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(Hansard)

Speaker: Honourable P.J. McNicholas

Tuesday

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The House met at 3:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

A matter arose in question time yesterday that I would like to deal further with now. Before getting into it formally, I did receive a clipping from the current issue of *The Rotarian* from a friend of mine this morning; I do not know if I should read anything into it. It says, "The editor of a local newspaper was noted for being stubborn and hardhearted. 'You always think you are right,' an indignant reader said to him in the street. You know very well there have been times when you have been dead wrong." 'You're right', said the editor. 'There was one time when I was wrong. It happened once when I thought I was wrong and I wasn't.'"

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
That does not apply to me yesterday, and I would say I was wrong. So I would like to deal with it formally. During Question Period yesterday the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) was recognized by the Chair for the purpose of asking a question of the hon. the Leader of the Opposition. He cited as his authority for this unusual procedure Section 39 of Chapter 5 of *Beauchesne*, Fourth Edition. He was recognized by the Chair on the basis of the authority cited. However, on further examination of this matter I must rule that the question and any others of that kind that members may rise to ask are out of order.

First, the Fourth Edition of

Beauchesne has been superceded by the the Fifth Edition and should not be cited in the House; members should confine themselves to citing the Fifth Edition only.

Secondly, the member for St. John's North quoted as his authority what is, in fact, Standing Order 39 of the House of Commons. The practices and procedures of the House of Commons are accepted as authorities in this House, but the Standing Orders of the House of Commons are not applicable here. The member for St. John's North, then, did not cite an appropriate authority in claiming the right to ask a question of the Leader of the Opposition.

I would also like to draw the attention of hon. members to our Standing Order 31. The clear implication of that Standing Order is that questions are to be addressed by members to Ministers of the Crown only.

I should also refer hon. members to Paragraph 366 of *Beauchesne*, Fifth Edition, which states "Questions may be asked of private Members only under strick limitations. Virtually the only question possible would refer to a committee of which the Member is the Chairman." That was quoted by the hon. the member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick) yesterday.

Finally, I refer hon. members to Hansard, May 29, 1981, pages 5378 to 5381. On that occasion an attempt on the part of the member for St. John's North to ask a question of the hon. the Leader of the Opposition was ruled out of order by the Speaker. I quote from Page 5381: "There has been, in the past, rulings given and, of course, the Standing Orders point

out clearly that questions may be addressed to ministers of the Crown. I do not believe I will be able to permit a question of the Leader of the Opposition."

In conclusion, I rule that it is not permissible for a member to ask a question during the Question Period of any member of the House who is not a minister of the Crown.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, in early 1987 government announced a policy whereby persons who illegally occupied Crown Lands between December 31, 1956 and February 27, 1987 could apply for legal title. If the applicant's occupation of the land did not constitute a serious problem or hazard, title was virtually assured. Reaction to this initiative has been reasonably positive with 2,000 new applications having been received.

My purpose today is to outline government's follow-through with this policy and announce certain important information with respect to it.

Firstly, applications will continue to be received under this policy for the present \$250 fee until May 31, 1988 after which the fee will increase to \$500. However, normal processing

criteria will apply. In October, 1988 the issue will be further reviewed.

It should be again pointed out that persons who have occupied Crown Land since February 27, 1987 are doing so illegally and are subject to prosecution.

Additionally, it should be noted that there are four groups who would be exempt from the \$500:

(1) Communities, churches and charitable organizations;

(11) Commercial resource based camps used in commercial fishing, trapping and logging operations;

(111) Survival tilts which are built as places of refuge which are sponsored by responsible groups and are available to the public at large;

(1V) Crown Land occupied by individuals in a community under the government resettlement programme.

Illegal occupation of Crown Land is a difficult, historic and widespread problem in Newfoundland which we have tried to address in as fair and straightforward a manner as possible with minimal social impact or disruption. While we are indeed pleased that people have taken advantage of this special programme, we are concerned that there are yet too many who have not sought to have their land title problems resolved. It is for this reason that I am again appealing to individuals to act immediately in this matter. Thank you.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for letting me have an advance copy of his statement. The policy of allowing persons who had illegally occupied Crown Land to apply for title is a good one, I say to the minister. Otherwise, the minister might want to rework his statement. Because I say to him that if he looks at the third paragraph, and thereon, he will find the following: I think he will agree that the \$250 he is talking about is not an application fee at all, as he says, but the charge in lieu of back rental assessed all illegal occupants once they come forward.

In addition to that there is, as he will know, an application fee of \$50.00. There is in addition to that, as he will know but did not make known in his statement, an annual rental of \$75.00, the first year's rental of which must be assessed up front and paid before the lease is granted. So the figures we are talking about, Mr. Speaker, are not \$250, but \$250 plus \$50 plus \$75, or \$375 once that illegal occupant comes forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister's announced increase from \$250 to \$500 is, in effect, an increase from \$375 to \$625, because, I repeat, once that illegal occupant comes forward, he has to pay three charges: the charge in lieu of back rental, the application fee, and the first year's rental.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to all of that, of course, he has to underwrite the cost of survey and the legal cost to get the land,

which everybody has to do but which, nevertheless, costs money. So all told that individual is talking a figure approaching \$1,000 after October, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this increase to \$500, I say to the minister, is absolutely outrageous. Stop this madness! Is he trying to incite people? This is absolutely terrible.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What would you do?

MR. SIMMONS:

What I would do, Mr. Speaker, is ensure that the cost of implementing this programme is recovered. I would not sock it to ordinary Newfoundlanders and Labradorians like the minister is doing here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMONS:

Why, Mr. Speaker, I ask the government, the double standard? Sock it to the ordinary people, Mr. Speaker, but give a sweetheart deal, a free ride to the Krugers and the Sprungs of this world. Why, Mr. Speaker? Why? Their only sin, Mr. Speaker, is that they want to enjoy the wilderness of Newfoundland, and for that they are being asked to pay very dearly.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. SIMMONS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Peter says, 'Sit down.'

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker, just two comments: One, I would like to recount an incident involving some constituents, I believe in Central Newfoundland, who called me up complaining about the previous policy, when it was only \$250 plus additional costs. They were talking about a cabin that they had built in the woods about twenty or thirty years ago and they had just neglected to get any kind of a Crown grant for it, and so on, and they had another cottage that they spent a little bit more time at. It turned out that the amount of costs that they had were well in excess of \$1,000, even under the old policy, in order to pay the fine, the complaints and so on. I am not particularly pleased with the amount of fees that we have in the previous policy, but the present policy is even worse, in my opinion.

I would like members of the House to remember one thing, \$500 is a relative amount depending on what your income is. For example, if you are making the minimum wage of \$4 an hour now, \$4.25 after April 1, it would take you three weeks of work to earn enough money to pay the \$500 fee, three complete weeks at forty hours a week in order to get the kind of revenue just to pay that particular part of the fine. If you are a Cabinet minister over there, it would take

you only two days in order to earn the income required to pay the \$500 fee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. FENWICK:

And if you are the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Wells), it would take you one day in order to earn the \$500.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FENWICK:

So, Mr. Speaker, it is clearly unfair, and it should not have been raised to the \$500 limit.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Before going on to Oral Questions I would like to welcome the Carnival Queen from the Mount Pearl Frosty Festival, Miss Tina Holden, and her chaperones Gerald and Barb Smith.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. KELLAND:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Naskaupi.

MR. KELLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct a question to the Premier. I refer to page 11 of the construction contract, specifically paragraph 3.3, which

provides that while Sprung must provide its partner with copies of all subcontracts, the provision is there that the prices on these subcontracts are to be deleted. So I ask the Premier, why would he agree to that kind of secrecy? Why would he allow his partner to keep that kind of price and that kind of cost on the project a secret from him as the other partner, the government?

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
The hon. member is asking about the subcontracts, I think. We have a deal, Newfoundland Enviroponics Limited, with the Sprung Group of Companies to construct a facility for \$14.15 million. Then with that \$14.5 million the Sprung Group of Companies go and construct the facility. I guess the hon. member is asking me why are not all of the subcontracts - is that what the hon. member is asking me - public?

MR. KELLAND:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
Supplementary, the hon. the member for Naskaupi.

MR. KELLAND:
I am sure the Premier is a little more knowledgeable about the contracts so I will repeat it. Section 3.3 of the construction contract provides that all copies of all subcontracts must be provided to the government, the

other partner, the 50 per cent owner. However, it also provides that the prices of these subcontracts will be deleted. I ask the Premier how can he justify that? How can he rationalize and accept and agree to the fact that that kind of price is being held secret and hiding the true cost of that construction contract?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
These are the subcontracts, not the main contracts. What we have is a contract between, as I said, Newfoundland Enviroponics Limited with the Sprung Group of Companies to construct a facility, and because of the assessment that we have done on the building and on the materials, we think that \$14.5 million is a good deal for government and a good deal for Newfoundland Enviroponics Limited. Now the member is asking the question why the different prices for the different subcontracts are not revealed, I guess, who was the lowest tender and all this kind of thing. I will have to just wait to get the information. The main deal that we did was with the Sprung Group of Companies for \$14.5 million. Then he, or the Sprung Group of Companies, go out and get the best price that they can get from subcontractors. The main point is that the deal that we did, that we are involved in, is not with the subcontractors, it is with the Sprung Group of Companies. We have released the construction contract between ourselves, that we are involved in, and the Sprung Group of Companies. Then the Sprung Group of Companies go out

and try to get the best prices they can so that they will come in around the \$14.5 million that they have the contract from Newfoundland Enviroponics for.

So the main concern that we have is the \$14.5 million. That is what we are involved in and that is what we are concerned about. It is a turnkey contract to the Sprung group of companies from Newfoundland Enviroponics Ltd. That is our concern and that is what we released yesterday, this construction contract. That is what involves government, because we are 50 per cent owners. Newfoundland Enviroponics did a deal with the Sprung Group of Companies for \$14.5 million, and that is what that entails. Now, it is up to the Sprung Group of Companies to try to deliver the project for \$14.5 million. If they do not, they have to pay more money out themselves. It is nothing to us. The deal that we did is here. This is the deal that we did. It is here. It has been made public. That is our responsibility. That is our obligation. Because that is where we have our money.

Now, the Sprung Group of Companies is different all together. They now have to try to bring in the project for what they signed to bring the project in for. If they do not, they have to find the money themselves. I do not see what the big problem is.

MR. KELLAND:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. KELLAND:

An interesting dissertation by the

Premier, but he is still avoiding the question, which is pretty direct. Your partner, the government's partner, the Sprung Group of Companies, half owner of Newfoundland Enviroponics, are all the same people. There are legal technicalities involved as well as the House Leader suggests.

I am asking, and I will ask again, if it is a requirement to provide copies of all the subcontracts. That is the accepted subcontracts, Mr. Premier, not all the subcontractors who bid, the accepted subcontracts. Why did you agree that they would not have to provide the prices in the information they gave you? When they gave you the list of the subcontracts why would they not give you the prices? Is that just not another attempt, as has been the case ever since this thing started, of you and your government trying to hide the real costs from the people of this Province? Come on, Mr. Premier! Tell us, what are the prices? Let us know. What are you hiding?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

No, Mr. Speaker. The answer to the question is no.

MR. SIMMONS:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

There have been two supplementaries to that question. I recognize the hon. member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for

the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies (Mr. Matthews) who is also the minister responsible in the government for the Status of Women. My question concerns the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, and whether this principle is going to be applied in the Public Service. In view of two statements that have recently been issued through the Minister's Office from the Women's Policy Office, one talking about the increased participation of women in the work force, and another describing the wage gap whereby women in this Province earn on average sixty-three cents for every dollar that men earn, does this minister have a commitment to promoting through the government the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in the Public Service?

MR. MATTHEWS:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies.

MR. MATTHEWS:
I thank the hon. member for his question. I would just like to say, before getting down to the core of his question, that this government takes a back seat to no government in Canada when it comes to standing up for the status of women in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. MATTHEWS:
Since 1979, Mr. Speaker, there has been a number of initiatives taken by this administration to increase and to protect the status of women in society. What the hon. gentleman is trying to do now is to try and get into a negotiating

session here in the House of Assembly about things that are ongoing with different sectors of the Public Service. As the minister responsible for the status of women, while I am very, very concerned with the status of women and all matters related thereto, I am not willing to get into a negotiating session in this House of Assembly with the hon. member on any matter.

MR. LONG:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A supplementary, the hon. the member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:
On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, I am not asking the minister to deal with sensitive negotiations that are underway. What I asked the minister, and will ask the minister in a different fashion, is on the question of principle. That last year the Minister of Justice (Ms Verge) acknowledged, in referring to the wage gap between men and women, that if anything the situation in this Province is worse than it is in the rest of the country. As the minister responsible for the Status of Women, does the minister bring to the Cabinet a commitment to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value?

MR. MATTHEWS:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Career Development and Advanced Studies.

MR. MATTHEWS:
Mr. Speaker, I think his question is probably prompted by news reports this morning about ongoing negotiations and where, I guess,

different parties think they are with it. I just want to say to him, in my final comment on it, that the matter that he has raised is presently under consideration by government.

