necessary on the Island portion of the Province and, in particular, in the Goose Bay area of Labrador until further notice.

This ban is effective immediately and includes the cancellation of all permits to burn issued by my department which would not normally be cancelled until the forest fire regulations come into effect, which I think is midnight, May 18.

The decision to place a ban on outdoor fires was based on a very careful amount of consideration of the present state of the forest, the potential danger to the public in some areas of the Province, the approaching long holiday weekend, and a weather forecast which calls for sunny, warm and dry conditions for the next few days.

While I realize, Mr. Speaker, that the tradition of boiling up over a campfire, especially at this time of the year, is regarded as a fairly enjoyable activity, the dry

condition of the forest and the seriousness of the situation really leave me with no choice but to place a ban on all outdoor fires.

Mr. Speaker, several major fires are already underway that are keeping fire crews busy and our equipment in use. We are assessing the situation with respect to the suggestions made by the member for Windsor - Buchans (Mr. Flight) with respect to EMO and so on. We are also considering the necessity, if it becomes necessary, of availing of equipment from other provinces, as we have done in the past. My officials and my staff, the Forest Protection Division in particular, are on top of the situation, monitoring it on a constant basis.

I might just add in passing, if I may Mr. Speaker, that there is a very serious fire in the Goose Bay area. Today we had to pull our fighters back from the fire it is so serious. There is 27 degree weather up there, I gather, and in that area, if anybody is familiar with it, there is a lot of caribou moss, so the fire is just sweeping right through the area. Fortunately, it is heading towards land points, so toward the water, and it may burn itself out. But it is serious.

The fire in the Grand Falls/Windsor area is also very serious. We had a crew of forty-odd people fighting it this morning, at least, and we have a water bomber fighting it. It is heading toward the direction of the town of Windsor and it is, obviously, a very serious situation. There are a couple more fires that broke out this morning on the West Coast in addition to the ones that were

occurring over the weekend, of which, I think, there were seven or eight.

In addition, just before I left to come to the House, as if things were not serious enough, my Deputy Minister called me aside and said, 'By the way, you might want to know that a fire broke out this afternoon on Bell Island and we had to dispatch a Canso water bomber over there.' I was not able to get all the details on the fire, but it must be serious, to send a water bomber over there.

Mr. Speaker, the situation is a very serious one and we do not want to find ourselves in a situation where all our resources are strained anymore than they are now.

The weather has been unusually dry in most forested areas of the Province for the last month and we are, in fact, about a month ahead of normal schedule in weather conditions. This has very rapidly increased the fire hazard beyond seasonal norms, to the point where the hazard is classified as extreme in many, many areas, especially in cutovers and brush areas.

The fire hazard, of course, is further aggravated by the fact that the trees and bushes in most places have not yet fully greened up, so, therefore, the branches are still very bare and very dry.

Mr. Speaker, it is the responsibility of my department, of course, to take every precaution to protect the public and the forest, which is vital to our economy and our way of life.

Therefore, I have decided, without much of an alternative, to place a

ban on all outdoor fires and we are relying on the understanding and co-operation of the public in preventing any outbreaks.

I do want to note, Mr. Speaker, in passing, that the ban does not affect the use of propane stoves or anything of that nature, like a Coleman stove, as long as they are operated no closer than ten feet to any woods, brush or other inflammable material.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. K. AYLWARD:  
MR. Speaker.

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

MR. K. AYLWARD:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the minister for informing me that he would be making a statement in the House this afternoon. We have just been informed, also, that the fire on Bell Island is now somewhat under control, or is getting close to there, so at least that is some positive news. Extreme circumstances require extreme measures so we fully support any measures that will help lower or help stop this situation, which is spreading all over the Island. It looks like it is going to be a very bad Summer for forest fires in this Province.

A number of my colleagues are concerned, as I am sure every member of the House is concerned, that every possible measure is being taken, every possible piece of equipment and all manpower available is being used to put a stop this situation. There are fires breaking out, as has been

said, all over the place. As one colleague mentioned to me, we would not like to see a repeat of what happened in 1966, I believe I believe it was, where there was a gigantic forest fire problem.

We support the measures being taken, but some very extreme measures may have to be taken to make sure this thing is stopped. We support the measures taken today and I would like the minister to keep me informed as to exactly what the situation is over the next few days. Thank you very much.

MR. FLIGHT:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

So that the Minister of Justice (Ms. Verge) can be apprised of the situation, just minutes ago I was informed that the fire in Windsor is within minutes of my own house and I raise the issue to make sure that the resources of her department, the Emergency Measures Organizations, are there and using their capabilities to assist in any evacuation. Evacuation is now going on. I have no doubt it is happening, but I just want to give the minister a chance to assure the House that indeed Windsor and the people and the property threatened in the stricken area are availing of Emergency Measures, and Emergency Measures is there and doing what they are supposed to do to assist in an evacuation of that sort.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I can assure the House that the Emergency Measures Division of the Department of Justice is routinely brought into play when circumstances like this arise. I will have to check with my officials to give an up-to-the-minute account of what is actually happening in Buchans. I can supply that up-to-the-minute information to the House later this afternoon.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, there is no point of order. The hon. member took the opportunity of conveying his observations to the Minister of Justice.

Before moving to Oral Questions, I would like to welcome two groups of students. We have forty-two Grade VII students from St. Peter's Junior High School, Catalina, with their teachers, Marvin Ryder, Basil Durdle, and Terry Martin.

I would also like to welcome some sixteen Grade VII and VIII students from Curling Junior High School, with their teachers Helen Warren and Gary Parsons.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

### Oral Questions

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education (Mr. Hearn). Yesterday the minister refused to halt the

close down of small community schools while his study into small schools in the Province was going on. The implication was that the minister had no authority to do so. Perhaps the authority lies with the district superintendents. Will the minister instead today, in place of this, offer his support and influence to these small community schools that are threatened with closure, and will he help these communities keep the schools open until his study is complete?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I made it quite clear that the decision for closing schools, moving classes or whatever rested entirely in the hands of the school board, not the superintendent. I think we have been talking about three specific areas of the Province where problems have arisen in relation to possible moves and the objections of the parents have been raised and voiced.

I have met with representatives of the parents from all three areas. The problem that existed down in St. Bernard's has now been at least postponed for a year, which was what asked for really, to give them a year to assess the situation. I have talked to delegations of parents from two of the other areas also, and I have assured them, as I do with all groups with which I meet, that I will give any co-operation in any way to help solve the problems which they are now facing. And we will do that for parents in any part of the Province.

MR. BAKER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

It is nice, Mr. Speaker, for the minister to go and talk to these people and perhaps give some moral support. Does the minister understand that any district superintendent has more control over education in this Province than the minister does? And is he comfortable with these little educational fiefdoms that the superintendents have set up around this Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

The hon. member, Mr. Speaker, as a former teacher, might be walking on very dangerous ground. Superintendents of education are responsible to the school boards. The total educational policy in the Province, of course, comes under the jurisdiction of the department and, despite what the member thinks, we do have a lot of control over what happens in the Province.

We have heard just in recent days an assault, and undoubtedly we will hear it again today, upon my colleague to my left, the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Doyle) about how government spends money in rural areas. If we controlled all expenditures from here and started building schools where we wanted them built, undoubtedly we would hear complaints from the other side. So the decisions that are made locally are made with the best of intentions. Often, as with decisions made in here, they are not ones which satisfy everybody, but usually we find when people get together, most

problems, if not all of them, can be solved. This is what we have been doing in the St. Bernard's situation. We were involved in that one, and we are involved in the others. And, undoubtedly, the problems that we are now facing out there can be solved if people co-operate with each other.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Has the minister sought any assurances from the district superintendents of the school boards around the Province where this is happening? Has he sought and received assurances and got the assurances from these people that the schools will remain open until the study is complete? That is what we are after.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

Just a short while ago, we set up the small school study, Mr. Speaker, and, despite a press release of, say, a month ago, it was only in recent days when the St. Bernard's situation was resolved and credit given, I suppose, to the establishment of the small school study and also the work of the workload committee that is presently underway, that people began to zero in on the small school study and what they hoped they would achieve.

What we have suggested to the groups and people in the

department, because we are assessing many of the problems associated in the field resulting from small schools and resulting from rural areas generally is that perhaps it would be an idea to sit back and see what is going to happen. If there is any doubt that the problem cannot be solved, of course, by the small school study - it may be well beyond that - then, of course, we do not want to interfere and will not interfere directly with the workings of the board.

MR. BAKER:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker, to help the minister out, has the minister examined the Manitoba model for making small schools viable? Does he consider that any of these ideas in use in Manitoba, ideas already being implemented, are useful in Newfoundland and, if so, which ones?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

Last year, when we started to zero in on the problems in the small schools in the Province, we were informed at that time that there was a small school symposium taking place in Manitoba, undoubtedly much like the one we will be sponsoring ourselves this Fall. We sent people to that and it is from the discussions that they had there, as well, of course, as our own experience and knowledge - when I say 'our own', combined with the experience of the people in the field who work

closely with us -that we zeroed in on the problems that exist in our schools. Undoubtedly we will come up with solutions. I know the government will be able to do something about it.

MR. KELLAND:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. KELLAND:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the absence of the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Power), the Premier and the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall), perhaps I could direct the question to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ottenheimer) and ask him to use his discretion as to who may answer it, himself or one of his colleagues. I would like to ask the minister if he is aware whether or not a solution has been found for funding, joint or otherwise, for the continuation of the Resource Technician Training Programme currently about to finish its first course in North West River, Labrador?

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:  
Mr. Speaker, I will have to direct that to the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies, who is not here, or if he is not here tomorrow take it as notice and answer it on his behalf.

MR. KELLAND:  
Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:  
A supplementary, the hon. the

member for Naskaupi.

MR. KELLAND:  
Just briefly, for the information of the minister and his colleagues, a petition is on the way to the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies. He was advised by telegram yesterday that the petition was on the way, bearing 500 signatures from the North West River - Happy Valley - Goose Bay area. What I would like to ask the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs is would he impress upon his colleague, the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies, the need to present the original, which he will have, of the petition in the House of Assembly to allow the Labrador MHAs to speak in support of the petition to retain the programme in Labrador?

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:  
Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the minister will be fully cognizant of his duties and responsibilities and will live up to them as it is his traditional manner to do so.

MR. EFFORD:  
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:  
Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Brett). I would like to ask the Minister of Social Services, Mr. Speaker, is he aware of any problem that had taken place late last Saturday night at Exon House? If he is aware of the problem, would he care to inform



the House on exactly what that problem was?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. BRETT:

No, Mr. Speaker, I am not particularly aware of any problems at Exon House last Saturday night.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

I would like to ask the Minister of Justice (Ms. Verge) is she aware or was she informed that late last Saturday night there was a bomb scare at Exon House?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, no, I had not been aware of that.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I will have to go back to the Minister of Social Services. Strangely enough there are two ministers in this hon. House of Assembly who do not know exactly what happened late last Saturday night. I would like again to ask the Minister of Social Services would he care to make a comment on the statement I just made to the Minister of Justice.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. BRETT:

I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I apologize to the hon. member but he has been asking all kinds of queer questions about Exon House and other group homes around the Province. It is rather difficult to be specific sometimes. Yes, I know what the hon. member is talking about now. He is talking about the bomb scare that we had at Exon House. I was advised of it and, of course, the police were called in, the building was searched, we did not find anything, and everything reverted to normal.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, this leads up to the very important point I was trying to make. I would like to ask the Minister of Social Services if he is aware that the staff at Exon House had to search for the bomb? Would he care to make a comment on that?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. BRETT:

Mr. Speaker, I do not really know if I should comment on that or not. There was a bomb scare. The police were called in and I do not exactly know what procedures were followed but obviously the police were in charge. I do not know who did the actual searching or anything else. All I know is that

they got the phone call, the police were called in, the necessary investigation was done, and nothing was found. I do not know who searched or who did what, but I know the search was carried out.

MR. BARRY:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BARRY:  
Mr. Speaker, the point that the member for Port de Grave has made here is that the building was not evacuated. The police came in and asked the staff to search to see if there was a bomb in the place. Does the Minister of Social Services agree that this is the proper procedure that should be followed as far as Exon House is concerned?

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

MR. BRETT:  
Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the hon. the Leader of the Opposition should direct that question to the police and not to me.

MR. BARRY:  
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:  
A supplementary, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:  
Okay I will accept the minister's suggestion. I will direct my question to the Minister of Justice. Would the Minister of Justice tell us whether she accepts that this is a correct

procedure for the police to follow in such a circumstance?

MS VERGE:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MS VERGE:  
I have already said that I had not known about a bomb scare at Exon House until this Question Period. I will be quite willing to investigate what actually happened, what procedure the police followed, and to assess what happened Saturday night with the senior officials of the Justice Department.

MR. BARRY:  
A supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:  
A supplementary, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:  
Mr. Speaker, I go back again to the Minister of Justice, and I ask her the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please! Order, please! It is impossible to carry on Question Period if members continue to interrupt when they are called to order on a number of occasions. I ask for silence for members on my left.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:  
I repeat my question to the Minister of Justice.

SOME HON. MEMBER:

Sit down!

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

MR. TULK:  
Name the gentleman. Name him.

MR. BARRY:  
I repeat my question to the Minister of Justice. If the minister is informed, as she has been, that the staff were asked to do the search for a bomb, that the building was not evacuated, does she accept that as a correct procedure for the police to follow in such a circumstance?

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

MS VERGE:  
Mr. Speaker, before attempting to evaluate or comment upon what happened at Exon House Saturday night, I would want complete evidence, not hearsay evidence, not second, or third or fourth hand accounts by members opposite, who presumably were not personally present and did not observe what actually happened Saturday night. I have undertaken to have an investigation made by the senior officials of the department, and at that point an assessment concluded about the appropriateness of the police actions.

