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Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

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****NOTE****

HANSARD EXPERIENCED MINOR
TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES RECORDING
THIS AFTERNOON SESSION.

The House met at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker (Lush): Order, please!

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, I have a series of questions for the Minister of Finance (inaudible) isn't here. I normally would not question the absence of a Minister, Mr. Speaker. I take for granted when a Minister is absent, he or she is on Her Majesty's business. But I hope the Minister is not, in view of the Premier's comments a few weeks ago, in Ottawa giving constitutional advice to the Premier.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Simms: Like he was last November.

Mr. Rideout: Where he was last November.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, I will direct my question to the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Simms: He is twice as bad.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, on May 2 past, I enquired of the Minister of Finance whether or not the present constitutional impasse the country finds itself in was reflecting itself in higher

borrowings for the Province? The Minister, at that time, assured me and the House that was not the case. Now, Mr. Speaker, as a result of comments made before the House of Commons Finance Committee yesterday by the Federal Minister of Finance, indicating that provinces like Newfoundland are now paying from one-half to one per cent premium on bonds, I would like to ask the President of Treasury Board whether in fact he can confirm that the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is now paying from one-half per cent to 1 per cent premium on recent bond issues?

Mr. Simms: Contrary to what the Minister of Finance said. Don't know.

Mr. Winsor: Take it under advisement.

Mr. Simms: Ask the Minister of Finance.

An Hon. Member: Let me start again, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, the Minister of Finance is in New York signing the bond issue; at this very moment, as we speak, Mr. Speaker. He is not in Ottawa. There have been a number of comments made concerning the effect of the constitutional crisis on a variety of money matters in the country in terms of the effect on the Canadian dollar, in terms of the effect on the stock markets and so on. I think a lot of these comments are not borne out by what has been happening, both on the stock market and what has been happening

to the Canadian dollar.

The Canadian dollar, for quite sometime, has been fluctuating around eighty-five cents, and it dips below and it goes above and so on. I believe yesterday, or this morning, it was at 85.12. The Canadian dollar fluctuates. And every time it drops, they blame it on the constitutional crisis; every time the Toronto Stock Exchange drops, they blame it on the constitutional crisis. But the next day it comes back again. For the last number of months, the Toronto Stock Exchange has been on a high and it has stayed there. So I want to question the supposition, first of all, by the Federal Minister of Finance that the constitutional unrest in Canada at the present time is affecting the money markets. Now having said that, Mr. Speaker, we did recently -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Baker: Well, I would say to the Opposition House Leader, all he has to do is check the financial pages for the last two months and he will see what I am saying is absolutely correct. Now, then, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the raising of the bond issue, which was the second part of the question, when we go to the bond market we have a level which we expect we will get on that market. I believe, and I will get the exact figures for the Leader of the Opposition as quickly as I can, but I believe that we were about a half percentage point, or four-tenths of a percentage point higher than we expected we would, or somewhere in that vicinity. But I will get the exact figures and advise the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister confirm that the most recent bond issue, as announced by the Minister of Finance on May 24, is bearing a Meech Lake premium, up from .85 to 1.30 per cent, and that, in fact, will cost this Province an extra \$20 to \$22 million over the life of the bond issue? Can the Minister confirm that, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Simms: No, he (inaudible).

An Hon. Member: There is no Meech Lake premium.

Mr. Simms: Yes, there is.

Mr. Rideout: Go pick up the Globe and Mail today!

Mr. Tobin: Old Chicken Little. What is old Chicken Little saying over there?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, as I pointed out in the answer to the first question, the tendency is to blame all those things that happen on the constitutional unrest in the country. These comments tend to inflame the situation and do nothing to help it, certainly. What we are seeing, Mr. Speaker, in terms of our credit rating and in terms of what we have to pay to raise money, is a reflection of the \$5 billion that we are in debt, most of which was accumulated during the last ten years. That is what we are seeing, a reaction to the financial management of this Province during the last ten years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rideout: (Inaudible)
intelligent response from the
President of Treasury Board.

Let me ask the Minister a very
simple question to which he can,
for once today, say yes or no.
Can the Minister confirm that the
Province's fiscal agents are still
the firm of Merrill Lynch?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the
President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Baker: I will check into
that, Mr. Speaker, and advise the
hon. Member.

An Hon. Member: The President of
Treasury Board doesn't know who
our fiscal advisors are.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Leader
of the Opposition.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, is it
possible the President of Treasury
Board does not know who the fiscal
advisors to the Province are? Is
it Merrill Lynch or is it somebody
else? Have the Government brought
in new fiscal agents since the
Government changed? Surely, Mr.
Speaker, the President of Treasury
Board must know that?

Mr. Simms: Right on!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the
President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Baker: I am very concerned,
Mr. Speaker, in this House about
giving answers that are absolutely
accurate. I always try to give
answers that are absolutely
accurate and checked out. To the
best of my knowledge, and I am not
the Minister of Finance, there has
been no change.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Leader
of the Opposition.

Mr. Rideout: We got something out
of the Minister.

Mr. Simms: To the best of his
knowledge.

Mr. Rideout: To the best of his
knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, let me ask the
Minister this: In view of the
fact that Merrill Lynch, who are
still the Province's fiscal
advisors, as far as I know and as
far as the Minister knows, and in
view of the fact that Moody's,
both of whom today have said that
the weaker provinces in Atlantic
Canada will continue to pay a
significant premium for
borrowings, bonds, as long as this
constitutional crisis continues,
in view of that, Mr. Speaker, how
can the Minister try to slough off
for some other reason increases in
premiums in the bond issues we are
paying today?

An Hon. Member: Moody's?

Mr. Simms: Are Moody's our
advisors?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the
President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The reason I can say that with
assurance, Mr. Speaker, is because
of all of the other myriad of
comments over the past couple of
weeks that have been coming out
from so-called financial experts,
claiming that the bottom is
falling out of the Canadian dollar
because of Meech Lake, that the
Toronto stock exchange is
collapsing because of Meech Lake.
None of these things are

happening, Mr. Speaker. I prefer to take a more rationale, sensible view of what is happening in this country.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, will the President of Treasury Board undertake, if the Government have not already done so, to consult with their own fiscal advisors, Merrill Lynch, and see if Merrill Lynch will confirm for him what they are confirming to the news media in this country, that in fact the constitutional crisis is causing a premium to be paid for bond issues by this Province and all other Atlantic Provinces?

Mr. Simms: Ask your advisors. You do know who they are?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, I will listen to Merrill Lynch and Moody's when it comes to the figures, but when it comes to just a simple opinion as to what is causing things to happen in the market, these companies have been wrong before and will continue to be wrong in the future, Mr. Speaker. I do not assume that every word that comes out of their mouths is the gospel truth. We take advice from these people and we operate as well as we can using their advice, but we do not assume that everything they say is absolutely correct. I do not know how they can possibly prove, in light of the other kinds of comments these financial experts have been making, I cannot see how they can possibly prove that there is any direct connection to the constitutional crisis.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I had a question for the Minister of Transportation but he is not here, I had another question for the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs and he is not here, so I will probably direct my question to the President of Treasury Board. I hope his response to me will not be the same as the one to Leader of the Opposition, when he says all the financial institutions are misguided, something like the Premier would say. Everybody in this Province is misguided except him and the Premier.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) the question?

Mr. Tobin: I will ask the question when I am ready to ask the question.

