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(Hansard)

Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

Monday

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Statements by Ministers

The House met at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (Lush):
Order, please!

We have a visitor in the the Speaker's Gallery, Mr. W. J. Chafe, a resident of St. John's. Mr. Chafe was Chief Dispatcher with the Newfoundland Railway and later the CN Railway. He is the author of I've Been Working On The Railway, a song that has made us all happy from time to time. Mr. Chafe is 93 years young. On behalf of all members, I would like to welcome him to the Gallery today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Also, we would like to welcome a delegation from the Council of Wabush in the persons of the Mayor, Mr. Bill Kelly, Councillor Jim Skinner, and Town Manager Keith Warren.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Also, we would like to welcome some students. We have twenty-five Grade III students with four chaperons and their teacher, Yvonne Dawe, from Vaters Elementary here in St. John's.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
We would also like to welcome twenty-eight cadets with their leaders Bob Greene, Madonna Roberts and Trudy Taylor, from Gunners Cove.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Premier and this government, it is my pleasure to announce that the Province has successfully completed negotiations for a public offering of debentures in the United States capital market.

The issue is for an amount of \$150 million in United States dollars bearing interest at the rate of 9 per cent and priced at 99 and 1/8 of the principal amount to yield 9.09 per cent. This, Mr. Speaker, represents the lowest interest rate the Province has paid for a long term issue in either the Canadian or United States markets since 1973. The debentures will be dated June 1, 1989 and will mature June 1, 2019, with the bondholders having an early redemption option on June 1, 2004.

The issue is managed by Merrill Lynch Capital Markets, Salomon Brothers Incorporated, RBC Dominion Securities Corporation and ScotiaMcLeod (USA) Incorporated. Proceeds from the borrowing will be used for general provincial purposes and to refund a maturing U.S. dollar debt issue. I am pleased to state, Mr. Speaker, that the issue was very well received by the investment community and saw a lot of interest from a large number of the major insurance, trust and pension funds in the United States. The official signing of the new issue will take place in New York on June 1, 1989.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I would first of all like to thank the hon. Minister for being so kind as to forward a copy of his statement to my office before coming to the House, and that courtesy is certainly welcomed.

It is very encouraging, indeed, to see the lowest interest rate since 1973, 9 per cent, in the United States money market, but I guess that begs the question, what rate would we have received if we had gone to Japan or Switzerland or some other money market. As well, of course, there is a very compelling statement in the statement for me as a former Minister of the past administration. I think the interest rate and the interest shown in the debentures reflects a confidence in the way the Province's affairs were handled in the past.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MATTHEWS:

Mr. Speaker, it will be quite interesting to see what happens in the next twelve to twenty-four months with the credit rating and the interest rates on future bonds to be floated by the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the hon. the Premier. The Premier indicated in the House in debate on Thursday that his administration will not be interested in band-aid solutions in trying to solve the economic problems that face Newfoundland and Labrador. Certainly, while that is not an novel approach it is an noble approach and we admire the government for taking that position. In view of the present long-term crisis facing the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker, and in view of the horrendous negative impact on this Province, can the Premier tell the House what proposals his administration have developed to date, have made to the federal government, or are about to make to the federal government to lessen the economic impact of the horrendous failure, long-term, that is facing the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador over the next five or six years?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, just before I answer the question, with the House's permission, I would note that this is the first time a member on behalf of a government has stood to answer a question in this House for nearly a year, and I say to all members present that that will not happen again.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:

Now, to deal with the question: The government has taken steps.

We have had meetings with representatives of the federal government. We have been preparing a position. We are preparing to deal with the situation that we expect to arise, because everybody who rationally looks at it expects that late this year the Government of Canada will confirm the reduction. It is not definite yet, they have not made a decision, but we are not going to wait until that decision is made and then be in a position where we do not have time to respond. We have met with Mr. Crosbie and other federal representatives and we have worked out an arrangement with them to work co-operatively. We must bear in mind that the federal government has the exclusive jurisdiction in the management of the fisheries. They have had the responsibility for the fisheries. Whether it was mismanagement, bad management, poor management, no management, negligent management or just bad luck that caused the situation, it is a federal responsibility. Fortunately this Province is not saddled with the financial consequences of being responsible for that bad management, so we have left the responsibility where it belongs to provide the funding to deal with it, with the federal government. Now, we have taken preliminary steps to work co-operatively with the federal government to work out the best long-term solution. It is not going to serve anybody for me to start the negotiations through question and answers in the House. I have to work directly with the ministers involved and not do it in a public way. But suffice it to say the thrust that we are taking is to recognize the dimension of the problem and recognize that no matter what, we still have a large portion of our

people than we should have dependent upon the fishery. There is not enough coming out of the fishery, the fishery had not demonstrated enough potential in the past to provide that, so we are asking the federal government to work with us to try and find long-term solutions, and that is the thrust that we will be taking.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that in 1989 there was a 31,000 ton reduction in 2J+3KL cod made available. Everybody in this Province knows there will be a further 45,000 ton reduction probably recommended for 1990. That is 76,000 tons that is going to impact on thousands of people in hundreds of communities. Now, I ask has the Premier, on behalf of his administration, made any commitment to the federal government to get involved in any national program that might be developed, and must be developed, to address this major crisis?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

The answer is simple and I gave it. We have made a commitment and we will be working with the federal committee -

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

PREMIER WELLS:

If the members want an answer, I will answer. If not, I will sit down. If they do not want an answer, I will sit down. Now, Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is we have met with Mr. Crosbie, we have talked with Mr. Siddon, we have met with Mr. McKay and others, and we have proposed an approach. We have got, initially, a very good response from the federal government representatives. We have established a committee of the Newfoundland Cabinet consisting of the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Carter), the Minister of Development (Mr. Furey), and myself, to be involved as a committee to work with the federal committee. We will do that. We have proposed solutions for their consideration. We will be proposing more, and we will propose a method to deal with it. That method is in the process of being put into operation. Yes, we have taken steps.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary. Mr. Speaker, obviously the Premier has chosen not to answer the question. Let me ask him this: Who is it, on behalf of the government of Newfoundland and Labrador, who will lead for the government of Newfoundland and Labrador on this most important issue? Is it the Premier? Is it the Minister of Fisheries, or is it some other minister?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

It is me, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The member for St. Mary's - the Capes.

MR. HEARN:

My questions also are to the Premier. The Premier mentioned, when he was answering the first question, that there are too many people involved in the fishery. I ask him, is he advocating another resettlement program like the first Liberal Premier we had in the Province?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:

Mr. Speaker, we are simply recognizing the fact, and our preliminary discussions with the federal representatives indicate clearly that they recognize the fact that too great a proportion of our population is dependent upon the fishery resources. We have got to provide other alternative sources of income for our people, and that is the failure of the former government that we intend to address, Mr. Speaker. That is what I am saying, facing reality.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for St. Mary's - the Capes.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, he could have said 'burn your boats', which would have summarized it in three words. The Premier has set up a special cabinet committee to deal with the present crisis. I ask, seriously: Would he consider

setting up an all-party committee of the House, where we could have a greater range of experience, in dealing with the serious situation?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER WELLS:
If an all-party committee wants to get together to discuss it, I have no basic objection. But it is the committee of cabinet that will deal with the Government of Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for St. Mary's - the Capes.

MR. HEARN:
The Premier stated in answer to one of the original questions that he would be chairing the special committee, that he would be dealing with the problem. He is also chairing the three member committee he has set up, and I understand he is leading the way. I wonder why he did not axe his Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Carter) and save us some more money instead of axing a competent Deputy Minister of Fisheries?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:
Is the hon. the member for St. Mary's - the Capes repeating his question?

MR. HEARN:
I asked, Mr. Speaker, if he is going to Chair all the committees himself, including the recent one he set up, why do we need a Minister of Fisheries?

PREMIER WELLS:

That is another question, and I am happy enough to answer it. That was not the question that was asked before.

Mr. Speaker, the answer is fairly simple. After discussion with the Minister of Fisheries and the Minister of Development, we agreed that this matter was of such concern to the people of this Province, and in particular the fishermen of this Province and the people working in the fish plants of this Province, that we want to give it the highest possible priority. That is why the Premier is involved.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

PREMIER WELLS:
Unlike the Prime Minister of the hon. member's party, who refuses to get involved on behalf of Newfoundland and deal with the foreign over fishing and give it the priorities, we are giving it the priority it needs.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Grand Falls.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my friend, the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture. I would like the Minister to advise the House, or inform the House, of his government's plans for this year's aerial protection program. Would the Minister, when he answers the question, confirm that the 1989 infestation forecast shows a marked decline in the hemlock looper problem - because of, among other things, an effective aerial protection program undertaken in the past - and would he, at the same time, confirm that only 1,531 hectares are in the moderate to

severe category as opposed to 118,000 hectares in 1988? Indeed, I understand the scientists predicted a total collapse of the hemlock looper infestation by next year, 1990. Perhaps the minister could address those points?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would have preferred if the minister - the hon. member would ask the various questions that he posed as supplementaries and I could have dealt with each one. But, basically, the minister is right - the member, I am sorry. Force of habit dies hard, Mr. Speaker. After fifteen years standing up and asking the questions. The Speaker will have to give me directions because I may well stand up one day, Sir, and ask a question when indeed I should be answering.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Speaker understands.

MR. FLIGHT:

The hon. member is basically right. I will be informing the House in the next day or so about the government's intention with regard to an aerial spray program. On his assertions, I am not certain, though, that the collapse of the hemlock looper or the lower level of infestation is a direct result of the past spray programs. There is no question that the hemlock looper infestation is at a lower level than it was last year, or lower than it was the previous year. But whether or not it is a direct result of the spray program, I am not certain of that, and I doubt very much if anyone else is

certain at this point in time. However, it is lower, and I tell the member in due course I will be announcing to the House of Assembly the government's proposed forest protection program for this year, specifically against the hemlock looper.

MR. SIMMS:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, according to some remarks made by the minister in the press, he has managed already, in just a few short weeks now, to alienate the paper companies in this Province, by his remarks recently in the weekend paper. I am wondering if the minister will be insisting on a very heavy-handed, dictatorial approach, because he has already said publicly the Cabinet will decide. And I am wondering if this is a personal position of the minister, long held? Or will he be taking the advice of the professional people, his own officials, the federal scientists and the professional foresters from the paper companies, which, in fact, paid two thirds of the cost of this particular program? And can he confirm for the House and for the people of the Province that his own officials are recommending a \$1.2 million, 8,000 hectare program during the coming year, which would include areas of silviculturally treated areas running from Castors River to Main Brook on the Northwestern area of the Island?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, with regards to the specifics of the aerial spray program, the minister will have to wait until I, as Minister of Forestry, is prepared to announce to the hon. House the details of that program, and that will come very shortly. But I want to say this to the hon. member: He himself would be jealous, would be very proud of the relationship that I have developed in two short weeks with the paper companies.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FLIGHT:

I have had discussions with the various paper companies. They are aware that their concerns and their ideas will get due consideration. Any forest protection program taken on by this government, because of the fact that it impacts so greatly on the paper companies - because, of course, they cost share it - their concerns, their ideas will be addressed, and no program will be announced without input being considered from the paper companies. But I have to say to the minister that it is indeed a fact that it is this Cabinet and government that decides what spray program or what forest protection we will announce.

In as far as my alienating the paper companies, no, Mr. Speaker, I have not attempted, nor will I, nor have I alienated the paper companies. As I said, the minister himself would be very proud of the relationship that I am developing.

MR. TOBIN:

The member!

MR. FLIGHT:

The member himself. But, furthermore, I might say that I also have no desire to be known in this Province as the Minister for Abitibi-Price.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

A final supplementary. The hon. minister need not worry about becoming known as the Minister of Abitibi-Price. His big challenge is to become known as the Minister of Forestry, upholding the responsibility of protecting this Province's most important resource. That is the thing he should be worried about.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that there is evidence that recent spray programs in the past with both Bt and fenitrothion have obviously proven to be effective because of results; and in view of the fact that there are very, very serious concerns, which we will not go into right now, about wood supply shortages in the very near future; and in view of the fact that there is enough product on hand now to cover about 4,500 hectares of this spray program - product on hand - and to go any other way would cost the taxpayers of this Province, unnecessarily, in my view, an additional \$40,000 or \$50,000 for additional product, I want to ask the minister once again will he be taking the advice of his own officials and professional people like them, federal scientists and the other

professional foresters who are involved in this issue, will he be taking the advises of his own officials and will he be indeed accepting the recommendations that all of these professional people are putting forward? And who is going to take the lead in this issue? Will it be the Premier or will it be the Minister of Forestry?

MR. SPEAKER:
The Minister of Forestry.

MR. FLIGHT:
Mr. Speaker, the member, as I stated earlier, will have to wait until I am ready to make a decision to announce our forest protection program in this House of Assembly. Most of the questions he has raised will be answered when I make the Ministerial Statement announcing our program.

MR. WINDSOR:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WINDSOR:
I would like to address a question to the Minister of Energy (Mr. Gibbons). In view of the importance and the magnitude of the impending development of the Lower Churchill hydro-electric potential, would the minister tell the House what importance and what priority he is putting on this project, and what measures he has taken to move these negotiations along? Is the intertie to the Island still an essential component of the negotiations that are taking place? Has he authorized a negotiation committee to continue with these negotiations towards reaching an

agreement with Quebec?

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

MR. GIBBONS:
Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say to the member for Mount Pearl, the former Minister of Energy, that it is our intention to continue to seek an arrangement with the Province of Quebec. Personally I have been briefed on the matter over the last few days and we will be following up on that in due course.

MR. WINDSOR:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WINDSOR:
Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to hear the minister is putting such importance on these negotiations. Would he, therefore, tell the House why the meeting that was scheduled for last week was cancelled? Was it cancelled because he had directions from the Premier to do so? Was it cancelled by the Government of Quebec because of the fact that the Premier has alienated the Government of Quebec? Was this the reason that that meeting was cancelled? Is that the priority?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

MR. GIBBONS:
Mr. Speaker, the meeting that I had arranged with the Minister in Quebec was arranged before the

House was called for last Thursday, and it was a meeting to be a courtesy visit by me to visit him, introduce myself, and it was not to be a negotiating session as such. That is left, as the hon. member knows, to the professionals.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WINDSOR:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Mount Pearl.