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

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Leader of the Opposition, a final supplementary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Sit down! Sit down!

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

MR. BARRY:  
Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Justice is this normal? Would she normally expect not to be informed by her colleague, the Minister of Social Services, about an occurrence such as a bomb threat? And seeing as the Minister of Social Service has not had the interest to enquire and find out what procedures were followed, would she now consult with her colleague, would she ask her colleague to make an enquiry as to what took place there so that the minister can properly evaluate what took place and determine whether the actions of the police were appropriate?

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

MS VERGE:  
Mr. Speaker, officials of the two departments involved, Social Services and Justice, probably are consulting right now.

MR. BARRY:  
'Probably'. I see.

They do not tell the minister any more.

MS VERGE:  
Obviously the staff of Exon House called in the police so there was consultation at the time of the scare or the threat. I have already undertaken to this House that I, as Minister of Justice, will have the senior people in the Justice Department investigate and report to me. An assessment will be made of what happened on the part of the police Saturday night and I think that is quite proper in the circumstances.

MR. FENWICK:  
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

My question is for the Minister of Justice as well and it has to do with The Leaseholds in St. John's Act and it is essentially by way of an update. Last Fall there was an indication of a major number of problems with the particular act itself, and the problems centred around the difficulty of tenants getting permanent claim to their land. I would like to ask the minister has there been any progress on getting some sort of permanent solution to that problem?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to report to the House that thanks to the initiative taken by my colleague, the member for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall) and the Government House Leader, there are efforts underway to present to this House during this sitting further amendments to the appropriate legislation so that the current practical problems being encountered by legal practitioners in converting St. John's leaseholds to freeholds, problems having to do with time and money, will be reduced and minimized.

The Government House Leader is personally aware of some of these problems. He led the effort to get the present legislation. It appeared that that legislation would take care of past problems but in fact some lawyers practicing in this area have frustrated the good intentions behind that legislation and it is now incumbent upon us to try and refine the legislation so that the

delays will be minimized.

MR. FENWICK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

My supplementary has to do with a similar kind of problem that just occurred last week, and that is the problem of trailer owners who are renting the land underneath their trailers. It seems to me a sort of modern analogy to the problem that exists with The Leaseholds In St. John's Act. What I would like to ask the minister is in view of the problems these trailer owners are having, basically the fact that they have no control over their land, is it possible to have a look at this particular piece of legislation, or a piece of legislation similar to it, that may give these individuals some sort of security of protection similar to that which we have given to the people who have been on this long-term leasehold land?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I understand from my colleague here that this issue is mentioned in today's issue of the The Evening Telegram. I will certainly be glad to take a look at that issue with the lawyers in the Department of Justice and see if in fact there is a problem which can be corrected or reduced through some kind of legislation or regulations.

MR. FENWICK:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

I understand that somewhere around fifty of these individuals are in a position where they may be evicted by this Fall. Is it possible to have that review or that look at this legislation done on a very quick basis so that some indication can be given to them as to whether or not there might be a legislative remedy to the problems they have?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I can certainly assure the House that the problem can be addressed quickly without the benefit of some more background information and research. I cannot assure the House of how quickly a solution can be found or if indeed a solution is possible. I will certainly undertake to have the issue addressed immediately and if there is any quick and easy solution to have it put forward as soon as possible.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I have another queer question for the Minister of Social Services. I find it very surprising, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Social Services takes this problem so lightly. My question to the Minister of Social Services not only concerns a problem that was there on Saturday night, since I would like to ask the Minister of Social Services if

he is aware of a problem at Exon House on Sunday night?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. BRETT:

I think that question is a little bit queer, Mr. Speaker. No, I am not aware of anything on Sunday night.

MR. EFFORD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Let me inform the minister of some of the things that he does not know about that are going on in his department. Such a thing as a bomb scare at Exon House or anywhere, in any building, is a very serious thing. Strangely enough, I was informed of this on Sunday night, but is the minister aware that there was a prowler found lurking in the building Sunday night around eleven o'clock? Would the minister care to comment on that?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. BRETT:

No, Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of a prowler at Exon House.

MR. EFFORD:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, we have brought these

things to the attention of the Minister of Social Services. Obviously he is not even sitting in his seat when it comes to answering a question. I will ask the Minister of Social Services, taking into consideration the seriousness of a bomb threat, the fact that the building was not evacuated, the fact that the staff had to search for the bomb, and the fact that there was a prowler reported in the basement of the Exon House on Sunday night, would he investigate that problem and report back to this House?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. BRETT:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's questions have about as much credibility today as they did a month or so ago when he got up on the other side of the House and waved a piece of paper and suggested to the House that he had a report in his hand indicating there was a real, serious problem at Exon House. We asked him to table it and he never has from that day to this. I doubt very much if he had the report. If he did, he was not a very responsible person in that he never did table it. We are still waiting for it, the staff are still waiting for it and the parents of the children who are over there are still waiting for it. So if the hon. member has it, then he should table it.

To answer the hon. member's question, I was advised of the incident of the bomb threat the next morning. I was told that the police went in and that everything was back to normal. There was no bomb found. Now there was absolutely no need of anybody to

report to me any further than that.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier, I have a question for the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout). The question concerns the newly stated policy of rights being given to the Conne River Indian Band to remove 1500 salmon from the estuary of the Conne River by traps or nets. I might point out that this policy came as a complete surprise to apparently everyone. Was the minister aware that this policy was being negotiated and agreed to when the Conne River Indian Band received status?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I think that the question might be better directed to my colleague, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ottenheimer). We do not have any departmental role to play in inland fisheries' policy or regulations or food fishery or anything of that nature. But from a purely provincial Fisheries perspective, we were aware that the former federal minister, Mr. Fraser, had engaged in consultations with, I assume, representatives of the Conne River Indian Band with a view to providing them with, I believe it was, 1200 fish as a Native food fishery. When we became aware of that as a provincial Department of Fisheries, we certainly let it be

known that we could not be supportive of that kind of policy decision. We subsequently took the matter up with the present Fisheries minister (Mr. Siddon) and it is my understanding that he is reviewing the negotiations that took place between his predecessor and representatives of the Conne River Indian Band. At the present time that is the status as far as I know as the provincial Minister of Fisheries.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, I can deduce from the minister's answer that the provincial government is not indeed supporting the policy of taking 1,500 fish directly out of the river. If the minister wants me to refer the question to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, then I will be delighted to that. I ask the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs would he confirm what the Minister of Fisheries just indicated, that the Newfoundland Government is not supportive of the policy of removing 1,500 salmon from the estuary of the Conne River by traps and nets?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Are you supportive?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

Mr. Speaker, I can certainly inform the House, as indeed my colleague, the hon. Minister of Fisheries, has, that the

Government of Newfoundland does not support allocation of fishery resources based on ethnic or racial grounds. I think roughly a year ago, a month or two one way or the other, the government was informed that the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans was looking into this matter and the Government of Newfoundland did then inform the federal government of what the policy was. Indeed, no more recently than two or three weeks ago, in a personal conversation with the federal Minister not of Fisheries but of Indian Affairs (Mr. Crombie), and then followed up by letter about a week or ten days ago, that position, which is not new, which dates back, was reconfirmed, that this government opposes this allocation of fishery resources on ethnic grounds, whether ethnic be people of Micmac origin or English origin or Irish origin or Channel Island origin or Jewish origin or Chinese origin or whatever.

MR. FLIGHT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for Windsor Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would assume, again, from the minister's comments that his government is going on record and making strong representation, if that is indeed the position of the government, that they are not supportive of this. Federal Fisheries apparently is espousing this particular policy, to the extent that anyone knows, because all we have heard officially are Federal Fisheries comments. If Federal Fisheries officials feel that the

Conne River Indian Band are entitled to something extra from Conne River, then would Federal Fisheries be prepared to pay for this, similar to what is being done for the commercial fishermen who are being asked to sell back their licences to the provincial government? If indeed the Conne River Indian Band feels that there is an entitlement there, maybe an option is to offer financial compensation or something else that would be just as attractive to the Conne River Indian Band as the policy of taking 1,500 fish out of the estuary of the river.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

Mr. Speaker, of course, the provincial government position is that the fishery resource has to be equitably accessible and the benefits of its harvesting flow to all residents of the area on a fair and equitable basis.

Now, of course, with respect to Conne River, there have been discussions with respect to the establishment of a reserve, but that is a different question. The resource in the Conne River, the salmon, are a mobile species which does not stay within a reserve or stay outside of a reserve. Our position on the allocation of that resource is not that the residents of Conne River or the Micmac people of the Conne River region do not have the right to an equitable access to it, but that it is not an exclusive access and that there has to be an equitable sharing of that resource among all the residents of the region.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Fisheries.

In view of the great concern being shown by many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to conserve and to maintain, indeed to increase our Atlantic salmon stock, is the minister aware that in the past couple of years the federal government have been consistently hiring fewer and fewer game wardens, river guardians and the like, leaving many of the rivers and streams in this Province, and in the Labrador area too I expect, completely unprotected and wide open to poaching? I can assure the minister that this problem of poaching is getting quite out of control in many areas of the Province.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt about the validity of the question raised by the hon. gentleman from Bonavista North. Representations of that kind from the recreational aspect of policing and wardens on rivers is dealt with intergovernmentally between the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth and the appropriate ministers in Ottawa. That did not only start over the last year or so, I would like to remind the hon. gentleman, it goes back four or five years when the contracting out to private firms and laying off departmental employees began. I would like to take the opportunity to tell the hon. gentleman that I made the point, when we had our last round



of discussions on Atlantic salmon management, that there are a whole range of areas where we need to move in. One is better and more adequate protection on the river systems, others are enhancement and programmes of that nature. So there is no divergence of opinion between us on that matter, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LUSH:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder is the minister also aware that in addition to an inadequate and insufficient number of river guardians and wardens on regularly scheduled rivers, or regularly licenced rivers, that we have many rivers and streams in Newfoundland that are not scheduled salmon rivers but have large supplies of salmon in them and they too are being poached? So, Mr. Speaker, as a final question to the minister, I wonder will the minister assure this House that in the interest of conserving, maintaining the Atlantic salmon stocks that we have in this Province, that he will insist to his federal counterpart that we have a sufficient number of river guardians and wardens on our rivers and streams in place this Summer?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. gentleman that we have I believe collectively come up with some innovative ideas for a better presence of guardians on our river

systems and we have made certain suggestions that if acted on we think will be a great step forward from the system that we have today.

MR. SPEAKER:

The time for Oral Questions has elapsed.

Answers to Questions  
for which Notice has been Given

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Public Works.

MR. YOUNG:

I would like to give an answer to the question asked during the Committee on my Estimates which provides the necessary information regarding construction of the extension to the Harbour Lodge chronic care facility.

Petitions

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. GILBERT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a petition, Mr. Speaker, from 284 residents of the South Coast of Newfoundland. I will read the prayer of the petition. It is rather lengthy but I think it deserves to be read in its entirety.

"This is a petition of concern

regarding the proposed automation of lighthouses on the Newfoundland coastline commencing April 1, 1987. The decision in favour of automation of lighthouses not only worries the lightkeepers themselves but the 2,000 fishermen," -

MR. MATTHEWS:

That is a federal matter. It is out of order.

MR. GILBERT:

- "numerous sailors and pleasure craft operators who sail these waters.

"The absolute necessity of manned lighthouses is easily acknowledged if one person listens to the practical and reasonable explanations."

MR. MATTHEWS:

Send it to Don Mazankowski.

MR. GILBERT:

"Let us use the stretch of land from Port aux Basques to Green Island in Fortune Bay as an example. Along this stretch of the coast there are about thirteen manned lighthouses spaced at an average of thirty miles apart. This distance is significant to pleasure craft operators and fishermen with respect to the distance their CB radio equipment can be used to signal for help, about twenty-five to thirty miles over water, should the need arise.

"Communities such as LaPoile, Grand Bruit, McCallum, and Francois are unable to communicate by CB radio more than three or four miles outside the harbour due to the hilly terrain. Should a disaster call be issued by a vessel in trouble, the communities will not receive the message because the boats are out of range. An unmanned lighthouse is

unable to respond, thus a disaster could ensue, whereas a manned lighthouse can be a direct contact with the Coast Guard by a mobile telephone and it has use of VHF and CB radio.

"Lighthouse keepers also play a valuable role in the maintenance of machinery, painting of various structures, weather reports, reporting damages, and reporting local knowledge of the coastline to sailors who are unfamiliar with these waters. The provision of local knowledge is especially important on the South Coast of Newfoundland where there are so many rocks that present problems to shipping that are not marked by buoys.

"Another reason why automatic lighthouses are inferior to manned lighthouses is assessability. The South Coast of Newfoundland is prone to stormy seas during half of the Winter months. This is the reason for the inassessability of the lighthouses. If a light should go out or a foghorn quit, no one will be able to immediately remedy the problem in an automated lighthouses. Added to this is the fact that a storm would prevent anybody from reaching a lighthouse from four to seven days. Thus the safety of sailors is neglected for this period of time and perhaps several times throughout the year. This is negligence.

"The explanations above are supportive of manned lighthouses, not only for the purpose of saving about 100 jobs but also to ensure that sailors are provided with maximum protection against disaster and immediate attention to rescue.

"We hope this letter will appeal to your sense of reason and

concern for the lives of others who work in a harsh environment. Thank you."

Mr. Speaker, I heard some of the backbenchers on the other side say this is a federal problem. No doubt it is. But the other thing about it is it is a transportation problem. I feel that in Newfoundland we do have a Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) and the Government of Newfoundland has a responsibility to protect the lives of Newfoundlanders.