Mr. Speaker, I recently met with a group of homeowners from Pearson Street. These people are renting houses there, some of them for the past fifteen or sixteen years, which are now being changed to condominiums and the price has gone from \$55,000, which they were offered for last year, to \$70,000 this year. In order to make the purchase they have no now choice but to buy the homes and abide by the group's decision on what colour the houses are painted and everything else, or move out after paying fifteen or sixteen years rent there. The bottom line is the people there are all basically middle-income people who are not

eligible for subsidized housing, and do not have the necessary funds to pursue a mortgage to buy these houses, so I ask the Minister if Newfoundland and Labrador Housing will consider putting in place a subsidy to assist these people with their downpayments to buy these condominiums so as not to be forced on the street?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Baker: It sounds like a very good question, and I will certainly take it under advisement. If the Member could provide me with all the details he has, I will certainly take it under advisement and investigate it.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, let me say to the Minister I will be more than glad to provide him with all the information, letters and that, which I do have here, and hopefully he can do something about it.

I want to again emphasize to the Minister that this is being done and the only way these people can come up with the funding is if Government does provide them with it, and I would certainly hope they will.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for St. John's East Extern.

Mr. Parsons: (Inaudible - technical problems) - with the responsibility of developing various options for the renewal of hospital facilities in St. John's, with particular reference to the Grace Hospital and St. Clare's.

My question to the Minister is has the Hospital Council now formally presented its report on these options to the Minister of Health?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Decker: (Inaudible - technical problems).

Mr. Parsons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister says they have received the report. Has Government considered the report and made the decision on what option it supports for the renewal of the Grace and St. Clare's hospitals?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Decker: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Government is presently considering all nine options, looking at the seventh option which was recommended, but a firm decision has not yet been made.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for St. John's East Extern.

Mr. Parsons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister confirm that the Government has recently advised the Grace General Hospital that the Government is considering an option not presented to it by the Hospital Council, that option being the closure of the Grace Hospital?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, the St. John's Hospital Council came to Government with nine options to deal with hospital problems within the city. Number seven was the one which the Hospital Council recommended, which would cost

about \$250 million in 1988 last-quarter dollars; in today's dollars probably well over \$300 million. Before the Government took it upon itself to spend that kind of money - and as you always find, Mr. Speaker, the estimates are usually under, so we are talking a potential half billion dollars this could go to - before we undertook to spend that kind of money, Government went back to the St. John's Hospital Council and suggested that they would look at least one other option, and maybe a dozen other options. We have to make sure, Mr. Speaker, when we spend that kind of money, that there is no less expensive way to deliver the same high level of care which is presently being delivered.

Mr. Simms: So the answer is yes.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for St. John's East Extern.

Mr. Parsons: Now that the Minister has confirmed the closure of the Grace Hospital -

An Hon. Member: The option.

Mr. Parsons: - that option - can the Government confirm that as part of that option of closing the Grace Hospital the Government is considering not adding any additional beds or facilities to already existing hospital facilities in St. John's?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, the Grace Hospital, the present facility, that structure on the southside of LeMarchant Road, when we took over Government we found that that building needed to be replaced. There is no doubt about

that. The 300 plus beds must be replaced. If the Grace Hospital were closed today, if it were to disappear, we need these beds in the city.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Government is looking at the least expensive way that we can replace those beds and still maintain the integrity of the system and still deliver the high level of health care we want to deliver. Mr. Speaker, it is the duty of Government to do that for the people of this Province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Warren: Sacrificing the patients.

An Hon. Member: They are closing down the Grace?

Mr. Tobin: Murphy, don't you clap.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for St. John's East Extern.

Mr. Parsons: I want to remind the Minister that the Salvation Army in this Province has served this Province well as far as the Grace Hospital is concerned. Now I want to ask the Minister does the Minister think the health care needs of the residents of St. John's and, indeed, of all Newfoundland, can be met if almost 300 beds are taken out of the health care system in the Province?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, in the first part of the question the hon. gentleman made reference to the contribution the Salvation Army made to health care in this

Province. Government and myself, we all recognize the tremendous contribution the Salvation Army has made, not only in St. John's, Mr. Speaker, but up in Labrador City and throughout Canada. There is no one underestimating or downplaying the contribution they have made.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Decker: Now, could we meet the health needs of St. John's if we took out 300 plus beds? No, Mr. Speaker, we could not meet the health care needs of this Province if we were to close 300 beds. Nobody is suggesting that we close 300 beds. We are suggesting that we build 300 plus beds, Mr. Speaker. We are in the business of opening hospital beds, not closing them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, if and when we close the Grace, we will replace it with an equal number of beds.

An Hon. Member: But you are not saying when.

Mr. Decker: I am tempted to say I am going to stand again, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Rideout: You won't stand again, because the Speaker won't let you.

Mr. Decker: I think I have covered the answer for the hon. gentleman. We are not taking out 300 beds. We need the 300 beds and, thank goodness, we are going to place 300 beds for the people of St. John's and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Parsons: (Inaudible) when the hospital is gone.

Some Hon. Members: It is a disgrace.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

Mr. Woodford: Mr. Speaker, my question was supposed to be for the Minister of Transportation but, I suppose, in his absence, I will direct my question to the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that there has been a very volatile situation with regard to the independent truckers in the Province and, more specifically, I guess, we would have to talk about the situation now in the Grand Falls - Badger area, where just yesterday there were some 40 RCMP officers there to try to control some of the protesters, namely, the independent truckers; and I think, in this case, there were two or three arrested - they even had a chartered bus there to carry away the protesters - would the Minister be able to inform the House of the results of any meetings yesterday between the Minister of Transportation and his officials?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Baker: No, Mr. Speaker, I cannot, and I am assuming the Minister of Transportation, when he comes back to the House, can inform the House of any contacts he has made and so on, with regard to the situation. We realize it is a serious situation that has been going on for years and, hopefully, we can find a resolution to it. Somehow, there has to be a resolution.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

Mr. Woodford: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the Minister. Would the Minister, then, being a senior Cabinet Minister, agree with me that the concerns of the independent truckers would be legitimate or not?

Mr. Simms: Are their concerns legitimate?

Mr. Woodford: Would he agree, being a senior member of Cabinet and a Cabinet Minister, that the concerns of the independent truckers in the Province would be legitimate or not?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Baker: There are legitimate concerns, I should imagine. I don't know specifically what the independent truckers have written down as their concerns, so I can't comment on any list of things that I haven't seen. But certainly there is a problem, and perhaps the Minister of Transportation will deal with it at some other time.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

Mr. Woodford: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

As I said before, the Minister responsible for Treasury Board, being a senior Cabinet Minister, would he take it upon himself to talk to his colleague, the Minister of Transportation, and get him to show some initiative and get the three parties together probably, to try to discuss this issue before it becomes worse? I am not being an alarmist or

anything, but it is in Central Newfoundland today, I am expecting it to be in Deer Lake probably next week, and, I think, in the hon. Member's District, in Port aux Basques. There is the potential for some very volatile situations over the next few weeks.

So would he take it upon himself to ask the Minister of Transportation to get the three parties together to try to solve this problem?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Baker: Knowing the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation, Mr. Speaker, I am sure he knows the situation and has taken steps to determine, maybe, what the way out of the situation is. I cannot make specific promises. I will certainly sit down with the Minister of Transportation and we will discuss the issue.

Mr. Tobin: Why don't you go down and buy your cars, then he can come back to the House?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Fogo.

Mr. Winsor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Fisheries. The recently announced Salmon Management Plan has come under severe criticism, I think from the Minister and from several interest groups. Can the Minister indicate to this House the level of involvement this Government had in formulating the plan for 1990?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, we had

very little opportunity to have an input in the management plan announced by the Minister a few days ago, very little opportunity. My Deputy met with various Federal officials, both in Ottawa and just recently in Halifax, at the meeting of the Atlantic Salmon Advisory Board, but the final management plan which was announced on Monday is the product of Ottawa, without any input from the Department of Fisheries provincially.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Fogo.

Mr. Winsor: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. It was customary in past years for the Atlantic Council of Ministers of Fisheries to have input into the Salmon Management Plan. Did this meeting occur this year, and did they make any recommendations to the Minister?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

Mr. Carter: I did not get the first few words of his question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Fogo.