MR. LONG:

A final supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:

I would like to put a final supplementary on the same issue to the President of Treasury Board (Mr. Simms). In light of news reports that negotiations are likely to be broken off between the hospital workers and the government around the critical issue of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, is the minister sending negotiators to the table in light of the fact that this government refuses to bring in legislation, unlike most other jurisdictions in the country, to deal with the issue of social justice here, with a commitment to the principle of negotiating equal pay for work of equal value in the Public Service as a lead for the whole Province, including the private sector?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. the member's question is predicated on the assumption that what was reported in the press this morning was accurate. I can tell the hon. member that what was reported this morning is not accurate. What was reported by some of the press, quoting one of the negotiators for the other side, if you wish, the

NAPE representatives, is that we were not prepared to accept the concept of equal pay for work of equal value, and for that reason they were asking for some assistance from the Department of Labour.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that group was advised at the bargaining table that the government was considering that particular matter, because obviously that is an issue that is very broad, it covers the whole Public Service, and a lot of money is involved in it. So the government is presently considering that particular issue. In the meantime, there were numerous other matters at the table that we were prepared to continue discussing. However, unfortunately, NAPE saw fit to set preconditions, that until that particular issue was dealt with they were not prepared to discuss any other issues. Unfortunately, I do not believe that creates a good atmosphere for negotiations, and I can say publicly to the press and to the public of the Province right now that we are disappointed with that approach, but I can also give the assurance to the public that we are anxious to proceed with continuing negotiations and, in the meantime, we will also be addressing that particular issue in due course.

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, there has in the last day or two been a GATT ruling that Canadian regulations preventing the

purchasing in Canada of whole fish and exporting them without processing in Canada violates international trade and that Canada has indicated that she proposes to accept that ruling without challenge. I believe the minister said they intend to bring in requirements for landing and inspection of fish. The minister also said that this response is being made because it meets with the request of the provincial Ministers of Fisheries and has been endorsed by the First Ministers.

Can either the hon. the Premier or the hon. the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) tell the House whether or not this is the Newfoundland government's position?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland government's position must be very clear. During the free trade negotiations between Canada and the United States, the Government of Newfoundland made it very clear that we needed certain protections related to unprocessed fish in the Province, and we were highly successful in getting those incorporated into the free trade agreement with the United States, where most of our trade occurs. So it should be clear to the Leader of the Opposition and to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians where we stand on that because we made that one of the conditions of our support for the free trade agreement.

MR. WELLS:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the

Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

Has the Premier or the Minister of Fisheries given any consideration to the effect of Canada's acceptance of the GATT ruling without challenge on the so-called free trade agreement with the United States?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

As we understand it, there will not be any, Mr. Speaker, because the government of our largest trading partner, the United States, has agreed to that provision in the free trade agreement. Let me also say that the Leader of the Opposition is being very broad in his questioning because the particular regulations which were challenged by other countries in the GATT ruling had to do primarily with salmon and herring on the West Coast of Canada and did not apply to what is happening here on the East Coast.

MR. WELLS:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, would the Premier's position be different if he realized that the complaint was made by the United States, the party to the free trade agreement, and that the actual response of the Minister for International Trade, Mrs. Carney, was that the reply would deal with fish generally on both the Pacific and the Atlantic coasts, not just salmon and herring on the Pacific

Coast, which was the primary cause for the complaint in the first instance, and that the new position would apply the fish on both the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, we understand that the agreement between Canada and the United States will be the operative agreement in our relationship with trade on fish with the United States.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. Minister of Fisheries, and it concerns a report that came out of the United States some time ago concerning the possibility of the United States government increasing the minimum requirements in terms of lobster sales in the United States. Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that this regulation if put into effect will have very severe implications as far as Newfoundland fishermen are concerned, has the minister made any representation to his federal counterpart with a view to having that requirement set aside for maybe a year or two years?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me tell the hon. gentleman that what he refers to is not a regulation of the Government of the United

States, it is a regulation of some of the state governments of the United States. In this particular case, it is a regulation of the state of Massachusetts. And we have been in touch with the Government of Canada, I personally met with the Canadian Counsel General in Boston a couple of weeks ago, and the Government of Canada, through our consulate office in Massachusetts, is working with the Massachusetts state government and are optimistic that there will be some change of heart in terms of this particular regulation. So we are onto it, we know that in the short term it has some financial implications for Newfoundland fishermen. In the long term, of course, after the regulation, if it goes into effect, has a chance to even itself out over two or three years, then there are back-end, positive financial implications for fishermen. But the short answer to his question is that we are working on it through the Canadian Consulate Office in Boston and that office is lobbying as hard as they can with the State Government of Massachusetts to try to have this particular regulation delayed at least.

MR. W. CARTER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, in the report, to which I referred to a moment ago, the President of the Inshore Fishermen's Union in Newfoundland stated that they are now mounting a lobby with their counterparts in Washington with a view to having that regulation set aside for a

certain period. Has the minister met with the union, for example? Is he prepared to join with the union in their efforts to lobby their counterparts in Washington with a view to having that regulation set aside?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Most definitely, Mr. Speaker. I am prepared to join hands, heart and soul with whatever group is out there that wants us to be part of a lobby that is for the benefit of the fishermen and the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador. I did have a meeting with the President of the UFCW Inshore Fisheries Local just two or three weeks ago, but that certainly was not an agenda item at that time.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Minister of Fisheries and it is concerning fishermen not only along the Northeast Coast but fishermen all over Newfoundland and Labrador. During the last couple of years Newfoundland fishermen have enjoyed a good fishery in most areas, especially as far as their income and the price they have been receiving for fish was concerned. I would like to ask could the Minister of Fisheries give any indication as to the price that will be paid to fishermen for fish at the start of the 1988 season?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, it is very encouraging to hear a member of the Opposition indicate publicly that it has not been all doom and gloom in the fishery over the last two or three years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Of course, there has continued to be some weak areas in certain geographical areas of the Province but, as the hon. gentleman indicates, previously, particularly in 1987 because of the price and so on, fishermen's incomes were, in most cases, up over previous years. The price that fishermen receive for their fish is a matter of collective bargaining. The fishermen, through their unions, asked for collective bargaining legislation, which this House some years ago passed, and no doubt the price of fish will be arrived at through that collective bargaining process. In fact, it was only just a week or so ago when both unions told me very, very forceably - when I tabled a report in this House a few days ago on caplin - that they did not want government to interfere in any way in their collective bargaining process. I can indicate to the hon. gentleman that the marketplace is softer at this point in 1988 than it was in 1987 and that no doubt prices arrived at through the collective bargaining process will reflect that market softness.

MR. EFFORD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. EFFORD:

The Minister of Fisheries in his answer has given a clear indication to all fishermen that he knows full well and is on top of everything that is happening in the fishery, but from the answer just given he is not on top at all. In fact, he is at the bottom. And let me give the Minister an example. Just two days ago -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

I ask is the Minister aware that just two days ago a fisherman from Port de Grave who fished on the Grand Banks brought in 120,000 pounds of cod, and the price he got for his fish was twenty cents a pound less than last year? It has nothing to do with collective bargaining but has to do with the market.

Is the Minister aware of that, or is he just holding back and not informing the fishermen of exactly what is taking place?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable gentleman for his backhanded compliment. I am on top of what is happening in the fishery in the Province, Mr. Speaker. It is the honourable gentleman, as usual, who is out to lunch. The fact of the matter is that I am aware of the incidence that the hon. gentleman is citing where fish was sold for a certain number of cents per pound. But, again, the hon. gentleman must

know, Mr. Speaker, that that was not sold in contravention of any price that was arrived at or bargained for collectively in this Province.

The only species of fish in the Province of Newfoundland that the Minister of Fisheries sets is the 70 per cent condition on lobster licences and lobster prices in the Province. So there is nobody disagreeing with what the hon. gentleman is saying; it is just that he is putting his question and his weird conclusions in the wrong direction.

MR. EFFORD:

Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary.

MR. EFFORD:

Let me say to the Minister that he has a responsibility, because of the boats presently being built in Newfoundland and the expenses fishermen are incurring, to ensure that fishermen are aware of market conditions before they get into expenses for 1988 - 1989, or we will be back in the situation that we were three years ago, with boats being repossessed.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. member is making a speech.

MR. EFFORD:

Let me ask the Minister: Is it not his responsibility to at least know what market conditions are? Because this gentlemen called seven fish plants and all of them told them that the market conditions in the States were dropping off rapidly and prices were going to go down further. Is it not the Minister's

responsibility at least to inform fishermen and keep them informed as to market conditions and what prices would be expected in the coming year?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman, if he were interested in anything other than political innuendo, would know, simply by picking up the telephone, that all parties in the fishing industry of Newfoundland are advised on a need basis and on a request basis through the Fishing Industry Advisory Board - an independent arm's length agency - as were members of the Opposition today when they enquired, Mr. Speaker, as to exactly what market conditions are and what prices are. That is available to the unions. We have given it to the unions whenever they have asked for it; we give it to the industry whenever they ask for it; we give it to the members of the House of Assembly whenever they ask for it; members of the media whenever they ask for it; so we are continuously on top, on a daily, weekly and monthly basis, of what is happening in the marketplace. Now, whether anybody believes it or not is something else, but the information we make freely available.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune -

Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I want to come back to the Premier, to the line of questioning put to him by the gentleman for Naskaupi a few minutes ago. In doing so my colleague referred to Clause 3.3 in the contract between the Newfoundland Enviroponics and the Sprung Group, and the provision there that government or the owner receive subcontracts less the prices, with the prices therein deleted.

Now I heard the Premier's earlier responses, but I want to ask the Premier -

MR. J. CARTER:

You know all about contracts.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:

Surely, I say to the Premier - when I get his attention - this is a basic question of trust.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

Would the hon. member please pose a question?

MR. SIMMONS:

By all means, Sir. By all means.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier does he not feel that this is a very basic matter of trust? Here are two partners, 50 per cent partners, and we have a situation where there is a provision which would keep essential information from one of the partners, albeit

the partner that has to look after the interest of the public which has \$13.4 million exposed in this project?. Is this not a matter of basic trust? Can the Premier really justify this kind of deletion?

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
One has to look at the hon. member for Fortune - Hermitage with some skepticism when he asks questions like that, given his recent history. Of course, that is history, nobody is allowed to talk about that anymore. That is history. 'While the light holds out to burn/The vilest sinner may return.'

Mr. Speaker, every day, I guess it is like doing the building next door or doing any contracts that government has from time to time, we award a contract. We awarded a contract, I guess, for the West Wing of the building to a major contractor for X number of dollars. So we have awarded our contract. This building over here cost \$38 million or \$40 million, not \$11 million or \$12 million or \$13 million or \$14 million, but \$40 million. I guess there were contracts over here valued at \$10 million, \$15 million or \$20 million. Say X company got the contract for \$10 million or \$15 million. Then that X company goes out, does some of the work themselves and gets subcontractors to do some of the other work - the electrical, mechanical, plastering the walls, painting or whatever it happens to be. The core of it is that government was involved, awarded a contract to contractor

X, and then contractor X has to bring in the project for that price. That is what we did in this case.

In this case it was the Sprung Group of Companies. They were given a contract, if you will, for \$14.5 million. They go out and try to get it done as cheap as they can. I mean, it is a lot of foolishness.

MR. SIMMONS:
A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary, the hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:
The Premier skates and he does so very badly. It is a question of being an equal partner. I am not going to get answers from him, so I will go to my friend, the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Power), a man who has a reputation for forthrightness.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when did that minister become aware of this nefarious stipulation that the prices be deleted?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMONS:
Ah! They are hurting, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:
When, Mr. Speaker, did he endorse this unusual provision in Clause 33?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Rural Development.

MR. POWER:

Mr. Speaker, the questions really are getting kind of ridiculous. I mean, for persons opposite who cannot understand what is happening with Sprung, the Newfoundland Government has a contract with Sprung. Newfoundland Enviroponics is a joint venture company. That is not very complicated. Sprung, the company that we have a contract with to build this facility, is doing work with other contractors in Newfoundland. Sprung's contracts with other companies are Sprung's business. They are not the business of the joint venture company, Newfoundland Enviroponics. That is not very complicated. And it is not a great concern to government what the contracts or arrangements are with Sprung and its subcontractors. All we are concerned with, as a government, is that Newfoundland Enviroponics is going to work and going to work very well in this Province.

MR. MORGAN:

It is not near as complicated as Revenue Canada matters.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Mount Scio - Bell Island.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General (Ms Verge). I would like to ask the minister, in connection with the inquiry by Judge Reid into the drowning death of Noel Hiscock on August 24, 1986, what has been the response of her department to the recommendations contained in the report or to the report of Judge

Reid in that case?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice and provide the response to the member for Mount Scio - Bell Island and other hon. members in the next day or two.

MR. BARRY:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Mount Scio - Bell Island.

MR. BARRY:

I thank the minister for that. I ask would the minister also consider, and if possible respond today but if not respond subsequently, to the point that the head of the Coast Guard indicated that they had not received any notice - or any invitation, I think, was the way he put it - to participate in this inquiry? I have the transcript of the enquiry here and there is a reference to the minister's department's representative apparently looking for a particular member of the Coast Guard to subpoena, and either not being able to find the whereabouts of that individual, or for some other reason not having proceeded with a subpoena. I wonder can the minister tell us whether it would not be the policy of her department to encourage the involvement of the Coast Guard into accidents of this nature so that the advice of the Coast Guard might be sought on remedial measures?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, yes, I will take that point into consideration in providing information on the full response of the Department of Justice to the judge's recommendations.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The time for Oral Questions has elapsed.

Notices of Motion

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will on tomorrow ask leave to introduce a bill, "An Act To Incorporate The Newfoundland and Labrador School Trustees' Association.". (Bill No. 9)

Petitions

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from 350 residents of the communities of Burgeo, Ramea and Grey River in my district. I will read the prayer of the petition.