The South Coast is an area where we do not have a Trans-Canada that has to be upgraded. What we have seen happen on the South Coast of Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker, is a downgrading of the services from CN Marine and, with this latest move, we see another example of an uncaring federal government which is reducing services to Newfoundlanders. Is the federal government saying it has to be another case of user-pay? This seems to me to be the attitude of the current federal government. They reduce services.

I read that petition in its entirety because it was written by the people of the South Coast who signed that petition, the people from LaPoile, Francois, Grey River and MacCallum. They outlined the problems as they see them, in their language. I support them and I wonder if the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) made any effort to contact his counterparts in Ottawa to ensure that those lighthouses are maintained in their present state? I feel that there is a cause here. The petition pointed out the weaknesses of the automated system and the situations that could happen.

I speak from experience because I know the light keeper on Penguin Islands and there are times during the Winter when they have been there for an extra two weeks waiting for the weather to get smooth enough so that they could come and change them. Just imagine the case if it were an automated lighthouse and it went out. The fishermen of that area and the sailors along that Coast would be out without protection for a period of two weeks while they were waiting to get people out to repair it.

For these reasons I support the petition and I ask the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) to make representation to his counterpart in Ottawa to maintain manned lighthouses along the South Coast.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, I want to rise in support of the petition so ably presented by the member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Gilbert) on behalf of some 284 people.

I understand that most of the people here in this petition come from the South Coast of the Province but I would also want to speak as a Northeast Coaster, if you want to, to this petition, for this very simple reason: while the circumstances and while the weather condition may be somewhat different on the South Coast than they are the Northeast Coast, it applies equally to all Newfoundland.

I think it is a petition that should be taken very seriously by

the provincial government. We heard, as the member for Fortune-Hermitage (Mr. Simmons) said, some of the trained seals on the backbenches saying this was a federal matter. I do not think the member for Burgeo-Bay 'Espoir is saying that it is not, but surely this government has the right, and should, make representation to the federal government over a matter that is of such an urgent and dire necessity. There is very little point in the hon. gentlemen in the backbenches trying to cover up for what the federal government should or should not do.

The petition is a very urgent petition. As the member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir said, while we are not against automation in many fields, this is one of the fields and one of the areas where automation can be put in place that I think we would have to be against. Anybody who recognizes and realizes the dangers to which people who live along the coastlines of Newfoundland and Labrador go through would recognize that manned lighthouses are a necessity.

The member for Burgeo-Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Gilbert) pointed out that at times when there is a distress signal issued by vessels in trouble, lighthouse keepers in Newfoundland have traditionally been known as people who save lives. They have saved, I would suspect, hundreds and hundreds of lives in this Province and with an automated lighthouse, of course, a person would not be there to help people who are in distress.

The other point that the hon. gentleman made, of course, is that when an automated light goes out, it will sometimes take weeks and

weeks and weeks before you can get somebody into an area to put it back in place. He made the point that lighthouse keepers have been known to be on islands for sometimes up to two weeks before getting off the island and back on land.

I want to relate another incident which happened in my own district of Fogo some two weeks ago where there was an automated light out, and the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) knows about this. As a matter of fact, we had a meeting with the young fellow yesterday evening where lights have not been put back in place and the consequence of that was the young fellow lost his boat. Indeed, if you want to say this, if it happened farther out to sea, we could have had a loss of life.

I think that is what the important issue here is. Although we are losing 100 jobs, and in Newfoundland that is bad enough with the highest unemployment rate in Canada, but certainly the overriding concern of the people in this letter is the safety factor.

I can say I have taken a trip with the gentleman from Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Gilbert). He is one of the better - I suppose you have to call yourself an amateur seaman - one of the better amateur seamen in Newfoundland. I learned a lot about the South Coast on that trip with him, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry), the President of the Liberal Party and one of the best, I suppose, captains on the South Coast at that time, Mr. Nat Slade.

MR. CALLAN:  
From Arnold's Cove.

MR. TULK:  
From Arnold's Cove.

While I would maintain that the Northeast Coast of the Province is probably the roughest and the most treacherous in regards to the sea that you will find anywhere in Canada and perhaps anywhere in the world -

MR. WARREN:  
Labrador.

MR. TULK:  
Yes. When I say Northeast Coast I mean the whole coast. The South Coast, in terms of being able to navigate because of the tremendous amount of fog that they do get down there - and they do get a tremendous amount of fog - has got to be one of the most difficult areas, again, in the world, but for a different reason, to navigate.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would support the petition of those people and I would ask the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe), and, indeed, if he is not here, the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout), because by and large we are talking about people who fish. There are more boats on the sea that fish perhaps than there are boats that do other things on the sea.

While it is a federal matter, I would ask that somebody on that side of the House rise and speak in support of this petition and take further action so that this petition just not be placed on the table of the House and referred to a particular department. Take some action and do not let this end up like a good many other petitions, Mr. Speaker, filed away somewhere in somebody's garbage bucket. Take the petition, look

at the concerns that are on it and take it to the appropriate federal authorities to see that what might be a very dangerous situation is adverted. It is not good enough for them, Mr. Speaker, just to hide behind their political party.

AN HON. MEMBER:  
Hear, hear!

DR. COLLINS:  
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):  
The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:  
Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the petition and, of course, I echo the sentiments of all members of this side of the House. We have no hesitation whatsoever in saying that the people of this Province, so dependant on the sea, have not been served as we would like in terms of safety at sea. Of course, safety at sea relates in large measure, or in considerable measure anyway, to things like lighthouses and buoys and weather forecasting and so on and so forth. We have taken a position as a government for quite a number of years that air/sea rescue, which is another aspect of safety at sea, should be increased in this Province.

I take a sort of personal interest in this myself, coming from one of the great fishing districts in this Province, an electoral district which has one of the larger fish plants in the Province. Of course, also in my district we have Fort Amherst which is the entrance of the harbour and was one of the guiding sentinels to people who came to this Province for many years back.

But even moreso than that, my own family is related to lighthouses. My mother's people came from the lighthouse keepers of Cape Race. As a matter of fact, my mother received the S.O.S. from the Titanic when the Titanic sank and passed on that message. So that is a reflection of how useful lighthouse keepers can be in times of distress. On my wife's side, her family were the lighthouse keepers at Cape Spear, the Cantwells, very noted lighthouse keepers. So I have a personal interest in this.

I have no problem whatever in supporting the position brought forward by the hon. member. I think that anything we can do to promote safety at sea, to guide our mariners and, in particular, our fishermen, giving them assistance and giving them safety and giving them comfort, I would favor. I would say that that should relate to better weather forecasting and more frequent weather forecasting in this Province also. So we have no hesitation in supporting this petition.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present to this hon. House on behalf of 455 residents, not only from my district but from the district of Bellevue, from St. John's and area, pertaining to a road leading to Ocean Pond.

The prayer of the petition, Mr. Speaker, reads: "We, the undersigned residents of Ocean

Pond, Newfoundland, hereby respectfully petition the hon. Minister of Transportation and the House of Assembly to cause, as soon as possible, the necessary upgrading and repair of the Ocean Pond Road which has deteriorated into a deplorable condition that greatly impedes vehicle passage over the said road."

Mr. Speaker, this road, according to the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe), is called a Class Four road. He describes in his correspondence to the people who are applying to get this road upgraded that a Class Four road is used and is called a seasonal road. But, Mr. Speaker, this road certainly is not a Class Four road, if that is the case, because this road is used for the full four seasons. We have here, Mr. Speaker, some 455 people who live there six or eight months of the year in cabins. The road there, Mr. Speaker, is used by hundreds and hundreds of people throughout the Winter months for obtaining firewood. It is used also, Mr. Speaker, by the Department of Lands and Forests as a log cutting area. A number of people obtain a living from cutting logs in that particular area, in the Fox Marsh Road area, which extends off Ocean Pond Road.

Taking all this into consideration, Mr. Speaker, we can certainly not class Ocean Pond Road as a Class Four road because a Class Four road, as stated in the correspondence from the Minister of Transportation, is a road that is used only seasonally. This road is not used just a few months of the year, it is used year round so therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is a road that is getting an excessive amount of usage. It is also now a road that

is not fit to put a horse and cart over, let alone a vehicle.

I heard a comment on the news the other morning concerning the main roads across the Province of Newfoundland indicating 80 per cent of them are not fit to drive over and I think, Mr. Speaker, this goes to even speak even more about exactly the type of assistance and type of work that is being done by the Department of Transportation on these roads.

These roads are very beneficial to the people who are using them. Their vehicles cost thousands and thousands of dollars, especially those woods vehicles. Most of the people who are using that road in the Wintertime log cutting are people who can barely exist on the income that they are obtaining from different sources. They are driven to woodcutting because of the high cost of home heating oil and the high cost of electricity, which we in Opposition are continually fighting to try to get something done about. But this is a source by which these people can obtain cheaper fuel, and in obtaining the cheaper fuel, they find going over this road is costing equally as much because every time they go over the road it is causing extensive damage to their vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, the time of the year has come when these people who have these cabins in there, return. There are some 400 cabins in that particular area. By the way, there is also a small restaurant and there is a small grocery store. As I said, Mr. Speaker, it is not just an out-of-the-way road, it is a road that is used quite extensively, especially from now until late Fall. This road will get

extensive use and very seldom, once or twice a year, we get a grader to run over that area.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) and the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands (Mr. Simms) to take this under consideration, to support this petition and to ensure that not only the people of Port de Grave district, Bellevue district, Placentia district, but the people who are from St. John's and all other people who use this road for fire wood, for cabins, for recreational purposes, for logging purposes get their wishes. Take it under consideration so we will see something very seriously done with this road in the very, very near future. Other than that, I do not see, as one gentleman said to me the other day, it is getting to the point where it will have to be closed off completely and have absolutely no transportation. As I said earlier in my statement, you would not even get a horse and buggy over it if it is let go much longer.

Mr. Speaker, I fully support this petition and I ask members of the government to support it and to make sure we see something in the very near future done about it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. CALLAN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thought somebody on the government benches would want to

rise. The Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) is not in his place. Mr. Speaker, my colleague, who just presented that petition indicated that he thinks that it is in the district of Bellevue. Whether it is the district of Bellevue or not, I am not certain, but I think it is in Harbour Main District. I think Ocean Pond is in the Minister of Municipal Affairs's (Mr. Doyle) district, and, of course, the 400 to 500 cabins that are located on this road.

Mr. Speaker, I support the petition. Perhaps two weeks ago I received a phone call from a constituent who lives in Dildo, in my district, complaining about the fact that the road that he and his family and other families lived on had not been graded so far this Spring. He complained about the fact that the grader was preoccupied in trying to do some work on this very road, the Ocean Pond Road. And, of course, my first inclination was to agree with constituent who called from Dildo that the grader and highways equipment should be on residential roads as a priority before cabin roads. But, Mr. Speaker, there is lots to be said for maintaining this road as well.

The reason I wanted to stand and support this petition, Mr. Speaker, as I said I am not sure if it is in Bellevue district or not, but whether or not is immaterial. The reason I wanted to stand and talk about this particular road is because it is supposed to be maintained by the Highways Depot at Whitbourne. That is the highways depot that is supposed to maintain this road. That also, Mr. Speaker, is the same highways depot that is supposed to maintain the Markland

road. We saw a month ago, or thereabouts, on the CBC Here and Now programme the people in Markland out blocking the road protesting because of the deplorable condition of their road, the road that leads, of course, through Markland, through Colinet, up to Branch, St. Bride's and all that area, into the district of St. Mary's - The Capes.

The Markland Road, Mr. Speaker, was in a deplorable condition. As I said, a day or so later I received calls from down Dildo way and the roads down there were in deplorable condition. Now, of course, even though the grader was on this road, the Ocean Pond Road, two or three weeks ago, here today we have a petition presented in the House complaining about the state of that road.

Mr. Speaker, to bottom line in all of this - and I have said this before in this House and I will say it once more today - is that when the Whitbourne depot was transferred from being under the jurisdiction of the larger Bay Roberts depot to the supervision of the depot at Point Verde in Placentia, that is when everything seemed to go downhill as regards to maintenance of all of the roads in that area.

Getting back to the state that the Markland Road was in a couple of weeks ago or a month ago, when the frost was going out of the ground and a lot of was to be expected, it was natural, but the road need not have been in nearly the state it was in, Mr. Speaker. On that programme, Here and Now, the highways foreman, whom I know very well and whom the member for Trinity - Bay de Verde (Mr. Reid) knows very well because, I believe, he got him the job as



foreman - he lives in his district in Trinity - Bay de Verde but I know him as well through camping and marriage and so on - he was on television saying that the reason the grader was not in there and there was nothing being done on that road - and I have heard the man say it dozens of times, I was going to say hundreds, but I have heard the same foreman, when I have talked to him year after year in the last ten years, you can expect the line that will come from him before you even make the call - the grader is broke down or this piece of equipment is not working and so on and so on.

As I said, Whitbourne depot was working fairly well until it was transferred from the Bay Roberts supervision over to Point Verde. Billy Brennan is the supervisor over there in the Placentia district. Mr. Speaker, they are all over, the complaints about the roads.

That I believe, Mr. Speaker, explains why this cabin road to Ocean Pond which is used, as I said, by about 500 cabin owners, in addition to people who go in there to cut firewood and to cut logs and so on, like the Markland Road, like the road to Spread Eagle, like the road in Dildo and so on and all dirt roads are in the deplorable condition they are in. It has a lot to do with the way that the Whitbourne is not being provided with new and proper equipment.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
By leave.

MR. CALLAN:  
By leave!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
No.