Mr. Winsor: The Atlantic Council of Ministers of Fisheries, did they meet this year to have input?

Mr. Carter: No.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

Mr. Carter: I am sorry. That is something else, Mr. Speaker. I believe in other years, and maybe the Leader of the Opposition can either confirm or deny this, there was a meeting, I believe, of the Atlantic Provinces Ministers of

Fisheries convened for that purpose. There was a meeting called to discuss the Groundfish Management Plan and the setting of the TACs and all that, but there was no such meeting called to discuss the Atlantic Salmon Management Plan which was released recently.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Fogo.

Mr. Winsor: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Did the Minister request that such a meeting take place so that we could have some input? And, furthermore, could the Minister tell us if he has made any request to Ottawa for compensation because of reduced quotas and the potential that there could be even further quota reductions?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks I have made I do not know exactly how many, but several requests for meetings with the Federal Minister to no avail. A number of meetings have been requested and, I regret to say, the Minister has not seen fit to accede to my request in that respect.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes.

Mr. Hearn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have have a question for the Minister of Education who is not here, so I will ask another question to the Minister of Development.

A few days ago, in response to a question to the Minister of Fisheries in relation to the deal between NLDC under the Minister's

Department and the Twillingate plant, and also between NLDC and the plant in Trepassey, the Minister of Fisheries could not give me the answer; he said the Minister of Development had all the answers and he thought he would be tabling them in the House.

I ask the Minister if he could tell us, what is the lease being paid at the Twillingate plant? What is the deal with the operator in relation to management fee? And, also, what is the deal with the plant in Trepassey?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Development.

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, I would undertake to table those details, yes.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes.

Mr. Hearn: Mr. Speaker, we have asked the question in the House on three or four different occasions to the Minister of Fisheries, and each time he has delayed given an answer. He indicated last time that the Minister of Development would table the answer. I ask the Minister, why is he hesitating to table the information? Does he have something to hide? And is it really a sweetheart deal, which would embarrass their dealings with all other plants in the Province?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Development.

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to hide. It is not a sweetheart deal, it is a deal which was constructed in a proper manner to protect 500 jobs of people in the Twillingate area, fishermen, fish plant workers, and

it is a deal, Mr. Speaker, that this Government is very proud to have put together.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that when -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that when the Government does something correct and proper and right to protect jobs, it normally is the duty of the Opposition to heap praise upon the Government for doing something correct.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Furey: In our view, Mr. Speaker, it was a correct deal. It is one, Mr. Speaker, that was put together by NLDC - the Member is correct. It was one that we consulted on a daily basis, leading to the deal, with the Economic Recovery Commission whom we give great credit for helping us construct this deal; and it is one, Mr. Speaker, which a private sector person who has been operating in the fisheries, namely, Dr. Ches Blackwood, and who has been operating successfully - the hon. the Leader of the Opposition gave him great praise recently in this House, and I commend him for that.

So, Mr. Speaker, all of the principals involved in this, NLDC; the Economic Recovery Commission; Dr. Ches Blackwood; and, indeed, Mr. Speaker, I would be negligent in my duties without saying that the Minister of Fisheries did a terrific job in putting this deal together, too.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Furey: So I commend all of those people. 500 people -

An Hon. Member: On a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. gentleman seems to be involved in making a speech. I would ask the hon. gentleman to finish up in a half a minute or less, please!

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, in my commendation of all of those people who helped to put this deal together, I say to the hon. Member sincerely, there was nothing hidden; nothing improper; and, as I have stated in my first response to the first question, I would be absolutely delighted to table the details and I will table the details at the appropriate time.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker, I would like to -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

There is just a short time left in Question Period and I would ask hon. Members to extend the courtesy to the hon. the Opposition House Leader to ask his question.

The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to pose a question, if I may, to the President of Treasury Board. The Minister responsible for Public Libraries Boards is in

not in the House today, so I want to ask the President of Treasury Board, as the Minister who would be responsible for making any alleged cuts to any programs in Government services, in this day and age, when so much emphasis is being placed on illiteracy -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

There seems to be a conversation taking place on both sides of the House and the Chair is having great difficulty in hearing the questions submitted by the hon. House Leader. I have already asked for silence, and I don't want to do it again.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, in this day and age, when so much emphasis is placed on illiteracy through programs like Read Canada, for example, with which the Premier's own wife, I believe, is quite familiar and quite involved, would the Minister or the President of Treasury Board agree that closing libraries, eliminating library programs and, in fact, cutting back on library programs, particularly one that mails books, for example, to remote areas of Newfoundland and Labrador, would be a very serious backward step, considering the program and the talk about illiteracy and so on?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Baker: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I suppose any cutback in any service to any part of this Province - any cutback to any service - is a backward step that we do not like to take.

Mr. Speaker: Question Period has expired.

Mr. Simms: Oh, Mr. Speaker! By leave?

An Hon. Member: Oh, Mr. Speaker!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Simms: By leave? Mr. Speaker, the supplementary question is very important.

Some Hon. Members: By leave.

Mr. Speaker: On behalf of hon. Members I would like to welcome to the galleries today fifteen students from the Canada Newfoundland Youth Strategy Program from the Gander Bay area, along with their three teachers Mr. Derrick Hicks, Mr. Gary Penney, and Miss Evelyn Bennett.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, to meet the requirements of Section 26 (1) Subsection 4 of the Financial Administration Act I would like to table a copy of an Order In Council relating to pre-commitment of funds within the Department of Education.

0 0 0

Mr. Warren: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: A point of order,

the hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

Mr. Warren: Several days ago, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries, in answer to a question, said he would get back in a few days with an answer to the question. I am just wondering if the Minister of Fisheries has an answer to the question I asked him, which is very, very important to the people in my District.

Mr. Speaker: There is no point of order. The Minister gave a commitment to bring back the information, and it is up to the Minister when he brings it back.

Orders of the Day

Mr. Baker: Private Member's Day, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Private Member's Day. Motion No. 12.

The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

Mr. Doyle: Mr. Speaker, this is a very appropriate motion we have before the House of Assembly today, very appropriate at this particular point in time, when you consider the state of labour relations that presently exists in the Province. I want to read into the record the Motion that is on the Order Paper today:

WHEREAS many collective agreements are going to expire this year in both the public and the private sector; and

WHEREAS a good labour relations climate in both the public and private sector is essential to economic growth in the Province

and proper public administration, and the delivery of public services; and

WHEREAS the present Administration has failed to foster a good labour relations climate;

THEREFORE be it resolved that the House urge the Government to foster a good labour relations climate in the Province and that it negotiate in good faith with its own employees to ensure that public services are not disrupted in the coming year.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

I wonder if the hon. gentleman would permit me to interrupt him for just a moment. I do not like to do this, but some students leave early and I am sure the hon. Member will tolerate this.

I would like to welcome on behalf of all hon. Members, thirty grade five students from the W.E. Cormack School, Stephenville, accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Perry Cook, and Mr. Ash.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

Mr. Doyle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The last part of the motion again that the House urge the Government to foster a good labour relations climate in the Province and that it negotiate in good faith with its own employees to ensure that the public services are not disrupted in the coming year. As I said in the beginning, Mr. Speaker, this is a very appropriate motion to have on the Order Paper today, especially, when you consider the current state of labour relations in the

Province.

The Government has been the Government now for only a short period of time, approximately twelve, thirteen or fourteen months, a very, very short period of time when you get right down to it. But, Mr. Speaker, the very significant thing about that is the fact that this Government has managed in that very, very short period of time to alienate more workers and to alienate more unions in this Province than you would expect. They have managed in that very, very short period of time, only a twelve, thirteen, or fourteen month period, it managed to alienate more people in that twelve month period than you would expect any Government to do.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, Members opposite when they were over here, saying that the current Government was in power too long, that they were long in the tooth, they had broken down their relationship with the various unions, especially the public service unions in the Province. But again, I would repeat, Mr. Speaker, that this Government has done more, I believe in that twelve or thirteen month period, to inflame, to create acrimony and to irritate the public service unions in this Province than any other Government has done in that period of time.