"To the hon. House of Assembly, the petition of the undersigned humbly sheweth: That

"Due to significant delays experienced by the Burgeo Ground Search and Rescue team in obtaining necessary helicopters and equipment requested by the local RCMP; that

"Ground Search and Rescue members are mainly unpaid for services provided; that

"Politics should not be a consideration, when time is of the essence in the Ground Search and Rescues' attempt to save human life; that

"Budgetary constraints should also not be considered when human life is at risk; that

"The Ground Search and Rescue teams provide an essential service in this province, particularly in remote areas of Southern Newfoundland.

"We the undersigned, citizens of the district of Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir, make petition to the House of Assembly to enact legislation making the provision of equipment in times of emergency an item of unbiased priority and also to provide funding for reasonable compensation for Ground Search and Rescue member's loss of income."

Mr. Speaker, this petition was prompted because of a tragic event that occurred on the South Coast. In October of this year there was a tragic accident in Ramea and two people lost their lives. What happened at that time was the Emergency Measures Organization were contacted and they provided a helicopter for the day after those people were reported as missing. On the next day the helicopter was requested again and the word came back that the Emergency Measures

Organization had used most of their budget, to quote the RCMP constables. I believe it was Constables Smith and Matthews that I talked to at a meeting up there with the ground search and rescue team from Burgeo. The word that came back was EMO had used most of their budget looking for two bodies in Labrador.

The unfortunate thing that happened here, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the two people from my district, from Ramea, who did go astray on a hunting trip, did die as a result of going astray. They froze to death.

In the prayer of this petition what the people of Burgeo and what the members of the search and rescue team are saying is that they do not know if the fact that they could not get a helicopter the next day had anything to do with the fact that those people died. They do not think they did in this case because of the severe conditions, maybe those people were dead the first night.

But what they are concerned about is the fact that the Town Manager of Ramea the next day, when they were told by EMO that they did not have a helicopter, tried to contract me. At the time I was on a longliner going from Hermitage to MacCallum, normally a two hour trip, but it took ten hours that day. It was a little rough. They could not get me. They finally got hold to the MP for the district later on that day and he went through the Department of National Defense and the next day a helicopter was made available again. Now this is why part of this petition talked about 'politics should not enter into it.'

I am sure that everybody here agrees that it should be a policy that should be addressed, not politics. I notice that the Minister of Justice is not in the House and, whether she is aware of it or not, the ground search and rescue teams in this province are now under the Department of Justice. They were not taken when EMO went to the Department of Municipal Affairs. The ground search and rescue teams were left under a sort of loose arrangement with the Department of Justice.

I have talked to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superintendent who was involved with that and he was checking out with the Department of Justice at the time to insure that he was responsible for ground search and rescue teams. It now has been established, yes, the ground search and rescue teams are under the umbrella of the Department of Justice.

Those people, Mr. Speaker, first of all, are volunteers. They provide a service in rural Newfoundland that is not available as it would be here. If someone went astray in St. John's, you have firemen, police, militia, everyone that could get involved, immediately in the search. In rural Newfoundland, you do not have that, and these ground search and rescue teams were set up for this purpose, to take part in searches when people went astray as it happens in rural areas or as it happens anywhere.

They are volunteers so they have to pay for all their training and they have to lose pay when they take off work. When they are called upon by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to be involved in a legitimate search, they then lose their day's work, which they are

not compensated for. The ground search and rescue team in Burgeo have spent \$2 thousand this year in providing equipment like maps, map reading equipment, and first aid equipment out of their own pockets.

What they are asking for basically is that the government Department who sponsors them provide the basic training so that those people are able to carry out the job they are set up to do, and that is provide the basic service when someone goes astray or someone is lost in a situation or an emergency occurs in Newfoundland so that those people who have volunteered are prepared to do the job.

Like firemen, Mr. Speaker, -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. GILBERT:
- in conclusion, every time they are called upon to do the job, they are in a life threatening situation and they are putting their own in jeopardy. So I ask that the government consider providing the necessary equipment for those people to do their job.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker.

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

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

It is a pleasure today to rise to support the petition by my hon. colleague from Burgeo - Bay

d'Espoir. He speaks about a situation that I think is very important, and should be considered to be very important by the government of the Province.

I have, in my area, a ground search and rescue team. As a matter of fact, in this instance that the member talks about, where two people were not able to be found in time, the group from my area were also notified a number of hours later to try to help out.

I agree with the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir that there have been problems. I think everybody concerned agrees that there have been problems with the communications process in trying to get the ground search and rescue teams mobile as quickly as they can. They have recommended a number of measures to the Department of Justice. They have, on many occasions, met with and corresponded with the minister and the deputy ministers involved proposing ideas in order to help make these organizations effective.

I have been involved with my own local organization, but I have also become aware of the others that are in the Province. They are all very important to rural Newfoundland. We have one of the largest land masses in Canada, as a Province, and we have very few people situated all around, but they require and we require the services of good ground search and rescue teams that are fully trained. The problem that we have is that the provincial government has not been providing the proper assistance. I do not feel that, and many people out there involved in these organizations do not feel that. It is unfortunate, because they have been getting the runaround for many, many months

and the last few years in their attempts to try to get some funding.

They are not looking for a whole lot, Mr. Speaker. They are looking for radios to help them communicate, so that when they go out there and they are searching, they are able to carry out the search much more effectively. The member for Naskaupi, my colleague, also has a group in his area and he has shared the same views on occasions, talking about the problems of communication.

I have written a number of letters to the Deputy Minister and Minister of Justice, and the response, I must say, Mr. Speaker, has been somewhat disappointing, in our efforts to try to get some type of funding, be it provincial or federal, for these groups.

I even have a proposal here from the group in Bay St. George, as a matter of fact. The total amount of money comes to about \$12,000 to \$15,000. This would fully support the group. They would not need any more money for the next number of years. But, up until this time, they have been unable to do it.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that we in this House should look upon this matter as being very serious and we should look upon it as trying to get that amount of money to these people, and to not look upon them just as volunteers. While they may be volunteers, they spend a great deal of their time and a great deal of their money on a very serious matter. They provide an effective group that is able to respond to emergencies in the Province where we do not have all the resources and the police do not have all the resources. So we

have groups here in this Province that I do not think are being fully appreciated for what they do, and I would like to see their efforts taken under more serious consideration by both the federal government and the provincial governments. Hopefully, over the next number of months we can push to see better communication, and more funding provided to these groups, because right now they have to raise all the funds on their own. They have to raise every cent on their own and try to provide some support for their own people.

I think they are providing a very important service, and I think that this House should go on record, and the present administration should try to provide some sort of mechanism so we can have funding provided to these groups. Also, their responsibilities should be clearly defined with the police, what they are supposed to do, what they are not supposed to do. Also, we should provide for a mechanism that would allow them to carry out their efforts in a much more effective manner. That is what they are trying to do.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LONG:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:

Mr. Speaker, I have a petition that I would like to submit which has already been presented to the House a couple of days ago. I

read it to the record and I would like to present another copy with a small number of names this time. I will read just the 'Be it Resolved.' It is addressed to the House of Assembly and was presented to me in December with 1,400 names on. I would like to have my time to say a few words about the petition.

"THEREFORE we the undersigned petition members of the House of Assembly to call upon the government, through its Minister of Social Services, to stop withdrawing funds that have been made available to social assistance recipients who have been receiving a special needs allowance as a supplement to regular assistance."

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

In the ruling yesterday I did indicate to the House that the hon. member had spoken for five minutes, but I did allow that so that it would be on the record.

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FENWICK:
I assume that the petition is legally before the House, so I wish to speak to it then, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Menihek, to the petition.

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker, I think a point of order would be more in order, but

I will leave that for now and discuss it later.

The fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that there are 1,400 individuals who signed the petition and gave it to the Minister of Social Services. If the Minister of Social Services is negligent and refuses to bring it to the House, well, that is too bad, but the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, there is a distortion of the ultimate priorities of this government here that has occurred over the last couple of years. We, quite frankly, are frightened that next Tuesday, when the Budget comes down, the same sort of distortion will continue, and that is, Mr. Speaker, that it is the obligation of governments to look after the business of governments first, and if there are additional funds later on, you can look after the fancy stuff like Sprung and whatever the heck they want.

But, quite frankly, to start cutting back on allocations for the Department of Social Services so that money can be loosened up to give to various companies, which happen to be very good Tory supporters as well, that, Mr. Speaker, is intolerable to us. We will not sit here or we will not stand here and allow it to continue to happen. When the Budget comes down, Mr. Speaker, we will be looking at it very closely.

We do not believe that the people on social assistance in our Province are living any kind of a noble existence whatsoever. In most cases they are well below the poverty line and they are suffering greatly as a result of it.

There is no more fat to cut off there. You are at the bone already and I think it is extremely important that this government realizes, before it puts another \$12.5 million into the CHC helicopter company, before it gives \$7 million in grants to NORDCO, a company that it set free from government supervision last year, before it gives money to any other private individuals like Sprung and so on, it has to look after those in our society who cannot look after themselves.

Therefore, we have to have the proper amount of funds in Social Services, Health and Education.

MR. SIMMS:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the President of the Council.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to get Your Honour's clarification, I guess, more than anything else, because the point I raised a few days ago, when the member for St. John's East presented the petition, is really almost operative now once again. On that occasion there were three names signed to a sheet of paper, two of which were the names of the member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick) and the member for St. John's East (Mr. Long).

I had understood, or assumed, that they had now done their homework properly and had properly obtained at least three original names, and other names to add to this particular petition. But, in looking, Mr. Speaker, at this petition that has been tabled here today, you have exactly the same situation with one minor exception.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:

Well, this is what I want to get clarification of. I will ask the Speaker to rule for me and not the hon. member for St. John's East.

Mr. Speaker, so what has actually occurred here now is that the member for St. John's East and the member for Menihek have signed this petition, the one name that was on that petition the other day is there and they have added one other name.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, there needs to be some kind of tightening up of the rules with respect to the presentation of petitions because to me that does not seem appropriate.

I am asking the Speaker if he could not give this some further consideration because to me all they have done is gone out the back door, made some kind of a little change, added one name and come in and occupied fifteen minutes of the House in debating the same petition.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

The Speaker did make a ruling yesterday on the petition and I understood the Speaker ruled the petition was perfectly in order.

I would ask your Honor to take a look at something else that I believe is happening here. What I think we have happening here are two things. First of all, I think the Government House Leader is

trying to tell the Speaker, through the back door, to reverse a decision that he has already made on a petition, and secondly, and perhaps more importantly, that what he is basically doing is trying to prevent members of this House from presenting petitions by using up the five minutes which are allocated.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TULK:
I would ask your Honor to start taking into account when the honourable gentleman rises in his place as to whether indeed he is coming close to infringing upon the privileges of this House -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TULK:
- rather than trying to make a legitimate point of order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
To that point of order I have heard sufficient comments to rule on the matter.

I have stated yesterday that the petition with the one name, and two others, was in order, and that is the petition that is being presented today, as far as I understand it. The fact that another name is added to it does not alter the fact that it is the petition that I ruled on yesterday and that is the one that I am hearing at the present time. I ruled yesterday that the honourable member for St. John's East had spoken his five minutes. Now the honourable member for Menihek has now spoken five

minutes -

MR. TULK:
He succeeded him.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
- and that is the position.

MR. LONG:
Mr. Speaker, (inaudible.)

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

A point of order, the honourable member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:
It is actually a point of personal privilege and the Speaker will determine whether it is.

MR. SPEAKER:
A point of privilege, the hon. the member for St. John's East.

MR. LONG:
Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the ruling the Speaker has made in my attempt to speak to the resolution. In making the ruling that I had spoken previously when I did not have an opportunity to speak to the resolution because points of order took up my time, I came in today with a new petition with original signatures in order that I might have an opportunity to speak to the petition that was presented to me by 1,400 constituents of mine.

I have still again today been denied an opportunity to speak to the issues raised in the petition. So I am appealing to the Speaker, as a matter of

privilege, to allow me the opportunity to speak and present the petition according to the rights I have as a member, according to our Standing Orders and according to precedents in which the same petition may be accepted as in order day after day after day, as we have seen in the short time I have been here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

On that point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I submit that it is the most important point to be raised in the House since we came back here a week or so ago.

Mr. Speaker, the right of the people of this Province to petition their House is a sacred right and absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker, ought to be done to abridge that right.

Mr. Speaker, we can put what characterization on it we want to, the clear fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the gentleman is from St. John's East, not in my party, but nevertheless a member with rights in this Chamber, is having his rights trampled on, trampled on, trampled on!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMONS:

He really is having his rights trampled on. This childish convention of allowing a person presenting a petition to speak for

a couple of minutes and then get up and talk for three for four minutes so the Speaker can get up and say the time has expired, that, apart from being childish, is unfair to the people whose petitions we are trying to have heard here in this House. It is grossly unfair. It is a travesty of the whole process, Mr. Speaker.

I would appeal to you, Sir, to take time before ruling on the Point of Privilege raised so justifiably by the gentleman from St. John's East. I would appeal to you, first, to take time to rule, because you want to research the authorities, and, secondly, Sir, if I may, if this is not completely inappropriate, I would appeal to you to consider, given the very brief period during which a member is allowed to speak to a petition, it being only five minutes, finding that points of order and privilege ought not to be subtracted from the overall time frame allowed a member.