MR. CALLAN:  
Since my colleagues on the government benches do not want to grant me leave, Mr. Speaker, I conclude on that comment. More and better and newer equipment needs to be provided to the depot at Whitbourne and then all roads serviced by that particular depot, I am sure, will be brought up to standard.

PREMIER PECKFORD:  
There is something wrong there somewhere.

MR. CALLAN:  
Well, it should be investigated.

#### Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):  
Bill No. 22, "An Act To Amend The Embalmers And Funeral Directors Act, 1975".

MR. DECKER:  
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. DECKER:  
Mr. Speaker, this bill gives us an opportunity to discuss the role of the funeral directors and the embalmers in this Province and, indeed, across the nation. We can justify the position of funeral director.

I remember in the 1960s, there was a little book published, the title of which was Oh, Death, Here is

thy Sting - not Oh, death, where is thy sting?, but Oh, Death, Here is thy Sting.

MR. BAIRD:  
Hallelujah, brother!

MR. DECKER:  
Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would wish to tell us what he sees to shout and sing about, I would gladly sit down and let him tell us.

MR. BAIRD:  
You are doing so well I am encouraged.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):  
Order, please!

MR. DECKER:  
The point that this particular book was making, Mr. Speaker, was that there is a place for irresponsibility in the role of the funeral director in Canada. This little booklet, which I never bought, I read one time while browsing in a book store. It was so thin that I read it in about fifteen minutes. But it pointed out some of the abuses and some of the things which are happening in that particular segment of society. It definitely proved that the sting of death can certainly be in the cost of the funeral.

The title of the book, Mr. Speaker, reminded me of a conversation that I had with a funeral director. In a different incarnation of mine, a funeral director and I were riding in the black limousine which goes in front of the funeral procession. I honestly thought that I had stumbled upon a very conscientious, concerned individual when he said to me, 'Reverend, I do not try to

encourage my customers to have expensive funerals.' He said, 'I try to encourage them to have a modest, dignified funeral with a casket which is not overly expensive.' I thought to myself, well, here is a man who is indeed conscientious and caring. But he spoiled my praise of him when he said to me, 'The reason I do not encourage those big, expensive funerals is that it is so hard to collect the money.' He was not concerned with the people after all, he was concerned with the difficulty he had in collecting the money when he had a too expensive funeral.

MR. CALLAN:  
A typical Tory businessman.

MR. DECKER:  
He was a businessman, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CALLAN:  
Yes, and a Tory too, by the sound of it!

MR. DECKER:  
Mr. Speaker, in Newfoundland outports, the role of the funeral director is a relatively new one. I am sure outport members can remember that when a member of the community died, friends came in and took over. The coffin was manufactured from local lumber. In later years it was covered with some sort of cloth to make it look a little more presentable. Some people made them in advance. That was quite common.

We had a little general store and coming on in the Spring of the year when prudent people, always preparing for their future, realized that there could be a shortage of coffin handles, it was quite common that if you had an old gentleman living with you who was a little bit sick and who

possibly would not survive until navigation opened and the coastal boats brought in more coffin handles, it was quite common, Mr. Speaker, that the handles would be bought in advance. I can tell of one case where an old gentleman was in his dying bed, he was on his last days, and when his loving wife bought the coffin handles, she placed them under the bed in which he died within a week or so.

It was quite common in Newfoundland outports, and it still is today in many of our outports, that the undertaker or the embalmer is not a part of the picture. He is not required. I will admit, and I will be the first one to agree, that there is a place in the funeral for the funeral director, there is a place for the undertaker, provided it does not become a closed shop and provided it does not become a total ripoff. Like any business, these are the dangers which are there, Mr. Speaker.

When a loved one dies, the relatives are not particularly in the mood to get out and bicker over price, they are not particularly in the mood to come out and bicker over whether the funeral should cost \$3000 or \$5000. Now, if they were buying a car, there would be bickering, if you were buying a new boat, there would be bickering, but this is a time when emotions are there. People are at their weakest time, and they cannot argue over price.

I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that funerals, you know, I am sure members are aware, funerals are not for the dead people. The last person to be taken into consideration after the funeral is the dead person. He is just dirt,

dust, gone back from whence he came. The funeral is for the living and there is that tendency in human nature to try to make up for some of the things which we did not do in the past, so you spend \$5000. Instead of giving it to the cancer society, which may investigate what took the loved one, or instead of giving it to the heart foundation, it is given - these are hypocrites, Mr. Speaker. My colleague has asked me what they are. I will tell you what they are, they are hypocrites. Do you want my other story? I will not tell the other story.

Very often families who have gone through a long term of suffering with an old person, families who have not treated that old person the way they should have, who have been known to subconsciously wish that the day of death would soon arrive, when the day of death does come, they feel so guilty that they go and slap \$5,000 or \$6,000 or \$7,000 into a funeral for the living, not for the dead at all. This is the most vulnerable, this is the word I was looking for just now, Mr. Speaker, it is a very vulnerable time and unethical funeral directors, if there were any, they could approach the family at that time and they could entice them into spending more money than they can afford to put on a display for the living, not for the dead. The dead does not know a whole lot about the event, Mr. Speaker.

In Newfoundland outports, from the beginning of our civilization here, it was quite common for the friends and the relatives to take full responsibility to dress the deceased person in his best clothes and put him into a coffin and bury him. Well, Mr. Speaker,

if we were to talk to the average Newfoundlander today, especially Newfoundlanders in some of the larger towns, in Grand Falls, I would challenge the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands (Mr. Simms) to talk to some of his constituents, I would challenge the member for Windsor-Buchans (Mr. Flight), I would challenge any of the members from the larger towns and cities in this Province to ask your average constituent, is he or she allowed to take the body of a deceased relative or friend and put that body into a hand-made wooden casket and tend to the funeral without the assistance of a funeral parlour.

MR. YOUNG:

There is no law against that.

MR. DECKER:

Absolutley, Mr. Speaker. I know there is no law against it.

MR. FLIGHT:

Conflict of interest over there now.

MR. DECKER:

Now, Mr. Speaker, if we are going to have conflict of interest in this debate, I would ask that the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Young) to declare his conflict of interest before he starts heckling me. I will sit down and let him get up and declare his conflict of interest. If he will declare his conflict of interest, I am quite prepared to sit down. Does the member want to do that? Does he want to declare his conflict? If so, I will sit down and let him declare his conflict.

MR. YOUNG:

It was already done the other day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. DECKER:

I will declare my conflict, Mr. Speaker, yes. As a former clergyman, and once you are ordained you are always ordained, I am in practice since 1971, but as a former practicing clergyman, Mr. Speaker, who was in a business but thrown out of business by the linerboard mill which was forced out by government, I will say that there is a place for corruption. I am saying there is a good valid place for the undertaker but there is a place for corruption in this business and it attracts people who thrive on corruption, Mr. Speaker. The possibility is there to attract such people, that is why it is ever good that we all should declare our conflict of interest before we discuss such a matter. I declare mine and now we can discuss it.

What I was trying to say was this, Mr. Speaker, the average person in the larger centres of this Province is not aware that he or she is allowed to take the person who is deceased, put him into a hand-made casket, or no casket, and bury him. As the Minister of Public Works points out, quite validly, that is still permitted in this Province. Of course it is still permitted.

MR. YOUNG:

The memorial society also has a plan.

MR. DECKER:

I am glad the minister is staying in his seat. I am glad that the minister is very much aware of what is going on here. What I am getting at is that every protection must be maintained for Newfoundlanders so that the day will never come in this Province when the services of an undertaker, the services of a

funeral director, are compulsory by law.

Now, I do not think this bill is suggesting that for a minute. There is no indication here. But when you get pressure groups, when you get interest groups, there is always the danger, Mr. Speaker, that the day will come when the average Newfoundlander will not be allowed to bury his relative's or his friend's body as he sees fit. Now that is something that we must nip in the bud, that we must avoid at all costs. That is why I am speaking to this bill today.

I am not going to take up the full half hour, but I want to go on record, and I think the Minister of Health (Dr. Twomey) agrees with me, because I have already said that the funeral is basically for the living, it is not for the dead. I am arguing that the right of Newfoundlanders to bury their dead as they see fit must ever be maintained. I would shudder to think that the day would ever come when this right would be taken away from Newfoundlanders. And I still maintain that there are people in the larger centres today who are so used, so accustomed to seeing the undertaker and the funeral director, seeing the hearse, seeing the black limousines, they are so accustomed to this that they are convinced that somehow-

MR. YOUNG:

That is the only way to go.

MR. DECKER:

That is the only way to go, as the minister points out.

MR. YOUNG:

That is right. Go in style.

MR. PATTERSON:

You know better than that, Chris. Come on, boy, play your cards face up!

MR. DECKER:

I am not getting through to the member, so for his edification I will again say that today, under Newfoundland's tradition and law, anyone is allowed to bury his relative.

MR. PATTERSON:

You can dig your own grave and get into it, too.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, you see regulations coming in of such a frivolous nature. I mean, I am talking about a serious subject here and members opposite are having an extremely difficult time trying to contain themselves. This crowd sees humour in everything, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today in this House we discussed the fact that there was a prowler in Exon House. This topic was a big laugh, a big joke for members on the other side. We talked today about a bomb threat, a bomb scare at Exon House. This topic was a big laugh, a big joke. I am now talking, Mr. Speaker, about death and funerals, Mr. Speaker, and this is a big laugh.

MR. PATTERSON:

About the death of the Liberal Party.

MR. DECKER:

Surely goodness something must be serious, we must be able to speak about something in this hon. Assembly without driving members opposite into fits of laughter and peals of glee. Surely goodness there must be some seriousness to this bill, otherwise, why is the time of this House being wasted? Why was it brought forth? If

members want to find something to laugh at, go pick up a Newfie Joke Book for seventy-five cents and laugh in your spare time. But do not laugh at a bill which is so serious that the Minister of Health is guiding it through this House; do not laugh when there is a bomb scare at Exon House, do not laugh when there might have been a prowler in Exon House. Surely goodness there is some seriousness in this.

Mr. Speaker, speaking to this bill, I would also like to draw to the attention of this House, again I know everyone knows it, that we do not have any cremation facilities in Newfoundland. Today, if it is the wish of a family that their loved one be cremated, I understand the body has to be taken to Halifax. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

DR. TWOMEY:  
That is right.

MR. DECKER:  
The body is taken to Halifax.

Cremation has proven to be a more inexpensive way of disposing of the body of a person.

MR. PEACH:  
I think it is more expensive.

MR. DECKER:  
It is more expensive when you have got to take the body to Halifax, by plane. But surely there should be some services in St. John's and Corner Brook, or even in Gander, some central place in this Province for people whose wish, before they die, is that their body be cremated. It would be my wish, Mr. Speaker, on my death, that my body would be cremated because I have a little little bit of concept of the whole span of

time, and the fifty or sixty years that a headstone is going to stay over Chris Decker is totally irrelevant when you compare it with the billions of years that this planet is going to be here.

So I would like for the Minister of Health (Dr. Twomey), when he gets up, to address whether or not we are going to see very shortly in this Province cremation facilities, so that people who do not want to go to the expense of paying the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Young) for a big funeral, or whatever the case might be, will not have to. I do not think it should be done.

MR. YOUNG:  
Do not go to the expense of a viewing room, you are going to hell, anyway.

MR. BUTT:  
There will be lots of fire where you are going.

MR. DECKER:  
Mr. Speaker, I am not going to belabor this point. Obviously, I have given members something else to laugh about. That, in effect, helps make my day, when I say something which some people interpret as being extremely funny. I do not particularly think it is. I think I can contain myself quite well when I talk about it, because it is not funny.

In conclusion, I just want to say, Mr. Speaker. let us as members, all of us on both sides of this House, ensure that the day will never come in Newfoundland when a funeral director, an undertaker, must be used. Let the day continue when people can use the services by choice, but let the day never come when people are

forced to use them.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank you for your attention, and I wish that members could see the seriousness in this bill which the Minister of Health is putting through.

MR. LUSH:  
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:  
Just a couple of questions, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure I understand the full implications of this bill, so could the minister explain to us why it is necessary to have this amendment? What does it change in terms of what was previously the case? I understand that the only thing this bill is doing, as I read it, is removing the grandfather clause.

Now, why is it necessary to remove the grandfather clause? In most legislation, we insist that there be a grandfather clause. In this particular legislation I cannot see the purpose for removing the grandfather clause unless it is to ensure that the people now coming into the business are more professional, that they are trained with mortician courses and first aid courses, or whatever is related to the establishment of an efficient and effective funeral home. If that is the reason, well, I think we can possibly accept that. I do not know, then, what would happen to the existing people who are there. Does it mean that they will be closed up?