Now Government has gotten off, as we all realize, Mr. Speaker, to a very, very bad start. They have gotten off on a very bad footing indeed. This Government is rapidly establishing itself as the enemy of the working man, establishing itself as the enemy of the working class, Mr. Speaker, and especially the enemy of unions.

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible).

Mr. Doyle: Well, if the Member for Port de Grave would like to listen for a little while maybe he will learn something and maybe he will know what I am going to suggest. So if he will just sit there and be quiet for a little while, he will have his chance in about fifteen minutes from now, if he wishes to, to stand on his feet and tell us what he is going to do. Because it is more important that the Member tell us what the Government is going to do, than what we are going to do. We are not the Government of this Province. The hon. Member is the Government. So it is more important that he lay out his platform to the people of this Province.

So the unions are not waiting to find out how the Opposition are going to treat them. They are waiting to find out how the hon. Member, the President of Treasury Board, and the Premier is going to treat them. So, if the hon. Member would like to be a little bit patient, and if he would like to wait, I will give him fifteen or twenty minutes, the House will give him twenty minutes to stand on his feet and explain to the people of the Province what he is going to do, and what his Government is going to do to solve some of the labour problems, and the labour strife that we have in Newfoundland and Labrador right now.

But as I said a moment ago, Mr. Speaker, the Government has gotten off on a very bad start. They have gotten off on a very bad foot, and it is rapidly establishing itself as the enemy of the working class, and not only the enemy of the working class but

the enemy of the union movement in Newfoundland and Labrador. That to me, Mr. Speaker, is highly unusual when you get right down to it for this Government. That is highly unusual. It seems rather irregular to me that this Government would get off on that type of a foot. They seem to be out of sync with the established policy of this Government.

The policy that they enunciated to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador back a twelve or a thirteen or a fourteen month period. They are out of sync with their own established policy of how they were going to establish an air of co-operation with the labour movement in Newfoundland. And I would venture to bet, Mr. Speaker, that especially in the more urban centres of Newfoundland and Labrador, and maybe around the rural areas of Newfoundland and Labrador, but more especially in the urban centres that this Government garnered or chalked up a considerable amount of support from the union movement in this Province, on the promise that they were going to establish a good labour relations climate. That they were going to be the saviour of the labour movement in Newfoundland and Labrador. There was going to be a new air of co-operation.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, will you use Beauchesne to stifle the Minister?

Mr. Doyle: There was going to be a new air of co-operation, Mr. Speaker. There was going to be a new day of dawning is what everybody was saying.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Doyle: And I would imagine that the Government received its mandate on that basis. That was one of the reasons that the Government received its mandate. Because I would think that there was - maybe not a number of the unions, but there was a scattered union here and there who gave their support to the Government on the written promise that they would establish a good labour relations climate in the Province.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, it is fair to the labour movement right now, right across this Province, to expect in return some measure of co-operation from the Government, and some measure of fairness, when you get right down to it, in labour negotiations. And not only in labour negotiations, but in a lot of other labour matters as well. And the promise, Mr. Speaker, of that type of labour peace and that type of labour co-operation was made, and it was not only made, it was the basis of a campaign that this Government put on in 1989 to receive its mandate. It was part of their campaign. It was a plank in their platform, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: With all your experience tell us what you would do.

Mr. Doyle: This is one of the reasons they are sitting over there right now. It was the basis of their campaign, and this was part of their campaign literature, and that was part of their campaign promise.

And what did they say, Mr. Speaker? They had the gall and the nerve to actually put on paper, 'in recent years economic development in Newfoundland and Labrador has been impeded by an

unsettled labour climate, which has resulted largely from the failure of the Government to recognize the essential role of unions in our society.'

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Doyle: Now, Mr. Speaker, the gall, the nerve of any Government to act now in the way they are acting in direct contravention to what they put on paper. If this group had their way right now instead of recognizing, as they said, here in their paper, their policy statement of principles, if they had their way right now with the current state of labour negotiations in this Province, they would wipe out every public sector union in the Province.

And let us listen again, Mr. Speaker, they went on to say, 'The record of the Tory Government in dealing with labour has been dismal.'

An Hon. Member: It had been dismal.

Mr. Doyle: Has been dismal. 'The record of the Tory Government in dealing with the labour movement in Newfoundland and Labrador has been dismal. Its adversarial approach has created some of the worse moments in the Province's trade union history. A Liberal Government will be determined to create an atmosphere of realistic co-operation in developing -'

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Doyle: 'A Liberal Government is going to be determined to create an atmosphere of realistic co-operation in developing labour legislation and in dealing with the public service unions.'

Now that all sounds pretty good, Mr. Speaker.

The Liberal policy of fairness and balance will be the basis of negotiations - mutual respect. I will now have something to say about the mutual respect that the President of Treasury Board has established with the President of NAPE, in a few moments. The Liberal policy of fairness and balance will be the basis of negotiations. Mutual respect and genuine concern for the welfare and the interest of all sectors of society, employees, employers and the public at large, will be the guideline for labour policy in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Progressive and fair legislation will be developed to deal with issues such as double-breasting and industrial standards and the minimum wage and pay equity and on and on and on they went. But I guess, the most significant part of all that, and I have to read you this little paragraph, 'The Liberal Government is committed to full consultation with labour and management in the creation of confident legislation to address these issues.' And what did we see, what did we see, Mr. Speaker? As soon as Government got ready to address the Bill 59 issue, they never even gave representation on the Committee to the largest public service union in the Province. In spite of repeated attempts, in spite of repeated attempts by NAPE, to have representation on that Committee, this Government didn't even see fit to give the largest public service union in the Province representation on that Committee, and that is the level of consultation. That is the level of consultation in which this Government is involved with the

public service unions on Newfoundland and Labrador, Mr. Speaker. And the nerve, as I said, Mr. Speaker, the nerve of this Government, in the second paragraph of its Statement of Principles, to say that the former Government had taken an adversarial approach, has to be one of the most hypocritical statements that I have ever seen this Government issue, and they have issued a few, they have issued a few in the last twelve or thirteen months, the short time period they have been there, they have issued a few hypocritical statements in their time, but this happens to be one of the most. Right in the middle, Mr. Speaker, of the most sensitive labour negotiations that has taken place in the Province in a while with the lab and x-ray workers, right in the middle of that whole process, what did this Government do? Did this Government hold out the olive branch to NAPE, did this Government say to NAPE, we have to ensure that 650 of the Province's most valued workers, the lab and x-ray people are kept on the job? No, Mr. Speaker, they did not.

What did they do, what did we see the Province's chief of Treasury Board, the Province's chief of Treasury Board, do? The Government's main emissary, the President of Treasury Board, Mr. Speaker, the Government's main emissary whose responsibility it is not only to keep labour peace, not only to make that contribution of keeping labour peace and establishing a good labour relations climate, what did he do? He launched a vicious personal attack, not sticking to the facts, but launched a vicious personal attack on the President of the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees, and actually

taunted him, actually taunted the President of NAPE into strike action.

That seems unbelievable. That seems totally unbelievable coming from an individual who is the Province's chief emissary when it comes to labour negotiations in the Province. A man, whose responsibility it is to establish a good labour relations climate in Newfoundland and Labrador, what did he do, did he hold out the olive branch to NAPE and say look we have got to keep these 650 people on the job, the lab and x-ray people, they are one of the most valued groups of workers in the Province? That's what you would expect the President of Treasury Board to do, you would expect him to do that. But no, Mr. Speaker, what did the President of the Treasury Board do? He launched a vicious, personal attack, he launched a vicious personal attack upon the President of Treasury Board, and actually taunted him into strike action, told him that he was feeding his ego. He told the President of NAPE that he was actually feeding his ego, and he said, when he gets finished with these little temper tantrums he is on, he will be back to the bargaining table.