Thank you, Sir.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, if I may, to that point of privilege. Nobody has spoken on this side.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of privilege, the hon. the President of the Council.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. members opposite have blown this all out of proportion, as they usually do. There is nobody a stauncher defender of members' rights in this House than I am. I was not, for one moment - it was Your

Honour that ruled the member for St. John's East's time had expired, not my interruption or intervention. So I suggest the member for Fortune - Hermitage is really casting a slur on the Chair, which is not unusual for the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the question I raised and, as Your Honour recalls, I prefaced my remarks by asking for clarification - I wanted clarification. I was not certain what your ruling was yesterday and I wanted clarification of it. You ruled yesterday, as I understand it then, that two members of this House and one person from outside signing a sheet of paper would be an acceptable petition. I understand that is what Your Honour is saying now. I was not aware that that was what Your Honour ruled, and I asked if it was in order again today.

But, Mr. Speaker, the hon. members opposite who want now somehow to give the impression that they are the staunch defenders of peoples' rights in this House are doing nothing but trying to play politics with it.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we on this side are quite prepared to give the member for St. John's East five minutes to speak to the petition, if he wishes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:
That will certainly show that we have no objection. So, it was a point of nonsense by the members opposite, as usual.

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
I will hear one other member.

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:
To the question of privilege, I think my colleague from St. John's East has made an adequate argument for it, but I do not think he is quite familiar with the form in which privilege should be taken.

So I would ask the House to consider that at the end of his speech was the motion to have five minutes to speak to it, as he would have had had he received recognition at the time I believe he should have had. I would suggest that that would be the way in which we interpret it. I think he would be quite happy to have the five minutes in order to address the issue.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

There is no prima facie case of breach of privilege. There may be some misunderstanding. I ruled on the matter yesterday, that the hon. member's petition, the second one with three names attached, was in order. My understanding today was that that was the petition that the hon. member was presenting and his time had elapsed. I did allow him, just for the record, to state the prayer of the petition. Then the member for Menihek spoke subsequently.

But, as I understand members of the House are quite happy for the hon. member for St. John's East to speak for five minutes, and I recognize the hon. the member for St. John's East.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. LONG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Sometimes it is a struggle as a relatively new member of the House to understand how one is best to proceed to discharge one's duties. I take encouragement from the proceedings here and I feel more comfortable and confident in finally being more clear on how to bring forward a petition and have my time to speak.

In the case of the petition that I have already read into the record, it is addressed to the hon. House of Assembly and, in particular, calls on the government to instruct the Minister of Social Services to take action with respect to cutbacks in the Department of Social Services, in particular, to a series of wholesale cutbacks that were brought in just before Christmas. The petition that I presented with the photocopied names were presented to the former Minister of Social Services just prior to Christmas.

It was presented on a very stormy day two weeks before Christmas in which a number of the social assistance recipients who have initiated the petition and successfully for two weeks campaigned to reach as many people as they could and get as much support as they could for the petition, went out in front of the Confederation Building here on a freezing cold day, just before Christmas, and held their own soup kitchen as a symbol of their protest and as part of the demands that they were putting in front of the government to show some respect for the people who are most disadvantaged in our

society.

In particular, those people who were bringing forward a number of concerns in which the Department of Social Services began, without any kind of public notice, and in many cases without any real notice to the individual social assistance recipients, initiating a series of actions to take money away from people.

In response to a number of individuals, some of whom were constituents of mine, who live in my district, some of whom do not live in my district, but social assistance recipients who live in the St. John's area and who see the office of the New Democratic Party as a place of last resort perhaps when they are not able to get any response from their social worker or the Social Services Department, they came forward. I was dealing for a period of about two weeks, from December 1 onward, with a continuing series of people coming to me asking for my support in registering appeals on their behalf to have money given back to them that, without any real notice, in some cases without any notice at all, these individuals received their bi-monthly cheque in the mail to find out that they had \$50 less or \$80 less or \$120 less and had no where to go, could not get any answers in the department and came forward. As a result of my hearing about a person who went to the media and began to call for other people out there to take action, there was a meeting called and then the campaign kind of took off and the petition was presented around the city. In two weeks they had over 1,400 people signed the petition and presented it to the minister.

I would like to say on these

issues that I am presenting here today, I would like to serve notice to the new Minister of Social Services (Mr. Tobin), and also to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Windsor) and to the government in general, that as they are preparing their budget projections these coming days, in preparation for presenting a budget in the next short while, that the present review that is underway to consider all expenditure in systems and structure and management practices within the Department of Social Services, if what the public has been given notice of is further curtailment of monies to poor people in this Province and that we may see more action either in the budget or hidden in the budget and promised within the action of this new committee - the Expenditure Review Committee has called for an outside management consultant to come in and study the Department of Social Services - and I quote from a release from the Minister's Office, from the Executive Council Office, "to review efficiency and effectiveness of all government operations and programs with the ultimate objective of improving the Province's overall financial situation," - if the message that is going out to the people of this Province, if the signal to the welfare recipients of this Province is that the government is going to take action to balance its books on the backs of the poor, then you had better well be prepared to deal with more petitions and more attempts -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. LONG:
If I may have just thirty seconds to conclude, Mr. Speaker, to

finish my sentence. I am here presenting the petition to serve notice that if in the budget there are going to be more actions taken against the poor people of this Province, you will rue the day that you try and balance the budget on the backs of the poor of this province.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. LONG:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. TOBIN:
Mr. Speaker, the petition that the member for St. John's East presented, I think was presented, he said, to the Minister of Social Services on December 15. Then he went on to attack me for my performance on it. The petition was not presented to me, Mr. Speaker.

I can say to the hon. member for St. John's East that this government has never and will never balance her books on the backs of the poor in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:
Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about cutbacks. In 1979 the Department of Social Services' budget was \$45.7 million, provincial government dollars. Now, Mr. Speaker, it is \$111

million. In nine years there has been a 146 per cent increase. Now, if that is cutbacks, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what anything else would be.

When you are talking about the Department of Social Services, why do we not take a look at the programs and policies that we have implemented to assist the people who need our services. I can tell the hon. member that I do not need any lecture from him as to how to perform and what it means to the people on social assistance. I too worked there for ten years in the frontlines, Mr. Speaker, dealing with the people who needed our services. I know the situation and the circumstances as it relates to the people on social assistance. I have no intention, Mr. Speaker, of seeing the government balance its books on the backs of the poor.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman from St. John's East knows full well that we have no intention of doing that. He was just trying to skimmy a few political points. He was trying to get a few political points, Mr. Speaker, on the backs of the poor in this Province. That is the game the hon. gentleman is up to.

Mr. Speaker, did we not increase social assistance last year? Yes. Did we not increase child welfare allowance, Mr. Speaker, and all of the other programs that the budget covers? Did we not do that, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the budget? There have been no cutbacks, and the hon. gentleman knows full well there have been no cutbacks.

What happened last year was that there was an increase in the budget of the Department of Social

Services, an increase to the people who need social assistance. They got an increase from the year before, Mr. Speaker. Their cheques were larger last year than they were the year before.

As it relates to the people who receive special needs or whatever the case may be, every case is evaluated on its own merit. Every single, solitary case, Mr. Speaker, is evaluated on its own merit.

Now, the hon. gentleman made an accusation this afternoon. He said the people who needed social assistance could not get any response or could not get in contact with the social workers in this Province. Mr. Speaker, I stand by the social workers in this Province.

The social workers in this Province, Mr. Speaker, are not difficult to get a hold to. The social workers in this Province are out. They are a very dedicated group of individuals, and should not, Mr. Speaker, receive that from that gentleman there, to say that the social workers could not be contacted. The social workers in this Province are dedicated to serving the people who need our services, and I would stand by them, Mr. Speaker, and would not let the member for St. John's East or anyone else in this House attack the social workers of this Province. They cannot get a hold of them!

The social workers of this Province, Mr. Speaker, bring more dedication to their jobs than the member for St. John's East brings to his.

MR. MORGAN:

The next election will show that.

MR. TOBIN:

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me say -

MR. LONG:

The social workers (inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

The hon. gentleman can take all the backwater he likes now. He has attacked the social workers of this Province, and the word will get out.

MR. MORGAN:

The NDP are finished in St. John's.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. MORGAN:

Finished in St. John's, dead.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, we are very conscious in the Department of Social Services as it relates to our department. We realize that we are a very large department, probably the largest department that deals directly with the people. We have Education, obviously, that has school boards that employ teachers. The Department of Health is somewhat larger as they have the hospital wards, but when it comes to people being directly responsible for serving people of this Province, it is probably the social workers. One of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, why we are bringing in a committee to make an assessment is because we want to ensure that the services of the Department of Social Services are as efficient and as effective for the people we service as is humanly possible. It is also being done, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that this department is efficient and

effective for serving the people who need our services.

As I look through the pile of programmes here, I see child welfare allowances, youth corrections, regional corrections, respite care, special child welfare allowances, rehabilitation, day care services, homemaker services, social assistance, and employment opportunities. Who brought in all these programmes, Mr. Speaker, for the people of this Province? These are not the days of public welfare, Mr. Speaker, when that was all that was attached to the department, that day went with the Liberal regime.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. minister's time has elapsed.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I rise in my place -

MR. SPEAKER:

Is this a new petition?

MR. EFFORD:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

It is not in order for the hon. member to speak; we have had one from each side.

Orders of the Day

MR. SIMMS:

Order 2. Committee of Supply.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Order, please!

MR. J. CARTER:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. J. CARTER:
Mr. Chairman, since this is Interim Supply, tradition has it that we may make as wide a ranging debate as possible and I intend to do that, with the understanding that my remarks will have financial overtones. And my remarks, although they should be addressed to the Chair, and will be, are really directed towards the Leader of the Opposition not in the form of an attack, but in the form of an appeal, and a very genuine appeal. I notice that he is running a very tight ship and is controlling his somewhat unruly members. There is a particular member I wish him to control and talk sense to, and I will elaborate.

Now, this House would move very swiftly and very decisively against pickpockets, against burglars, and against embezzlers. There would not be a single descending voice if an act were brought in to prohibit the activities of these particular gentlemen, thieves, blackmailers, and various other types, yet, there is a most despicable type, far more despicable than any of these, which I believe may be on the verge of being encouraged, especially by one particular member over there, and I refer, of course, to the chiropractors. Now, I think that these people are running the most despicable scam that it is possible to envisage. They are not trained, they have no

medical ability worthwhile, and they do no proper study of the patient; they see them for a few moments, churn them through the mill, then charge them \$15, \$20 and \$25.

And they would like to get their claws into Medicare, as they have in Ontario. Thirteen hundred chiropractors in the Province of Ontario take that province's medicare programme for \$60 million a year and the good they do is dubious at best and baneful at worst.

Now, the hon. gentleman to whom I refer, the richest man in the House I think he is, according to his public statement, the member for Port de Grave - Efford).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. J. CARTER:
He can take all the credit he likes.

MR. SIMMS:
The hon. member for Exploits (Dr. Twomey).

MR. J. CARTER:
No, I think it is the member for Port de Grave who is the richest man in the House.

- he ought to know that chiropractors are especially dangerous, especially when they say they can cure diabetes. Now, this is a condition with which the hon. gentleman is very familiar and with which I am somewhat familiar myself. I say that whatever their abilities or non-abilities, I part company with scam artists who suggest that they can cure diabetes. Now maybe some day a cure will be developed, and we hope it will be soon, but at

the present time all that can be done is it can be controlled.

Now, people who suggest that they can cure everything are, very simply, as far as I am concerned, frauds, and I appeal to the Leader of the Opposition to discuss this in the strongest and frankest possible way with the member for Port de Grave who, I believe, is going to bat for these nefarious individuals. I think it is wrong, wrongheaded, ill-advised and stupid. I cannot ascribe personal motives, and I do not think the hon. gentleman has bad motives, but they appear to be malevolent in the extreme if they are encouraging this group.

I call upon the government of this Province to throw out these baneful and harmful and dangerous quacks. Get rid of them as soon as possible. By all means, bring in an act that will punish them by fines, prison terms and whatever other sanctions the law can provide. Get rid of them, and for heaven sakes protect the public of this Province. Do it, and do it soon.

With those few remarks, I think I have said enough. I will return later on.

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Chairman, yesterday when we were speaking on the Interim Supply Bill I addressed the \$125 million which the Department of Transportation is requesting as an interim measure to tide them over a few days to award a few of their

political friends, to do another little bit of political pork barrelling. When I was referring to this \$125 million, I spoke about the conditions in the Strait of Belle Isle at different times of the year; I referred to the Spring, the Summer and the Fall.

Today, while I was sitting in the House, the Page brought me a message which came up from my office downstairs. The message had been phoned in from the principal of the school in Gunners Cove.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Where is that?

MR. DECKER:
On the Northern Peninsula. Ask the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Doyle). He knows where Gunners Cove is. He has received enough complaints from me and from the people in Gunners Cove over the past few weeks to know where Gunners Cove is. The previous Minister of Transportation knows where Gunners Cove is, Mr. Chairman, because he, too, received enough complaints from me and from the people of Gunners Cove. And the previous Minister of Transportation, even before the immediate last one, knows where Gunners Cove is, Mr. Chairman, because he, too, received numerous complaints from the people of Gunners Cove, which would have to suggest that the problem was not taken any more seriously by the previous minister, and the one before him, than it is being taken by the present minister.