Maybe the minister can address these concerns: Why is it necessary to have this particular

piece of legislation now? Why the removal of the grandfather clause at this particular point in time, whereas in most legislation there is always an attempt to insert a grandfather clause? That is my understanding. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FENWICK:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FENWICK:  
Just to continue with my line of questioning, the question I have to raise is in the same realm as the whole question of licencing, but it is a little bit different. The member for Bonavista North (Mr. Lush) asked some of the questions that I wanted to ask - Why are we taking the grandfather clause out now? - but I have another question with regard to the act and it is a little bit more broad. The question is essentially this: What is the way in which you now would become licenced as a mortician in this Province? In other words, what it says in there is, 'Every person who is not less than nineteen years of age and has complied with the requirements of this Act and the regulations for the grant of a licence to practice as a funeral director may apply to the Registrar for and has the right to obtain from the Registrar a licence to practice as a funeral director in the Province if the application is accompanied by the fee,' etcetera. In other words, what I am asking is how are morticians trained in this Province now? The reason I raise it is because there is an act we passed with regard to another group, the opticians, namely, where we have given a particular

organization the right to certify these people as being qualified practitioners, and there have been some questions brought to me about that particular act, the Opticians Act, as to whether or not the qualifications are fairly established, whether the training courses that are offered are being widely enough available, whether there is being some discrimination on people coming in and so on. So my question on this particular bill, speaking to it in second reading, on the principle is: How would you become a mortician in the future? Where would you take the courses, for example? Who is the certifying body? Is there an association Canada-wide that will be certifying them? Do you have to go to a specific institution in another Province in order to take the training? Is it correspondence training? Is it on-the-job training with a qualified mortician? These are questions I think are probably answered in the regulations, and if the Minister of Health (Dr. Twomey) can indulge me by giving the information when he replies and speaks on second reading and closes this debate, I would appreciate knowing about it. Because there is a very serious matter that I think all legislatures have to take into account. We probably have given the morticians society, or whatever it is, the right to limit people going into that profession, the right to establish qualifications for them. I think it is very important that we keep a close eye on how the authority that we originally had, which was to regulate these things, has been given to other societies, and I think we should be very careful about how we give it to them and how they exercise it, that they do not, for example, limit the number

of morticians in the Province, which would be a problem because then the morticians that are currently there could raise their prices and so on. Of course, I echo the member for Bonavista North's comments: Why do we have to take the grandfather clause out now? I await the answers from the Minister of Health.

MR. SPEAKER:

If the hon. the minister moving the bill speaks now, he will close the debate.

DR. TWOMEY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. TWOMEY:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to thank all of you who have contributed to the debate on this particular bill. Many of you have taken this as an opportunity to express your views on death and dying and I know that is a most intriguing subject matter when you sit and debate it, whether it is in the House or in the drawing room. As the hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Decker) was speaking a few minutes ago, he reminded me that going back into history, death and dying has become famous in many poems. I think I can go back to the time when I was a schoolboy, and I read and learned the poem, *The Death of Sir John Moore*, and as he recited his experiences on death and dying and funerals, some of the words of the poem came back to me. Then I thought of other people who took a different view, I would not call it a macabre view.

MR. DECKER:



Give us a few words from the poem.

DR. TWOMEY:

"Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note/As his corpse to the rampart we hurried;"

Anyway, they dug his grave with their bayonets and they did not have pomp and ceremony. You have psyched me out in asking for the words right at this moment.

Now I remember the poem of Charles Wolfe, "Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,/ As his corpse to the rampart we hurried;/ Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot/ O'er the grave where our hero we buried./ We buried him darkly in dead of night,/ The sods with our bayonets turning." Sorry. That was a long, long time ago.

HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

DR. TWOMEY:

Then there are other ones that came. I thought of W.B. Yeats when he wrote his own epithet, and it is written on his tomb, "Cast a cold eye/ On life, on death./ Horseman, pass by."

Then I tried to remember - you spoke about the book of death and dying - about some I had read. I think that Graham Greene had written one that was very popular quite a number of years ago which prompted quite a number of people to emulate his style and talent. I think, as a result of that, there was a society formed, called the Memorial and Funeral Society. I believe that it is a credible group across the whole of this nation.

It gives advise to people who are planning their own funerals and

this has been done by many people I have seen. I can equal stories - but I do not think we should tell them in the House - about experiences similar to the one that you have had about death and dying. This funeral society will help people in choosing their casket, arranging their funeral and discussing prices.

I have been asked what was the purpose of the amendment. I think that most acts have in them an automatic, you can call it, sunset act or the grandfather's clause. It is usually after a period of six months that those who are entitled to be licensed or come under the auspices of the this particular act have to apply. If they do not apply within that period of time, they will be deprived of membership of that particular board.

You also asked, Sir, as to how one can get training. I know that one can become an apprentice in St. John's in one or a couple of the funeral homes. I think if you have enough funerals per year or over a two year period, and this can be verified and you have done the course, then you are entitled to sit for examinations and if you pass the examinations you are entitled to be registered as an embalmer and/or a funeral director.

MR. SIMMONS:

Who sets the exam?

DR. TWOMEY:

It is set by the board and the board consists of certain members. There are two embalmers, two funeral directors and three other people. The three other people, we discussed it with the Memorial and Funeral Planning Society and they recommended two names or more. Two of these

recommended names are on this board. There is also one of our staff from the Department of Health who sits on the Board. The examination I have told you about.

There are a few other questions. I believe the gentleman for Windsor - Buchans (Mr. Flight) asked me what was the cost of a funeral that comes under the auspices of the Department of Social Services. I looked it up but I feel it would be unfair for me to discuss that subject matter since it comes under the direct responsibility of the Minister of Social Services. But I will give you a round figure. The figure, I would say, would be \$800 to \$900. That is only my guess now. Because as I looked up the various costs: One, the distance from the funeral home to where the individual died; the picking up of that body and bringing it back to a particular area; whether the body is to be embalmed or not embalmed; whether the body is to be waked in a church or in the funeral home; the size of the casket. Between five foot and six foot, there is quite a difference in cost. Also, there is an allowance for clothes for the individual who is to be buried. I do not think there was any other question asked of me. If I have omitted anyone I am sorry and I will take questions from the seats.

MR. FLIGHT:  
Cremation.

DR. TWOMEY:  
Cremation is a burning issue. I believe there is not a crematorium in the Province of Newfoundland at this particular time. I understand someone has an interest in establishing a crematorium. I understand it is going to be opened within the next few

months. That is all I can say about it.

I thank you all for your contribution and I would like to move second reading.

Thank you.

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The Embalmers And Funeral Directors Act, 1975," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow. (Bill No. 22)

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act Respecting An Increase Of Certain Pensions." (Bill No. 24)

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

DR. COLLINS:  
Mr. Speaker, this is an Act respecting an increase of certain pensions and it really implements an announcement made at the time of the Budget presentation. Hon. members will remember that the pension levels were frozen during the restraint period but now there is an increase being given.

There was a two year restraint programme put in place by this government and we indicated that to the public service unions, saying that as of the time of their last contract, after a two year period government would be in a position to discuss with them further increases, but during the intervening two years the situation was such that we felt we had to deal only with non-monitory matters, matters that would not be an extra cost to the public treasury. That meant that various public service unions came under the restraint programme at various times because their last contracts had different dates. In terms of

our pensioners that period is now over so we are in a position to put in place some increases in pension benefits. The increase on a general basis will be 4 per cent, but there is a minimum, a floor, so that no increase will be less than \$240 as a minimum. That means that if a pensioner is receiving \$6000, or less on a 4 per cent basis he would be getting less than \$240. But if he is receiving a pension of \$6000 or less he nevertheless will get \$240 as a minimum increase in his pension. No pension being paid will be less than \$2200. That is the minimum pension that any public service pensioner will receive.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that we have 4000 former public servants and those individuals who come under the pension provisions laid out there in the schedule to the Act and this increase will cost the pension fund about \$1.8 million.

The cost of this increase, of course will come out of the pension fund which government set up, I think it was in 1981. Prior to that date pensions were paid out of the Consolidated Fund. In that year we set up a pension fund into which current contributions are paid and the government contribution, matching those current contributions, are also paid. I believe that the fund is now built up something to the order of \$230 million. I cannot give an absolutely precise figure but it is something of that order. So these pension increases, and of course all pensions now being paid, come out of that fund.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if I need to go into this in any

greater detail at this stage. It is something that we are very pleased to do. We realize that former public servants have contributed and are reliant on these pension benefits. It is only their right. I suppose a pension benefit can be looked upon as a delayed wage benefit. It is a benefit they earned as a result of their employment in the public service. Undoubtedly, many pensioners would like to have greater increases than we are able to give, but nevertheless our pension provisions match or compare quite favourably with similar jurisdictions and at least this increase will keep up with the cost of living.

So with those words, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a few remarks about this particular bill, Bill 24, which puts into effect the pension increases mentioned by the minister in the Budget Speech.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot that one can say about pensions and one certainly can appreciate the unfortunate circumstances, the unfortunate financial bind that many of our retired people find themselves in when they are on relatively small pensions. We have many people in the public service who retired on relatively small pensions. Of course, I suppose nobody gets any kind of a large pension, it is always a reduction in what one was used to

making. They are always a percentage of salary, be it 60 per cent or whatever the particular individual qualifies for, so it is always a tremendous adjustment when one comes from a salary to a pension.

The real problem seems to be with pensions the lack of any systematic level of increases, and I believe, for example, that this might have been the first time that there was an increase in many of those pensions, maybe all of them, say for three or four years.

DR. COLLINS:

Two.

MR. LUSH:

The minister says two. Well, there was a two year freeze. Is the minister saying now that it has only been two years? Well, if that is so that is certainly better news than I thought, because I have been under the impression that many pensioners had not received an increase for three or four years. That is certainly, as I say, a little better than I thought. In any event, it is certainly a small enough increase. I am sure that the pensioners will welcome the increase, as little as it is, if it is two years since they received any increase. Certainly that 4 per cent is not going to take care of inflation, not going to take care of the continual eroding of the dollar over the past number of years, since they received an increase.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, we certainly support the bill and, like the minister, we certainly wish the amount could have been a little more, probably in line with the increases that the government is giving this year. I am not

sure, but I suppose that probably falls within the range of the increases government is giving to its public service in these recent rounds of negotiations.

But 4 per cent, when they have gone two years without any increase, is certainly not going to be anything substantive. Mr. Speaker, we do support the bill, and the question I would put to the minister is what kind of system is in place with respect to pensions to ensure that the pensions, inasmuch as possible, keep up with the cost of living? I wonder if the minister can address that? I am sure the minister is as concerned about that for pensioners as we are. What kind of system can be put in place to ensure that pensioners, people who have borne the heat of the day, people who are now beyond the working age, what sort of system can we put in place to ensure that the inflationary period that we are going through, the recessionary period, does not hit these people too hard, that these people can indeed make it on their pensions?

Can the minister inform the House as to what system is in place? Is this at the whim of the government? Is there anything in place to ensure that every year, every two years, every three years there will be an increase? Because, if we give an increase every year, then, that would certainly, if it is only 2 per cent, if it is only 3 per cent, be better than going three or four years and then giving a 3 per cent or 4 per cent increase. So I am just wondering if the minister can indicate whether there is some systematic method in place whereby these pensions are increased from year to year to sort of lessen the

financial burden of many of these pensioners? And some of these pensioners are not all in the same position, some of them are pensioned for different reasons. They are not all pensioned because they have reached the proper pensionable age, some of them have to retire prematurely because of health reasons and these people are placed in a very difficult position because they have expenditures, hospital bills, this kind of thing. So I am just wondering whether the government has in place any kind of system to ensure that the increases take place on an annual basis to help these people to be able to take care of their living in a much more effective manner? So there is that concern, Mr. Speaker, that the increases do not come too far apart, that they are almost on an annual basis. So if the minister can address that point.

There is another point about pensions, generally, pensions funded by the government. The Auditor General referred to this, I believe, back in 1981 and 1982 when he was concerned about the pensions funded by the Province; he was concerned that there would be too many demands on the pension fund in the future and that the funds would be inadequate to meet the demands that would be coming on the pension fund. As a result of that caution, I believe, as a result of that concern by the Auditor General, the government decided to set up an actuarial study just to see how adequate the four pensions funded by the government were, just to see how adequate they would be in terms of meeting future demands. And I think it has been some concern of the Auditor General that maybe the government have been dragging their feet with respect to setting

up this actuarial study.

Now, I wonder if the minister can tell us just what is the status of that actuarial study and what time the House can expect a report on this study? Does the minister have any information now that he can give the House and give the people with respect to the adequacy of the pension fund established by the Province to look after all of the needs that will be required in the near future and in the distant future, a little further down the road? Because again, as I said, we must certainly take anything that the Auditor General says about finances very, very seriously, and the Auditor General was indeed very, very concerned about the ability of the pension fund to meet all of the requirements that would be needed in the future. So if the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) can certainly address that question, what has happened to the actuarial study, whether indeed it is over, what time we can expect a report and whether he, indeed, shares the same concern as the Auditor General over the ability of the pension fund to be able to meet the needs in the future, and whether he can shed any new information on that situation today?

With these few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will finish just for the time being.

MR. SPEAKER (Greening):

Before recognizing the hon. the member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick), I will read out the three questions for the Late Show.

The first question is to the Minister of Housing (Mr. Dinn) with regard to the NLHC units in Stephenville, and it is from the

hon. the member for Menihek.

The second question is from the hon. the member for Gander (Mr. Baker), who is dissatisfied with an answer given today by the hon. the Minister of Education (Mr. Hearn), with regard to small schools and wishes to follow up the matter on today's Late Show.

The third question is to the hon. the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) from the hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans (Mr. Flight), with regard to the Conne River fishery.

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Just a couple of questions before I go into the more detailed argument I would like to make on this pension bill. Did the minister not say there were 4,000 recipients of pensions? One of the points in question that I have often had thrown at me is that the MHA pension plan is much too generous and is therefore the kind of thing that should not be there. I have tried to give rational arguments to it. One of the questions that has been put to me is, How many former members of the House of Assembly are actually receiving pensions? I am not sure if the minister has that information, but if he does not, I would not mind his taking it under advisement and getting the information later. How many other former MHAs are in a position to have eligibility for pensions and are waiting until the appropriate time for it? The answer I have always given to people was that there is not really a lot of former MHAs drawing it and, even though it looks like a generous

pension, very few people are actually in a beneficial relationship to it.

The other question is, is there \$230 million in the pension fund?

MR. MATTHEWS:

You will have to wait a long time to get a pension from here.

MR. FENWICK:

I will repeat it, if I get his attention. There are \$230 million in the pension fund?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Right.