Mr. Simms: That was the first day of the strike.

Mr. Doyle: That was terrible.

Mr. Murphy: What gall.

Mr. Doyle: The Member for St. John's South is right, what gall for the President of Treasury Board to launch that type of vicious attack right in the middle of the withdrawal of services of 650 lab and X ray workers, shame

indeed, holding up the sick people in the Province to that type of abuse and ransom. I would ask the President of Treasury Board, after having launched that vicious personal attack upon the President, is that any way for him to establish a good labour relations climate in the Province? Is that any way for him to avoid unnecessary labour strife here in the Province?

Instead of him trying to keep these people at the table, and trying to keep them talking, he was instrumental in causing 650 people to walk out. These are not people who walk out every year. This is not a group, the lab and X ray people, who at the drop of a hat are gone. This is the first time they were on strike in a nine year period. You do not often see a group like lab and X ray taking that type of action, and I have a feeling that if the President of Treasury Board had exercised a little bit more diplomacy, and a little bit more sensitivity, these people would not be on the street right now.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that Government cannot give a blank cheque to anyone, they cannot bend to every single request that every single union makes in the Province, but what we can expect, what Government can do, is negotiate in good faith and stop using the sick of this Province as part of a bargaining tool. That is what actually happened in this round of negotiations, they used the sick and the dying of the Province as a bargaining tool, and that is not what you would expect from a Government whose main plank, or one of the main planks in its platform last time around, was the promise to establish a good labour climate with the

people of the Province. That is not what you would expect. As I said a few moments ago, with respect to Bill 59, Mr. Speaker, Government, at that particular point, promised a full range of consultation with the labour movement in putting in place the provisions of Bill 59, and the Government never even had the decency, when they were putting in place the provisions of that, to give representation, as I said, to one of the largest public service unions in the Province.

Is that a good labour relations climate? Is that the way to establish a good labour relations climate? Is that full, complete, and total consultation, as the Government promised? Is that a healthy climate for the union movement to be operating in? It is certainly not realistic co-operation, as the Government said it would offer. Most of all is that keeping your promise? Is that keeping the promise to the labour movement that you would have full and total consultation with the public service and the private sector unions of the Province?

The President of NAPE, Mr. Speaker, just recently made the statement that Government is not telling the truth in its public statements. That is a very, very strong message for the President of NAPE to make, that the Government is not telling the truth in the public statements it is making to the people of the Province. And the Government has been accused of trying to turn the people against the workers in this particular instance. What Government has been doing in this whole round of negotiations with NAPE, what we have been given to understand, is putting forth some

very -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member's time has elapsed.

Mr. Doyle: Okay, Mr. Speaker, I will have more to say later on anyhow.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

Ms Cowan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am almost speechless at the unmitigated gall of this Member.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms Cowan: He was smiling throughout the entire thing. So obviously he could not take himself seriously.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Ms Cowan: That is right. There were very few people left when he was nearing the end because they were too embarrassed. Their memories of what had happened when they were in power came back to haunt them and they could not face them.

Mr. Hearn: Mr. Speaker does the Government House Leader have a quorum in the House?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

Quorum

Mr. Speaker: There is a quorum in the House.

An Hon. Member: Where is the eighteen? Where? There is no

quorum.

An Hon. Member: There is a quorum.

An Hon. Member: Where?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

I will ask the Clerk to count the Members in the House.

Mr. Speaker: Quorum present.

An Hon. Member: How many is a quorum?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Health on a point of order.

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, what we have just witnessed is a case of disrupting the Government of this Province. And, Mr. Speaker, that hon. Member should be 'named' for disrupting this House. There were eighteen or twenty Members in this House when he stood up and attempted to mislead the Chair by saying there was no quorum in this House. Mr. Speaker, that should not be allowed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Decker: What the problem was when the hon. Member for Harbour Main was speaking, talking about all his labour relations stuff, not a single Member on his side of the House would stay and listen to him, that is what has happened, Mr. Speaker, and he should be 'named' and flicked out of the House. That is what should be done.

Mr. Walsh: Not one stayed in the House to listen.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, let us get a couple of things clear right off the top. It is the responsibility, according to the Standing Orders of this House, Mr. Speaker, for the -

An Hon. Member: We had a quorum.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, I did not interrupt the hon. Minister when he was speaking, would the hon. gentleman from Eagle River keep quiet, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

I ask the hon. Members to my left to extend this courtesy to the hon. Member speaking. He has a right to be heard in silence.

An Hon. Member: He came in late.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, I did not come in late. I can walk in and out of this House when I like when the Speaker is in the Chair.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that according to our Standing Orders it is the responsibility of the Government to keep a quorum in this House at all times, if they want to conduct the business of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: There was a quorum here.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, the other fact is simply this, that any Member on either side of this House can ask for a quorum call at

any time. And it is up to the Chair to determine whether or not there is a quorum present in the House. It is not up to Government Members to say that somebody should be named or flicked out of the House for calling a quorum.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen Members on the Government side when they were speaking calling for a quorum in years gone by. I have seen Opposition Members call for a quorum and walk out of the House en masse time after time, Mr. Speaker. But the rules of the House are clear. The Government must provide fourteen Members at all times.

An Hon. Member: There were eighteen.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Rideout: It is up to the Chair to determine whether there is a quorum or not! Mr. Speaker, will you silence that gentleman please.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Rideout: And the second point I want to make is this, that it is the responsibility of the Chair, not the Minister of Social Services, the Minister of Development or the Minister of Health to determine whether a quorum is here. They might not like it, Mr. Speaker, but those are the rules of the House.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The Chair is about ready to rule on that point of order.

Mr. Furey: To that point of order.

Mr. Speaker: I will entertain one more submission.

The hon. the Minister of Development.

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, the Standing Orders are quite clear. As the hon. the Leader of the Opposition rightly points out, Standing Order 3 requires the presence of at least 14 Members to constitute a quorum of the House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, clearly what just happened was, I guess, borderline infantile because what happened was the hon. Member for Harbour Main introduced his Private Members resolution.

An Hon. Member: That is right.

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, when we looked across halfway through his speech, which lasted twenty minutes, there was not one single Opposition Member in their place, not one. Then halfway through his speech, the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes trying to be cute by half, decided that he would rise as the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations began her speech to call for a quorum, to disrupt the proceedings.

Mr. Speaker, clearly there were 14 Members on the Government's side, there were 4 Members on the Opposition side, and there was one independent sitting in the House, which makes 19 which is 5 more than that which is constituted under Stand Order 3 for a quorum.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Furey: So, Mr. Speaker, clearly what it was was childish, very infantile for that Member,

very childish games. And there was a quorum. And I would ask you to let the hon. Minister speak.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

An Hon. Member: You are taking up our time, for God's sake.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

I have heard enough submissions on this.

There is no point of order.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, with respect there has been two speakers from the other side, could I speak again please?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

Ms Cowan: How the truth hurts, Mr. Speaker, how the truth hurts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition, on a point of order.

Mr. Rideout: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is going to have to sit down and listen to the truth again for another minute or so, Mr. Speaker.

The point of order I want to raise is this, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, the point of order I want to raise is this, is the deliberate attempt by

the Minister of Development to cast aspersions and motives at the Chair. Again, Mr. Speaker, it is the Speaker in the Chair who determines, after a Member has asked for a quorum call, whether a quorum is present or not.

Some Hon. Members: He did! He did!

Mr. Rideout: The Minister of Development, Mr. Speaker, has no right to suggest to Your Honour that a quorum is present or is not present. Your Honour makes that decision, and for a Minister -

An Hon. Member: He did that.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, for any Member on either side of the House to question Your Honour's judgement as to whether or not a quorum is present or not present, is not proper, Mr. Speaker. And the Minister of Development should be asked by Your Honour to apologize to the House for what he has just done to Your Honour, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Development on a point of order.