MR. WINDSOR:

I have never heard such a cop-out. That was an ideal opportunity to meet with the minister. He waited until the House was open, and his excuse now is that the House is in session and he does not want to be away. Is he going to wait another five weeks? Why, indeed, would he cancel that meeting of last week? A meeting of that nature is critical. Why did he wait two or three weeks before even going to see Mr. Ciaccia on having that meeting? Who is the official energy speaker for the government? Is it the Minister of Energy or is it the Premier? Has he had directions not to meet with Mr. Ciaccia?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. GIBBONS:

Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member says, we will continue the negotiations in due course. My meeting with the Minister of Energy for Quebec was really only a courtesy call. The negotiations will be done by the appropriate people and we will

look for an appropriate arrangement.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

I have a question for the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation. Mr. Speaker, the previous government, through Minute-of-Council 204, ordered that there be a contract for two new vessels at the Marystown Shipyard to service the people of Bell Island. Mr. Speaker, when the work was getting slow at the Marystown Shipyard and a greater emphasis put on the need for the ferries for Bell Island, a further MC, 308, ordered that both ferries be advanced to start the same time, with a letter of intent signed by the Deputy Minister to the Marystown Shipyard to start these two vessels.

My question to the minister is: Why has he displayed such contempt for the people of Bell Island and the employees of the Marystown Shipyard by rescinding or reneging on the MC and not living up to the agreement of the previous government?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

I can tell the hon. member that we, on this side of the House, in government, have our own agenda as to how we plan to operate the department and I will let him know in due course.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, have you ever seen such arrogance displayed to the people of Bell Island who need a ferry service?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I just want to ask hon. members if they would wait until I recognize them. This will be for the benefit of Hansard. Three or four members now have carried on without my recognition. So I ask for that courtesy, please.

The member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, now that the minister has displayed such contempt to the people of Bell Island who need the ferry service to say that his agenda is not going to fulfill the commitment that was needed, now that the people of the Marystown area, the shipyard, are having to leave the Province to work in the shipyard in St. John, New Brunswick, and other people are unemployed because of the arrogance contempt of this government, can the Minister tell us, Mr. Speaker, whether it was his decision, the decision of the Premier, or the decision of the Cabinet to renege on our position and have Newfoundlanders unemployed and the people of Bell Island waiting for a ferry service?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

I will tell the hon. member that the decision was made, the decision to provide the ferries

for Bell Island is there. We recognize the fact that a commitment was made to provide one ferry, which we have already given a contract for. As to the second one, it is under study and the commitment was there -

MR. TOBIN:

It was (inaudible).

MR. GILBERT:

I am not bound by the MCs of the previous government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. GILBERT:

but it will be there, and we will be making the decision in due course.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary to the member, based on what he has just said, is: Have they rescinded the MC. Has the MC been rescinded, Mr. Speaker, or just basically ignored? Was the decision made by him or by the Premier, Mr. Speaker? He may also answer, in this supplementary, whether the government plans to have designed and constructed at the Marystown Shipyard a new icebreaker type ferry service to serve the residents of Fogo Island?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

MR. GILBERT:

The hon. member will get the

answers to all those questions in due course.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The member for Humber East.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

The position of Director of Cultural Affairs, so vital to the cultural life of the Province, has been vacant since the end of March. Is the government going to fill the position? If so, how is the position to be filled? Will the Public Service Commission be involved? When will it be filled?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

I would like to thank the hon. member for her question.

Yes, we do intend to fill the position of Director of Cultural Affairs. I have had discussions with the people of my department, particularly in the Cultural Affairs area, that along with the consideration of the integration of the various departments into the portfolio. We will be reappointing a director in due course.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Humber East.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of

Municipal and Provincial Affairs consult the artists of the Province, through the Provincial Artists Coalition and the government's own Arts Council, about the job description of the Director of Cultural Affairs before the position is advertised?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

Mr. Speaker, I have already had considerable discussion with the arts and cultural community about the focus of the department, the philosophy and the thrust we are going to take in the weeks and months ahead. In fact, we will consult before appointing such a director to that position.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Green Bay.

MR. HEWLETT:

Mr. Speaker, I note, with some degree of irony, I suppose, from my old nemesis, **The Sunday Express**, that the advertising for ministers in a courtesy sort of way has been cut back considerably, if not eliminated, by the Premier.

I would ask the Minister responsible for Environment, in light of the problems that the recycling company is into with regard to aluminum cans, would not money saved on advertisements in the newspapers, of a courtesy ministerial nature, best be spent in promoting environmental consciousness and the picking up of cans and the recycling of them by Newfoundlanders?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. KELLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am not sure if the member's question was all that clear, which gives an indication that the quality of questions is at the same level the quality of answers were in the previous administration, but I will do my best to give him some information.

The member may very well know that the bottling companies have undertaken the cost of the recycling program when they are talking about aluminum cans and plastic bottles, but it is certainly within the scope of this department to present the ideas of recycling and a clean environment to the public, and if dollars can be found, if it seems to be worthwhile, we will certainly consider it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Green Bay.

MR. HEWLETT:

I also ask the minister a question with regard to Come By Chance. Has the minister recently met with the municipal officials in Come By Chance?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. BAKER:

In the normal course of affairs, Mr. Speaker, the asking of a supplementary question is supposed to deal with matters covered in the original question to require a little further information, a little more factual information about the original answer. This is an entirely new question. I wonder is the member aware of that?

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, to the point of order, that really is a silly point of order to raise when there are only three minutes left in Question Period and a new member is asking a question. He did not ask a supplementary. He stood and asked a question of the Minister of Environment and Lands a separate question, which he is perfectly entitled to do, Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, and he does not need prompting from the hon. member opposite.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, most generally when a member is asking questions the member does ask a supplementary, but there is nothing in the rules of the House which says that the member cannot ask another question to another minister.

MR. HEWLETT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Minister responsible for Environment if he has met or spoken recently with municipal officials in the Come By Chance area with regard to the waste situation in that area?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. KELLAND:

I inform the member that I personally have not met with the municipal officials from Come By Chance; however, my department is in constant contact with the situation. We are on top of the situation and will take the appropriate steps at the appropriate time.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Kilbride.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs - I believe it is called now.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the Premier's promise during the election campaign to bring fairness and equity into the spending of our Province, and in view of the shortness of the construction season in our Province, Mr. Speaker, and in view of the amount of people who are seeking employment opportunities through the construction industry in our Province, I ask the hon. minister, Mr. Speaker, will he immediately honour the approvals given by the previous administration, under the legislative jurisdiction which were allowed at the time, for municipal capital funding, which has been announced already?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will know that this is a government with a new mandate. We are dealing with that mandate and the questions he has asked will be addressed forthcoming in the new budget.

MR. WINDSOR:

Are you waiting until the construction season is over?

MR. MATTHEWS:

Yes, by Christmas.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Kilbride.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the hon. minister.

Mr. Speaker, it is well known that we do not have a very long construction season in this Province, and it is also well known, or should be well known, that the projects that were announced, were recommended by the staff on a priority basis and were not made on a political agenda. So I ask the hon. minister if he is going to continue with the recommendations of his staff, on a priority basis, to start municipal funding and capital works immediately?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

MR. GULLAGE:

Mr. Speaker, I should remind the member that this House has been closed for over a year, and that was not of our doing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Not true. Not true.

MR. GULLAGE:

Well, just under a year. We will, in fact, be dealing with the matter of allocations for water and sewer and roads, done on a priority basis, as you said, by the officials in the department, and not on a political basis in any way, and that will be forthcoming. We understand the fact that it is late in the season and the urgency, but that announcement will be forthcoming.

MR. SPEAKER:

Question Period is finished for today.

Before going on to continue with Orders of the Day, again on behalf of hon. members, I would like to welcome to the galleries today a delegation from Twillingate, consisting of Councillor Frank

Guy, Councillor William Cooper,
and Councillor Harry Cooper.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker, in compliance with
The Financial Administration Act,
1973, I would like to table before
the House the report of the
Auditor General, along with The
Public Accounts, The Accounts of
Crown Corporations, and The
Departmental Observations on the
report of the Auditor General for
the year ending 1988.

Orders of the Day

MR. BAKER:
Motion 1, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
Motion 1.

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that
I have received a message from His
Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

MR. SPEAKER:
I, the Lieutenant-Governor of the
Province of Newfoundland, transmit
Estimates of Sums required for the
Public Service of the Province for
the year ending the 31st day of
March, 1990 by way of Interim
Supply and in accordance with the
provisions of The Constitution

Act, 1867, I recommend these
Estimates to the House of Assembly.

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. KITCHEN:
Mr. Speaker, I move that the
message together with a bill be
referred to the Committee of
Supply.

On motion, that the House resolve
itself into Committee of Supply to
consider the message of His Honour
the Lieutenant Governor, Mr.
Speaker left the Chair.

Committee of the Whole

MR. CHAIRMAN (Snow):
Order, please!

Shall the resolution carry?

The hon. the Government House
Leader.

MR. BAKER:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This Interim Supply Bill, I would
like to explain to members
opposite, is a necessity at this
point in time. Normally, in the
ordinary course of events, the
House would open in February,
sometime, a budget would be
brought down in early March and
Interim Supply would be asked for.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Chairman, on a point of order,
just so we can get clear what we
are doing here. It is very
unusual. At least I do not recall
seeing it in my experience in the
Legislature, where an Interim
Supply Bill, proposed by the
Minister of Finance on behalf of
the government, is not introduced
by the Minister of Finance.

MR. BAKER:
It does not matter.

MR. SIMMS:
Somehow we have the President of Treasury Board introducing it. It seems to me, if you look through precedents and everything, Mr. Chairman, you will find that the Minister of Finance is the individual who introduces it, and, of course, our side has prepared for our Finance critic to respond to the Minister of Finance and so on. Perhaps the President of Treasury Board can explain the reason and the purpose for this unusual move?

MR. BAKER:
To that point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:
First of all, I would like to remind the Government House Leader that the government sets its own order of speaking.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Opposition House Leader.

MR. BAKER:
Number two: I have checked this out, and the introduction of the bill can be done by either the President of Treasury Board or the Minister of Finance. As a matter of fact, it is probably more appropriate. Because in a sense, as the member who used to be President of Treasury Board knows, the whole Treasury Board process perhaps involves the President of Treasury Board in a lot of the minor details much more so than any of the other ministers in government. So perhaps it is a better practice for the President

of Treasury Board to handle the regular introduction of the bill, and the Minister of Finance can answer questions and so on about the various parts of the document during the course of the give and take in the House. I would like to say once again to the Opposition House Leader that it is proper for the President of Treasury Board to introduce the bill, and that is the decision we made.

MR. SIMMS:
Not to prolong the agony, but it is important, because, as I said, I do not recall it ever happening before. In my days in the Legislature I have seen no one other than the Minister of Finance introduce the Interim Supply Bill and that is the reason I asked the question. Now, if it is the government's intention to have the President of Treasury Board introduce Interim Supply from now on, then that is fine.

MR. WELLS:
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:
If the hon. the Premier will just relax now, I can get to my second question. Is it therefore the government's intention as well, then, to have the President of Treasury Board read the budget next week when it is brought down?

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:
That is a good question, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Order, please!

MR. BAKER:
To that point of order, Mr.

Chairman.

This is a silly kind of question. Obviously, the Minister of Finance reads the Budget Speech. It matters little who introduces the Interim Supply Bill. The Opposition House Leader should sit back and relax and enjoy himself as much as possible and let us get on with the business of governing this Province.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Chairman, finally to this point of order. I am not trying to play a silly game, I am trying to make a legitimate point of order. Because if you read the front of the bill that has been distributed, the bill is presented by the Hon. Hubert Kitchen, Minister of Finance.

MR. BAKER:

He has already presented it.

MR. SIMMS:

It is the Minister of Finance's Interim Supply Bill, and therefore it should be the Minister of Finance who introduces it. I cannot understand for one moment why the Minister of Finance is not being allowed to introduce his own Interim Supply Bill, and that is the point.

MR. BAKER:

One final point and that will be all from me, Mr. Chairman. The Minister of Finance has already introduced the Bill. The Bill has been introduced. The Minister of Finance has already done that, and I am simply speaking to the Bill as the first speaker. That is the order we have decided on. We decided our own order of speaking. It is as simple as that. The next time perhaps it may be the Minister of Finance, or maybe somebody else could do it.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

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

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:

As I was saying, the normal course of procedure would be for the budget to be brought in early in March, and an Interim Supply Bill then brought in to give the government money to tide it over until the whole budget process was completed. Normally, this Interim Supply Bill would be for a period of two months maximum. This is the normal procedure. However, Mr. Chairman, in this province, in recent years, that practice has been seriously strayed from or abused. We have the situation now where the House has not been open for eleven months. Normally the House would have been called together in February but was not because members opposite made a decision for their own reasons, for whatever reason. It was certainly not to carry on the business to the province. The House was not brought into session, the business of the Province was not carried on, and members opposite went and got Lieutenant-Governor's warrants, in contravention of the advice of the Controller General, to obtain money to keep the government going - to pay salaries - until they could get their leadership convention or election over, or whatever.

We, now, after winning the election, taking over the government of this Province, find ourselves in the situation where the money is running out from the warrants that were improperly

obtained. The House should have been called into session. In a couple of days Interim Supply could have been obtained and then the House dissolved, if they wanted to do that. The House should have been called into session. The money obtained from the warrants is now running out. As quickly as we possibly could we opened the House, brought in this Interim Supply Bill and are now presenting it to the House. The money is running out. The amount of money provided by warrants will keep us going until the end of this month, so there is some urgency in getting this particular bill passed.

The Interim Supply we are asking for covers two amounts: It covers the amount of the warrants, \$717,775,300, plus an additional amount to keep us going for another two months. These amounts that we have requested are essentially amounts to carry out the normal housekeeping duties of government; to pay salaries and to provide for ongoing regular expenses. The amount being asked for is \$1,155,475,600. That should keep us going for another month or so, until the budget can be properly dealt with in this House.

Interim Supply is intended to deal only with regular housekeeping matters - continuance of ongoing government programs and projects - and it is not supposed to deal with new projects. When it does deal with new projects, these have to be carefully announced and carefully pointed out in the course of the Interim Supply debate.

So I would like to point out at this time that included in The 1989 - 1990 Interim Supply Bill,

presently before the House for consideration, are some new capital account projects totalling some \$81 million. These new capital account projects will be described in some detail in the budget. They are being included in this Interim Supply for the reason that it is late in the year and construction has to get started. We have to proceed with certain public works in this Province, because if we wait for another month and a half for the budget to be completed, obviously the construction season is effectively over, because then we would have to get into the tendering process.

So included in this amount would be approximately \$16.8 million for improvements and construction to roads, approximately \$8 million for road and bridge rehabilitation, \$2.1 million for bridges and causeways, and \$54.1 million as part of the highways agreement with the federal government. That is a total of \$81 million, and it is included in this Interim Supply Bill.