Now, the principal of the school in Gunners Cove informs me that the school in Gunners Cove is closed today because there is a blizzard up there. Now he admits in his message that there is not a

whole lot he or anybody else can do about getting school open today. He is sensible enough to realize that no person can stop the blizzard, but the very principal who tells me about this condition up there today knows that to date, in a Winter which has not been an exceptionally severe Winter for the Northern Peninsula, the school in Gunners Cove has been closed twenty days because of bad weather and because of road conditions which were not attended to by the Department of Transportation - twenty days. The children of the Great Northern Peninsula who already, because of the policy of the Department of Education, are receiving a substandard education are also being penalized twenty days because the Department of Transportation is not fulfilling its mandate and is not keeping the roads in that area cleared of snow.

The principal goes on to explain some of the reasons why the road has been blocked for twenty days. He says there is only one plow and a small snow blower there, and sometimes a flyer. That is all that is up there. He says that this plow and this flyer are not capable of keeping that road open. Now, the present Minister of Transportation, and the previous one and the one before that again, knows this is not something new; this is an old story that has been going on and on for the past number of years. There is not enough equipment up there to keep the roads open. The principal says that the road is not fit to put school buses on, and I agree with him 100 per cent. It is not fit to bus children over.

The principal goes on to explain that the Department of

Transportation was supposed to have stationed two snow blowers there after the protest in St. Anthony - I highlight that - but they were only there for two days. The principal refers to after the protest. You know, Mr. Chairman, we talk about A.D. and B.C. On the Northern Peninsula, in dealing with this government, people have to talk about the days before the protest and after the protest, because the only way this government will do anything for people in Liberal districts is after a protest.

My colleague, the party Whip, was asking me if it was true that my district had received certain sums of money last year from the Department of Municipal Affairs - he referred to some money going into St. Anthony, some money going into Roddickton, into Englee and into Bide Arm - and I said yes. Then he suggested, 'You must be a good member to get this kind of money.' And as vain as I am and as much as I would like the praise, I said no, I cannot take the credit for that. That money was received after some of my constituents got out and took part in civil disobedience. I have a picture on my wall of three RCMP officers with a headlock on one of my constituents, and my constituent's face, Mr. Chairman, is not showing any humour. That constituent's face is not amused. He has been fighting for what he believes to be his rights. Knowing the system, he has come of age and he realizes how this system has been corrupted today, he realizes that he is being penalized because he had the principle to stand up and vote against the party in power. That, Mr. Chairman, takes principle. That takes backbone.

I am glad to be able to stand here today and say that he was my constituent. Like constituents of other members of the Liberal Party, he had the principle to stand up and vote for something he believed in, and voted against something that he honestly believed should be kicked out of office. He and the other 8,000 or 10,000 people in my district are being penalized because of the way they voted.

The Principal talks about after the protest. He is not referring to the protest which took place in St. Anthony last Summer when raw sewage was finding its way into a brook which flows through the middle of town and the Mayor of the town, who, by nature, is a pretty reasonable fellow, had no choice, realizing that everything else had failed, but to declare a day of mourning. They strung up a black flag on the pole, next to the Newfoundland flag and the Viking flag, the flag which you would see on the Viking site on the Northern Peninsula, the oldest settlement in Newfoundland, the oldest settlement in North America. That is the only way that the people of St. Anthony could get some money for water and sewer. This is a government which reacts to crises. This is not a government which plans to put water and sewer projects in, plans to build roads, or plans to maintain roads, this is a government which rules by crises. They react to crises, Mr. Chairman.

When the principal of this school talks about after the protest, he is not talking about the protest in Roddickton, he is not talking about the protest in Englee, he is not talking about the protest in Bide Arm, he is not talking about the protest in St. Anthony, and I

could go on and name all the protests that this government has reacted to over the past nine or ten years that we have had the present Premier in power, he is talking about a protest that took place just a few months ago where people from Great Braha, people from St. Carols, people from St. Anthony Bight, people from all over the Northern Peninsula who have been saying for the past five years that it is impossible to clear the snow North of Plum Point unless we acknowledge the fact that there must be at least two shifts of Department of Transportation employees. I have nothing against private enterprise.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. DECKER:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will come back.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Chairman, I want to take the opportunity to speak in the debate to address matters that have been on my mind for quite some time, and have nothing to do with the hon. member's very eloquent speech, the member for the Strait of Belle Isle, who, I believe, is one of the few members on that side of the House who perhaps really has his constituents at heart and really is a strong fighter, along with the member for Port de Grave, and there are many others on that side. But that is not what I want to talk about

today, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I have had on my mind now some of the things that have been going on in the Province for the last few weeks, some of the things that have been said publicly, particularly by the Leader of the Opposition on numerous public occasions. I am appalled, by the way, at hearing some of the manipulating that is going on behind the scenes by certain individuals in this Province, certain power brokers, I guess, manipulations of a type that you would not want to even talk about publicly. I am hearing all kinds of rumors and all kinds of stories.

In recent weeks, in particular, focusing on the Leader of the Opposition and others in the Liberal Party, but primarily on the Leader of the Opposition, is the suspicion that he is getting a considerable amount of assistance somewhere to be able to zero in as he has been doing on the criticisms that he has been putting forth towards the government on behalf of the Opposition.

Now, I suggest to the Leader of the Opposition since he is relatively new in the House - he has not been here for twenty-two years, or whatever it is - that he should be careful in his approach - this is advice. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition is not one who is too good to accept advice - because what I see happening, and this is a personal point of view, is that the Opposition Leader is settling into a trap, a trap that many of his predecessors were caught in, in that they are being perceived now as being a party, and he a Leader, who is criticizing for the sake of

criticizing. Nearly every single issue that comes up in the Province, whether it has any merit or not, the Opposition is simply criticizing it; nothing else, no alternatives, no options, simple criticism. Now, that has been on my mind a little bit for obvious reasons. I am wondering how he can find himself in this particular trap, as some of his predecessors have.

Then I am hearing these stories, as I said, about some of the manipulations that are going on outside the legislature, manipulations by power brokers in this Province. Particular people in this Province are using whatever influence they can.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You do not always say what you mean.

MR. SIMMS:

Well, I am in a position to say what I mean. I am not going to say it here today, but it will come out in due course. At the same time, Mr. Chairman, what has crossed my mind is that nowhere in this debate have we seen the Leader of the Opposition respond to any questions; he skated around them. For example, the question Why does the Leader of the Opposition not support Newfoundland's right to have a greater say in the fishery? Why does he not support that? an opportunity which is provided for in the Meech Lake Accord and which he is opposed to. Why does the Leader of the Opposition support the idea of giving fish to France in order to get a deal? Why does he support that concept, that idea?

Another thing that has bothered me, that I really cannot

understand, is that the Leader of the Opposition has been heard many times in recent weeks saying we need a change. Mr. Peckford has been in office for nine years. We need a change. Is it not passing strange to you, Mr. Chairman, that in 1966 the Leader of the Opposition embraced warmly a Premier, Mr. Smallwood, and a government that had been in office for seventeen years?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:

Is it not passing strange that that was somehow okay back in 1966, when he jumped on his tractor and rode over the Howley Road, -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAIRD:

From the railway station, you mean. There was no Howley Road.

MR. SIMMS:

- I regret to say with some support from my late father.

MR. WELLS:

A man I held in kindest regard.

MR. SIMMS:

Yes, I know you did. And he had regard for you. In any event, I do find it passing strange that the Leader of the Opposition can go around publicly these days saying, 'Oh, we need a change in Newfoundland, Mr. Peckford has been there nine years, when twenty-two years ago the Leader of the Opposition warmly embraced Mr. Smallwood, in 1966, and joined his government before he was even elected.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Before he was even elected! Mr. Smallwood had been Premier then for seventeen years. How come it was okay then and it is not okay now? I am sure when the Leader of the Opposition gets up to comment on some of the remarks I have made he will address those points. I do not know why he did that. I do not know why he continues to make those kinds of statements when, you know, people have questions in their minds. This just does not make a lot of sense, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition has also frequently argued in public, or at least tries to give the public the perception, that all is not well with the economy of Newfoundland; everything is falling apart in Newfoundland with respect to the economy; unemployment is increasing, this kind of a story. We have all heard it.

Mr. Chairman, the facts are the facts, plain facts, which the Leader of the Opposition often avoids when he is speaking in public. For example, real gross domestic product in 1987 in this Province increased by 2.6 percent over 1986, which was itself an all time high for Newfoundland. The Leader of the Opposition never mentions that. There have been employment gains of 2.8 percent, which contributed to the second year of decline in unemployment in Newfoundland. In 1987, the unemployment rate in this Province was the lowest annual rate since the recessionary levels we experienced back in 1982. And the drop of 1.4 percent from 1986 to 1987 was the largest absolute decline in the unemployment rate

by any Province in Canada.

Now, how can the Leader of the Opposition still get up and insist that unemployment is not dropping. I mean, these are substantiated facts. But I guess he does not want to present the facts to the people, he wants to try to fool the people, try to get them to believe that the personal income of people in this Province is decreasing. That is the perception he gives, but it is not factual. Because, Mr. Chairman, we, in fact, had a gain of over 7 per cent last year, and on and on and on it goes.

The Leader of the Opposition, for some strange reason, with the help of the power brokers who are manipulating the Leader of the Opposition and his party, and we all know them -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Name them.

MR. SIMMS:

They will be named in due course.

- they are doing everything -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Do they own hotels?

MR. SIMMS:

Well, now, there is another interesting comment. I was out in my constituency last weekend and I thought about this when I looked at the reservation booklet in the hotel I was staying in and I saw written in that little booklet a reservation for my friend, the Leader of the Opposition, which said, 'Clyde Wells (Complimentary)'.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

I thought that was rather interesting.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Oh, yes! Whose was it?

MR. SIMMS:

Well, I am not going to say that. That will all come out in due course, after we finish our inquiry. But the Leader of the Opposition, who gets up in the House portraying a holier than thou type of approach to politics, for some reason or other is now putting himself into a further conflict.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

The hon. member's time is up.

MR. SIMMS:

Oh, Mr. Chairman, that is too bad. Perhaps another day.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Chairman, I listened with great attention to my great friend from St. John's North, and I want to join him in his onslaught against undesirables on one condition, that he include unabatted hate mongers in the group.

Mr. Chairman, if the situation with respect to chiropractors is as terrible as the gentleman suggests, there is only one question for him and for the administration that he supports, 'Why have they not brought in legislation to regulate it?'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMONS:

Now, Mr. Chairman, let us come to the question of the Interim Supply Bill. This bill, like the others this session, has been subjected to a cost-saving measure consisting of sheets of paper, sexy little staples, etc., and I would hope that by the time we graduate to thicker legislation, we will do a proper job. Perhaps we can find a dollar or two from the Premier's limousine account or the travel account of the gentleman from Port au Port, not to be confused with Menihék.

Mr. Chairman, to the substance of this stapled document. There is an item here, \$124,958,300 for Transportation - \$125 million. Now, that is just the initial drop in the bucket. That is just what they are asking for on an interim basis, until they can get the budget through the House.

Mr. Chairman, before this bill passes the Chamber, I hope the administration will follow the dictum, the recommendation, the plea of the Auditor-General. That is to say, provide a list of roads projects which would make up this \$125 million.

Mr. Chairman, I suppose in all the history of political slush funds at Westminster and Ottawa and Queen's Park and here and elsewhere, I suppose there has never been a larger uncategorized slush fund than this one. Can you imagine a Heading just simply called Transportation \$125 million? I mean, it is indecent, it is disgraceful that the government would have the face to come in and ask for it in those terms, without providing just a

note, just an explanation, just some categorization that this much is for this purpose and this amount is for this purpose. No, just one word, Transportation, \$124,900,000.

Now, Mr. Chairman, this self same thing was done last year. Because as the minister in time will point out, if we look at then Bill 16 of the last session, the Third Session of the Fortieth General Assembly, we had a bill, the parallel bill to this one, Interim Supply in respect of the previous fiscal year, actually they asked for \$126 million for Transportation then, at that particular time.

So, you see, Mr. Chairman, the pattern has not changed despite the public dismay and horror over the way this government spends money on roads. And the Round Pond example was just the symbol, it was the catch phrase, if you like, in the public mind that reinforced in the public mentality just how callous this administration is when it comes to paving roads. And in case you have forgotten about Round Pond, because there have been so many interesting items since, I say it is just beyond Mt. Scio, just beyond the farm, out there a way, and you have a road twenty feet wide, a thousand feet long, and pavement that stops in front of a tree, right in front of a tree.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there are hon. members who would like to believe this issue is dead. I say to them, Mr. Chairman, that it is dormant, I suppose, in the sense that other issues, like cucumbers and limousines, have caught the public imagination. But they have not at all, Mr. Chairman, totally forgotten about Round Pond road.

MR. J. CARTER:

A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

A point of order, the hon. the member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER:

I think that the Round Pond situation has been put to bed. There was a proper inquiry and no guilt was attached to any party whatsoever, and to try to bring that up and smear the then minister responsible I think is utterly despicable. I think the member should be named and flung out of the House unceremoniously.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

To that point of order, there is no point of order.

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Chairman, as I was saying, the public will decide on Round Pond, and it has largely decided. My plea to the committee is that there would be some explanation before we allow the vote to pass. We need to be told what that large amount of money is being spent for. We know it is going to be spent on paving and so on, but can we expect there are going to be more Round Ponds? Is that what we are being told, that it was okay to do what was done, to pave roads up to trees and to friends cabins? I reject that, Mr. Chairman, and I believe the overwhelming majority of Newfoundlanders reject that. And that is what we are finding as we go around the Province, when we can get them to stop talking about cucumbers or limousines long enough.