Mr. Furey: There was a specious argument and if ever the hon. the Leader of the Opposition deserved to choke on his own verbiage, that was one time for him to choke on his own verbiage.

An Hon. Member: Sit down, boy.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, I never questioned Your Honour's ruling. In fact I commend Your Honour for

the ruling. I was simply pointing out how childish the hon. Member for St. Mary's - The Capes was, reinforced by the childishness of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I never questioned your ruling. We stand by your ruling, and I ask you to call upon the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

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

Mr. Hearn: When I stood to call quorum there were ten Members sitting opposite.

An Hon. Member: That is true.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Some Hon. Members: Now you are questioning the ruling.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

I ask all Members again to let the Member be heard in silence.

Mr. Hearn: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Hearn: The Speaker, rang the bell which must have indicated that the Speaker thought there was no quorum in the House. Consequently, I submit, Mr. Speaker, there is no point of order, and perhaps it is time that the hon. the Minister of Development be reprimanded for questioning The Speaker again.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Order, please!

The Chair has heard enough submissions on this point of order. There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

Mr. Tobin: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West on a point of order.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I am being serious. I just wonder if it would be possible to get the Government House Leader in to (inaudible) the Government side of the House. Because he obviously doesn't have the ability to do it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

Mr. Tobin: Obviously whoever he left in charge cannot do it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Tobin: Put John in charge.

Ms Cowan: I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, in future, before the Opposition put in their Private Member's Bills, that they put in ones they can cope with.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms Cowan: I am going to start today by making reference to a couple of things I have heard said by the President of the Federation of Labour. When we were first in Government, last June, he was being interviewed by television,

and he was asked, how do you think this Government will be as far as labour relations is concerned. The gentleman's answer at that time, Mr. Speaker, was they could never be worse than the past Government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Ms Cowan: I will also repeat, Mr. Speaker, something I said another day in the House, that when I was being introduced by the same gentleman to a group of employees in the Province, he referred to the past Government as the most arrogant employer this Province has ever known.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms Cowan: Now I can recall, Mr. Speaker, in 1983, standing out in front of Confederation Building, on the steps, with about 3,000 teachers in front of me. And do you know why we were there, Mr. Speaker? We were there because of the Government's attempt to contract strip - contract strip - and they talk about fair labour relations.

An Hon. Member: Shameful! Shameful!

An Hon. Member: That is why they (inaudible) the press.

Mr. Hodder: Token woman.

An Hon. Member: Did you hear that?

An Hon. Member: I heard it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms Cowan: I think I shall sit

down until the gentleman has withdrawn that remark, please!

Mr. Furey: Withdraw it, boy. Come on!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I want to speak in the debate.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The Chair did not hear any remarks made by the hon. Member, so -

Mr. Furey: Mr. Speaker, I think the remark made by the hon. Member -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please! Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Development, on a point of order.

Mr. Furey: I think the remarks the hon. Minister heard, and was highly insulted by, was the Member for Port au Port called her a token woman in the Cabinet. That is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, and we would ask that the hon. Member withdraw that comment.

Mr. Hodder: A point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please! Order, please!

To the point of order first, please!

The Chair did not hear any remarks made by the hon. Member. If the hon. Member wishes to speak on that point of order, I will hear what he has to say.

Mr. Hodder: To the point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Development should, perhaps, listen to what is being said in the House. What I said, Mr. Speaker, was that the Minister, when she was President of the NTA, was there because she was a token woman at the time, Mr. Speaker. That is what I said.

An Hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Speaker: There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

Ms Cowan: I feel, Mr. Speaker, that that is a totally improper statement to make about a person who was duly elected by the membership of an organization.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms Cowan: I will ask the gentleman to withdraw it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Opposition House Leader on a point of order?

Mr. Simms: No, I was standing to speak. I presume -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Warren: She is sitting down, isn't she?

Mr. Simms: What is she waiting for?

An Hon. Member: A withdrawal.

Mr. Furey: Do you all support that statement?

Mr. Simms: What is she waiting for?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

Mr. Simms: We have seen the way the Minister of Development has handled parliamentary matters in the past. He is at it again, Mr. Speaker. The unfortunate part of all of this is that the original point of order was raised by one of the Minister's own colleagues, the Minister of Health, and that fueled the entire debate. And the unfortunate part is that the Minister of Labour, from whom we should hear in this debate, has now had her time basically eliminated.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Simms: I would like to hear what the Minister of Labour has to say with respect to the resolution. Instead of the Minister of Development trying to play the role of Government House Leader.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

Ms Cowan: I would certainly hope, Mr. Speaker, that gentleman does not associate himself with that remark. I must say that the gentlemen on this side of the House have always treated me with the utmost respect, as I would expect.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms Cowan: Thank you very much.

I recall, Mr. Speaker, and I am recalling it with a great deal of vehemence and pain, I would say, in 1983 standing on the steps of Confederation Building with 3,000 teachers in front of me because of contract stripping by this Government who was so arrogant as to stand up today and talk about good labour relations and our failure to cultivate that climate.

Mr. Hearn: That was the last contract.

An Hon. Member: Put poor people in jail (inaudible).

Ms Cowan: I recall in the mid-1980s, Mr. Speaker, zero and zero being introduced. Now is that fair labour relations? Is that negotiating in good faith? No, it is not. It is going to the table with a fixed position which allows for no negotiations. Bill 59, a disgrace, a blight on the Province. For one of the first times in Canadian history the international labour organization had to come into a Canadian province and examine legislation to see whether or not it was discriminating against a union. And the results of that was that this Government was not treating labour fairly and that they were interfering with the proper collective bargaining rights of employees by introducing such legislation as Bill 59.

Bill 59, the type of legislation a decent law abiding people were forced to break, because of a principle that they were not being allowed to collective bargain. And then where did they end up? They ended up in jail. It was a disgrace, a disgrace that will be a blight on that party for years and years to come.

Mr. Tobin: Do you support what your Government is going to do to the teachers?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Ms Cowan: The essential services legislation, Mr. Speaker, could have been brought before this House while these people were in Government. It was not brought before this House for two or three reasons, one, they never had sat, so it could not be brought before the House had it been ready. But the other thing is that the Minister of Labour then did not have the intestinal fortitude to make the decisions that had to be made so that that legislation could be brought to the Cabinet table. And that in itself is horrifying.

And let me tell you something else too, Mr. Speaker, before I sit down because I only have a couple of minutes now, thanks to the disruptions that were caused by the people across the floor. You talk about labour relations: when I came into the Department of Employment and Labour Relations last May do you know how many grievances there were in that Department, just within the Department of Labour, now it should be setting the standards for all of Government? Thirty grievances. I cannot believe it. Somewhere in the area of thirty to thirty-five, and three court cases. And they have the gall to stand up there today and talk about labour relations as if they were the leading examples in the Canadian Nation when they were in Government.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms Cowan: What did they leave me with? What did they leave this

Minister of Employment and Labour Relations with? Double-breasting? I had to cope with that. Did they ever cope with multitrade bargaining? No, they could not cope with that. Could they simply bring in something to do with it being a jurisdictional umpire? Something the unions have been asking for for years? No, they could not do that. Could they leave me with the Workers' Compensation Commission that was in decent working order? No, they could not. Did they leave me with a Labour Relations Board that could deal with cases in an expeditious order? No, they did not. And yet at the same time they sit there day after day expecting that I, instantaneously, would correct all these ills, and again I am complimented by the fact that they think I could do that. But this is a group that has the audacity today to bring in this particular resolution.

Now I look at the President of Treasury Board and I consider him one of the finest people in the Province to be at a negotiating table. The man is conciliatory, he is diplomatic, he has handled himself extremely well.