Members opposite will appreciate, and I have to be very frank and honest at this point, the difficulty and the difficult position we are currently in with a budget in the process of preparation, and bringing in an Interim Supply Bill before the budget is presented and bringing in amounts that have to be explained in the Budget Speech and in the budget process.

I feel that we are performing our duties properly by pointing out exactly what this money is for in terms of amounts of money, \$16 million for this, \$8 million for road and bridge rehabilitation, \$54 million for highways and so

on. I feel that it is not proper at this time to detail every single program, these will be announced in due course. But we are in the budget process.

I think members opposite also must appreciate that in the discussion of The Interim Supply Bill, because of such a thing as budget secrecy and everything else until the budget is brought out, that there may not be a whole lot of minute detail that we can go into on this Interim Supply Bill. I know members opposite will be pushing us for it, but in all honesty, and with all the frankness I can muster, I would like to say to them that we will be as honest and as straightforward in explaining these amounts for Interim Supply as we can possibly be without causing the breakdown of the budget process, and without what we are doing here becoming preannouncements that might affect something in the Province, because we have to wait for the budget to be brought into the House before these things can be dealt with.

Mr. Chairman, having said these few words, I would like to give the Opposition members a chance to deal with the Interim Supply Bill. We will give them adequate opportunity to debate and deal with any items that might be covered in this Bill. I hope whatever concerns they have they will express, and we will do our best to answer their concerns, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Grand Bank.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I listened with great interest to

the President of Treasury Board and his explanation of the expenditures proposed in the Interim Supply Bill. I think it is fair for me to say at the outset, Mr. Chairman, and I think it is accurate, that for the first time in the history of this Parliament we have seen the President of Treasury Board and not the Minister of Finance get involved in presenting the Interim Supply Bill. I think we should put that on record today, that this has never occurred before in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador. I do not know why, or what explanation one could give for such a change in tradition. I do not think for any reason that it would be a reflection on the hon. Minister of Finance's capabilities or competence, or the Premier's confidence in him, but I think we have to go on record and say that it is very, very unusual that we see this happen here in this House today. Of course, over the last two or three weeks we have seen a number of unusual things happen in the Province with appointments to committees, and ministers not on committees that they traditionally were on. I am sure that that will be dealt with later on today and over the next number of days by other speakers on this side.

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to reflect for a moment, if I could, and go back two or three years, on the financial position of the Province and the last two or three budgets that have been presented in this legislature.

In the 1987-1988 budget the current account deficit was projected at \$173 million, and actually came in at \$58 million, which was significantly less than what was projected. In the last

fiscal year, 1988-1989, the deficit was projected at \$41 million. Two or three months ago, I think late January or early February, in actual fact the assessment that was done on the revenues and the budget position of the Province at that time showed there was some \$5 million surplus. I would be kind of interested to hear the President of Treasury Board's reaction to that, and if he has any information to give us that would clarify that matter, and if it was indeed between \$5 million and \$10 million surplus as of the end of January early February, then we would be quite interested to hear that as well.

MR. WINDSOR:

Or if they cooked the books.

MR. MATTHEWS:

If they cooked the books? No, I am not going to suggest that anyone has cooked the books, because I am sure they have not been there long enough yet to even think about trying to cook the books. I am sure that that thought will never occur in the next three to three and a half years that they are the government of the Province. After that, of course, it will be our responsibility to do an assessment on the books that they leave behind them.

Mr. Chairman, in two years we have seen a \$173 million deficit completely wiped out.

The budget of the hon. gentlemen, I suppose the President of Treasury Board or the Minister of Finance, one of them will introduce the budget, or maybe the Premier will want to do it himself, or the Minister of Fisheries, or someone else may

introduce the budget in a few weeks time, whenever they bring the budget in. But we have seen a deficit reduced from \$173 million, which is quite significant, and I guess the question that I would like answered by the minister when he responds, or someone replies from the other side, is: How long is this Interim Supply supposed to last? Are we talking, realistically, the end of July? I guess it is until the budget is actually passed in the Legislature, which I guess would be sometime between the middle of July and the last of July, to be realistic. I am sure most hon. members hope that we are here until the last of August dealing with the budget, because I am sure that no one wants to be out in the sun and the good weather this time of year.

Another thing, Mr. Chairman, that I would like to talk about, if I may, is it was quite ironic or amusing to hear the hon. Minister and his explanation for the amounts he is asking for for water and sewer, transportation and capital works projects, and to hear how today he cannot give too much detail, that it is too much to expect that he gives this amount of detail as to where the money will be spent this year. Of course, I did a little research and looked back through Hansard, of last year particularly, when he reacted to the Finance Minister of the day, the member for Mount Pearl's Interim Supply request for \$800 million. Of course, today we see his request for \$1,155,000,000, which is quite significantly higher than what was asked for last year. At the time, of course, the hon. gentleman and his colleagues of the day were asking for a specific list of road work that was going to be done

around the Province, and water and sewer projects that were going to be done around the Province, so I say to the hon. minister, that, yes, we do expect further detail and, while we do realize the urgency of dealing and passing an Interim Supply Bill to keep the Province operating and running, while we fully realize that and while we intend and plan to be co-operative to keep the Province running as best we can, we do not intend to just give him a free hand, to go on and give him \$1,155,000,000 in Interim Supply to do with as he sees fit. We will need answers to specific questions that I myself and other members on this side will ask before we consider approval. Of course, we realize the urgency and we are not going to be involved in any unnecessary delays or stalling tactics in the House, because it is too important an issue for the people of the Province to play that kind of game. There is a certain frankness that we will expect and we will require before we get on with the actual passing.

Mr. Chairman, these are some of the things and some of the questions that we would like raised, like, realistically, what time frame are we looking at for this amount of money to cover, if we could have a little more detail on where the monies will be spent in the Province, the amounts of money outlined by the hon. minister and outlined in the Bill, and if we could get further detail on where we can expect these monies to be spent?

Of course, Mr. Chairman, we anticipate and look forward to the Budget itself and to the expenditures of the money so allocated, because we are quite keen, on this side, and the people

of the Province are quite keen as well, to watch very carefully to see how monies are spent by the new administration. The theme of the election campaign was fairness, balance, and eliminating regional disparity. We are going to watch very closely, as the Official Opposition of the Province, and we will be informing the people of the Province accordingly as to how well the Premier particularly keeps the promises that he made just a few short weeks ago. Of course, we have seen some signs of his fairness of balance over the last couple of weeks in the way he dealt with some of our top civil servants. We just hope that when it comes to the expenditures of the Province he will, indeed, be more sincere about his fairness and balance when it comes to spending money around the various areas of the Province.

When saying that as well, Mr. Chairman, there is no question that there are some regions of this Province that have greater needs than other for road work and road improvements, water and sewer and everything else. No one can argue against that. No one can argue against fairness and balance if it is actually fairness and balance. I would be the first one to admit that in this Legislature and I tried to portray that as best I could when I was on the other side. I see the member for Port de Grave, the hon. Minister of Social Services (Mr. Efford) making comments and laughing, but one thing he cannot say about me is that I was unfair. I tried to be fair, I tried to be equitable and I tried to balance things, around this Province, of the departments that I had jurisdiction at the time.

MR. G. WARREN:
Mackisons will get their water and sewerage system.

MR. MATTHEWS:
I am sure other members on this side will be dealing with all those election announcements and promises that were made by the hon. the Premier and I am sure that he will live up to his 'fairness' and 'balance' campaign promises over the next couple of months in this Province. Of course, if he does everyone will be happy, because those areas of the Province that have the greatest need will indeed get more money than those that have lesser needs. I look forward as one member of the Legislature to seeing that occurring in the Province.

Mr. Chairman, I will conclude my few remarks by saying, again, that I would like greater detail, more specific outlining of where the monies are going to be spent, particularly for capital works. In saying that I am only making the same request that the hon. minister made last year when he was in this position. If it was reasonable for him to expect it then, it is only reasonable for me to expect it today and over the next couple of days. We look forward to further questions and debate on the Interim Supply Bill, Mr. Chairman, and I will have more to say a little later.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. SIMMS:
The Minister of Finance (Dr. Kitchen) is not even going to make a comment.

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

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Chairman -

MR. SIMMS:
You would be prepared to sit down with the minister, would you not?

MR. RIDEOUT:
I certainly would be prepared to sit down if the Minister of Finance wanted to make a comment. It is his resolution.

MR. SIMMS:
Unbelievable!

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Chairman, I have never seen happen in my fifteen years in this Legislature what is happening today. I have never seen it. If the Government House Leader is to be totally honest and aboveboard, during his term as Finance critic he has never seen it either.

MR. SIMMS:
That is correct.

MR. RIDEOUT:
We have never seen a situation in this Parliament when the President of Treasury Board with the Minister of Finance present in the House, sitting in his seat, takes the responsibility for introducing Interim Supply. It has never happened.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:
Shame! Shame! Shame!

MR. RIDEOUT:
Then, Mr. Chairman, if that was not bad enough, with the President

of Treasury Board sitting in his seat, the Minister of Finance, after the official critic for the Opposition speaks, stays in his seat, still does not try to get up and defend the estimates that the government are introducing today. What kind of signal, Mr. Chairman, is that sending to this Parliament? What kind of signal, Mr. Chairman, is that sending to the credit agencies, to the bond rating agencies that have to deal with the credit of Newfoundland and Labrador? It is irresponsible, on the first day of a new government in a new legislative session asking for Interim Supply, that the Minister of Finance stays in his seat and allows the President of Treasury Board to introduce his resolution.

Mr. Chairman, what does that mean?

MR. TOBIN:

No confidence in the Minister of Finance.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Does that mean, Mr. Chairman, that the administration has no confidence whatsoever in their Minister of Finance? Is that what it means?

MR. SIMMS:

It is pretty obvious.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Does that mean, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister of Finance in this administration is going to be silenced? He is sitting in the backbenches; although he is a Minister of the Crown he is in the backbenches, as are other ministers. Does it mean that the Minister of Finance is going to be silenced, Mr. Chairman, that he is going to be stifled, that the administration has no confidence in him, that they made him a

minister just to keep him quiet? Is that what this means, Mr. Chairman?

MR. SIMMS:

It is pretty clear.

MR. RIDEOUT:

That is a pretty sorry message to be sending to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Let me tell you something else, Mr. Chairman, that I have never seen in the fifteen years that I have been in this Legislature. I have never seen the most senior Cabinet Committee, Planning and Priorities Committee, devoid of a Minister of Finance and a Minister of Fisheries. I have never seen it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Every administration that I have observed in this Province in the time that I have been here, they were the chairpersons of the various policy committees, like Treasury Board, like Resource Policy, like Social policy, but in addition to that there were the two most important and most significant ministries in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, one being the Minister of Finance, who has the responsibility for raising and spending the money of the taxpayers of this Province, and the other one, then, the Minister of Fisheries, who has ministerial control over the most important economic department in this Province.

We have an administration today that have, deliberately or otherwise, frozen those two ministers off their most senior

Cabinet Committee. So every time, Mr. Chairman, there is a question of policy and planning and priority that comes up relative to Finance, who does the Premier turn to?

MR. SIMMS:
Himself.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Himself. He certainly does not turn to his Minister of Finance because he is not there. If there is a question, as there is now with this Province facing a crisis in the fishery, on fisheries in that Planning and Priorities Committee meeting, who does the Premier turn to for advice?

MR. SIMMS:
Himself.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Himself again.

Mr. Chairman, this has never been seen to have happened in this Province before. The two most senior ministers, responsible for two of the most important departments in the government, are deliberately frozen out of the inner circle. They are deliberately frozen out of the most senior Cabinet Committee. They are set aside. They are nothings. They do not exist. Their advice is not wanted. They are only a problem, so you solve the problem by keeping them out of your hair, Mr. Chairman. It is unbelievable that this would be allowed to happen. The ministers themselves, I would expect, are not very happy. For the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Fisheries not to be included on that senior Cabinet Committee is unbelievable and I would expect that they are not very happy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:
Hold on, boys, or Clyde will give you a rap.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Chairman, it is no trouble to know that the hon. the Emperor is absent from the House.

MR. SIMMS:
King Clyde.

MR. RIDEOUT:
You hear the catcalls now from the other side. You will not hear him when he is in.

MR. SIMMS:
No, you can say that again.

MR. RIDEOUT:
But you will hear them now from the other side.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Chairman, whoever is going to provide answers, whether it is the President of Treasury Board, but preferably the Minister of Finance - it is his bill; the resolution and the bill stands in his name - should be prepared to stand up on behalf of the administration and answer questions. But whoever it is going to be, one or the other, we have no control over it. It is something that has never happened before, but we have no control over that. Whoever it is going to be, I hope, Mr. Chairman, that they are prepared to provide specific answers.

I listened briefly to the Government House Leader and President of Treasury Board talking about part of this was

Special Warrants that had been obtained by the previous administration. That is true for a two month period, April and May, so I would assume the balance is for an additional month, that is up to the end of June, that the new government is asking for.

MR. SIMMS:

Seven hundred million in Special Warrants.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Yes, \$717 million.

We want to know specifically what is current account and what is capital account in this total allocation. And I expect the President of Treasury Board or the Minister of Finance when I sit down to get up and tell us exactly, first of all, the breakdown between current account and capital account.

Current account obviously the government has to have to meet its everyday commitment and to pay its bills, pay the salary bills and things of that nature. It is not normal that there be any significant capital requests made in Interim Supply. Now there are some federal/provincial programs that have to be continue to be funded. As a matter of fact there were none in the Special Warrant requests, only four federal/provincial commitments on ERDAs and things of that nature. These have to go on and that is normal and that is legal. There is nothing wrong with that.

But what is the breakdown in this budgetary request here between current and capital? And also, Mr. Chairman, we want to know the breakdown per department. For example, the total request for the Department of Fisheries is almost

\$21 million in Interim Supply. Now there will be - what - three or four months pass by during the period that covers this Interim Supply Bill, but certainly I do not expect the Department of Fisheries budget will be four times twenty million. I would hope it is, I would love to see that it, but I doubt if it will be. So the Department of Fisheries, for one example, is asking for a significant amount of allocation in those two supply motions.