Now, Mr. Chairman, my good friend, my cousin from Grand Falls, even though he cannot spell his name properly, I say to him that he is whistling passed the graveyard. He talks about the low unemployment rate. Where has he been? Is his head so far in the clouds since he become the President of the Council that he does not realize that there are tens of thousands of young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians out there who do not have a job? And his grandstanding speech will not persuade one of them and, more to the point, will not put one single dollar in their pocket, not one.

Mr. Chairman, let him try that rhetoric on those young people. Let him try that rhetoric on the people in Fortune - Hermitage and other districts of this Province whose automobile costs are much higher than in other parts of Newfoundland because they are banging them up trying to get from job to home, from home to school, from home to hospital.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Chairman, let him, my cousin, the gentleman for Grand Falls, tell those people who daily incur additional expense because they do not have the cozy arrangement that is epitomized by Round Pond Road the kind of rhetoric he tried on here today, because they might not thumb their desk as hard for him unless they do it in pity at his lack of understanding of what they are going through out there in the mud and gutter trying to get from school to home, from home to

hospital, and so on.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Order, please!

The hon. the member's time is up.

MR. SIMMONS:
Thank you, Sir.

MR. DINN:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The hon. the Minister of Mines.

MR. DINN:
Mr. Chairman, it is passing strange, I think, that we have had a couple of days now to talk about Interim Supply and nobody from the Opposition asked any questions or talked about mining in the Province, nobody asked any questions about Baie Verte or Daniel's Harbour. Nobody asked any questions about the few million dollars in Daniel's Harbour, the money we put into Baie Verte, the reopening of St. Lawrence, or the Hope Brook gold mine. What do they talk about? Out of about \$3 billion last year, they talk about the \$62,000 for the Round Pond Road. That is what they talk about.

Now, Mr. Chairman, that is not as much, from what I am told, as the Leader of the Opposition got from somewhere outside this House. Can you imagine, can the people of this Province imagine how he would handle the affairs of this Province if he had \$3 billion a year to look after? Where would this Province be? Can anybody harken back to 1966? They talked about a contract today in this House. We gave a contractor a contract to do something for us for \$14 million and they asked for the contract that that contractor

had with his subcontractors. Now, can you imagine that in 1966?

AN HON. MEMBER:
Cost plus! Cost Plus!

MR. DINN:
They did not have a Public Tendering Act in 1966.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DINN:
They had four or five people in this Province to whom they said, 'Okay, you take from Gander West and it is yours.' It was on cost plus, and he supported that. The Leader of the Opposition, who sits here in his pious and sanctimonious way in this House, the legal beagle who is, as far as I am concerned, good at income tax and stuff like that but is not very good on contracts, he gets up in this House, Mr. Chairman, and talks about contracts. He wanted the contract, wanted the Premier to go out and dig that out and provide it as information to this House. I think is just marvellous! Where we have come from! There were no contracts in 1966. If you wanted to do \$100 million worth of roads in this Province, as long as you ponied up to the Liberal Party you were given it all, there was no tendering. He sat there and supported that and now he gets up and he wants not the contract that we signed to get something done, he wants the subcontracts of the contractor produced for this House of Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, is there anybody within earshot who can believe what is going on in this House? I said yesterday that new things will be exposed in this House because I am not going to sit by

nor is any member of this House going to sit by - now, I hear, we have complimentary hotel reservations and complimentary air tickets.

MR. J. CARTER:

Oh! Shocking! Shocking!

MR. DINN:

Now, Mr. Chairman, let me tell you what this means, because it is very serious. It is pretty serious stuff if you cannot live on what the people of this Province say you should have as a member of this House. If the hon. the Leader of the Opposition wants more money, let him get up in this House and propose a motion that we vote more money for him, for the member for Fogo, for me, or for anybody else. We can debate it then. The members down in the far end of the House, they are in favour of having a debate on it. I am prepared to debate that, but I am not prepared to let go by what is going on here today.

Now, the hon. Leader of the Opposition stood up in this House yesterday on a point of privilege and said, 'Yes, Mr. Chairman, I get \$50,000 from the Liberal Party.' When it was being discussed, the President of the Liberal Party said, 'I do not know anything about it.' Does anybody know who else said that in history? He called for the bowl and he said, 'I find no fault'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DINN:

That was just decreased to \$50,000 because you moved into the House. That is what happened.

MR. J. CARTER:

(Inaudible).

MR. DINN:

No, I am not getting into that. I just want to deal with some of the things that are going on, because it is starting to get to me. It might not get to the people of this Province for a while, but it will eventually get to them. Because what it means is that - ah! the hon. member for Port de Grave does not like it.

MR. MATTHEWS:

He has coughed up a few bucks. That is why he is up front.

MR. DINN:

I will tell you, Mr. Chairman, there are going to be a good few ten minutes go by before I let go of this issue, because this is a very important issue in this House. Because what it says is that four or five or six people in this Province, and I was serious yesterday, can buy, and that is what is happening - I repeat - can buy any member of this House - whether he launders it through a party or not is something else - and can buy now.

If you keep that in mind with what that hon. member believed in 1966, that we do not need public tender - we did not need it then, it was cost-plus - what would happen to the Public Tendering Act if that hon. member sat in that chair? That question has to be asked by every person in this Province. I do not hear a point of privilege today. Is there a point of privilege to be made today? I will tell you why there is no point of privilege, because there is really no point of privilege. What it means is this, and we have to ask questions about what we are talking about here because it is very important, what it means is that if every one in this House was the same, the member for

Twillingate was the same, and the member for Port de Grave was the same, and the member for Naskaupi, who got wrapped on the knuckles because he said something in the people's House was the same, if they were the same it would mean that we would speak in this House without freedom. We are giving up our freedom to speak freely in this House. And for the purpose of those people who are within eyesight and have watched what has gone on in this House, that is exactly what is happening. There are certain members in this House who, when they get up to speak, if they do not toe a particular line or say the words the right way, are shoved down in their seats, much like it happened in 1966. I came in here to see what went on in the House of Assembly, and I went into the Colonial Building, and I remember the hon. member for Bonavista South, at that time, who had the nerve to stand up in the people's House to speak, and God looked over at him and he said, "Sit."

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

The hon. member's time is up.

MR. DINN:

I will have more time, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

After the last ten minutes of attempted character assassination by the member for Pleasantville, saying things in this House that

he will not repeat outside the House, I would like to get back to the Interim Supply Bill. I have two questions, primarily, for the Minister of Finance. And I apologize to him. I was called out of the House and I did not hear his responses earlier this afternoon. However, I have two questions for him and I would like to pose the questions and outline the reasons why I would like answers to these questions. First of all, we have seen during the past six or eight months a statement by the former Minister of Finance indicating that at the end of the first quarter the Province was doing well because of some increased sales and the projected deficit would no longer be \$172 million but would be reduced by \$19 million to, I believe, \$153 million. Since the present minister took over, we have not received, or I have not heard of - maybe I am just remiss in this - any further progress reports on the second quarter and so on. In light of the fact that a short time ago we were presented with special warrants totalling \$38 million, and I understand in looking through them that some of them were simply the movement of funds whereas more of it was allocation of new funds, but in light of the fact that there was this extra \$38 million in special warrants, I would like to hear some comment from the Minister of Finance concerning what he expects, or what he would have expected at the end of the third quarter in terms of the provincial debt.

Of course, I know that he knows now, as his budget is coming down shortly, exactly what it is at the end of the year, and if he does not want to release budget secrets at this point, at least give us an

update up to the end of the third quarter as to how we are doing with regards to the current account deficit.

I would like some comment from the Minister of Finance concerning that, and one of the reasons is we are being asked now to approve without a great deal of information \$800 million of Interim Supply. I really believe that it is relevant to my vote on that \$800 million of Interim Supply. The state of the current account deficit of the Province to me is a relevant factor and I would like some kind of comment? So that is the first thing, Mr. Chairman.

Secondly, there were radio reports that the minister outside of the House was commenting on the fact that the Supply Bill, this present one we are debating, may be held up for awhile and he was expressing the hope that it would not be held up and the concern that if it were held up there were certain projects that have to be tendered immediately, and that there were certain contracts that had to be awarded, and I am specifically referring to those things. I dealt with the salary issue, you will remember, in the comments I made yesterday.

Now if, in fact, there are projects that have to be tendered, and if, in fact, there are contracts that have to be awarded, then the minister obviously must be in a position right now to provide this House with a list of these projects. And I would suggest to the minister that the exceptionally large amount of money he is requesting for the Department of Transportation would lead me to believe that the substance of his request has to do

with the road building programme for the present year. Therefore, I would suspect that the minister would have in hand at this time a detailed list of the priorities, the work that is going to be done this coming year if he is ready to go to tender.

So I would say to the minister that it seems to me to be sensible that at this point in time, and we have expressed our concern, we have said we would like some questions answered, he would contribute to the speeding up of this process. If in fact he wants the process speeded up, and if, in fact, this is not simply an opportunity for the Government House Leader, for instance, to get up and go on with ten minutes of nonsense and foolishness, or if it is not simply an opportunity for the member for Pleasantville and others to get up and attempt character assassination, if this is not what this is all about, if this is, in fact, not a game, if the minister is serious about getting this Interim Supply Bill through this hon. House, I would ask him now to give some indication of his good faith and of his good intentions by getting up and giving us some answers to these two questions that I pose to him.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. WINDSOR:
Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. WINDSOR:
Mr. Chairman, I am delighted to have the opportunity to respond to some of the questions. I want to, first of all, thank the hon. the member for Gander, who is the

finance critic.

AN HON. MEMBER:

A good man.

MR. SIMMS:

He should be the leader.

MR. WINDSOR:

He is the only one I have heard so far - I missed a couple of hon. gentlemen. If I am wrong I will retract it - who has debated the issue which is Interim Supply. I was most disappointed yesterday in listening to the Leader of the Opposition.

Now, my colleague for St. John's North mentioned earlier that Interim Supply is a very broad debate, you can talk on any issue relating to Interim Supply. The hon. the Leader of the Opposition missed that. He could not even manage to target something that is involved in the \$780-odd million of expenditure that we are requesting, because all he talked about was Sprung. I mean, he has Question Period, he has Answers To Questions, he has Questions on the Order Paper, he has the Throne Speech debate where he can spend all the time in the world talking about Sprung, but he choose to do it under Interim Supply, when there is not one cent, not one penny, Mr. Chairman, in Interim Supply dealing with Sprung. I was going to call him out of order, but I took pity on the poor fellow. He has been away from the House for so long he probably does not know the difference, so I let him carry on. But he was probably out of order. Now Your Honour probably would have ruled, 'Well, he was talking about finances and therefore it is, strictly speaking ...' but there not one penney in Interim Supply dealing with Sprung, yet this is what he choose

to spend his time at.

Other hon. members, Mr. Chairman, complained that there are only six hours. I think my hon. colleague from Gander suggested that there are only six hours to deal with interim supply. They must know, or somebody should tell them, that they have seventy-five hours under the rules of this House to deal with the budget, to deal with the whole budget, and they are going to waste six hours, and complain that they do not have more, talking about Interim Supply when they know and everybody in this Province knows - maybe they do not - that interim supply is a routine procedure used by every House of Assembly to provide fundings so normal programmes can carry on. Maybe they want us to close down the schools and the hospitals and not pay any public employees. Maybe the Clerks of the Tables should not get paid. Maybe the Hansard people should not get paid. Maybe we should not make any payments to social assistance recipients. Maybe we should not plow the streets, the roads, the highways. Maybe we should not run the ferries. Maybe we should not provide any services to the province for the next couple of months while we debate the budget in detail, and that is where the detail is.

Mr. Chairman, in the last six or seven years I have been most disappointed with the budget debate itself. When I was Minister of Development, I think the longest time we took was an hour and a quarter to get \$15 million or \$20 million approved by the Estimates Committees, and the questions always related to some foolish issue in the hon. gentlemen's districts. They never once got down to any real

important searching question dealing with the finances of the province, just some little local issues that the hon. gentlemen were interested in.

And I am hearing the same thing here again now. We have spent about three and a quarter hours, something like that, out of the seventy-five hours talking about nonsense from the Opposite side. Not a searching question. The main thing they want to hear about is the roads programme. I mean, they must know the budget process. We have been involved in this for months. And the roads programme will indeed be decided upon by government, but it is not yet. I say in all honesty and sincerity to my friend for Gander, we have not yet dealt with it. The minister and his officials are going to through the detailed work preparing their plan for this year, what the priorities are, and Cabinet will, in due course, look at it.

Unless I missed the Cabinet meeting, I do not think we have decided yet. It never is done until April or May, probably early April, because we are very anxious, indeed, to get those projects out as quickly as possible. But there is a lot of work in the minister's department in preparing his priorities and doing the engineering estimates, preliminary engineering work, planning for that.

AN HON. MEMBER:

It takes six months to do a budget.

MR. WINDSOR:

It takes six months to do a budget, that is right, and that is one part of the whole process.

Interim Supply, Mr. Chairman, as I

have indicated, is really straightforward. What is in here, with the exception of the things that I highlighted, and I welcome questions on the things that I highlighted, which are not normal, ongoing salaries, and ongoing programmes, usual everyday operations. There are no new programmes, there is no expansion of programmes in the normal items there. The only items are the eight or nine items that I have listed down. I gave some information on what they were, and the ministers involved are here waiting for questions to give information, as much as possible, on what these funds will be spent on.