MR. FENWICK:

I just want to have some indication, when the minister responds at the end of the debate on it, as to where it is invested and to what purpose it is being put and so on. I know that some of the Canada Pension Plan is actually incorporated into the debt of the Province. I am not sure where this money is.

The other thing that I would like to say quite complimentary about the bill, because I am pleased to see that there is an increase in the pension - 4 per cent is not exactly keeping pace with inflation over the last three years since it has been frozen for two years, but it is certainly better than zero, which was the norm for the last two years. I think it is overdue that we did increase these pensions somewhat. Having said that, I would like to indicate that there are a considerable number of people who do work for the provincial government who will not benefit by this and can never benefit by this. Of course, I am referring to the people who work for the

provincial government under contract, with contractors. That refers to the people, for example, who clean this Chamber in the evening and who clean Confederation Building and who do the same sort of cleaning in the vocational schools and so on.

I was referring to the several hundred cleaners who work for the provincial government through contractors, on contracted-out work. It seems to me somewhat discouraging that these people, who do very hard and menial work, should be denied any of the benefits that we give to this long list of groups that are obviously being benefitted by this pension. They include the public service in general and the hospitals. I assume the hospitals are covered by this - are they not? - this pension plan. Is the hospital pension plan being increased by 4 per cent, as well, by this particular act? I did not notice it on the list. I am not sure whether it is there or not. Is it under something that I have not seen? Anyway, the minister can let me know if I have missed the place where these people are covered by it.

Nevertheless, the point that I would like to continue to make is that we do have a large number of people who are not covered by any pension plan at all, who work for contractors, who get the minimum wage, who get no sick leave, who have no group medical insurance, no group life insurance provided by funds that come out of the Legislature and who are working at a marginalized rate in society. I know this question has been brought up before and it is one that the member for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall) has been very sensitive to, and he has actually

spoken in support of the idea that pensions should be provided for others in our society other than those who are civil servants and those working for large corporations.

As a matter of fact, I would be quite interested to hear if the member for St. John's East is interested in pursuing that further, because I really believe that in Newfoundland and in Labrador we have a particular kind of work pattern. I think intermittent is the best word to put to it. Other people call it high levels of unemployment. But the fact is, we end up with a large number of the workers in our society who work for a portion of the year and are unemployed for other parts of it, or who have long times of being unemployed. As a result, there is no large pension plan that covers these people.

At the same time, we have other people working in marginal jobs, such as working in the local corner grocery store, in some cases making the minimum wage, in which the owner of the store himself is not in a position to provide a pension plan because he just does not have the resources to do it.

It seems to me we are leaving a large percentage of our population in a position where they will be living in poverty when they get to be retired. And I really think it is unconscionable of us to allow them to continue to be left outside the protection, shall we say, of a major pension plan.

So I refer to those two groups, one, the people who are working for contractors who are working for the government, and that

includes all the cleaners here. By the way, it is interesting to note that if the cleaners you meet in the elevator in the evening, with the buckets and the trolley and everything else, was working at the General Hospital, they would be making over \$8 an hour, with medical insurance to cover them, with a proper pension plan, and a whole bunch of other benefits. But because they are working here they get \$4 an hour, and if they call in sick one day, they do not get any pay for that day. There is no such thing as a pension plan when they retire. As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as job security, because in a year's time somebody else may bid for the contract, someone else may come in and these people get fired, they get laid off.

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is Tom Bursey for you.

MR. FENWICK:

Yes it is, if that is the name of the cleaning company. I am not really picky whether it is Tom Bursey Cleaners, or it is Atlantic Cleaners, or Jet Cleaners or any of the other contractors, the concept is wrong. Surely we are not so mean as a Province that we have to sweat our cleaners and tell them that they have to work for these minimum wages and that they have no benefits just because we want to save a few dollars here and there. I really feel that is an unfair thing to do to employees. Also, I do not think, in the long run, it is particularly wise. I think most members were aware that when the contract switched over from one contractor to another there was a period of time, about a month, when the new people were being trained, that the cleaning was not being done as thoroughly and

as efficiently as by the previous people. I believe now it is up to standard, but there was that period of time when that occurred.

So I would like both the member for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall) and the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) to address those concerns. I know the Minister of Finance in previous times said that to do that we have to look at a pension plan for the entire Province. I think, maybe, it is time that we did look at a pension plan for the entire Province. We have a unique situation here, with our high unemployment rate and our very interrupted form of working, and I think a pension plan that responds to those particular circumstances is very important for us to do so that we will not have just a list of public employees who are well off, and people who work for large corporation who are well off, but that will look after people who have an intermittent work pattern and people who work for small employers.

So with those comments and those questions I will sit down and allow the Minister of Finance, or whoever else wishes to address it, to speak.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

If the minister now speaks, he closes the debate.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, hon. members know, of course, that pension is an extremely complex subject. I certainly do not profess to be an expert in it. It is one of my few areas of non-expertise. But we have a very large division in the



Department of Finance that deals exclusively with pensions.

As I mentioned when I introduced the bill, I think our pension arrangements are not perfect, granted, but I think there is a very credible effort on the part of the provincial government.

Now, to go into some of the questions that were raised: The hon. the member for Bonavista North (Mr. Lush) asked what arrangement we have in place to try to ensure that pensions keep up with the costs that pensioners face? Well, the arrangement we have in this Province is that we bring in periodic increases. There is no automatic arrangement. There are, in some other jurisdictions, certain automatic things; sometimes they are related to increases in the cost of living, sometimes they are related to increases in wage scales, sometimes they are related to formulae that are not really based on either of those but, nevertheless, there is an automatic arrangement.

In this Province, and we are not alone in this, we have elected to keep that in our own hands and we make a decision each year, usually at budget time, whether there will be an increase in pension benefits, and, if so, what will be the level of that increase.

Except for the recent restraint period, the usual thing was that we gave a pension increase that was in line with the average wage increase that was given in the public service. Now, I am sure you could argue for or against any system, but we feel that we have to keep control of the finances of the Province. We work on a pretty tight rein, and we feel that it

would not be in the best interest of the people generally if we put in some automatic arrangement that we had to stick with no matter what. We feel that it is in the best interest of the people to keep it flexible. And, of course, even though in the recent restraint period there was no increase, that is not to say that at other times there is not an increase greater than is given in the general wage situation. And I might add that that has happened in the past, particularly in regard to certain groups. For instance, retired teachers, especially teachers who retired a considerable time ago, were on a very, very low pension entitlement and for a number of years we gave those teachers - you know, those who retired over, say, twenty years ago or whatever it was - extra increases, a larger increase than we were giving to the general pensioner and a larger increase than we were giving in the wage increase. So I think that there is a value not only from the Provincial Treasury point of view but also from the groups of pensioners' point of view, to have it flexible.

Now, the hon. member also asked what about these actuarial studies. He is quite right in that there was an actuarial study done roughly ten years ago, I think it was, and then we decided to get into another actuarial study in recent years. We were not dragging our feet about it. We were getting into computerizing our pension administration, which was a very large undertaking, and that meant that it would have been unwise for us to embark on an actuarial study under the old method when, if we waited a while and got everything computerized, we would get the study done much

more efficiently. So we waited until we were reasonably well computerized and that has been done now. We have in large aspects of the actuarial study. They are being considered at the present time. We have not really ourselves, shall we say, taken all the information, or have not assimilated and correlated and understood all the information that came out of those studies, but we are in the process of doing that. We have some officials working on the reports to get the essence out of them and to make it understandable for the politician, shall we say, and once that process is completed, we will be making the studies public, we will also be making our considerations of the studies public and our recommendations that flow out of those studies.

There is not much point, I suppose, in mounting studies unless it is to some purpose, and we feel that those studies will give us some guidance as to how to handle our pension system. So when they are made public we will also be making public our recommendations, or perhaps even our decisions, on how we will proceed in the future.

I think the level of concern was also brought up - are we concerned about the validity or the state of our pension system? Yes, we are, but we are not alone in this. Most jurisdictions, and I would say probably the whole pension industry, is concerned about how valid and how good and how well-based are the pension arrangements. So we are by no means alone in having concern, but we are concerned about it and, of course, that is why we do have these periodic actuarial studies.

Now, the hon. member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick) asked about the MHA plan and he says that he has been told on a number of occasions it is too generous. I think we have to understand something about the MHA plan, and it is something related to being an MHA. If you are an MHA, you are not an employee in the ordinary sense of the term, i.e., you do not get a job and expect to keep that job for twenty-five years, or thirty years, whatever it is -

AN HON. MEMBER:

I do.

DR. COLLINS:

PCs can look forward to that, but I am talking generally. - and get average increases and all that sort of thing. I think MHAs should think of themselves more, say, as the Armed Services or the Uniformed Services, i.e., you are in a high risk situation, you may be there or you may not be there; you may be flicked out or you may come upon an unfortunate accident or whatever. It is not a regular nine to five job so, I think, the MHA pension plan should be regarded more in light of what pension arrangements are given for the Armed Services or the Uniformed Services, that type of thing. If you look at it in that light, sure, the MHA plan is generous compared to the ordinary employment type of pension plan, but it is not particularly generous if you look at it in the light of how it compares to the Armed Forces pension plan or the Uniformed Services pension plan. And, I might add, it is by no means extra generous if you compare it to the MLA plans or MNA plans, that is the elected persons' plans in other provinces. We are about in the middle somewhere; some people are

better than us and some people are less well structured in that regard than we are. Some aspects of our plan are better than others and some aspects of our plan are worse than others, that type of thing. We are about in the middle there.

The hon. member also asked how we invest our money.

MR. FENWICK:

I also asked the number of former MHAs

DR. COLLINS:

I do not have those figures but I can get them for the hon. member. He wants to know how many former MHAs are now actually drawing pensions and how many people are, shall we say, eligible for deferred pensions. I really do not have the figures. I do not think there are a large number but I will get the numbers. As to how the investment fund is invested, we have made some changes in recent times on that. Our pension fund was always handled by the Royal Trust but we had a feeling - and this is not to say anything against the Royal Trust - that we were not getting the best return on our investments from that particular organization so what we did was split off some of the pension fund and we put it into the hands of specialists, specialists in real estate, specialists in the bond market, specialists in other forms of investment and, in that regard, we are in line with how most jurisdictions handle their pension funds. We are already seeing that we are getting a better return on our investments having gone that route and, of course, any better return we get ultimately will redound to the benefit of the pension fund itself.

MR. FENWICK:

Can you give us a breakdown of where the money actually is invested?

DR. COLLINS:

Our pension fund is invested in many, many respects and if I gave the hon. member a list of it, it would be a list about this long, we invest in this, this, this. I can get that sort of information, but I do not have it at hand.

He also asked about the private pension plans. We brought in awhile ago, largely under the leadership of the President of the Council, a Pension Benefits Act, and this was to regulate pensions in the private sector.

Many other provinces had this and we were, maybe, a little bit slow in getting on the ball in that. Our Pension Benefits Act is good. We have learned from how other provinces and other jurisdictions handled the matter. It is a matter that is under review in almost all provinces across Canada at the present time, to try to improve on the regulation of private plans. The idea is not to make private plans compulsory. If you do that, you almost kill the goose that lays the golden egg. You want to come in there so as to encourage private pension plans but, nevertheless, not to let them run wild. You have to bring a level of regulation but without actually making them forcibly do certain things which would only ruin the whole situation. I might add that part-time employees not only in the public sector but also in the private sector, are being given a lot of consideration now as people look at their Pension Benefits Acts to see if some arrangement can be put in place to handle the part-time employee, and I think that was a matter the hon.

member was concerned about.

Then he got on to our cleaners here. I can only answer the same way I answered previously, I believe. If we wanted to take all those in the private sector and put them into the public sector, they would fall under our precise pension arrangements. You might say that would be a good thing for them. Sure it would, but we cannot take all the people working in this Province and put them under our public pension arrangements. The cleaners in this building and in government buildings are in the private sector and it is a competitive sector. We would encourage the employers of those cleaners to put in place pension plans. We do not force them to, as I have mentioned already, to try to force them you would only make things worse. I do not think the answer is that everyone in the private sector has to come in under the public scheme. No public authority would ever be able to afford getting all the workers in their community on the public scheme. So there is a cutoff somewhere. Now, the hon. member might argue and he will say, 'Well, you got the wrong cutoff. Our cutoff should be such that those cleaners are in and not out there.' Well, that is all a matter of opinion. Perhaps at some later stage the hon. Minister of Public Works and Services might go into that a bit more. All I can say at the present time is that that is a private contract, they are not on the public service pension roster, they do not get served out of our pension fund and I afraid that is as far as I can go with it.

I think I have answered most of the questions that were asked, except for those bits of

information I said I would bring later. With those words, I move second reading.

On motion, a bill, "An Act Respecting An Increase Of Certain Pensions," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow. (Bill No. 24).

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The Land Development Act." (Bill No. 5).

MR. SIMMS:  
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:  
Mr. Speaker, I want to just briefly introduce this particular piece of legislation. It is really a housekeeping amendment in nature. I will try to explain it as best I can. It is An Act To Amend The Land Development Act, as such.

Mr. Speaker, this act, The Land Development Act, was the original legislative authority for creating such agricultural communities as Cormack, Pasadena, Winterland, Markland, and so on. This Land Development Act was the old legislation that was used for the creation of those particular communities. Now, Mr. Speaker, it is in fact no longer used by this department at all and no titles are currently issued under that particular act.

In fact, it is our intent to repeal this act, when we bring in our new lands legislation some time in the next year or so.

MR. CALLAN:

If you are still in office.