Part of it, of course, is there is an ERDA agreement in Fisheries, and I understand that. But we want to know the breakdown between current and capital. We want to know it for department by department. And the minister must have that information. Surely goodness the minister is not coming to this Legislature without being able to tell us at the flick of a finger - it is no good to say we are new ministers, we are new this, we are new something else; every minister, and surely the Minister of Finance, must be able to tell us - at the flick of a page how much is capital in a particular department, how much is current in a particular department, and, after doing that, Mr. Chairman, what are the projects that are going to be funded under the amount of capital requested here in this Interim Supply today? What projects will be funded in Fisheries, and in Development and in Rural Development and in Transportation, Municipal Affairs. All of those things the ministers must constitutionally make available to the House of Assembly before this House of Assembly constitutionally makes supply available to it, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Burin -
Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Chairman, it is almost unbelievable what is happening here today. We have the government coming into the House and, as the Opposition House Leader said earlier when he rose on a point of order, and as the Opposition Leader has stated, one thing is clear the Premier today has exhibited, Mr. Chairman, quite clearly - almost dramatic in the way he has come - places no confidence whatsoever in the Minister of Finance. I mean, that is blatantly obvious to the whole Province that the Minister of Finance today in this Assembly does not have the confidence of the Premier. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, I do not know how the Minister of Finance can continue to sit in this House and continue to sit in the Cabinet when the Premier, his Leader, does not have any confidence in him. Not only does he not have confidence enough in him to let him introduce the bill, the minister himself does not have confidence in himself to defend what has come forward here today, because he has now refused on two occasions an opportunity to stand up after the President of Treasury Board has spoken. He has refused now on two occasions, Mr. Chairman, to take the floor and explain to us what is in this, so either the Premier has no confidence in him or he has no confidence in himself. But one way or the other, the finances of this Province, Mr. Chairman deserve somebody who has control over the Department of Finance and

is going to set a course and direction, And I urge the Minister of Finance that your role, Sir, is very important to this Province, and I urge you to stand firm against your leader and stand up and operate the department that you are supposed to operate.

I say further, Mr. Chairman, that when we go through this, and we look at Transportation and we look at Municipal Affairs, Mr. Chairman, it is obvious that there is a significant allocation for the Department of Transportation in particular. So I would assume, Mr. Chairman, even though the information has not been given to us as to what projects are going to be carried out, I would assume from this that there is going to be capital works over and above the ERDA agreements that have been presently introduced or signed.

And I hope, I say to the Minister of Transportation, (Mr. Gilbert) Mr. Chairman, that the Government have struck down the MC that dealt with putting two ferries to Bell Island, will be giving the people of Bell Island, an adequate ferry service. I wonder where the member for Bell Island (Mr. Walsh) is? Because I can give the member for Bell Island the documentation, Mr. Chairman, that approved the two ferries for Bell Island. I can give to him, Mr. Chairman, where the previous Peckford Administration - by the way, it was Peckford Administration - approved the two ferries and moved them up. It was not the Rideout Administration, it was the Peckford Administration that did it. Yet the member for Bell Island, Mr. Chairman, is another man, like the Minister of Finance, can stay here. About his leader and his government, what did he do? Is there money in this for

two ferries for the people of Bell Island? Has the member for Bell Island asked that question, Mr. Chairman? Has the member for Bell Island asked that question, Mr. Chairman? Has the member asked the question is there money in this special warrant or going to be in the budget for two ferries?

MR. SIMMS:

He is not allowed to ask.

MR. TOBIN:

Well, he should ask. I think the member for Bell Island probably will ask. I will be disappointed if the member for Bell Island does not insist and say to his leader that when one government saw what was needed for the people of Bell Island, then your government, Sir, has to do the same thing for the people of Bell Island as the previous government was going to do.

MR. SIMMS:

He will get his knuckles rapped.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Chairman, that is between him and his leader, although it is blatantly obvious to all of us, but I will not get into that.

Mr. Chairman, let me say to the Minister of Transportation. I have, Sir, in my briefcase, a list of roads on a priority basis that was drafted, documented, not by the politicians, not by the Minister of Transportation, but by the senior officials of the Department of Transportation, passed, put in place, Mr. Chairman, for I believe \$48 million.

MR. SIMMS:

A non-partisan list.

MR. TOBIN:

Sure, a strictly non-partisan list of roads on a priority basis for this province, put together by the senior civil servants, Mr. Chairman, I want to know is the Minister of Transportation going to come forth with the same list and if fairness and balance is going to exist as was committed by the Premier during the election campaign? Will Minister of Transportation, Mr. Chairman, present that list on a priority basis if he will present to this House? And I will be asking the Minister of Municipal Affairs, to do likewise, and I would be very surprised if the Minister of Municipal Affairs will not do that. I think he is a very honourable gentleman, and I have to say that to him, I commend him for the position that he is in, the same as the member for Gander (Mr. Baker) and the Minister of Development (Mr. Furey). The Minister of Finance - not the Minister of Finanace, I do not know the gentleman, but his leader has explained the confidence that he has in him today.

I can say that the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and I have said it to him myself, I honestly believe he is doing a good job. As I have said to the Minister of Development, who is Minister of almost everything, and the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Chairman, we have got to have, as an Opposition, and the people of this Province got every right to know, every right, Mr. Chairman, what roads the Minister of Transportation is going to be dealing with. Is he going to be dealing with a list that is struck by the Planning and Priorities Committee, Mr. Chairman? Who is the Planning and Priorities

Committee? The Premier, the Premier, the Premier. Is that who is going to set up the list for this Province, or is it going to be the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Transportation based on the recommendations that I have that were put forth by the senior bureaucracy of the department based strictly on need? That is what we will be looking for. I do not think that we deserve anything less. We have got to have it, Mr. Chairman.

There are other areas that I can certainly touch on. There is \$82 million there for Social Services. I hope the Minister of Social Services is going to carry out the new initiatives submitted by the department for funding in the Budget, some very badly needed ones, Mr. Chairman.

I had a conversation, by the way, with the Minister of Social Services the day after he took office. I informed him of something that I thought necessary and I believe he shared my feelings on it. I thought it was something despicable that was taking place in this Province. I asked him to deal with it and, even though he was supposed to get back to me and did not, when I asked him today he told me he did take care of the matter. I sincerely hope he did.

I do not mind advising the Minister of Social Services, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:
I do not mind advising the Minister of Social Services. And I will not get into it. But I tell you, the issue we were

talking about, if he were on this side and I was over there, he would. And by the way, I hope he made the Premier aware of it. I am serious about this. If he has not made the Premier aware of what we talked about he probably should do it because I believe the Premier, with his legal background, would be very interested. It was something terrible. I am sure he will do that, Mr. Chairman. I will not get involved in it because of the sensitivity surrounding it.

So, Mr. Chairman, we want to know all of this. We will, I am sure, ask questions of the Minister of Education (Dr. Warren), another fine gentleman, I understand. And I am sure, Mr. Chairman, the former President of the NTA will be able to give him some assistance when we look at the resolutions passed at the recent annual general meeting of the NTA when she was President. We look forward to government fulfilling these commitments. I am sure that a former president of the NTA, with another former president of the NTA, sitting behind the Premier, would never let down their colleagues in Education and not fulfil the resolutions passed at the annual general meeting. The teachers out there have every right to expect, Mr. Chairman, that these two hon. people will certainly fulfil that commitment.

MR. HOGAN:
(Inaudible).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:
My friend from Placentia, Mr. Chairman, I know him quite well. As a matter of fact, I had the opportunity one time of nominating

the Minister of Environment and Lands for President of the Federation of Mayors and Municipalities when the member for Placentia was nominated by someone else, and I believe he lost by one vote, did he not?

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible).

MR. TOBIN:

I should not have nominated him!

I do have an association, an affiliation with some of those people, very credible, very honourable people, Mr. Chairman, and I will be one to give fair marks when I see them. I am going to watch the performance of the Minister of Transportation. If his arrogance today towards the people of Bell Island is any indication, Mr. Chairman, we will never know what this \$180 million is all about. I am sure the member for Bell Island will be calling him aside later and telling him, you know, 'That is not the way you treat people; the people of Bell Island do not deserve that type of treatment from you as Minister.' I am confident, Mr. Chairman, that the member for Bell Island will be calling the Minister of Transportation behind the curtain and saying, 'Listen, we are dealing with human beings over there, people who are isolated and need adequate ferry services. Do not deny it to them.' That is what I think the member for Bell Island will be saying to the Minister of Transportation. That is what he should say to him. The Minister of Transportation should know the difference of that because he represents a district covering the whole South Coast, where there is isolation and a fair amount of ferry service. He

should not be so lax, Mr. Chairman, in his attitude and should be more considerate towards the people of Bell Island. It is almost despicable, Mr. Chairman.

There are other areas. We will want to know, Mr. Chairman, whether the Rural Development agreement is included in this.

I know the minister will be very actively involved in it because it is so important to rural Newfoundland, so important to my district, to his district and to other constituencies throughout the Province. That is very important. We will be looking, Mr. Chairman, to see what type of commitment, although the Minister of Health (Mr. Decker) is not here, is involved in this for the health care system of our Province.

We were told during the election campaign that cost will not be a factor in bringing the health care system in this Province up to the standard that it should be brought up to. We were told that, Mr. Chairman, and we will be looking to see what part of that is included in the estimates, for the sick and suffering of this Province, Mr. Chairman. We will be looking to see if the commitments are fulfilled for chronic care centers throughout this Province that have been promised by members opposite, Mr. Chairman. We will be looking to see if that is fulfilled.

In the name of fairness and balance, we will remind you of that as well, we will be looking to see if that is fulfilled.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Chairman, I shall get back to it in a minute.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all I would like to say to members opposite that we would like to give them as much time as they need to ask the questions that they want to ask in the sense of reasonableness and fairness and so on. I am glad to see that there are some questions coming from members opposite.

I would like to, at this point, deal with a couple of them and bring us up to date. First of all, the member for Grand Bank asked how long is the Interim Supply supposed to last. There was over \$700 million allocated to last until about the end of May, and now there is another amount, a little over \$400 million supposed to last until about the end of July. The reason that there is this imbalance there is because a lot of the heavy expenditures are at the beginning of the year and, therefore, whereas it took \$700 million for two months it will only take \$400 million for the next two months. So we project that the budget should be finished - although you can never really say with certainty - by the end of July and, who knows, with the kind of austerity measures that this government is bringing in maybe it will last a bit longer than that.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What sort of measures?

MR. BAKER:

Well, in cutting back the staff in minister's offices and so on,

instead of having seven or eight or nine or ten or twenty employees in a minister's office, we have one or two, these kinds of measures.

Another question that was asked, and again by the member for Grand Bank and I believe one other Opposition member mentioned it, was about the Hansard from last year, and I am not sure if he quoted me but he quoted the Opposition last year as wanting details in the Interim Supply. I just want to explain to make it clear to members opposite so they understand what we are doing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. BAKER:

I am serious about this. I am not trying to be funny about this.

If the budget is brought in and then Interim Supply is asked for to keep us going, that is one situation where I believe you can quite legitimately ask for minute detail because the budget has already been presented. This case is slightly different. The budget is not ready, has not been presented, and you all know about the fuss Upalong with budget leaks and all this kind of thing. Well, right now we have to be a bit careful. I explained that to members opposite. We have to be a little bit careful about what we say. We will give as much detail as we possibly can without interfering with that budget process, but it is an entirely different situation. So I would ask members opposite to realize that I know that they are comparing apples and oranges.

A question by the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Baie

Verte - White Bay: He had quite a bit to say and I always enjoy listening to him speak. After all the show was over, he had a really serious concern here and I will try to deal with it. It was the differentiation between current and capital in this allotment. I will say to the Leader of the Opposition that I will have a lot of documentation here, and the process has taken time and so on, but I will ensure that before this is finished I will outline for the hon. gentleman a better breakdown of the current and capital.

The member for Burin - Placentia West (Mr. Tobin) asked a lot of questions, many of them in a rhetorical manner, and I would like to say to him that many of the questions he asked will be dealt with in the budget because they were more of a general nature rather than specific questions about Interim Supply. That was generally the nature of the questions he asked.

He made one comment that I cannot help but comment on: he wanted to know about the rural development agreement and whether that was included. I cannot help but make note of the fact that this is the same agreement that during the election the hon. gentleman opposite announced was already signed. He went through the process, at a rural development meeting in Gander I believe, of announcing that it would soon be signed, and then the next day a press release was issued saying that it was signed. Now that was my understanding, and it was the understanding of people involved, so I could not help but point that out.

Anyway, a number of the questions he had are the type of questions,

because they were general in nature about intended programs, that will be answered in the budget, I have no doubt. They were really not specific questions about the Interim Supply Bill itself.

In closing I would like to say to the members opposite, we will take note of your questions. We want to make sure that you have ample time to express your opinions. Whether they be of a political nature or not, it does not matter. It is your time to ask questions in this supply debate, and we will attempt to supply reasonable answers as far as we possibly can.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Mount Pearl.

MR. WINDSOR:

Mr. Chairman, first of all, I cannot help but say how concerned I am that the Minister of Finance is not being allowed, by the Premier, to speak in this debate. As the Leader of the Opposition so correctly and so clearly pointed out, this is absolutely and totally unprecedented, that the Minister of Finance would not introduce his Interim Supply Bill, and thus far he has made no contribution to this House. I cannot believe that here we are, the day that Interim Supply is being introduced into the House of Assembly, and the Minister of Finance has still not spoken. The sum total of his contribution to this House today was to read a statement earlier in the day prepared by his officials. And he need not take credit for negotiating that, because I know full well how that goes; the credit should go to the Deputy Minister of Finance, the Assistant

Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr. Wall, the Director of Debt Management, who, no doubt, came in with that debenture issue. And it is a good bond issue. As the Opposition critic on Finance so quickly pointed out, the fact that we received such a favourable rate has nothing to do with the credibility of the government opposite, it has to do with the fiscal management this Party showed during the last number of years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. WINDSOR:
My concern, Mr. Chairman, is this: What will be our credit rating next time? What is the reaction of the bond marketing agencies, the credit rating agencies and the financial institutions to statements made by the Premier when he says that he may not honour guarantees made by the previous government? I know for a fact, Mr. Chairman, that those agencies and that banks in Canada, let alone financial institutions abroad and the credit rating agencies abroad, are concerned about the credibility of this government opposite as to whether or not they can be depended upon to fulfill the financial obligations that they make on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. What impact will that have on us the next time we go to the bond market to try to raise funding to finance works in this Province? Why is the Minister of Finance not allowed to address these questions? Why is he being silenced? When is budget day? Is he going to tell us when budget day is going to be? Will he tell us that? How long are we going to have to wait before we get a

budget?