Other than that, it is a very routine matter of allowing the business of government, the business of running this province to continue while the House does its duty, which is to examine the budget estimates, which I am going to bring down next week, together with all the economic information that my friend would like to have. I thank him for that question. And he is right. It is important to see the economic performance of this province, and I know he and the rest of the provinces are anxious to find out what the final revised deficit of government will be. We projected \$182 million, I think, at the mid-year. My colleague, the former minister projected that that would be down to \$154 million. Well, we will see on Tuesday. I know they are waiting with bated breath, and so they should be, to see what I have to say on Tuesday about where the final deficit is and probably more importantly, where is next year's deficit.

What have we been able to do, Mr.

Chairman, with expenditure reduction? Not cost cutting, a stupid question from the socialist down in the corner earlier today talking about the efficiency experts and, 'Is that going to cut programmes?' Does he know what efficiency means! Efficiency is not cutting programmes, it is delivering those programmes more effectively and more efficiently with less administrative costs. That is what efficiency experts tell you to do, Mr. Chairman. They do not tell you what government policy will be or what programmes will be. That is what the people of our province elected us for, to establish programmes and policies, and that is what we are doing. I will give information on the economic performance, Mr. Chairman, next week.

My friend mentioned that the bill may be held up. He said yesterday, and the Leader of the Opposition said yesterday, that if they liked the answers they get then the bill will go through by next week. Well, Mr. Chairman, the choice is theirs. Clearly, they can stop this bill from being approved prior to next Tuesday. It will have to go through on Monday. By six o'clock on Monday we will need to approve Interim Supply. We have already announced the House will be adjourning for Easter, and if Interim Supply is not approved by six o'clock Monday night, well, then, either we are going to have to come back after Tuesday, change what the House Leader has already announced, or we will come back after supper - we can stay here all night as we have done before, I suppose - or we can just shut down services as of April 1. I mean, the choice is clearly theirs. They have the power of the House rules. We

cannot spend any money on government services until the House gives us the authority to do that, and then we will do it in accordance with the Financial Administration Act.

So we will see, Mr. Chairman, next week, on Monday night, whether or not we have the authority to continue on providing services in this Province. I certainly hope we do, because I do not know what purpose will be served if we do not. Because on Tuesday I am going to give them all the details not only of this portion of ongoing but of all the programmes of government for next year; where we plan to go, where we expect to go, how the economy has performed, how we expect it to perform next year, where we think inflation will be next year, what kind of deficit we expect to have at the end of next year and what impact that might have on the money markets. All kinds of new ideas, new initiatives, and new programmes. You never know what might be contained in the goody bag that I am going to bring in here until Tuesday.

What purpose is being served, Mr. Chairman, by talking about nonsense here and wasting six good hours of time? Because they know that time spent on Interim Supply is subtracted from the seventy-five hours that is allocated for the budget debate, including the Committee debates. Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, they would be better advised - I know my time is just about up -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

By leave!

MR. WINDSOR:

I would not want to impose on them, Mr. Chairman.

- to let the Interim Supply go through and have this time to do some detailed examination of the estimates of government for next year, that will be coming down on Tuesday. Maybe they could use that much more productively.

Anyway, I will sit down. My time is up, and I will have another chance, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

Mr. Chairman, I just heard the hon. member for Gander ask the hon. the Minister of Finance to provide some information. The minister spoke and he did not provide the information. Just let me tell him again what concerns the Opposition and what the Opposition sees as its responsibility to the taxpayers of this Province. Maybe the government side of the House does not feel the sense of responsibility to taxpayers that we do.

Just to look at the schedule, for example, the minister is asking that for the Department of Public Works and Services \$34,910,000 be provided as Interim Supply, whereas the total last year was only \$46,656,000 for the whole year. We are asking, why? What is it that warrants that now for a projected three-month period? We want to know why that amount. That is one of the things we want to know.

Similarly, Development and Tourism, the \$14 million is about one-third of last year's budget. If you look at Fisheries, the \$16 million is more than 50 per cent of what was spent last year - just

under \$31 million in the budget last year.

If you are asking the House to vote and give you this authority on a interim basis, then surely you have to answer the question. Surely, Mr. Chairman, the government cannot say we just want the House to give us a blank cheque. They have got to answer these questions.

If you look at Forestry, there is nearly \$13 million as against an expenditure of \$36 million for the whole of last year. That is a bit more than the quarter. If you look at Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development, \$20,541,000 is sought as Interim Supply. The budget for last year was \$39,014,000. The government has to tell the House what it proposes to do. This is the kind of information we want. That is what the hon. the member for Gander was asking for earlier and we still have not received.

A number of members have mentioned Transportation: \$125 million nearly is sought against the total expenditure for the whole of last year of \$165 million. Before asking the House to sign a blank cheque for that, the government has an obligation to provide the information. That is the kind of information the Opposition is seeking and that is the kind of information the Opposition wants. When that information is provided, then we are quite prepared to have a vote on it and decide whether or not we agree with giving it. If the government has the overwhelming numbers in the House, then they are going to get the authority. But we are, Mr. Chairman, entitled to that information. It is really as simple as that.

There is no need for the kind of vitriol and nonsense that we have had to listen to in the House in the last couple of days. Let us just deal with what is in the interest of the taxpayers of this Province. Let us spend their money wisely, but let us have some information on what the government proposes to do with it before they get the authority from this House to spend it. That is what the Opposition is asking for, Mr. Chairman, and it is time the minister answered.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Chairman, we finally heard, after six or seven hours, I guess, a pointed question.

MR. WINDSOR:

Right, the first one.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Any minister here could have supplied the answer to those kinds, we are prepared, we are here, we are armed, we are briefed to prepare the answers to those kinds of questions if that in fact is what the Opposition wants or wanted.

Now, of course, all members will know that over the last several days, up until this past five or ten minutes, those questions have not been asked.

Now the Leader of the Opposition mentioned the Department of Fisheries. So, let me get to the nub of what he is asking. Why does the Department of Fisheries want \$7 million on current account in Interim Supply and \$6 million on capital account, I believe it is. So I will tell him.

We are asking for three months Interim Supply for the following subheads: The Minister's Office \$58,600, that includes salaries for the Minister, salaries for an Executive Assistant, salaries for a Press Secretary, Transportation and Communications, Purchased Services, any of the other things that fall under that particular vote that we debate every year here in the House of Assembly. The same for Executive Support, of course. There is \$116,500 for Executive Support for the senior executives of the Department so that they can be paid and they can be about their business. For General Administration, there \$126,300 required for that three month period. For Facility Operations in marine fishing facilities to pay the administrative costs, there is \$175,700 required. To pay the staff of our marine service centre so that they can lift boats out of the water and put boats back in the water before the fishing season starts, there is \$943,000 required for that three month period.

MR. WELLS:

Will you permit a question that will probably deliver the information better?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Sure.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Leader of the

Opposition.

MR. WELLS:

The key thing that we are looking for, Mr. Chairman, where the significant difference is from last year's budget. This is why these particular ones have been highlighted. I appreciate the information the honourable the Minister is providing and I thank him for it.

Would he highlight for us, it would cut down on the amount of work we have to do, if he would highlight where the significance differences are as he is going through the list.

MR. RIDEOUT:

In the current account, Mr. Chairman, there is no significant difference. It is just a three month, we obviously budget for twelve months so to provide those services to the fishermen and to the fishery of the Province, we take a three month prorated amount of what your twelve month final figure will be.

MR. WELLS:

Approximately.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Approximately, yes. So for Marine Service Centres we are required to pay our staff, buy supplies, to keep our centres running, we require for a three month period \$943,000. To buy supplies for the Labrador fish plants to get them geared up for when the season opens in June or so in Labrador, we have to pre-tender and pre-purchase now so over the next three months we will require \$580,000 and so on, and on, and on, down it goes. Aquaculture, Middle Distance, Processing any question on any of those items, I can provide the details and the

breakdown.

Now, let me just turn to capital, where there is a significant difference. The significant difference on capital, of course, is that we just signed an insure ERDA Fisheries Agreement for \$60 million for which the cash will begin to flow on the 1st. of April.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

If you look at our capital account in Interim Supply last year, we did not have that agreement so, therefore, the numbers will be significantly less.

The capital for Interim Supply is made up this way, Mr. Chairman: For administration purposes just to administer the programs, there is \$50,000 charged off to capital. For marine service centres, this is our own program \$375,000 and it goes on.

Let me get to the ERDA arrangement where we have included in Interim Supply a figure of \$5 million for ERDA arrangements this year that we hope, because we have done pre-engineering and pre-design, we will be able to tender early in April some major renovations to Marine Service Centers. That will mean that we will award contracts before Interim Supply runs out at the end of June. We hope to tender some new Marine Service Centers, particularly, perhaps, the one in Makkovik where you have a very short construction season. We hope to be able to tender that and perhaps have it awarded in Makkovik.

We hope to be able to tender some major, significant, capital

contracts on our Labrador fish plants early in April or May, again because of the short construction season.

We hope to be able to tender some of the aquaculture work that we can do under the ERDA agreement.

We hope to flow some cash through to fishermen for improvements to their fleet, revitalization of the fleet, and some of those contracts may be awarded before the end of June.

Therefore, a major, significant difference in our capital account this year from last year is that we have the ERDA agreement. Therefore, we are projecting that we will perhaps need \$5 million. If we do not, it is fine. It will be there for July or August or September, but we are projecting that we perhaps will need to flow through contracts, we able to award contracts that would, in total, be \$5 million. Most of them are in Liberal districts, because that is where a lot of the activity is going.

On the other hand, the Leader of the Opposition will recognize that under the ERDA agreement we have to provide the value of the contract up front, the Province does, and then we regain 70 per cent of that contract as we go through the fiscal year through fiscal arrangements with Ottawa. So we have an up front cost before we can award the contract. Then we have the amount coming back from Ottawa so that we end up with a net cost, but to flow the cash through we have to provide an amount of money to cover those contracts.

So that, in total, then, Mr. Chairman, in the Department of

Fisheries on current account, to provide for salaries, to provide the day to day operating costs of our Marine Service Centers, to provide all of the things we are doing all over Newfoundland and Labrador for a three-month period, we anticipate we will need \$7 million.

On capital account, including \$5 million flow through from the ERDA agreement, and our own fisheries access roads, upgrading some Marine Service Centers we are going to do ourselves, three-phase power hookups, all of those things that we are doing ourselves as a department, we figure we will need in total a commitment for approximately \$9 million on capital.

So that, therefore, adding current and capital together, we are seeking an Interim Supply arrangement for three months totalling \$16 million.

Now, every one of those I have documented here. If somebody has a particular question on Marine Service Centers or on travel by the minister or travel by the senior executive or anything, it is all here. I can provide every detail that any hon. gentleman on any side of the House might want.

But I cannot do that if nobody asks a question, and that has been the case over the last two or three days. Nobody has asked a particular question about a particular department, a particular subhead, for which, therefore, we can provide the appropriate information which I am quite willing to do for the rest of this day and the rest of twelve other days, if it takes that long. I have it all here and I will provide it to the House, as I

should, if the House ask the questions and require it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister of Fisheries for responding so thoroughly to the question put to him by our leader. It is too bad the other ministers are not as well prepared. I would ask the minister -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Ask the questions! Ask questions!

MR. W. CARTER:

Alright, Mr. Chairman, I would then maybe ask the minister would he table his document? Would the other ministers table theirs? For example, the Minister of Transportation maybe should be encouraged to table a similar outline as the Minister of Fisheries just presented as to what he intends to do with the \$125 million that he is asking for under Interim Supply. Again, I ask the Minister of Fisheries, would he table that document?

Mr. Chairman, on the matter of fisheries, I think the minister did make reference in his remarks to the \$60 million subsidiary agreement that has been signed recently between the federal and provincial governments. We know that that is a five-year agreement. We know that there is something like \$28 million, I believe, over that five year period earmarked for the

harvesting sector. We know that there are similar amounts for processing and other sectors of the fishery.

Now then, I wonder would the minister mind telling the Committee how he intends to spend that money. I have the agreement here, and I have seen the documents presented by the federal minister and the provincial minister. There is no break down in that document as to how that \$60 million is going to be spent.

I might say, Mr. Chairman, that a lot of interest has been shown in that agreement. A lot of hopes have been built up on the strength of the agreement and certainly a lot of fishermen in my district would like to know what they can expect by way of assistance under the harvesting part of that agreement whereby it is intended that \$28 million be spent.

I would like to find out from the Minister of Fisheries, and I think he can do this, and I think he will, I would like to find out what the situation is with respect to the mid distance trawler fleet, the mid distance vessels that have been built by the government now being operated by a private arrangement, I think, or an arrangement with certain members of the private sector. I think most members would like to know, Mr. Chairman, how the mid distance fishery is working. Are the vessels successful? Are their catch rates high? Who is buying the fish? Where is the fish going? I believe it is going to the resource short plants. If it is, that is a good place to put it, but certainly I think we would like to know how that arrangement is working out.

I would like for the minister to give some consideration or at least give some thought to explaining the recently signed federal/provincial subsidiary agreement on the fishery. I noticed that a lot of the items listed in the documents presented are of a federal nature.

For example, it talks about considerable expenditure on the bait service. We all know that the bait service is a federal responsibility as agreed to under the 1949 Terms of Union.

We talk about an expenditure, for example, on marine service centres. We know that is a federal/provincial arrangement and it is probably one of the best things that could ever happen to the Newfoundland fishery, the advent of the marine service centres.

We would like to know, as I said a moment ago what the minister's plans are for the processing sector? Does he have any plans there for secondary processing? How does he intend to help the small plants? I might point out to the minister, Mr. Chairman, rumours that are starting to circulate to the effect that a lot of the small plants that were divested by Fisheries Products International when they were privatized, a lot of these small plants are now in serious financial trouble.