MR. SIMMS:

If I am still in office, yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, prior to 1977, all grants issued under this particular act were issued under the condition that if the land was sold, it would have to be sold in its totality. That was the provision. The wording was: 'Provided that this grant upon the condition', blah, blah, blah, blah. So, prior to 1977, all grants issued under that act were issued only on the condition that if the land were sold, it had to be sold in its totality. But, Mr. Speaker, over the years, through ignorance or otherwise of the law, a large number of these grants have been subdivided. Presumably illegally subdivided, to a certain extent, because it was done, I guess, either through ignorance or whatever.

These subdivisions occurred in the 1950s and the 1960s, the vast majority of them. They are still going on. They are usually brought to our attention, of course, by lawyers who are representing estates, trying to settle estates or whatever, and some of these estates are based on some of those conditional grants.

So, Mr. Speaker, to address that particular issue, the act was amended in 1977 to permit the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the Cabinet, to amend those grants by simply deleting that provision that had been in there. Is it fairly clear so far?

The purpose of this amendment, Mr. Speaker - as I said, it is really a housekeeping measure - is to further simplify the existing

procedure for approving these requests to subdivide Crown grants, because they are all pretty straightforward in any event. The amendment would, in fact, allow the minister, the authority to amend the acts upon request, assuming a couple of conditions are met: (a) that the land was illegally subdivided on or before January 1, 1979, and, in fact, it fits into that category, (b) the subdivision is in accordance with various municipal regulations where applicable, because some of them would fall into municipal authorities, and (c), that the Minister of Agriculture would, of course, recommend that the subdivision is approved. Any other requests for amendments, Mr. Speaker, through grants will continue to need the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. But these come up now fairly frequently, on a regular basis, and it really just takes a lot of unnecessary time. The minister could easily amend it without any major problem. So, as I said, the amendment is primarily housekeeping in nature, Mr. Speaker, and I move second reading.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Stephenville.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak on this amendment. I thank the minister for his pleasant briefing session of exactly what the bill entails. He has been very nice to me today, I must say, and I enjoy the rapport that we have on different measures that we discuss.

There are a number of questions to

be asked or comments to be made on this bill. This has gone on for many years. This procedure is now being simplified and we welcome that. It will get things solved a lot quicker, and will take up a lot less of the time of the Cabinet, as they have many, many things to consider in their daily routine. So any move to simplify such a procedure is something that you do not argue with too much.

One of the problems I have with this, and I want to express some thoughts on, is that the original act was set up to establish agricultural communities, or communities concerned with agriculture. At the present time, many of these communities are trying to build on this agricultural base. They are having a hard time doing that because of the non-existence of an agricultural agreement that supposedly someone cannot find, or the minister cannot seem to negotiate.

Now, many concerns have been expressed by people in the agricultural field all over the Province. They would like to see this agreement signed in the near future so that they can proceed, they can get help with problems that they face in agriculture in Newfoundland and Labrador. And it is something that they should not have to be going through right now, as there is so much co-operation and consultation with the federal government. So this exasperation and these doubts they have are of concern to me and of concern to many members, as they are trying to pursue agricultural interests to improve themselves and improve their farms and so on. So while we have a housekeeping measure that will make it simpler for the minister

to handle the decision-making process, we have some questions as to when we are going to have an agreement for agriculture which will help farmers, people involved in that industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Many people involved in the farming industry on the West Coast of Newfoundland are wondering when we are going to get that agreement so that they can improve their lot and create more employment out there in the Province. And it is something that I do not think the Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development (Mr. R. Aylward) has addressed as yet. I urge him to work on that agreement as much as he can, so that we can see it come to fruition in the very near future, and the benefits accrue to the people out there who are working very hard on a daily basis to make a living in this Province.

Another thing I want to make some comments on is land development itself, disputes and how they are settled. I have a number of constituents of mine, and people in the area, who have gotten into disputes with the Department of Lands and Forests over land that they would like to see given over to them, land that has been in their family for many years but, for some reason, over the years the claim was not submitted, or the proper procedures were not submitted to the Department of Lands and Forests so that the land could be put in the family's name. There have been a number of disputes which people have brought to my attention. They have also brought them to the attention of the Department of Lands and Forests but have gotten a negative reaction, they have been told to go the route of the lawyers and so

on. I am somewhat concerned about this. These people, who feel they should have this land put in their name, put under their jurisdiction, for many of them it would be a great expense, a great cost, to go with the legal mechanism. It costs a great deal of money.

So this is something that I think we should try to address. There should probably be an appeal procedure, or something along those lines, so that people do not have to take this extreme measure which costs a lot of money. Again, many people have expressed these thoughts to me in the sense that there is really no mechanism there. I think the minister should take note of this and maybe look into it to see if we can come up with some mechanism, instead of it just stopping there and then you have to go the legal route. I would hope that he would take that under consideration. When it comes to land development, I feel that that phrase itself should be taken into perspective. We have a lot of land development when it comes to forestry and lands, and I do not think there is enough being done when it comes to silviculture, etc., and a number of these things I would like to address further.

Since it is five-thirty, I would move the adjournment of the debate.

MR. SPEAKER (Hickey):  
Order, please!

MR. SIMMS:  
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:  
The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, just to close the debate on this particular bill.

MR. K. AYLWARD:  
I adjourned the debate.

MR. SIMMS:  
Oh, I am sorry. I thought he was finished. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:  
We are not ready to move second reading?

MR. SIMMS:  
No, Mr. Speaker. He adjourned the debate because it is 5:30 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER:  
All right. It being 5:30, it is time for the Late Show.

#### Debate on the Adjournment

#### [Late Show]

MR. SPEAKER:  
The first item is from the hon. the member for Menihek who is dissatisfied with the answer to the question regarding the housing situation in Stephenville.

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:  
Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I am not sure but the Minister of Education (Mr. Hearn) might be a more appropriate person to take over the portfolio. Quite frankly, I have never seen a more badly administered portfolio than the one responsible for housing, in that there is a series of actions coming from his department which seem to be colossal mistakes and blunders and can only be explained by, I think, catering to special interests.

I do not want to say that without first saying that this government has done a lot of things wrong and it has done a lot of things right. I try to give credit to the government when it does things right, but I also feel that it is absolutely essential to criticize them when they do things wrong. The decision to sell the 326 units in Stephenville, from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation to God knows whom, and we will be seeing who it will be soon, is, to me, one of the most stupid, ignorant blunders I have ever seen this government make and can only be explained by finding out who or whom those prospective buyers may be. Because we have some strong feelings and strong suspicions in Stephenville - excuse me, I am referring to another member's district - that there are some big Tories about to spring out with big cheques to buy over these apartments and to move into them.

Now, if these are rumours, I certainly hope the rumours are not true. Because if that occurs, if we do see a bunch of Tory bagmen come in there and pick up those apartments and raise the rents by \$200 or \$300, then I do not think there is going to be an end to the amount of screaming done here. I am sure the member for Stephenville (Mr. K. Aylward) will be screaming twice as loud as I will, but he will hardly be heard, because I will be at least filling this entire Chamber with yells and screams.

The unseemly haste! This Saturday, the day after tomorrow, these units will be advertised, this despite the fact that the people who live in those units have been demanding, have been begging, have been pleading with the minister to put a delay on it

for six or eight months so that they can put themselves in a position where they can put together a housing co-operative and take over the units themselves. They do not want to be put to the tender mercies of whoever is being lined up to take over these apartments.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! I have to remind the hon. gentleman that he is treading on very thin ice. When he talks about people being lined up, he is implying motives which border very closely on dishonesty.

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker, I will be perfectly happy to be proven wrong and, when I am, I will stand up here and say that I have been proven wrong. As it stands now, I am repeating the rumours that are going around in Stephenville and the fears of these residents. If they are wrong, I will be the happiest person in the world.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! The hon. member is responsible for what he says. He should not come in the House and repeat rumours and apply the responsibility to somebody else.

MR. FENWICK:

But that is the only way, Mr. Speaker, we can get any sense out of this whole operation. These units have been owned by the Housing Corporation since 1966, or at least by the Housing Corporation and its predecessor since then. We are talking - what? - almost twenty years of ownership. Why the unseemly haste now to put them on the market? There is a very strong question that has to be asked here, and we would like to know the answer to it?



The other question is, no matter who buys them, even if it is the most benevolent landlord in the world, we are still talking about units that were bought for \$1 back in 1966, when the Americans left, and have had absolutely no capital put in them by this Province whatsoever. As a matter of fact, the dollar bought the entire base, it did not buy just the units themselves.

So the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, what we have here is a situation where a capital asset that was bought for nothing, no matter what amount of money was put in for improvements and so on, may be sold for between \$5 million and \$10 million. Well, that has to be paid by somebody, and the people who ultimately will pay for the cost of this will be the tenants themselves.

Quite frankly, the minister is responsible for another programme, the Rural and Residential Housing programme, the RRAP programme. We have been told over the last two months that that is coming, that it is being put in place and so on. That is not being put in place. We have found no evidence of it yet, and we are desperately looking for that right across the Province.

The fact is, the minister can take these 326 units and dump them on the market with unseemly haste, yet he cannot put together a programme that would benefit the people of this Province, the RAPP Programme, within the time limit that his corporation has promised it. It just shows the warped priorities on behalf of the minister over there, and, it seems to me, that it is absolutely intolerable for us to have a Housing Corporation whose major

objective is to privatize everything they have rather than providing decent housing, which is their mandate under their act.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. member's time is up.

MR. FENWICK:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister for Housing.

MR. DINN:

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for bringing this up actually, because there are a lot of rumors out in Stephenville. It has been reported to me that there is a big Tory or a couple of Tories going to take over the base at Stephenville. Mr. Speaker, I want to suggest to you that 90 per cent to 95 per cent of the people in Newfoundland are Tories, so if anybody takes them over, chances are they are going to be Tory. So you have a 90 per cent chance, anyway.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the hon. gentleman, the hon. gentleman has been in the House for one year and he is not aware of what goes on. He is still not aware of what goes on. We have put houses for sale on Main Street here in the city. If the price comes in, then, Mr. Speaker, we sell the units. This government is not here to be helping the rich. The fact of the matter is, our responsibility and main objective is to be helping the poor people of this Province.

Here we have the provincial Socialist standing up protecting the rich. If the people in Stephenville qualified for social

housing, they would not be in those units. So they do not qualify for social housing. Now that is what the hon. member is defending. Here is the NDP member of Newfoundland -

MR. FENWICK:

Are you tell me that those (inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. DINN:

- who had his five minutes and now cannot take it. If he cannot stand the heat, he should get out of the kitchen. He is fighting for people who should be able to afford to pay market rents.

Mr. Speaker, if they could not afford it, I would be quite willing to accept an application from any of those residents to put them into social housing, which is what the responsibility is of this government or any government, to look after the poor of this Province not the people who can afford it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DINN:

Now, Mr. Speaker, what about this unseemly haste? For twenty years the government of this Province have been subsidizing the units at Stephenville. Now, with unseemly haste, after twenty years, we decide to put some of them out to tender, to see if there is any interest out there. The hon. the member for Stephenville, for example, recommended to me that some of those units could be sold to private enterprise, that there are some people out there interested. I personally have no knowledge of anyone, except the

two letters that I received, one from the hon. member recommending a person who had a proposal that he might be interested in putting in, and another letter from a private individual who does not have the money to buy one building let alone 326 units, but he is looking at the possibility of, in his retirement, possibly owning a duplex or something like that in Stephenville. He sent this letter in to me and I said, 'Well, we are considering having a look at that now. We are putting them out for proposals.' Mr. Speaker, if we get good bids, if we get market prices for them, we are willing to sell.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us look at some of the other stuff. Why should the Government of Newfoundland be subsidizing those units? We got them for a dollar, but we converted barrack blocks into apartment units. Those apartment units have been upgraded. They are scheduled for more upgrading, as the hon. member for Stephenville knows. All the hon. gentleman has to do is go down to Pleasantville and look at the upgrading we have done down there. Seven or eight million dollars has been spent on upgrading those units over the past few years. Mr. Speaker, we are in the business of helping the poor. The hon. gentleman should be ashamed of himself. He should be absolutely ashamed!

Mr. Speaker, there is interest shown by a group out there who want to form themselves into a co-operative. That group will be in to meet with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing tomorrow and they will be given a copy of the proposal call, which will not go in the papers on the weekend because I have not seen them, and

that does not happen until I have seen them. When I see them, they will be approved and we will get them in. They will not be in the paper this weekend, they will be in the paper possibly Monday or Tuesday. Mr. Speaker, if they go in on Tuesday, I am told the closing date will be July 2, and we will take eight to ten weeks to consider those proposal calls.

If the group out there, I tell the hon. gentleman for Stephenville, form themselves into a co-operative or submit a proposal of a proposal, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier this week, we will certainly consider that. We are a government who cares for all the people in the Province, whether they are rich or poor. We want to look after our poor. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the people who are tenants out in Stephenville, we will certainly look after their interests, as well.

MR. SPEAKER (Hickey):  
Order, please!

MR. TULK:  
Are you saying give it to them?

MR. DINN:  
That is what he wants to do. We got them for a dollar. We spent millions of dollars to upgrade them.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

MR. DINN:  
They have not paid for themselves; they have lost millions of dollars over the past twenty years. The people of Newfoundland subsidized all this. Now, the hon. member wants us to take the buildings and give that asset away.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. DINN:  
The asset belongs to all the people of this Province and they should -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER:  
All the people!

MR. DINN:  
That is right.

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

The hon. member's time has expired.

MR. DINN:  
Mr. Speaker, the leader of the socialists in this Province should be ashamed of themselves -

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

MR. DINN:  
- for bringing this question -

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

MR. DINN:  
- up, although I want to thank the hon. gentleman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

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

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

MR. SPEAKER:  
Order, please!

On a point of order, the hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

On any another occasion we would give the hon. gentleman leave, but I understand there are two more questions and those have to be debated.