Contrary to statements made by the Premier publicly a few weeks ago that there was no work done on the budget, there was a great deal of work done on the budget before this government left office.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. WINDSOR:
I can produce the documents on capital works, that my colleagues have been referring to today, to say what water and sewer programs and what road programs are being recommended by the officials. They were done two months ago, and why has this government not acted upon it in the last three weeks so that construction activity can move ahead in this Province, so that engineering companies can get work, so that thousands of Newfoundlanders can get some employment before the snow starts coming again and the construction season is over? Why will they not release those projects, Mr. Chairman? How much money is included in this Interim Supply Bill for capital works? I would suggest not very much. I would suggest not very much. There is only \$400,000 there. I would suggest that is bread and butter money to keep us going, to pay the public service over the next number of weeks until the budget gets through. That means there will be no money available until the budget goes through. And if this government thinks that the budget is going to go through without detailed scrutiny, they have another think coming, because we are going to examine it and examine it very carefully. And that means there may not be any construction activity in this Province for maybe another two

months, because it may take that long to go through the budget exercise.

MR. FLIGHT:
Shame!

MR. WINDSOR:
How much money is in this budget to pay severance pay to those good public servants who were thrown out the door unceremoniously by the Premier without any explanation for why they had been fired?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. WINDSOR:
How much money is this Interim Supply for that, Mr. Chairman? No doubt there were good severance payments given. That is what you would call financial restraint.

Now, Mr. Chairman, let me ask a question of the Premier, if he ever gets to his feet. Has he now given up his secret salary? Is he still being paid the secret salary that he received when he was Leader of the Opposition? When he stood here and defended his secret salary he said, 'I am not in conflict of interest, because I am not a member of the government.' He is now the Premier of this Province. Will he now tell us who paid that salary so that we can know who has the Premier in their pocket? Who would pay his salary?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. WINDSOR:
And how is the Premier, if he is not getting his salary - maybe he is - making up for that now? He said he is going to sell his house. Is he indeed going to sell his house? Does that mean that he

is going to move into Mount Scio house now? Will he tell us that, Mr. Chairman? Is that his game plan? The poor Premier has to give us his salary. He cannot get the money through the backdoor now, he has to go to Mount Scio house. Is that what he is proposing to do? Maybe if any of them are allowed to get to their feet to speak, Mr. Chairman, we will hear some of those answers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

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

MR. GILBERT:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It seems that members opposite are more worried about the structure of our government than they are about the substance of Interim Supply, and they seem to take a great delight in mentioning the difference in format. Well, I will tell them that we have new cooks so there are new laws as to how we do things over here. And we are not directed by the decisions and the way that those people felt government should be run, because the people of Newfoundland made a decision about that on April 20 and they gave us the mandate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:
The majority of Newfoundlanders voted Progressive Conservative on April 20, and do not forget that.

AN HON. MEMBER:
That is right.

MR. GILBERT:

Look over here, gentlemen. Here is where it counts.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:
On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
A point of order, the hon. the member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:
May I remind the Minister of Transportation that more than gentlemen sit on this side of the House, and he should address his comments accordingly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. GILBERT:
I do not think that is a point of order.

MR. TOBIN:
Oh! It is not important?

MR. GILBERT:
I do not see anyone. Oh, I am sorry! Yes, I do.

I am sorry, gentlemen and lady.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Two ladies.

MR. GILBERT:
Let me say, Mr. Chairman, that I heard the member for Mount Pearl (Mr. Windsor) talk about his capital works projects, which he said he had a copy of and which should be announced imminently. The only thing I will tell him about his capital works projects is the same thing we told him when we were in Opposition, that it was not a priority list made up by the civil servants, it was a political list. The priority list was

thrown out. That is the reason there is not a list there now.

MR. WINDSOR:
Be careful or I might table it for you.

MR. GILBERT:
That is the point. You have no problems.

MR. WINDSOR:
I might table it for you.

MR. GILBERT:
You can. Table it! I have asked the civil servants to give me a priority list for the projects that are going to be addressed in the Department of Works, Services and Transportation, and the amount is covered in the Interim Supply that we are asking for right now. The two departments are not combined yet, but what it boils down to is that \$234 million is being asked for to carry on the operation of the Department of Works, Services and Transportation during the interim, until such time as the budget is introduced and passed.

As my colleague, the Government House Leader, pointed out, because of the fact the budgetary process is in place right now, there are certain things we cannot say. We will tell you, as I have indicated to the press, that there will be a provincial road's project introduced. Once this Interim Supply Bill is passed, there will be a project introduced. I can give you the headings, but I cannot tell you the amount until it is passed. I will give you the headings so you will know. I would not want to keep you in the dark over there. We were in the dark for seventeen years over here, so I would like to try and enlighten you a bit. Under

provincial highways you are talking about things like improvement and construction, road and bridge rehabilitation, highways and causeways.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Where? Where?

MR. GILBERT:

These are the general headings under Interim Supply and you will find out where in due course. It will be a list that was established and put there by the civil servants, a priority list based on the fairness and balance that we have been talking about for some time, not the political list that was put forward by members opposite when they were over here, and Newfoundlanders being bribed with their own tax dollars. When the time comes, we will be only too willing to announce our list, and it will be a fair list. I will sit down now and let members carry on.

MR. LANGDON:
Mr. Chairman,

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. LANGDON:

I am eagerly looking forward to the forty-first session of the House of Assembly, because it is going to be a memorable one, and I underline the word 'memorable', in that we will see a new philosophy in the governing of this great Province of ours. If that is so, and the hon. the Premier, the member for Bay of Islands (Mr. Wells) has said so, and I honestly and sincerely believe that he is a man of his word, a man with integrity and fairness, and a man who has a genuine desire to be fair to all regardless of

political stripe, then the great district of Fortune - Hermitage will be eagerly awaiting the presentation of the budget by the hon. the member for St. John's Centre (Dr. Kitchen).

I would be less than candid, Mr. Chairman, if I said that this great district has been treated unfairly since Confederation regardless of the political stripe. We have been on the government side in this district and we have been on the Opposition side, both provincially and federally, and I must reiterate we have not got our fair share for this great district. I am not being facetious when I say we eagerly await the Budget. In this great district there are some seventeen communities, and we have some of the best fishermen and loggers in this Province. I come from a community where there are 600 people, the most industrious on this Island, and those 600 people have no water and sewer, they have no fire protection, they have no recreation, they have no playground and they drive on the oldest gravel road in this Province, a road that is sixty years old and is despicable. It is a distance of ten kilometers to the community of Hermitage, Sandyville. These people deserve - I repeat, deserve - better. They have been too passive and apathetic in the past. These same despicable sheep-path roads are found in all parts of the Fortune - Hermitage district, and I am really looking forward to the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation, when this Supply Bill is all worked out, and the Budget is presented, seeing that this great district will indeed receive its fair share. The district has the largest number of unpaved roads of any district in

this Province, from Seal Cove, Hermitage to Hermitage Bay, from Coomb's Cove to Wreck Cove, to English Harbour, to Grand Le Pierre and everywhere in between. In Gaultois, for example, about which I have already had consultation with the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Gullage), it is despicable when you have a community of 600 people who have had full employment over the years and these residents have to bring water in a five gallon bucket with an old fashion hoop. Mr. Premier, we do not have to go to Labrador to see these types of conditions, they exist throughout Fortune - Hermitage, and probably throughout Port de Grave and where ever. So I am really looking forward to the budget to see what happens.

In all sincerity I can say to the people of this House that I am really looking forward to the budget. I really am, because I believe that the people of Fortune - Hermitage have been on the short end of the stick for too long, and in that particular instance they are looking forward to the fairness that the Premier has promised people. As I said earlier, I believe he will be a man true to his word.

Also, I look at the Supply Bill and I see money allocated for Culture, and for Recreation and Youth. Again, in the area of Fortune - Hermitage, when it comes to recreation facilities the people have been isolated from the mainstream of recreation in this Province for too long. So I am eagerly awaiting that.

In fact, I am eagerly awaiting confirmation of the recreation complex for the Connaigre Peninsula. That was approved by an Order in Council. The Minister

of Municipal Affairs told the people from the Harbour Breton Recreation Commission that they could not find it. I will table it for him. I also want to tell him that the towns in the Connaigre Peninsula area, Seal Cove, Hermitage, Gaultois, Harbour Breton, English Harbour, Belleoram, Wreck Cove, Coomb's Cove, Mose Ambrose and St. Jacques, have already agreed, in writing, to participate in the operating fund. So they are looking forward to that, and I am looking forward to that amount being allocated, as well.

Of course, there are other needs that the district has and the Province as a whole has. I am a rookie, I guess, when it comes to the House of Assembly, but I am no rookie in the sense of my recognizing the needs of the rural areas of this Province. I concur with the people from my district and with all the other rural areas of this Province, that we do indeed seek our fair share. To almost quote verbatim, the Premier of the Province says that the rural areas have been left out of the funding, not only in recreation, but also in education and in roads and transportation to many of the larger centers. I want to tell him that I will be working to the best of my ability to make sure that not only the rural area of Fortune - Hermitage but other rural areas, as well, are not forgotten. These people contribute to the provincial economy.

In fact, I was in English Harbour East on Saturday night, I drove over twenty six kilometers of gravel road, and I was reminded by the people of English Harbour East that they have the highest per capita income in this Province.

You should go down and see it. They have no road - you cannot call it a road. They have no water. They have no sewer facilities. They have no fire fighting equipment. They have nothing. They have been contributing to the provincial economy, so, therefore, they should have gotten their fair share regardless of whether they have put in Opposition or government members.

I look forward, in the next four years in this House, to making sure that we, in Opposition or in government, will be fair and we will be honest and we will be aboveboard with people. Because if they contribute to the provincial tax base and they contribute to tax dollars and they contribute to the upkeep of this Province, then they should get their fair share.

Also, before I sit down, I am hoping that the Minister of Education, the member for St. John's North (Dr. Warren), who I have had occasion to work with over the years on the School Tax Authority - it has been a great thing, there are so many qualities within it. I am glad that the government has seen fit not to rescind it, as the hon. member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Gilbert) so many times advocated in his advertisement on Q Radio and CKCM Radio on the South Coast. The whole idea is that people in the rural areas deserve the right to be educated, just the same as the person in Gander, in Grand Falls, St. John's or Corner Brook. So, when the education budget is presented, I will be looking forward to seeing that these people will indeed get equality in education.

Finally, as with all of the rural areas, and the Province as a whole, I am concerned about the problem of the fishery in Fortune - Hermitage. Fortune - Hermitage, like many of the other areas, I suppose, is distinct in that their whole lifestyle depends on it. When I hear the President of FPI, Vic Young, say that there are too many people chasing too few fish, I become really concerned. If that is the case, and we are going to decrease the number of licenses and decrease the allocation to the plants on the South Coast, then I am going to tell you that the government has a problem on its hands. What are you going to do with the people in these communities? That is their lifeblood. They are not looking for social assistance. I am sure that government in its wisdom will find an alternative plan that will indeed look after these people in this district. As I said earlier, I will be looking forward to analyzing the budget. I have no intention of holding up Interim Supply, because I realize that there are people out there who need these roads; I realize that the people in Fortune-Hermitage are really concerned about getting their work done this year. I really look forward to seeing the budget, and I hope that the people of Fortune - Hermitage will be treated fairly, as the Premier promised like all other districts. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER:

Are you ready to pass it?

MR. WINDSOR:

Not likely.

MR. SJMMS:

No, we are not ready to pass it, absolutely not.

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Opposition House leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Chairman, the reason we were a bit hesitant is because we thought that perhaps more people on the opposite side would follow the lead now exhibited by the Minister of Public Works.

MR. SIMMS:

We have asked a lot of questions. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, that has been the problem. We have not been getting too many answers. We thought that some members opposite might follow the lead of the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation, but obviously that is not the case. Government strategy is to let us talk it out and talk it out and the President of Treasury Board will pop up from time to time and attempt to give the odd answer here and there and figure that that will pacify everybody. But what I find, Mr. Chairman, so absolutely incomprehensible is the point that I made earlier when I raised the point of order about the Minister of Finance. I really find that very difficult to understand. It was not folly raising the point of order, it was not a silly point of order, it was a very legitimate point of order. Because it has not happened in the length of time I have been in this Legislature, and I have asked officials if they could confirm for me whether they could recall a time when somebody other than the Minister of Finance, when he was in his seat, in the House, presented the Interim Supply

Motion, introduced the Interim Supply Bill, and there is nobody I can find that can recall that ever occurring.

Now, I can see where the Premier would say, in keeping with his fashion and his attitude - I will not say at this point in time what I think that to be, but I think that everybody in the province is beginning to realize what it is, but in keeping with the Premier's attitude it is clear that direction was given to the President of Treasury Board to carry the ball on Interim Supply, for whatever reason I cannot understand why or what the reason might be. And it is very, very disappointing when you have a brand new Minister of Finance, who is not given the opportunity, not given the rightful opportunity as Minister of Finance to get up and stand in this House and speak to the bill which he has presented in his name and which he himself gave notice of just a day or two ago, and somehow or other he is stifled. He is not allowed to get up in the House and speak to his own bill. Now, I could understand the argument and I understand that the Premier in the pressscrum just a few moments ago explained it away by saying that it is the government's prerogative, and that may well be, but the point is that it has never occurred in this Legislature to anybody's knowledge, never occurred in this Legislature before when the Minister of Finance has been in his seat. That has never occurred.

The second point is surely the Minister of Finance in subsequent opportunities, and there have been many since this debate began ten minutes to three or whatever time it was, over an hour ago now but there have been many opportunities

for the Minister of Finance to rise in his seat and at least let us hear what he sounds like as a Minister of Finance, but he has not been permitted to do that. Now hopefully the Minister of Finance will plead with the Premier, plead with him and ask him to allow to get up on his feet for ten minutes, for at least ten minutes, so that we can hear what he sounds like, what his attitude is, what his philosophy is, so we can hear what he wants the \$400-odd million for from May till the end of July, as the President of Treasury Board tells us this Bill will cover. It is their budget even if they want to slough it off by saying, "These are yours. This is all your stuff." For April and May, \$700 million, we concede that. We concede that.

The President of Treasury Board addressed it. But I heard the Minister of Development, speaking out loud when the Premier was gone - and you must stay around, Premier, much more frequently than you are, because the ministers when you are gone are getting naughty - the Minister of Development shouted out across the House once, after you left, and said, 'That is all your stuff. That is all your stuff in this Interim Supply Bill.' And now the President of Treasury Board confirms that that is not the case. A part of it is, most of it is. But let us hear the Minister of Finance tell us what the rest of it is for. That is all we are asking. We would like to hear him.