The essential services legislation was not in place, so what did he do? He made sure that he met with the parties and that an essential services agreement was worked out between the lab and X-ray people. Are they going to have to worry about being thrown in jail? No, because of the fact that that gentleman sat down with them and did the right and the honourable thing.

Mr. Tobin: The truckers in Grand Falls, what about them?

Ms. Cowan: Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, we have settled with the nurses. Everyone in Canada knows that settling with nurses in this day and age is a very difficult thing to do. Nurses are standing up, as rightly they should, and demanding that they get their just deserts. This Government, under the direction of the President of Treasury Board, made sure that the nurses in this Province got what they deserved, and I am proud of that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

Some Hon. Members: By leave?

Mr. Walsh: No. I would not do them the courtesy of asking.

Some Hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker, I only have twenty minutes in the debate and, it being Private Member's Day, the time limitations are such that probably only two or three speakers from each side will get a chance to speak. Under normal circumstances, I would have no objection to letting the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations have a few extra minutes, but on Private Member's Day it is a bit difficult because of time restraints.

Having said that, I will move on to make my own personal observations in support of the resolution presented by my colleague, the Member for Harbour Main. And, if hon. Members opposite - it must be the heat. I

don't know what has got to them today, but the Minister talked about her time being pre-empted because of points of order from Members on this side of the House. I remind her that it was her own colleague, the Minister of Health, who raised the original point of order which caused all the debate and took the time from her speaking. So it would be appropriate for her to reflect on that before she makes the kinds of observations and comments, critical of Members on this side, she has made. It was not necessary for her to make them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the resolution presented by the Member for Harbour Main, I don't think you will find anywhere in the preamble remarks that are strongly provocative or acrimonious towards the Administration. There is not much in the preamble. And in the resolve part of the resolution it simply says, 'Be it resolved that this House urge the Government to foster a good labour relations climate in the Province and that it negotiate in good faith with its own employees to ensure the public services are not disrupted in the coming year.' Now, I say to you, Mr. Speaker, I don't see much in the way of provocative language in that resolution that would cause Members opposite to go off -

An Hon. Member: Half-cocked.

Mr. Simms: - half-cocked today. Yes, that is a good word. I mean, I don't know what's wrong with them. I don't know what they ate this morning, or what they had for lunch, but they are like a bunch of crackies over there. I urge them to settle down. If they can't take the words expressed by

my colleagues in debate, then go out and have a coffee, or something like that, and relax. The Government has a responsibility to ensure that there is a quorum in the House, so just make sure you have fourteen here and if the rest of you can't take it, please get out of the kitchen and go out in the common room.

Mr. Speaker, to begin my comments, I would like to reflect for a moment on my own short period of time in the post of President of Treasury Board; a year and-a-half, or so, I had there. I have some fond recollections and I can say that without hesitation. Most of my recollections of that period of time are fond ones. We had our differences from Treasury Board's perspective, but I attempted, at the time, to foster a good labour relations climate, which is what we are asking for in this resolution. I took time, and made time, to go meet with the leaders of the major unions and associations in the Province, including the Minister of Labour, she will recall, when she was President of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association and I was President of Treasury Board. I went over to her office, in the NTA Building, and sat down and had a chat with her about some of the concerns the NTA had leading up to the negotiations, you remember, preceding the infamous 'thirty and out' issue.

I went up and met with Mr. March, the president of the largest public service union in the Province, NAPE, and I met with leaders of other groups, the President of the Nurse's Union, Jeanette Andrews, and all kinds of other people who were involved in the labour relations field as

leaders in their own right with their own respective unions, and I think, quite frankly, that initiative was the least I could have done as President of Treasury Board. I think it did a lot to at least foster a good relationship - I think it did. The only thing I can use to substantiate my argument is the fact that in the period of time I was there as President of Treasury Board, we did reach a major collective agreement with the Newfoundland Teacher's Association, and we did reach an agreement with the nurses, by the way. Their last agreement was an agreement reached between this Administration and the nurses.

Mr. Baker: You were not there then, though.

Mr. Simms: I was there then, I say to the President of Treasury Board. I was also the one who resolved the hospital support staff dispute two years ago. The last time the lab and X ray successfully concluded an agreement was during that period of time. All I am doing, basically, is just saying to you that I remember with some fondness some of those days. And I remember talking to some of the negotiators for many of those unions privately. The one thing I found was successful, the one thing I found was helpful, was taking the time as President of Treasury Board to make myself accessible and available to, not only the presidents or leaders of the major unions, but the negotiators, the employees of the unions who actually are out in the front lines doing the negotiating on behalf of the union. I offer that as a suggestion and advice to the President of Treasury Board, particularly in the case of the

current dispute between lab and X ray. I say to the President of Treasury Board, if the negotiator for NAPE in that dispute, I think it is Mr. Ryan, Jim Ryan, should ask to sit down and have a chat, I think he should make himself available, accessible, and listen. He should also, in my view, call Mr. March and get together with him over lunch, or whatever, and see if he cannot resolve the problem.

Mr. Speaker, I also remember fondly in those days, it is only a couple of years ago, the last couple of years, that it was our Administration, the previous Administration, which brought in the early retirement package for public servants which has been widely praised, with the one exception, of course, the fact that it was not extended to the health care sector of the public service, and that is unfortunate. I also remember fondly, my limited experience at the negotiating table specifically, when, at five o'clock in the morning, I had a telephone call during a dispute with, I think it was the hospital support staff and the major issue was pay equity, equal pay for work of equal value, and I recall going up to the Battery Motel at 5 o'clock in the morning to -

Ms Cowan: The union would have gone on strike if you had not brought it in.

Mr. Simms: Perhaps so, but what is the point? What is the Minister's point?

An Hon. Member: What is your point?

Mr. Simms: My point is that we had success during the tenure. We did reach an agreement with the

union. We were the Administration that brought in the pay equity program. The Minister of Labour says the union would have gone on strike if you had not brought it in. Well, so what? What is your point?

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible) get testy.

Mr. Simms: Ask your colleague, the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, the last person in the world, by the way, who should be interjecting. She is supposed to be a diplomat and now she is starting to get nasty.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, we did implement the pay equity program, successfully negotiated the program, and we are quite proud of that, as well.

There were other initiatives on the labour front, positive initiatives, which Members opposite failed to mention, and one was the legislation we debated here yesterday in the House, the amendments to the pension plan. It basically was to provide for the money purchase pension plan for part-time employees. Employees in the public service in this Province who are part-time employees did not have access to a pension plan, and, Mr. Speaker, it was the previous Administration that brought in that money purchase pension plan for employees who are part-timers. So to leave the impression somehow that the previous Administration didn't do anything positive in the way of a labour relations climate, is quite inaccurate. It is totally inaccurate, Mr. Speaker.

I also say to Members opposite that they can keep raising the issue of the 1986 dispute, when public servants in the Province

saw fit to withdraw their services and go on strike. There is no question about it, that was a serious time in our Province's history - no question about it. But, Mr. Speaker, the point is, of course, that the matter was eventually resolved with a commitment to bring in revisions to The Public Service Collective Bargaining Act, or at least the amendment, Bill 59, to that Act, to try to improve the situation. It's quite easy to criticize what occurred four of five years ago, quite easy, and Members in the Opposition have certainly had no difficulty doing that, too, from time to time. But the point is, Mr. Speaker, you have to rise above that kind of criticism and get on to the future and the present, and you have to learn from the mistakes, if they were mistakes, of the past. That's the whole point, and that's the whole point of this resolution.

Mr. Walsh: It is hard to swallow that down.

Mr. Simms: There is no difficulty swallowing that at all, Mr. Speaker. If one is prepared to be big enough, man enough, there is no difficulty in swallowing those kinds of comments, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) the children whose fathers and mothers were in jail.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

Mr. Simms: You see, Mr. Speaker, they have in their minds, particularly the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island, that if they keep that up, or something, it is going to make a major, major contribution to the debate on this resolution and that's going to do

a lot to improve the labour relations climate in the Province.