MR. SPEAKER (Hickey):

We have a full agenda until 6:00 p.m..

Order, please! Order, please!

The next item is from the hon. the member for Gander (Mr. Baker) who is dissatisfied with the answer to a question put to the Minister of Education (Mr. Hearn) regarding the study of small schools.

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the Minister of Education is pleased to be on the Late Show today. He does not get many opportunities to participate in the Late Show, and I am happy to provide him with that opportunity.

The reason I am dissatisfied with the answer he gave regarding the close down of small schools and his study into small schools in the Province is simply this, Mr. Speaker: in the answer that the minister gave, it seemed to me that he did not really make any kinds of commitments or make any definite statements.

We have a situation in the Province where a number - and I recognize that only three of them have been in the news; there are a number of others that will be in the news in the near future - a number of small schools that are in the process of being closed down. Some of them are being

openly closed down, others are being downgraded to the extent that the year after they will be closed down.

MR. TULK:

And the superintendents tell them that they will tell the people about it after they have done it.

MR. BAKER:

The superintendents and the school boards, particularly the superintendents, tell the people after it is done and not before.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what is the position of the Minister of Education in this? Well, he has a study of small schools underway. He has some rather knowledgeable gentlemen travelling the Province and receiving briefs concerning the operation of small schools. He indicated that he had officials take part in the conference in Manitoba that had to do with small schools and, obviously, has some input in that direction.

However, Mr. Speaker, the crux of the matter is this - and I think it explains to me at least why the minister's answers were of the nature that they were - I am not sure that the Minister of Education has the authority to do very much concerning the small schools in the Province. It is a resource that we have and, certainly, Mr. Speaker, the small schools should not be operated like the large schools, but somehow there has to be an attempt made to make these small schools work better than they are working now and have worked down through the years, and perhaps, that that involves a whole new approach to the teaching in a multigrade classroom, and so on. Perhaps it involves a whole change in direction. The minister, doing his

study, can come out and state the philosophy of his department.

He has stated in many different ways, and the department has stated, their philosophy of education, usually in terms that people cannot argue with. There is no way that you can argue with their basic statements of the philosophy of education. I commend them for looking at that aspect of education. It has to be done first before anything else can be done.

However, I am not so sure that the Department of Education has the authority and the power to bring about, to implement, what their philosophy of education is. Their philosophy certainly does not involve taking students seven or eight years old from a community and busing them somewhere else and leaving them there all day. It certainly does not involve that, especially when that school has ninety-five students in it and is, in itself, a viable entity that can provide good education for the community. Surely, that is not part of the philosophy of the Department of Education.

Surely, it is not the philosophy of the Department of Education, as I heard a board official state on television a couple of nights ago when asked about busing these small students to another community and keeping them there all day, he said, 'Well, it will help them grow up faster.'

I am sure that is not the philosophy of the Department of Education and yet, Mr. Speaker, that is what is happening out there. The reality of what is happening in the Province, as compared with the philosophy of the Department of Education, I

would suggest, Mr. Speaker, are two different things. This is why, I can assure the minister, that over the next year at least, we are going to have an airing of the educational situation in the Province. He will have many opportunities in future to speak in Late Shows in the next year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I must say I am delighted at my first question on the Late Show. Yesterday, I believe, was the first question I had as Minister of Education, so perhaps it says something for the priorities that the Opposition have in relation to what goes on in the Province, when you go a whole year without getting a question on the important field of education. Speaking of education, I will take a little bit of time and I will table this information to educate the member as to the organization and structure of education in the Province at the department level and the board level.

The Department of Education is responsible for inacting the laws and regulations of education in the Province and that gives us a pretty wide scope. In fact, what it means is we do have control over everything that goes on in one way or another.

We also develop and prescribe the texts and the course of studies. We establish and maintain minimum standards of education and we finance education in the Province. Throughout the Province, however, we have

thirty-five school boards. For a breakdown, we have twenty-one integrated boards, twelve Roman Catholic boards, one Pentecostal Assemblies board and one Seven Day Adventist board. The school boards, however, operate the schools. They are responsible for such things as the organization of the schools, the employment of teachers, the maintenance of the buildings, the provision of pupil transportation and so on.

Now, the boards are made up of members, two thirds of which are now elected, as of last year, by the public and accountable to them. Throughout the Province, we have 618 schools, 257 are elementary, 18 junior high, 130 senior high and 213 all-grade schools. The boards are responsible for the operation of those schools, including the allocation of teachers to the various areas, etc. Sometimes, because of local needs, sometimes at the request of parents, sometimes because of financial restrictions - I do not think that will be the case from now on - and sometimes because of the type of education that can be delivered in those rural areas, boards make decisions which sometimes, perhaps, are not accepted by everyone involved.

With 618 schools in the Province, many of them small schools, in fact, 213 of them all-grade schools. It is no great wonder that 3 or 4 schools this year are in the headlines because the parents in those areas feel that they have concerns which are legitimate. However, one of the problems perhaps that is leading towards making some very unpopular decisions is the fact that the school population is declining rapidly. That is having a

two-fold effect. Number one, it means that we have fewer students in schools, in fact, in some areas the population is declining so rapidly that it is very, very hard to do anything unless we do a lot of doubling up or bringing schools together.

The other side of that is, because up to now most of our financing has been delivered to boards based on the population of school enrollment, with the declining enrollment, of course, their operating grants drop significantly. As plant costs remain standard or escalated, they were having all kinds of problems. So what did we do to try to offset some of the problems that we are facing?

Number one, in relation to the funding, we provided them with a 6 per cent increase, which is above the cost of living, slightly at least, so that gave them a few extra dollars. Above and beyond that, we gave them what we call a declining enrollment grant. Really, we based our grant this year on their school population of last year so they really do not lose anything. But the main move this year was what we call a tax equalization grant. In many areas of the Province, especially rural areas where they do not have a good strong economic base, the boards themselves found it very difficult to raise the funding necessary to be able to operate the schools the way they wanted to and to put in the resource materials, etc., that were needed.

So what we did, instead of just throwing out a blanket solution where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, we identified need. We said there are boards

worse off than others and, consequently, the end result means that the students are the ones who suffer. So we introduced a tax equalization grant which means a special grant to boards. The worse off boards will get more than the better off on a sliding scale and our money is going where the money is needed.

We have also, in other areas, identified the same thing. For instance, in staffing -

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):  
Order, please!

The hon. minister's time has elapsed.

MR. HEARN:  
I will get an opportunity later on, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. MARSHALL:  
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MARSHALL:  
Mr. Speaker, I understand that that is the end of the questions.

MR. SPEAKER:  
There is one more.

The hon. member for Windsor-Buchans (Mr. Flight) has a question for the hon. Minister of Fisheries on the Conne River fishery.

The hon. the member for Windsor-Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have here a copy of a petition and the original was sent to the Premier. That petition was the basis of my question and had the Premier been in the House, I would have proposed the question to him.

Being a copy of a petition, Mr. Speaker, the House rules will not permit me to present the petition and I respect the rules of the House so I did not try to present the petition, as we have seen happen in the past. But the petition highlights, Mr. Speaker, a situation that has arisen in this Province in the past week or two that seemingly came right out of the blue. The Evening Telegram, I think, broke the story.

The Federal Department of Fisheries had a policy that would allow the Conne River Indian Band, the people who live in Conne River under their new status agreement, to take 1,500 salmon directly out of the estuary or the mouth of the Conne River. That caught everybody by surprise, as the minister will well know.

In answering the question today, both ministers, I think, indicated that the government's position was that they did not support the taking out of any river, it did not matter what the community, whether ethnic groups were involved or not, 1,500 fish. I would ask the minister if he would take note of this particular question because I have to assume that there are negotiations going on between the provincial Department of Fisheries, or whatever department of government is relevant, with the federal

government and I have to believe that these are ongoing negotiations.

Conne River received status, I think, roughly a couple of years ago. How is it, and it comes as a surprise to me, that the federal fisheries authorities would announce that policy and would have appeared to have made that policy decision if the provincial government was taking the position espoused by the two ministers in the House today? Their position was not supportative and opposed the concept of taking 1,500 salmon from the Conne River by traps or nets.

I want the minister to indicate how that can be. What is happening here? Are we seeing the federal government again ignoring the wishes and the representations of the Province and going to the media with their policy decisions, which appears to be what has happened in this case?

Mr. Speaker, I have great difficulty in understanding, number one, and supporting, number two, a policy that would permit the taking out of a river in Newfoundland - the community is insignificant, it does not matter to me where the community is or what it is - 1,500 fish when one looks at the price that we have paid in this Province in the name of salmon enhancement and salmon conservation. We all know about the forced buy back of the commercial fishermen's licenses. The salmon sport fishermen in this Province has seen their ability to take eight fish a day go down to four to two to fifteen per year, all in the name of salmon enhancement and salmon conservation. That is the price we paid, Mr. Speaker.

I suspect that the people of this Province will find it very hard to understand and to reconcile and to support a policy that would permit the actual netting or trapping of 1,500 fish right out of the mouth of any river in this Province. In this particular case, we are talking about Conne River. I would be pleased to hear the minister's comments on that particular point.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the House will recall, my colleague, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ottenheimer) and I both addressed this question today in Question Period. I can only reiterate to the hon. gentleman that the firm policy position of this government is that we do not support and cannot support the allocation of any resource, in this case the fisheries resource of the Province, based on ethnic origins. It does not matter whether you are Chinese or Japanese or a Conne River Indian. It is not the policy position of this government that you make an allocation of a resource based on ethnic origins, point number one.

Point number two, Mr. Speaker, from a fisheries management perspective, we have some very serious concerns if this policy or if this approval is given. You might be able to argue that 1,200 are 1,200 fish. They will go up the river and spawn and obviously they are not going to get up the river and spawn if people are allowed to put nets across the mouth of the river.

The other problem from a fisheries management perspective is the



control. There has been ample evidence in other food fisheries across this country, that to say, you have a food fishery and to close your eyes and really not admit that really what you have is a commercial fishery, it is trying to blindfold the devil in the dark. We have very clearly and unmistakably and unequivocally said that to the federal government.

Now the problem is, Mr. Speaker, that the Conne River Indian Band has been given, during the last two or three years, the status of Status Indians so that they have a bit more of a position in dealing with the federal government than they had before they had that present status or the present category that they have now. That leaves, to a large degree, all of those decisions that are federal within the realm of the federal Department of Indian Affairs, in conjunction with the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

There have been ongoing negotiations and consultations at the level of my colleague the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ottenheimer), at my level, with the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Siddon) to try to point out and in no unmistakable terms, letters, discussions and meetings in no unmistakable terms that this Province cannot and will not support that policy position, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:  
Hear, hear!

MR. MARSHALL:  
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):  
The hon. the President of the

Council.

MR. MARSHALL:  
Before Your Honour leaves the Chair I would like just to advise the order of business for tomorrow. We will resume Second Reading of Order 14, Bill No. 5, the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands, and then we will proceed to Order 15, Bill No. 6 and then we will be doing Committee of the Whole and the bills that are on the Order Paper.

It being 6:00 p.m. the House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, May 16, 1986, 10:00 a.m.

**Index**

**Answers to Questions**

**tabled**

**May 15, 1986**

*Tabled by Hon. Minister  
of Public Work & Services  
in reply to question asked  
during Estimates consideration  
15 May '86.*

MR. SPEAKER:

IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE DEBATE IN COMMITTEE ON THE ESTIMATES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES, I AM NOW IN A POSITION TO SUPPLY THE NECESSARY INFORMATION REGARDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EXTENSION TO HARBOUR LODGE CHRONIC CARE FACILITY. SPECIFICALLY, IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT A COSTLY ERROR WAS MADE IN THIS CONSTRUCTION PROJECT.

THE HARBOUR LODGE WAS ORIGINALLY A MOTEL WHICH WAS PURCHASED BY GOVERNMENT AND CONVERTED INTO A CHRONIC CARE FACILITY IN 1971.

THE ORIGINAL BUILDING WAS OF MULTI-LEVEL OR SPLIT-LEVEL CONSTRUCTION AND WAS NOT BUILT EXACTLY TO THE DIMENSIONS SHOWN ON THE ORIGINAL PLANS, INCLUDING VARIATIONS IN FLOOR-TO-FLOOR DIMENSIONS AND, AS WELL, SOME UNEVENNESS IN THE FLOOR SURFACES. IN 1984, PLANNING WAS CARRIED OUT TO INCREASE THE SIZE OF THE INSTITUTION. TENDERS WERE CALLED AND THE CONTRACT FOR THE EXTENSION WAS AWARDED. THE NEW PLANS HAD BEEN PREPARED USING THE ORIGINAL DRAWINGS, SUPPLEMENTED BY SOME FIELD MEASUREMENTS.

JUST BEFORE THE TIE-IN BETWEEN THE NEW AND THE OLD CONSTRUCTION AT THE SECOND FLOOR LEVEL, IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT THE NEW FLOOR WAS HIGHER THAN THE EXISTING FLOOR BY APPROXIMATELY 100MM (I.E. 4 INCHES).

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES, WORKING WITH OUR CONSULTANTS AND THE CONTRACTOR, HAVE ARRIVED AT A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM AND THE CORRECTIVE WORK IS NOW COMPLETED.

THE QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROBLEM HAS NOT YET BEEN RESOLVED. HOWEVER, IT IS THE DEPARTMENT'S OPINION, AT THIS TIME, THAT SUFFICIENT INFORMATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE CONTRACTOR SUCH THAT THIS PROBLEM SHOULD NOT HAVE OCCURRED.

THE EXTRA COST INVOLVED TO CORRECT THE PROBLEM IS CONSIDERED TO BE APPROXIMATELY \$10,000.

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