Now three or four of my colleagues have spoken in this debate - it is only a ten minute debate at a time, but they can get up again - and they have asked legitimate questions. But nobody on that side bothers to get up and

answer. The Minister of Transportation, or Services and Works or whatever it is, gets up and makes an attempt - feeble as it was he got up and made an attempt - and tried to answer some of the questions put by the member for Burin - Placentia West. It was not a very good attempt. But where are all of the other members? I do not know, but has the Premier had a caucus since the election? Has the Government House Leader sat you down and said now, look, in this debate, in Interim Supply, there is an excellent opportunity for new members, particularly new members, to speak, as my colleague for Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Langdon) just did, and gave a very eloquent speech, a good effort.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:
Surely if members opposite believe that he gave such a good speech as a new member, then you must have a bit of fire yourselves, ready to go yourselves, and we are looking forward to all you members over there, particularly the newer members, to get up and ask some questions on this Interim Supply Bill. Ask your colleagues, the ministers, to give you some answers. Ask them.

AN HON. MEMBER:
We will.

MR. SIMMS:
Well, Mr. Chairman, how long are you going to wait? We have given you all kinds of opportunities. Members opposite do not even bother to get up. So I really do not know what to think of it all. It is something that we have never seen occur in this House in our history, to my knowledge.

MR. HOGAN:
(Inaudible).

MR. SIMMS:
Well, I am glad to hear that. I look forward to the member for Placentia (Mr. Hogan) getting on his feet after I sit down and let us hear his ten minutes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:
I am willing to bet, Sir, that the member for Placentia will not get up after I sit down. We will see! We will see!

I want to get back to the Minister of Finance, that is who I want to get up on his feet. That is who should be up on his feet in this House. It is his bill. And so far in this debate he has not even spoken. Now that is rather, rather strange and I cannot get over it. The press cannot get over it. They asked the Premier and he sloughed it off. Oh, it is our prerogative. We can do what we want. We know that. But surely in subsequent opportunities he could have gotten up and spoken. Maybe he will. Maybe he is just sitting back and waiting and listening for a good opportunity. I hope he does.

Now the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation, when he did speak made some reference - the Premier asked if there were any questions - to the fact that we are more interested in the structure of the government as opposed to questions. Now I distinctly heard members on this side ask a number of questions, and I will ask a couple myself as I go along and maybe we can get some answers from members opposite.

But I have to make some comments about today's Question Period and the attitude expressed by members opposite, the ministers in particular. I must say I was extremely disappointed in the Minister of Works and Services. I thought his answer was very arrogant. He just sat down very quickly. I did not appreciate that and I do not think anybody else did. The Minister of Environment and Lands, in responding to a question put by my colleague, the new member for Green Bay (Mr. Hewlett), stood up and attacked his line of questioning, that it was not much of a question. I mean, that is arrogance. So I trust ministers opposite will, after time goes on, be able to grow.

MR. FLIGHT:
What about you?

MR. SIMMS:
Now I have to say though, I want to say this on behalf of my friend, the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture (Mr. Flight), that while he was not forthcoming in his answers, and I suspect mostly because he did not have the answers - that is my suspicion now

MR. FLIGHT:
You are wrong.

MR. SIMMS:
Yes, I could be wrong.

at least he got up and he answered it, and he answered at length. But the other ministers did not. So maybe the other ministers can take the lead from the Minister of Forestry.

MR. WINDSOR:
He was very humble about it.

MR. SIMMS:

Yes, he was very humble about it.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to hear the Minister of Education, too, a man who is well respected in this Province. I want to hear him get up in his seat and I want him to tell us what is the government's position with respect to the School Tax Authority. We want to hear the accurate position of the government, of the Liberal Party. We want to know if it is the position that has been enunciated in resolutions placed before this House in the past number of years, just about every year, by members opposite. I can name them, and I can show you a copy of the resolution if you have not had a chance to dig it up. You should dig it up. They have all called, including one from the President of Treasury Board, for the abolishment of the School Tax Authority. Is it that position? Is it the position articulated by the Liberal Party during the election campaign, which I understand was to abolish the School Tax Authority, or is the position now what we heard in the Throne Speech, that they will now review it? Basically that is the position that they have now come up with. But that certainly is contrary to the resolutions put forward by the Liberal Party in the past, where they very clearly asked for the abolition of the School Tax Authority. So, I would like to hear the Minister of Education get up in this debate, because we have lots of time to debate - today, tomorrow, tomorrow night, we can go on until Wednesday if we have to, and Thursday even, Friday, whenever. Who knows? I want to hear the Minister of Education.

I think the Premier should ask his

new ministers to get on their feet in this debate and give us a chance to hear what they have to say. Not the old hands up in front, we have heard all of them before and we know what they are going to say because they always had a patented speech anyway, but the ministers opposite in the back rows, the ones in the back benches; the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, I met Saturday night at a function in my district. He was out at a function in my district and did a fantastic job, by the way, I must commend him. I must commend the Premier, he did a very good job.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. SIMMS:

Pardon?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. SIMMS:

Oh, Mr. Chairman, I have not even started.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I want to take just a few short minutes of the time of the House of Assembly to comment on some of the comments given by the Opposition members.

I would have thought that after seventeen years sitting on this

side of the House of Assembly, that they would have at least been a little better prepared for the proceedings in the House of Assembly today, and especially Question Period. You would have thought that they would have learned a little bit over on this side, but their ability to administer the affairs of the Province has shown up no better than how they administer the affairs of the Opposition party, because we certainly are not seeing any improvement.

When the critic for the Transportation (Mr. Tobin) stands to his feet and asks the Minister of Social Services does he need any advice after seventeen years putting the Department of Social Services in the deplorable condition it is in now, we are not about to take advice from somebody who put it at the low standard that it now is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

We are quite capable at realizing how the widows and how the people of this Province have been treated by the former administration, and we have a new direction on this part to have our concerns placed in the right area. But the member for Fortune Hermitage (Mr. Langdon), I have to make a comment on what the new member said. I have to congratulate him on his maiden speech, but I am sure that his wine tie should be changed to a bright red because every comment he made was a liberal comment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

When we were on that side of the

House we recognized the fact that the people in this Province were treated unfairly on the way in which they voted. And the member his afternoon stood up in his seat and he confirmed everything that we said for the past four years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Because the former Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Brett), who is sitting with his hands under his chin, knows full well how I took a group of people in from Makinsons for a measly \$15,000, and while we occupied his office for a number of days, he sat there behind his desk and told us that he did not have any money, he did not have \$15,000. The very next week his own government goes out and signs a note for \$4 million for the Sprung cucumber venture. Now if that is fairness and balance, that is not how people will be treated by this administration.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

And the member is quite right about the roads up in English Harbour, because I had the opportunity to go up there -

MR. TOBIN:

A point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

A point of order, the hon. member for Burin - Placentia West.

MR. TOBIN:

I would like to ask the hon. gentleman, is he saying we can bring delegations into his office, stand them up, and you will get whatever money you want? Is that

what he is saying?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. Minister of Social Services.

MR. EFFORD:

What I am saying, Mr. Chairman, very clearly to all the members opposite, is when any delegation comes to this administration their concerns will be listened to and it will be decided on a priority basis, based on the needs of the people and not on a political basis.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

That administration, Mr. Chairman, operated like that for seventeen years and the people of this Province, on April 20, voted for a change in attitude and a change for the people, and that is what they going to see administered by this government, a change for the concerns of the people.

MR. TOBIN:

(Inaudible) projects for the people on social assistance in the liberal districts. Tell us about the letters you sent around to your colleagues (inaudible).

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Chairman, could I have order from the member?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

Would the hon. the Minister for Social Services continue?

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Sir.

The hon. member for Burin - Placentia West just got on with his usual flitter as he did for the last eight or ten years, making absolutely no sense.

MR. TOBIN:

(Inaudible) Liberal Party (inaudible).

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

I think it was in 1976 that the Employment Opportunities Program was introduced in this Province by that administration. There were 450 people employed that year. This past year there were 12,500 people employed by the Employment Opportunities Program by the Department of Social Services. That was the only way they could turn the employment of this Province around, by putting them on Social Services programs, and, Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely disgusting. I think that you will see a change in that over the next three to four years. You will see people employed with some pride in some permanent jobs and not just transferred from one program to another to satisfy the willingness of the Minister of Social Services who does not have the capability to produce any better long-term jobs. We will change that direction, Mr. Chairman, to where people can have pride in providing for their own families and not transfer from Social Services to unemployment on the 10/42 programs. That direction will change, and that is what this department and this administration means by equal and fair opportunities and fairness and balance to all people.

I would just like to conclude, Mr. Chairman, by telling the member

from Fortune - Hermitage that he is quite right. What you said in your maiden speech is quite right, people have not been treated fairly. There are road needs and water and sewer needs and artesian well services needed by all people of the Province. The unfortunate thing is that the party that you represent looked at it on a political basis and not on a need basis. I suggest, with the attitude that you have, you should look at your party politics and look towards what is best for the future of your district. You will see that not because of politics but because of need and a priority basis people will be treated on an equal and fair basis with no falsehood intended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The hon. the member for Fortune Hermitage.

MR. LANGDON:
I was wondering if the hon. member for Port de Grave and I would exchange ties so that I could have a blue one and he could take my red one?

MR. EFFORD:
Good point.

MR. LANGDON:
Getting back to the situation in Fortune - Hermitage, I was not being facetious when I reiterated my points. I knew that was the Liberal platform, I knew that was the Liberal philosophy, I knew where you were coming from. My point that I wanted to make here was to make sure that everybody understood, the people on this side and that side of the House as well, would indeed treat Fortune - Hermitage and every other rural

district, whether they be government or Opposition, fair and square. I recognize that. I said in my speech that the previous administration did not treat it well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. LANGDON:
I also remind the people on the other side that, under the first Premier of this Province, we were on that particular party side for years and years and years and years, and we were not treated fairly there either. It has been provincially and it has been socially. The problem is you have to take a new philosophy and a new look at the rural areas of this Province. When I said that the Premier of this Province was indeed sincere and that he was going to do it, I believe it. The point about it is the people in these areas are the ones who have the concern, and whether I wear a red tie or whether I wear a blue tie is immaterial. It is the people from my district that I represent and whether I am on the government side or the Opposition side it makes no difference, I am going to work for them to the best of my ability.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The hon. the member for St. Mary's - the Capes.

MR. HEARN:
Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to take part in this historic debate, historic in the sense that the President of Treasury Board rather than the Minister of Finance is piloting

through the Interim Supply Bill. I noticed a short while ago the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Efford) sort of break the pattern by getting up and making a few comments. I thought he was going to elaborate on some of the expenditures of his department. However, he did not; he got into a sermonizing, much as his leader would.

If you go back, Mr. Chairman, through the Hansards of past years containing the Interim Supply debates, you will find a couple of things standing out constantly: One, the Bill being introduced and piloted through by the Minister of Finance and, secondly, you would see that as the Opposition members got up and zeroed in on the different areas, the Ministers responsible in the different jurisdictions would then get up and clarify and explain and answer any questions.

At the opening of Question Period today, the Premier, instead of answering a question, complained about the House not being open for almost a year, blaming it, of course, on us over here. The leader of the Government and all the members have constantly been complaining that the House was not in session, that the people of Newfoundland deserved answers, and the place to get the information out is in the House of Assembly. So we have the House open today and what do we see? In Question Period we saw a very feeble attempt to answer questions. In fact, all we got were generalities.

Now we are on Interim Supply, a bill for over a billion dollars of the taxpayers' money that will be spent, and we as an Opposition are trying to find out how, where and when the money will be spent and,

once again, all we are getting are blank stares from the government side. That is not good enough. That is not what has ever happened. Government has a responsibility to answer questions, so I will pose a few. In relation to some of the expenditures: For the Department of Development and Tourism we have \$20 million-plus. Are they going to take the initiative that this party took when it was in government to build up a tourist industry in the province? Are they going to use this key time of year to advertise to make sure that we get an increase, as we have been getting over the last number of years, of tourists coming into our province?

In fisheries, despite the crisis we are presently having in the Province, there are many things that could be done by the provincial government to increase employment in the fishery, to aid fishermen and fish plant workers in the different communities around the Province. Is the \$20 million being spent by the Department of Fisheries going to be spent to enhance infrastructure around the Province? I presume it is. We have a very capable and experienced Fisheries Minister here, and hopefully, if he is given some free rein, which he has not been to date, we will see some improvements.

In Forestry, where we saw a couple of feeble attempts to answer the question from the Opposition House leader today in relation to the spray program, hopefully we will get some more clear-cut answers as to how the \$16 million will be spent there.

In the Rural Agricultural and Northern Development heading, \$27

million. We talked about the agreement, the agreement that we were told was ready to sign. Somewhere along the line something went wrong. The only thing that is not constant is the change in government in Newfoundland. So, consequently, if you have to point the finger of blame, you have to point it at that change in factor.

But aside from that, if the Government cannot persuade or cannot agree with the Government in Ottawa and get a rural development agreement signed, what is going to happen to the 53, I believe, Rural Development Associations scattered across the Province, many of whom are on their last legs? Within days, some of them will have to close down, will have to lay off the different co-ordinators around the Province who do the legwork, the spadework for the Rural Development Associations. I do not know what emphasis government places on Rural Development Associations in the Province, but I do know the emphasis that we place on them. Rural Development was a key factor in our total policy. Now it has been hidden away somewhere in this great Department of Development, something that concerns every person involved in every rural community of the Province.

Is the Government going to use some of this \$20 million to keep the Associations alive in the Interim, while we are waiting for an agreement?

I remember some years ago we were months without getting an agreement and the government of the day, our government, put in several hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep the Development Associations going, our own

provincial money, because we believed in Rural Development Associations, and we believed in what they can do in the Province. So is this money going to be used for that purpose?

In relation to education, are we going to use some of the dollars to plan the program to bring a good teacher aid program, or student aid program maybe we should say, into the Province so that it will be ready to kick in in September, something that was in place, something that the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, and we have two former Presidents over there, who, I am sure, will be thumping the Cabinet table and thumping the door to the Premier's Office to make sure that it will be done. So is this part of the funding? Maybe the different ministers who are responsible will respond, and I, particularly, would like to hear from the Minister of Development (Mr. Furey) in relation to the rural development expenditure and the plan to keep the Associations alive. Or are you going to ignore them and let them die? If you do, you will let part of rural Newfoundland die. They are not just independent of other things that are happening in Newfoundland. The present fisheries crisis is being handled in many areas by and through Rural Development Associations. So these Associations have to be kept alive, and hopefully the government of the day will see that they will be.