AN HON. MEMBER:
As we predicted.

MR. W. CARTER:
As predicted by members on this side, I should add, but I get no joy out saying I told you so. But I would like to find out from the minister what the situation is

with respect to the ten or twelve plants that were unloaded or divested by FPI at the time.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Do you have any figures?

MR. W. CARTER:
I do not have any figures.

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. W. CARTER:
I am suggesting, Mr. Chairman, that a lot of these plants are obviously having financial problems. I would like the minister to tell the Committee -

AN HON. MEMBER:
That is a rumour.

MR. W. CARTER:
Well, that rumour can be substantiated, in fact, it has been.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

AN HON. MEMBER:
Where are the figures?

MR. W. CARTER:
I am not prepared today, Mr. Chairman, to name the companies. I am not sure they would want me to. But that does not take away from the fact, Mr. Chairman, that certain of these smaller companies are having financial problems. I would like to know what the minister's plans are in that regard. How does he intend to maybe apply part of that allocation that is now set aside for the processing sector to some of these small plants that obviously will need financial assistance?

In other areas - we are now asked

to approve an \$800 million interim finance bill - of course, I would like to ask the Minister of Health (Dr. Collins) what his plans are, for example, with respect to providing accommodation and proper chronic care facilities for the aged and the infirm. We all know that a few years back certain facilities were promised, promises that were never kept, by the way.

I would like to find out from the Minister of Health what his plans are for the licencing of chronic care facilities. We now have a situation where it appears that the department is taking a dog in the manger attitude whereby they are unwilling to provide the funds themselves to provide these facilities, and the private sector, in certain areas, has expressed an interest in filling the vacuum, in doing certain things.

MR. WINDSOR:
(Inaudible.)

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Chairman, the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Windsor) will have a chance to stand up and speak, as I am doing, and I would suggest that maybe he would listen. The Minister of Finance, a moment ago, complained that we were not asking questions. Well, now, I am asking questions and I would ask him to do me the courtesy of listening and maybe when I sit down, then he can stand up and answer my questions. That is all I ask.

Mr. Chairman, on the Minister of Public Works (Dr. Twomey), my leader alluded to the amount requested by Public Works, \$34 million, I would like to find out from the Minister of Public Works, for example, what is going to be the cost of sound proofing or

correcting errors that were obviously made in the design and construction of the so-called West block of Confederation Building?

What is the cost to the taxpayer of the monstrosity that now adjoins the landscape of the new extension? It looks like it might be the upper half of a whale. I am not sure. I hear it cost about \$25,000 to put there. I would like the minister to tell us what it did cost, and maybe he could tell us what it is while he is at it. A lot of people are wondering what it represents, how it got there, what it is suppose to be doing there, and more importantly, what it cost.

MR. TOBIN:
It ran ashore.

MR. W. CARTER:
These are some questions.

I would like the Minister of Housing (Mr. Peach) to talk about housing and tell, for example, what representation he has made to the appropriate minister, I guess it is Justice who looks after the registry at mortgages and documents, has he made representation to that minister with respect to maybe reducing the registration tax that is now levied against new home buyers and builders in this Province?

I am told by young people who are interested in buying a home that when they go now to pay their lawyer for their legal fees there is a very substantial registration fee, for example, that is levied against that new home buyer. I believe, now, an average house of say \$100,000 with a standard mortgage would probably up costing by way of registration fees, in the government's registry down

stairs, close to \$1,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. W. CARTER:

Yes, oh yes. Mr. Chairman, these are some of the questions. And, of course, the Minister of Transportation maybe could explain again, in more detail, what his plans are. Certainly in my district, the people of Twillingate district would be delighted to find out what the Department of Transportation's plans are for the unpaved roads in Twillingate district. We have millions of pounds of fish being hauled over roads and conditions that are unfit to haul anything over.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. W. CARTER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MORGAN:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Bonavista South.

MR. MORGAN:

Mr. Chairman, I have been sitting in this House of Assembly since 1972. I have sat in the front benches, I have sat in the corner, in the very far corner, and I am now slowly moving up again in the back row, but I am happy where I am. I am quite happy where I am.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MORGAN:

I am quite happy and my colleague

for Bellevue (Mr. Callan) is also quite happy.

MR. CALLAN:

I am happier, myself.

MR. MORGAN:

I have never seen such a dismal performance by the Opposition in all the years I have been in the House of Assembly and I say that sincerely. So far we have been debating approximately four to five hours on Interim Supply. Interim Supply is indeed the time to zero in on government ministers, to ask very pertinent questions on their programs, on their spendings and their policies for the future years. Why do you want X number of dollars as outlined here? Mr. Chairman, it is \$787 million.

The Opposition so far has been so engulfed in the one issue, Sprung, they have lost touch with all other aspects of the particular issues of the people of Newfoundland. The Opposition Leader is so sensitive of one of us from this side mentioning the fact that he is getting an extra salary of \$50,000 and wanting to know where it came from, he just cannot stand it. He turns red in the face and get up on Points of Privilege, etc. But I say, Mr. Chairman, in all sincerity, if the hon. gentleman cannot take the heat, why did he come in the kitchen? Let him leave.

Mr. Chairman, there is no question I have very many pertinent questions to ask the hon. gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition, during this session. I could pose them today, but not today. No, no! Today is the wrong time. Whether I do it in this forum or publicly or otherwise, the Leader of the

Opposition must understand if he wants information from government, whether it be on the contracts of a program or a project or whether he wants the expenditure from Fisheries or from Health or from Municipal Affairs or elsewhere, he has got to play it both ways.

Come clean with the House of Assembly. There is not one member of this House of Assembly able to walk away today and say, 'We are drawing \$125,000 a year, and we can drive around in a government car, and we can get hotels where we want to get hotels on the special benefits of the extra salary.'

AN HON. MEMBER:
Complimentary.

MR. MORGAN:
Complimentary, they are called, but that is not the term to use. They are tied in benefits to the special salary he is getting.

Now, there comes a time when one of these days - the Leader of the Opposition must understand this, because if ever he stands on his feet to charge any minister of this Crown or member of this House of Assembly or the Premier with any kind of potential Conflict of Interest, he must understand immediately, that whenever he stands as the Leader of the Opposition or a member of this House to promote in any way or form the cause of any one of those four to five businessmen who are supporting him financially - Mr. Chairman, I know of one case right now where he is standing on thin ground, where he is already promoting the cause of a certain businessman and his projects in this Province. He is already on very thin ground. If the hon. gentleman came in this House for

the sole purpose of promoting the cause of his friends, if he is going to do that, Mr. Chairman, he better be able to take the heat in this kitchen, in this House of Assembly, because here is one gentleman here who will indeed give the heat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. MORGAN:
Mr. Chairman, he stood in the House for the last three or four times he has spoken and he has not posed one question. It takes a former Tory to get up and ask very pertinent questions, the member for Twillingate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. MORGAN:
The only questions we have heard so far on Interim Supply.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Falling apart! Falling apart!

MR. MORGAN:
Falling apart, talk to the member for Mount Scio. Oh, are they falling apart!

Mr. Chairman, if the hon. the Leader of the Opposition can be forgiven it is because he has been away from the House of Assembly for so long and not knowing how the House operates. I saw him sit in the Gallery of the House watching his Opposition House Leader, and taking reports daily as to the performance of the various members - I understand he is still doing that - but he was sitting watching the performance of the House of Assembly.

Surely it is not because he is not knowing what should take place in

the House. Instead of asking pertinent questions on these estimates, like, for example - does it take members of this government side in the backbench to get up and ask questions of the ministers as to what is going on and why you want so much money. Except for the member for Twillingate, nobody has asked a question.

For example, I would like to know a number of things. We can go down through the list. On Forestry nobody has asked a question. Are we going to be involved this year on major silviculture programs? Are we or are we not? Nobody has asked that question on Forestry.

On Mines, for example. What is the situation? Are the Opposition members afraid to speak about mines because it is so positive over the last year and a half. I have not heard any news on mines that is not positive, new mineral development, new mine development, the Hope Brook Mines, new mines in Central Newfoundland. Nobody has asked a question. Oh no, that is too positive, we cannot ask a question on mines.

For example, Culture, Recreation and Youth is an example. Has anybody asked if there is going to be an increase this year in the capital spendings on recreational grants, so important to many rural districts, so important to districts in the Opposition. Nobody has posed the question.

For example, on Municipal Affairs, not one question on Municipal Affairs. Not one question! The obvious question to be posed by someone like a member of the House concerned with their districts would be: How many applications

are in this year, Mr. Minister, over last year? What is the total value over last year, and how much can you accommodate, what is the percentage you can accommodate, versus the need? Nobody has posed that kind of question.

The Minister of Fisheries got up and answered questions which were not even asked, but the member for Twillingate at least attempted to put forward some reasonable questions.

On Tourism and Development, I would like to know, for example, and the House should know, what is the progress being made by the Minister of Tourism on the advertising program tied in with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island? Are we making progress? Are we making progress in the United States of America in getting tourists to come to our province? What is the status of the new tourism agreement between Newfoundland and Canada? Is that program working? How much will be spent this year on new facilities? Will an average entrepreneur who wants to build cabins, or a new motel get assistance this year? Nobody has bothered to ask these kind of questions.

Oh no, Mr. Chairman, now, for example, on Career Development and Advanced Studies, not one question about the new regional collages. Not a question on the regional cottages! A whole new concept in the province's education field and not one question posed as to how the new program is working. What additional costs does it mean to government, if any? What are the benefits? All these kind of things and not one question, very important matters.

And then, Mr. Chairman, on Education, there is one obvious question the Opposition should be posing, for example, Now we have had grade twelve the last few years. Now, how is grade twelve working out? How is it working out in the province? Looking at the cost of grade twelve, is it to our benefit as a government to keep it in place? Is it a good program, is it working well with the educational system? That is another good question not even posed in Education.

On Social Services, where we are spending \$53 million, nobody has asked a question about the major program which I think, is a very, very important program, where you take people off the social assistance roles and put them to work. Not one question on community development projects, not one question posed as to: Will the funds be as good as last year or as much as last year? Is the program going to be carried on the same as last year? If so, what is the status of the social assistance roles in the Province. Are we benefitting by this program, or not? I would say, Mr. Chairman, that question is a very important one. The minister, I am sure, will be pleased to answer it in appropriate time, but not a question from the Opposition, not a question.

Mr. Chairman, there is Public Works and Services with \$34 million. But the situation is, that the Opposition is not performing at all and if the members of the general public could only see how inadequate the Opposition is performing in scrutinizing - the only thing that the Leader of the Opposition thought he had a tiger by the tail on was Sprung. He thought he had

a tiger by the tail.

So he came into the House of Assembly on the coattails of an election in Waterford-Kenmount where he thought he had a great victor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MORGAN:

But, he was not, he was not. But the new member who is coming into the House, when he gets here, I will tell him that it was he who was the great victor. It is on his personal popularity that he came into the House of Assembly. He did not come in on the coattails of the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

The honourable member's time has elapsed.

MR. MORGAN:

I will carry on some other time, Mr. Chairman, some other time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Stephenville.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Performance, performance Mr. Chairman, Waterford-Kenmount was performance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:

We have a new program in this government now. You want to start a business, here is the proposal now: You come here to Newfoundland and we will let you be fifty percent owner of it, we will give you the contract for \$14.5 million, we will not ask any questions and when we go to ask you questions, we are going to say, 'Call the Premier, call the Premier.'

So when any business in Canada wants to come to Newfoundland, come on in. We do not want you to give us any money, not a dollar, not a nickle, not down, nothing. Come in to Newfoundland, we will give you fifty percent of it, then we are going to give you the contract and let you do what you want with it. Well now, I will tell you, that is a good signal to the rest of Newfoundland out there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:

It is a beautiful signal to all of those Newfoundlanders trying to start small businesses who got to put in most of their money.

Mr. Sprung comes in, and in this big contract that the Premier talks about, and says, 'We have put in \$3.5 million,' he says. He has not put in a cent! He has not put in a cent! That is why it is a big issue with Newfoundlanders. It is time you woke up on the other side as to what it really is.

The people of Waterford-Kenmount gave us their vote of confidence, and the people in this Province will do so in the next election, by the way.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:

That is the new government program now to get new businesses going. 'You come on in, do not bring a copper of your money and we will give it all to you and not ask any questions.' Way to go, that is going to drop the unemployment rate.

On performance, by the way, since 1979, 3,000 less people in this Province are working. Those are the numbers and that is all I need to know when we talk about performance. When we talk about performance, that is all I need to know.

Rural Newfoundland is declining out there and you are talking about the unemployment rate going down. Yes, it is going down, there is not going to be anybody left after the next little while the way you are going over there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. K. AYLWARD:

So, I am going to get into, Mr. Chairman, the next day, some very pertinent questions which I have been hoping to get at with all these wonderful ministers over there. I am looking forward to it Mr. Chairman. I have all kinds of questions.

Of course, it took them nine months to open the House and when you finally got it open -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. K. AYLWARD:

Don't you worry about the questions, Mr. Chairman.

Since it is approaching six o'clock, I would like to adjourn debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Chairman, I move the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. the member for St. John's East Extern.

MR. PARSONS:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole have considered the matters to them referred, have directed me to report progress and ask leave to sit again.

On Motion, report received and adopted. Committee ordered to sit again on tomorrow.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday at three of the clock, and that this House do now adjourn.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 3:00 p.m.

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