Mr. Chairman, I hope we will get back to what used to happen in the House of Assembly, where we will see the Minister of Finance getting up and defending his estimates and his Supply Bill, and we will see the ministers

answering some of the concerns that we have raised so that the people out there, whether they are fishermen or people on Development Associations, who are depending on the number of government programs will at least know something that is going on. That is the reason you wanted the House open. It is now open. The agenda is yours. Let us see if you can deliver. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Chairman,

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Development.

MR. FUREY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The hon. member raises a number of questions with respect to tourism and with respect to rural development. His first question was: Is this government committed to tourism? I can tell him absolutely this government is committed to tourism. And I also say, in a spirit of fairness and balance, that much of the work done by the previous government with respect to tourism was good work and we hope to build on that because this is an important industry for this Province, and some of that money from the Interim Supply Bill will go towards that, absolutely.

The second question, Mr. Chairman, was with respect to rural development and the Development Associations. You know, we have inherited quite a bind, Mr. Chairman, with respect to this problem. The former minister is right, there are fifty-seven

Development Associations out there that are very, very nervous, are very anxious to see just where and when this agreement will be signed. I tell him that the former government, and he is well aware of this, had a number of years to prepare a document and get ready to sign this agreement. In fact, there was an extension to the old agreement for a full twelve months. So when the previous agreement ran out there was an extension for twelve months, and that has subsequently run out as well. So when you ask us where is the rural development agreement. The real question is: Why was not the rural development agreement signed by the previous government? That is the real question in terms of this issue.

I refer the hon. the leader of the Opposition to his statement of April 3, with respect, when he talked about the approval of two development agreements, two EDRAs, on behalf of his government at that time, when he was the Premier. He stated clearly that an agreement had been reached between the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Canada with respect to a rural development agreement and with respect to the Coastal Labrador agreement.

Let me refresh his memory and quote verbatim, and it says, 'I am pleased to announce today that the Province has reached agreement with the Government of Canada to provide continued funding for the rural development agreement and a comprehensive Labrador agreement.' Now, here is the salient point, Mr. Chairman. 'The rural development agreement will provide funding in the amount of \$29.2 million and the comprehensive Labrador agreement

will provide funding of \$58.3 million, cost-shared 70/30 between the two levels of government over a five year period. I am pleased to announce we have reached agreement.'

Well the fact of the matter is that you can be as pleased as punch, but there was no agreement. Nothing was reached.

The Premier, myself and the Minister of Fisheries had cause to have meetings with our federal counterparts just Friday past and they knew of no agreement that had been reached. Is it not passing strange that this particular announcement was made on 3 April, seventeen days before the election? Very convenient, was it not, Mr. Chairman? I tell you, this government is committed strongly to rural development. It is not swallowed up by a bigger department. It will be intergrated in, and made better, for everybody who lives in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:

Now, Mr. Chairman, with respect to the specifics, we have asked Mr. Crosbie and his colleague, Mr. MacKay, to immediately move toward the signing of a Rural Development Agreement, because the member for St. Mary's - The Capes is absolutely right when he says a lot of people out there are anxious. Fifty-seven Developments Associations have been hanging out in the wind for more than a year through this extended period for this agreement. I tell him that we told Mr. Crosbie that more than twenty-five associations to date are living on letters of comfort, which is simply bridge financing,

of \$10,000 per association. In fact, some of the letters were signed by my predecessor, the minister for Northern Affairs, I guess. Or was that the ancillary ministry to the Rural Development and Agriculture?

Some of these associations have letters of comfort signed by the member for Humber Valley. I have subsequently signed a number of them, too, but this is merely bridge financing. Further to that, we have advanced a \$50,000 advance on the Rural Development Agreement that we hope to see signed for the operating costs out of the Gander office for the central office so we are committed. We are worried, we are deeply worried, about rural development, and we want the Government of Canada to come to the table. It is a priority for the Premier and for this government, and we are working toward that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. HEARN:

What happens when the \$10,000 runs out?

MR. FUREY:

The member asks me what happens when the \$10,000 runs out. Well, hopefully the agreement will be signed but you are right. In some cases some of the letters of comfort have run out and that is something that we can bring before Cabinet to see if more money can be forwarded. But at this time we are waiting for the next fourteen days to see Mr. Crosbie's position and hopefully he will have something to bring to this government that we can assess, evaluate and sign without too much wait.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Kilbride.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, since it is your first day in the Chair, I want to congratulate you, seeing I did sit there one time before. It is a very important place to be in this House of Assembly and I am sure you will do a good job there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. R. AYLWARD:

After just listening to the hon. Minister of Development I want to make a couple of statements. He said earlier on, when he got up, of the commitment that this new government has to tourism, and I have no doubt that they do have a commitment to tourism. It is the fastest growing industry in our Province. It is certainly a big employer of people in our Province and there is a lot of room for expansion. But I find it strange that if there is such a great commitment to tourism with this new government that I cannot find one mention of it in the Throne Speech. It certainly should be mentioned at least one in there somewhere. If it is the fastest growing industry, if it is an extremely big employer, which I am sure the hon. member for Mount Scio - Bell Island (Mr. Walsh) will attest to, it should certainly take a priority in the overall plans of this new government, and it has not taken any priority at all in this Throne Speech, so I hope that is not an indication of what is to come.

The hon. minister also mentioned that rural development will not be swallowed up by Development. I

just tell him for his own information that I was fortunate enough that the first department I ever had was Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development and I consider it to be the best department in this government. I certainly enjoyed it there. It is a people department. But while I was in that department, the Department of Development was always trying to take programs from Rural Development into their department, and I resisted. Yet we have a new government in place for a couple of months now and the whole department not only some programs, the whole department has disappeared. It has been swallowed up by Development, and without the minister's attention, and I am sure he will give it that attention, it is going to be difficult for the staff, for the programs in the Department of Rural Development, as it was called, to take a priority in that department because it is a very big and important department. I just want to suggest to the minister that we will be keeping an eye on what is happening with rural development, and I am sure with his attention it will survive but it is going to be extremely difficult to survive in such a big department. I still disagree that it was taken away from being a separate department. The Rural Development Association is central. All the associations themselves and every meeting that I attended with them were always asking for a separate rural development department. Take agriculture away and take northern development away, that was their philosophy. So it will be interesting to see over the next little while what the Rural Development Council has to say. I am sure if it does not work this way they will have some say in it

in the future.

I just want to also express a concern that the Minister of Finance is not presenting his Interim Supply today. I do not understand it. I am not saying this to be facetious. I really do not understand why the Minister of Finance, who is a very competent person. I have met him several times before. He has been involved in public life in this Province for quite a number of years, a long time as I remember. He is a -

MR. TOBIN:

Former President of the PC Association.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. R. AYLWARD:

- former member of this House of Assembly. I do not understand why he is not presenting it. Maybe sometime in the debate, over the next three or four days, he will get up and explain why this change in procedure. The President of Treasury Board is a very competent fellow, no doubt, but he cannot handle all the departments; you have to share the responsibilities and delegate somehow. Certainly it is not a matter of the President of Treasury Board delegating responsibilities. The Minister of Finance has responsibilities, when he was sworn in as minister he was given responsibilities, and part of his responsibilities are to defend The Interim Supply Bill. I would imagine that he will read the Budget Speech. I guess that will come within the next couple of weeks. Certainly he will have to do that, but that, again, is part of his responsibilities.

Anyway the minister that I am shadowing on the opposite side, I am sure he is very used to the public life. He served on City Council two different terms now and he is a very competent fellow. I just have a few questions for him and I am sure he will get up and answer them, unlike some of the other members.

I remember, first when I became minister of a department, this debate was the opportunity for a new minister to get up and give a few of his ideas. It is wideranging. You do not only have to talk about the certain amounts of money that are in your budget, you can get up and express some of your ideas with regard to what plans you have for the future. All the new ministers in the second row of ministers there should be jumping up today and telling what ideas they have for their departments and also explaining some of the reasons why the large \$1.1 billion Interim Supply Bill has come through this department.

I do have some questions that I would like the hon. Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs to answer, and I am sure he will. One of the questions that I have is that there is almost \$56.5 million allotted in this Interim Supply for the Department of Municipal Affairs. I would just like to know how much of that money will be spent on capital projects and how much of that money will be regular, day-to-day current projects. Maybe most of it will, but I think if there is an Interim Supply Bill before us today, as it is, that there should have been a great effort made to include a lot of capital money into this budget because, as I said earlier today, it is

extremely important to the construction workers in this Province that we start some municipal capital projects because the construction companies, the engineering companies and the construction workers in this Province desperately need the work. It is very important that we get the water and sewer services into the towns that are going to get them this year.

I am sure you will be fair and equitable, as you said you would be, but it is important that whatever monies you have - I know when I was Minister of Municipal Affairs, albeit it a brief while, the recommendations were made by the Capital Projects Board, I believe it is called, in our department. They were all prepared. I have a copy of them somewhere in my files. They were ready to be announced and we could have included a lot of money in The Interim Supply Bill to get them done. We do have a short construction period. That is a fact of life in our Province. We have been very fortunate this Spring to have a good Spring, the first Spring that I can remember having in quite some time, actually. We have had a good Spring. We could have had construction started now. If we are going to wait for the budget to be approved, we have a couple of weeks to a month to wait. Then we have to put tenders in the paper, so we have a couple of more weeks to a month, so we are talking about August. Before the construction companies can mobilize we are talking September, so there might be, there is a chance that there will be no construction. Unless we do it quickly this year there will be no capital municipal construction this year. But even if there is,

we are going to start our construction and get our prices in. In October, November and December the projects will be started, when I believe the construction estimates are at least 30 per cent higher - the hon. member for Mount Pearl might know that the construction estimates are at least 30 per cent higher at that time of the year.

MR. WINDSOR:

That is right.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

It is not a good time to be doing municipal work.

When I was going into that department one of my priorities was going to be was going to be an early tendering system. I pass that out to the hon. member for his consideration for next year that they should try it, as is done in Transportation, to bring in some method of an early tendering system to get the majority of municipal capital works started early. We started it two years ago. The hon. member for Harbour Main (Mr. Doyle) started it, briefly, two years ago.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. R. AYLWARD:

We got some projects on the way. It was not brought in big enough. We should be able to get early tenders out for the municipal capital funding.

Some questions I would like the hon. minister to answer before my time runs out, besides the one on capital and current, and maybe the President of Treasury Board might get up and answer questions, too, include: Is there any money in this Interim Supply Bill for the

economic recovery team? I would imagine that is going to cost some money. We need to know some details on that.

MR. WINDSOR:

Ask the Minister of Finance. He should know.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

The Minister of Finance will probably know that, yes, when he stands. That economic recovery team is supposed to be set up in thirty days, so I guess we have to have money there because the budget will not be approved in thirty days.

Is there money in this Interim Supply Bill - maybe the Minister of Municipal Affairs could answer this for me - to solve all the problems in the Province's new water and sewer corporation? There should be. That is suppose to be set up fairly quickly. It looks like there should be money in this Interim Supply Bill for the water and sewer corporation. And maybe he can give us some of his ideas on how that is going to work, and probably could tell us he had any conversation with the Major of the City of St. John's on how he feels about losing all of the equity that the City of St. John's and the City of Mount Pearl and many other cities Lewisporte, Labrador City, they all finance 100 per cent. I believe, Labrador City is one of the communities in this Province that finance their capital works 100 per cent through their own without government assistance. The minister maybe can give us some information on that.

There is one other problem in setting up this municipal corporation, what do you do with the existing \$1 billion debt or

almost \$1 billion that is on the books now? Do you write that off? Do you pay for it? Do you buy it? Do you create a bigger debt by buying back water and sewer projects from the City of St. John's and other who used that by the way for raising their own funds? And it will cost them some headaches.

I have some other questions here, if I can read my own writing. One of the problems and it is an immediate problem now of a delay in having the capital works projects. Today for the first time in many years as I have been elected and as many years before that, and partly because of the reason for a delay in capital projects in Municipal Affairs, the 60/40 program in particular, the children in on the backlines in the Goulds have to walk to school today. The school buses did not go up to the backline of the Goulds because the road is in such a bad state of disrepair.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

That ordinarily would be fixed by now, fixed during the Spring and the children would not have to be walking to school today. It is quite a distance from Ruby Line into St. Kevin's and the Goulds Elementary School. So that is another consequence of the delay and another reason why we should have more money in this Interim Supply for some of the capital projects for Municipal Affairs.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

Okay. I will try again.

MR. GULLAGE:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. SIMMS:

If the Minister of Municipal Affairs wishes to rise I will be happy to wait my turn, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. GUILLAGÉ:

Mr. Chairman, I thank the hon. member for his questions. Firstly dealing with the amount in Interim Supply for this particular department. In fact, \$9.5 million of capital is included in the figure quoted. We are attempting as quickly as we can to finalize the capital works for this year and we are getting close to that now. I understand the urgency. There is no question, given the number of municipalities that are concerned about water, sewer, roads and recreation and so on, that we have to, as quickly as possible, make these announcements so that tenders can be called and the work can be commenced. We do understand the urgency, and we are speaking to it.

My staff, of course, as the Opposition knows, are in constant consultation with the various communities involved. The priority list is an ongoing list, constantly being monitored. In fact, since we took office two weeks ago I have had some other discussions with various councils, and some of you, in fact, have had discussions with me as well, making sure that the priorities are established before we finalize the capital works for this year. I think in all fairness, as has already been mentioned by both sides of the House, we have in

fact not been political at all. It has been done on a priority basis, on the needs in the various districts and in the various communities, the needs as prioritized, in fact, by the communities and based on, in most cases, on five year plans that have been put in place and are ongoing, not just a current decision but an ongoing plan, finalizing work, in some cases, and commencing work in others.

A member mentioned early tendering. It is indeed a good point. I think we can, in fact, but beyond this budget it is very difficult this year because of the urgency and the fact that we are already behind, there is no question that we are, and we should already be out to tender on these capital works, whether it be water and sewer, roads, recreation facilities, or whatever. We should already be to tender, but we all know that this House has been delayed in opening, not of our doing on the government side, but it certainly has been delayed in opening, and because of that we have been unable to start the process as early as we would have liked. In the future, I think we can address that within the department. We would like to see decisions made and tenders called for various projects throughout the Province, in the various communities, a lot earlier than this, and there is really no reason for not doing so given the fact that we do have plans in place, plans for the community set down. A priority list is already established for water and sewer and roads in the major area, the Municipal Affairs side. Those priority lists, if they are followed, in the various communities and districts can indeed see the tendering process

started earlier in the year. I would certainly like to see that happen in the next year. Now we have to deal with where we are at the present, and as quickly as possible we will be announcing capital works for this year.

There is no question, Mr. Chairman, we have a serious problem with water and sewer facilities throughout the Province. There is no secret on the government side, we have \$1 billion of requests from the various communities, and it is a serious problem. More serious in some parts of the Province, as we all know, and in Labrador than in others. We have many, many communities that have good facilities in place. Certainly our cities are in good shape as far as capital works are concerned. There are some exceptions in every city naturally to bring them up to a perfect standard, if you like, where all water and sewer is in place and all roads are completed. But compared to other areas of the Province, I think it is fair to say that we have of our 340 incorporated communities and towns plus over another 100 unincorporated areas, local improvement districts, we have the vast majority some 30 percent, by my observations and my discussion with my officials, in dire need and in great need. An emergency situation in many cases where we have to deliver services as quickly as we can. Of course, those services and those needs have been prioritized as much as we can given the urgency this year with capital works, have been prioritized and have been identified. We have a long way to go. We did say throughout the campaign that a water and sewer corporation, the feasibility of

such a corporation would be addressed. We have already started work on that. I have a team of officials working on it now.

We do plan to address the serious problem of water and sewer throughout the Province and in Labrador and we are addressing that now by way of studying the problem, having our officials research it wherever it is necessary, looking at what is happening in other provinces and other jurisdictions and finding solutions to what is probably the most important dilemma in municipal affairs area. We have to come up with a solution to the crying needs of communities throughout this province and Labrador, to make sure that they are brought up to a standard that they would expect in this day and age, and we are addressing that as a department, and I want to assure you that I will be reporting to the House as we see the findings of this particular committee of officials.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Kilbride.

MR. R. AYLRARD:

Just a few more brief questions. I put a lot of questions there and it is hard to remember them all, but he did not make any mention of the water and sewer corporation which is to be set up. If he would make some mention of that during the election campaign and,

MR. GULLAGE:

I just did it.

MR. R. AYLRARD:

I missed it, okay. I did not understand it, maybe he can

elaborate on it and give me some more information, if I missed the last thing he said, maybe it is my fault. Maybe he can elaborate on it a bit more. There is also a couple of questions I have. There has been a study presented to the department, fire fighting needs of this region I guess would be generally the title, I am not sure of the exact title. I would like to know if there is any money in this, there are some very serious recommendations in that. Is there any money in Interim Supply associated with that study that was done last year, and are there going to be any financial implications of the Minister implementing the Barry Learmonth report which affects this whole region from Holyrood to Cape St. Francis. There might be some financial implications there, I know there is a bit of a controversy in Paradise and Conception Bay South. There will probably have to be some compromise in that area, so maybe those couple of things if he wanted to mention them, and I guess the most important thing to me, the most important thing to a lot of people in the Province - he did say that there is \$9.5 million in the estimates for capital projects and I would like to see and I am sure he can have it ready for the House of Assembly tomorrow, a list of the projects that would be considered in this \$9.5.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. GULLAGE:

I could speak to those too. I did not think this was Question Period, but I can certainly speak

to these additional questions. The Woods Gordon report is in fact into the department as you know, along with the Learmonth report. We do have to address both reports in a context of coming up with a regional approach to services, fire fighting services such as water, garbage disposal and all have to be addressed in a regional context. That report will be dealt with when we address the Province of the existing Metro Board and the annexation of lands within the jurisdiction of that board right now. Learmonth did in fact - the mandate of Learmonth was to deal with the demise of Metro Board, what to do with the particular lands in question, whether to annex them to the various communities adjoining and Learmonth has spoken to that. I have released that report as you know to the various communities involved and we are studying the alternatives that we would like to see examined in this particular region as far as the jurisdictions in place now. The fact that we have 21 communities in the North East Avalon region and deciding the boundaries of those communities considering the existing boundaries of Metro Board and the watershed that is contained the jurisdiction of Metro Board as well. When that is spoken to and we have a decision on how to properly annex this particular lands and how to set out an authority to deal with the servicing aspect of the region, the Woods-Gordon report and the decision on the fire department - whether it would be regional context or whether it would be some other arrangement will be spoken to and addressed at that time. I can say at this point that we are examining the Learmonth Report and reports like it, because there have been

several over the last few years, as well. In the context of coming up with a decision on this particular region, a decision on boundaries, a decision on the communities involved and how they will fit into a regional servicing authority to deal with services in the region, all that is being looked at now and my officials have commenced, along with me, examining the alternatives and coming up with a solution that we will ultimately present to the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I just want to follow up a bit on what my colleague, the hon. the member for Kilbride (Mr. R. Aylward), has been trying to get at with respect to the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs. Before I get into that, I found it rather humorous, to a certain extent at least, that when my colleague, the member for St. Mary's - The Capes (Mr. Hearn), was standing a few moments ago asking questions, the Premier looked quite perplexed and I think was heard to mutter - perhaps he did not - 'Well, you have not asked any questions.' I believe that is what he said, or something along those lines.

PREMIER WELLS:

I will tell the hon. member what I said: 'At last somebody with sense who is going to ask some questions.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. WINDSOR:

Too bad we cannot get some answers. When are you going to

answer some questions? You did not answer any of the ones I asked.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMS:

I am glad I made the point and gave the Premier an opportunity to get a bit of a rise and maybe show a bit of life to his troops over there. In any event, it was rather interesting then to hear one of his own ministers, and perhaps he heard that too, the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, stand and say that he did not realize he was supposed to answer questions; he did not know this was a question period. My suggestion to the Premier is that maybe he should call an emergency caucus meeting right after the House closes, and explain to members opposite that they certainly are entitled to get up and answer questions and enter into debate.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to follow-up on what my friend, the member for Kilbride (Mr. R. Aylward), asked. One of the questions he asked the minister had to do with tabling a list of municipal capital projects. I also noticed a couple of front bench ministers muttering under their breath and making some reference, no doubt, to what transpired in the past. But I remind members opposite that they are now the government and I wonder if they will be fulfilling commitments made by them when they were in Opposition as articulated by resolutions, for example, placed by the Liberal Party in the House just last year, as a matter of fact, when His Honour, the Speaker, when he was a lowly member of the House as opposed to being elevated to the Speakership,

presented a resolution asking, 'BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that government alter the budgeting practice by specifying the amount proposed for each municipality instead of using block funding.' So we are assuming that the minister will be doing that when the Budget comes down next week. That is the kind of approach we anticipate they are going to give.

The same thing with the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation who earlier made reference to the fact that he was going to be making public the projects. I would assume that will be done in the House of Assembly. I suspect that is their intention. I just want to make sure that they are going to follow through on those kinds of resolutions, and not in the same way as other resolutions they put forth and did not follow through on. For example, one resolution here calls for a separate Department of Rural Development, which is rather interesting.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Who put that down?

MR. STIMMS:

That was put forward last year by the former Opposition House leader. 'BE IT RESOLVED that the administration proceed immediately to the creation of a separate Department of Rural Development.' Obviously, they did not follow through on that resolution, which is one that they obviously believed in. There are others, of course, as well. I mentioned earlier the ones about the school tax authorities. Now, if there was any doubt about it, because members were shaking their heads, they just happened to dig it up. And there is one from the President of Treasury Board, the

Government House leader, and this is very clear: 'BE IT RESOLVED that School Tax Authorities be abolished, that government collect the revenues and disburse...' etc. etc. That was their position last year. In fact, there was a subsequent resolution put forth by the former leader of the Opposition on the same thing, 'Introduce legislation eliminating School Tax Authorities.' So if there is any doubt in anybody's mind as to what the Liberal Party's position was, there it is. They now appear to be fudging a bit on it.

I want to get back to my old friend, the Minister of Finance. By the way, for the information of the Minister of Environment and Lands (Mr. Kelland), I wonder how he feels about his resolution that was passed not too long ago, a couple of years ago, calling on the government to create a separate department of Labrador affairs? They did not seem to be too excited about that, I guess, after they formed the government.

I want to ask the Minister of Finance specifically - we will obviously have to ask the Minister of Finance questions tomorrow in Question Period. It is the only way, it appears, that we are going to get him on his feet. There is no need of that. In Interim Supply there can be debate back and forth, there can be questions, there can be answers. The Minister of Finance is permitted to speak in this debate. Now, I do not know if anybody has told him or what his problem is. Perhaps the minister has strep throat, or a bad cold or something, but if he has, would he at least get on his feet and tell us that. I mean, we just want to hear what he has to say in defence

of this Interim Supply Bill which he, himself, has given notice of and which he, himself, has attached his name to. That is all! We want to know what your position on it is as the Minister of Finance. The individual ministers can answer questions from time to time, but the Minister of Finance can also answer questions on behalf of other ministers, who apparently are too shy to stand up or not allowed to stand up or have been asked not to stand up, or whatever.

We are still waiting to hear the member for Placentia (Mr. Hogan) who an hour ago said, 'Ah, we will be there. We will be there.' Well, we are looking forward to hearing from the hon. member.

I am particularly interested in hearing the Minister of Education. Two or three times now we have asked him to stand and give us his comments with respect to School Tax Authorities. That has to do with revenues. It may have to do with Interim Supply for all we know. We do not know. We have no idea.

My friend asked about the Water and Sewer Board. I wish somebody would elaborate on that a bit. It seems to be a brainchild of the Premier, I believe. I do not know if anybody else understands it or knows much about it, but we would really like to hear a bit more elaboration on it. Maybe the Premier can be enticed to get up for ten minutes and give us the benefit of his knowledge on all of these important matters.

The Economic Recovery Team: Now I thought that that was an excellent question posed by the member for Kilbride. Nobody responded to that. Is there funding in The

Interim Supply Bill to assist in the creation of this so-called Economic Recovery Team, which the Premier has touted from time to time? Is there any funding in The Interim Supply Bill for that? They are nodding. Well, why did somebody not get up and tell us that there is and how much it is? How much is in there for the Economic Recovery Team? The President of Treasury Board has nodded and yes, there are funds in here for the Economic Recovery Team establishment, and he nodded earlier to his seat mate, the Minister of Development, as if it is going to be under his purview. I do not know. But wherever it is, would somebody please get up and tell us where it is located, and how much there is in Interim Supply for that particular purpose.

If the minister, whoever it is supposed to be, cannot tell us, then surely the Minister of Finance can tell us. That is a fairly legitimate question and we are looking forward to hearing the answer.

MR. TOBIN:

It is going to have its own separate (inaudible)?

MR. SIMMS:

Well, that is what we want to hear. What is involved?

MR. TOBIN:

I can tell you who is going to Chair it, too.

MR. SIMMS:

My colleague is a very knowledgeable individual, but unfortunately he is not a member of the government this time. I want to hear it from somebody in the government who purports to know what is going on over there, and there must be somebody besides

the Premier.

Maybe the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations could get to her feet and tell us what is in The Interim Supply Bill in terms of funding to assist in the creation of jobs in this Province. That would be an interesting thing for somebody to say from the government side. We would really like to hear somebody say something about that, and the Minister of Employment is the appropriate one to do so. We would really like to hear what her views are with respect to whether or not there is enough money in there to get things off the ground.

The Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, who has all the responsibilities for cultural activities, recreation, municipal affairs, was out in Grand Falls the weekend and I would say of the 200 delegates that were there, 180 must have spoken to him and asked him for money. I am sure of it. If that did not happen, then there was something unusual about it. So there are all kinds of questions we are asking, but nobody is getting up to respond. Everybody gets up and says, 'Well, we are looking at all that, we are thinking about all this, and in due course we will let you know.' But would the Minister of Finance please get to his feet. We will give him the commitment that we will be quiet, absolutely quiet, for the ten minutes - not even ten minutes, there are only five minutes left.

MR. SIMMS:

We want to hear his melodious voice. We want to hear what he sounds like as the Minister of Finance.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. SIMMS:

If the minister is prepared to stand, I will sit right now and listen to the Minister of Finance. I look forward to it.

MR. WINDSOR:

Here comes the Minister of Finance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. WINDSOR:

When is he going to resign.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He has no choice but to resign.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Chairman, time is going by and there are a few questions, from a number of speakers opposite, that need to be dealt with very briefly. Some of them have been answered and some of them have not, and I will try to deal with the few that have not been answered. I would like to point out that there has been a real scarcity of questions and that disappoints me. We are in a bit of a hurry to get Interim Supply through, and I would expect in the time that we have available that members opposite will take the opportunity, rather than simply politic and so on, to ask intelligent, sensible, probing questions concerning The Interim Supply Bill itself.

Some of the things outstanding:

An item dealt with by the member for Grand Falls, the Opposition House Leader, pointing out that we asked for details when we were sitting in Opposition and so on. I would just like to reiterate for his purposes again, because he may have been absent when I explained the first time, that there is a tremendous difference between asking for Interim Supply in the House after a budget has been presented and before a budget has been presented. We are in the unfortunate circumstance, simply because of the lack of concern of members opposite, that the House needs Interim Supply before a budget is brought in. It is unfortunate, but that is the situation that we have been put in. We look over three weeks ago and we have proceeded very quickly to get to the point where we have Interim Supply but the budget is not quite ready.

So before the budget, when Interim Supply is brought in, there are certain restrictions on ministers, obviously. I pointed out at the beginning that there were some new initiatives that were being funded and I indicated the general amounts, but we really cannot go into a lot more detail until the budget comes in. If, however, we had proceeded as we should have proceeded this year, with the House open in February, the budget in March, then Interim Supply to give you money to tide you over for a month or two, then the Interim Supply debate after the budget is a totally different matter. I just want to reiterate that for the Opposition House Leader. Obviously, he does not understand that fine point of parliamentary practice.

MR. SIMMS:

That is pretty fine.

MR. BAKER:

I would also like to say to the member for Grand Falls that general policy questions, questions on broad policy items to ministers are probably better handled in Question Period rather than in an Interim Supply debate. I would just like to indicate that to him.

My final comment is for the member for Mount Pearl who asked a few questions; some of them have been answered, some of them were too silly and ludicrous to answer. But there is one that I would like to deal with very briefly. He has the unmitigated gall to ask why we have not moved more quickly, that coming from somebody who was in government and was a member of the government that saw this House closed for eleven months, who would not open the House, who would have nothing to do with opening the House to make sure that we had things done properly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

The unmitigated gall! We have been in three weeks and we are almost ready with the budget. We already have the House open. We already have an Interim Supply Bill before this House. The unmitigated gall!

MR. WINDSOR:

What garbage!

MR. BAKER:

Why did we not move more quickly?

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

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask

leave to sit again, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has 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. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Government House Leader.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to point out to all members of the House that the intention is to continue on with Interim Supply tomorrow.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, May 30, 1989 at 2:00 p.m.