But I say to the Member, his best bet is to sit back, or go out in the Common Room or something, if he has nothing more than that to contribute to the debate on the resolution. Mr. Speaker, those are the kinds of things that did occur back in the days when I was there, and I just made that point because I know how difficult the portfolio is. Treasury Board is a very difficult portfolio. There are two major issues with which you deal, basically, as President of Treasury Board, neither of which makes you very popular, either with your colleagues or with the public service, in many cases.

Mr. Efford: You had a three-pronged approach.

Mr. Simms: To what?

An Hon. Member: To labour relations.

Mr. Simms: No, not particularly. I had no pronged approach. Whatever I did came naturally, Mr. Speaker, that's all I can say. There was nothing planned or plotted.

The President of Treasury Board, of course, has the fiscal responsibility in terms of expenditures of the public service and the Government, and that doesn't make him very popular with his Cabinet colleagues, in particular, because quite frequently he is the one who has to give the instructions to his fellow Cabinet colleagues you have to cut back this, you have to cut back that. So it doesn't necessarily make him a popular person. And the Treasury Board

President, of course is responsible for all the negotiations. The President of the Treasury Board is the chief negotiator for the Province in all its bargaining disputes or bargaining units.

Mr. Efford: So you have some sympathy (inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Oh, I certainly have sympathy for him. Absolutely! And I have no problem saying so. That is why I have tried to offer a bit of advice and suggestion, for what it's worth. Maybe it is worth nothing, but I did offer it and it might help. I mean, I say it sincerely. And, Mr. Speaker, he is going to need all the help and support he can get from colleagues opposite. I just want to mention some of the agreements that are about to expire or have expired this year, and that will be up for consideration, Mr. Speaker, involving thousands of Government employees.

You have the Air Services workers. I don't believe they are settled yet. All these contracts will be expiring or have expired this year, 1990. Air services, Allied Help Professionals - there are problems with that particular set of negotiations right now. The Cabot Institute support staff, The Central Laundry, The correctional officers, the fire fighters; the biggest one I guess, general service, is coming up, group homes, hospital support staff, and we know where that sits right now. Hospital support staff, in the next week or so, I guess, is going to come to a crunch. Hospital support staff from both NAPE and CUPE, their contracts have already expired. You have lab and x-ray, and we know they are already out on

strike. You have the MOS, 2,000 employees in the public service, contract expired this year. You have the Marine Institute, you have the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation, you have the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, you have the teachers - 8,300 or so teachers in the Province. Vocational instructors, another 640, and the Waterford Hospital support staff.

Mr. Speaker, all of these bargaining units have their contracts expired now, this year, or will be expiring sometime before the end of 1990. So this is a very, very tough year in terms of negotiations in the public service. I do have some sympathy for the President of Treasury Board. He will need the support of his colleagues in Cabinet to help him reach, not only satisfactory, but reasonable and acceptable agreements with all those groups. I do not know what it is, Mr. Speaker, but there must be somewhere in the area of 25,000 employees represented by all those bargaining groups I just mentioned, and maybe a few more I missed in my reading. About 25,000 public servants this year, all negotiating, all bargaining for new contracts.

Mr. Speaker, I think the resolution, which calls for the Government to foster a good labour relations climate to reach agreement with all those units, is a timely resolution. I offered a bit of initial advice to the President of Treasury Board: to make himself accessible, to call the leaders of the unions, to sit down and talk to them privately and see what you can do to work out problems behind the scenes, which sometimes is much more successful. I offered that bit of

advice to him. I would also suggest to him that he temper his public comments. Because, quiet frankly, when I read the comments of the Minister in the paper on Monday, the provocative statements about Mr. March on a temper tantrum, making his workers suffer, on an ego trip and things like that, I was very surprised.

Mr. Walsh: It is better than putting him in jail.

Mr. Simms: I am glad the Member mentioned about putting it in the mail, because -

Mr. Walsh: Putting him in jail.

Mr. Simms: Oh, putting him in jail. He is back on the jail thing, yes. Mr. Speaker, I would not say it is better than putting him in jail necessarily. I do not think either putting him in jail or making provocative statements like that does anything to foster a good labour relations climate, and that is the point. I know that might be a bit over the head of the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island, but that is the point.

Mr. Speaker, secondly, he made the comment that he did not know what to do concerning the hospital support staff situation. He also, as I understand it, last year sent out a pretty provocative letter to the members of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association that got them all riled up. I do not know if it was over - was it the pension issue or something else?

Mr. Winsor: In collective bargaining, he told them, not to expect too much.

Mr. Simms: Anyway, my colleague will elaborate on it. So my advice to him on that score is he

should temper his public statements, try as often as he can to remain noncommittal. No comment is the best public posture for a President of Treasury Board, in my view. That is my advice to him. Now it is up to him how he deals with it. But he will need his colleagues' strong support. He is coming in now. I am sure he heard what I had to say.

I also say to him, in Cabinet, may I urge the President of Treasury Board to talk to his Cabinet colleagues at the very next Cabinet meeting and say, Now, colleagues, I would like you people to temper your comments publicly, as well. I want you people to temper your comments publicly as well, because that does nothing to foster a labour relations climate.

When the Minister of Finance, for example, as he did last October, threatens the Member's people in the civil service, looking over their shoulders and talks about 'they should not unless they have something to fear' and he says, 'God help the public servant who plays patronage' and these kinds of things, there is no need for those kinds of provocative comments, because that disrupts the public service and causes a ripple down through the public service. It does not do anything to help foster a good labour relations climate.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of thorny situations. We have public service strikes, we have private sector strikes, loggers, truckers protesting, and the lab and x-ray people actually out on strike. We had the correctional workers protesting for the last few weeks from time to time, for whatever their reasons were. That

does nothing, Mr. Speaker, to help the atmosphere for good collective bargaining. Even management in the public service were upset over the pay raise they got last year, Members opposite will recall. And there is a considerable amount of demoralization in the public service as a result of the initiatives of the Government last year when they fired a number of people in the so-called purge, and then they hired the Assistant Deputy Minister in Social Services, Mr. Tulk. That demoralizes the public service, and it does nothing to help labour relations.

Now I will conclude, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure if I have a minute, but I will try to conclude by making one final plea to the President of Treasury Board with respect to the current situation affecting the lab and x-ray workers. I make one final plea to him. I ask him to pick up the telephone, call Mr. March personally, and ask Mr. March if you can meet with him to find out if there is a way to resolve this situation with respect to the lab and x-ray workers, because nobody - Members opposite laugh at it, particularly the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Simms: I assure him it is not humorous. It is a serious situation. People in this Province are suffering, and it should not be necessary.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Member's time is up.

Mr. Simms: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: By leave! By

leave!

Mr. Simms: All you can do is make a joke of it, the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island. It is a serious matter, boy. It is a serious matter.

Mr. Speaker: The Member for St. John's South.

Mr. Simms: There are people backlogged, people not being admitted to hospitals, and you laugh at it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for St. John's South.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, before I get into the resolution, I would just like to remind the hon. Opposition House Leader of a situation where I would assume all the bargaining units he just named that we as a Government, and more especially the President of Treasury Board, has to sit down with in the next twelve months to negotiate contracts. Let me suggest to the Opposition House Leader that every single one of them out there would much sooner sit with this President of Treasury Board and this Government than the previous Administration, Sir, believe me.

Mr. Simms: You had better ask them.

Mr. Murphy: Before I get into the resolution, Mr. Speaker, I watch Members opposite day after day criticizing and ridiculing the hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations for not standing and speaking on issues. Today she stood up to speak on this resolution, and the first thing we saw, and I was very

surprised, Mr. Speaker, to tell you the truth, because I have some respect for the hon. Member for St. Mary's - The Capes, but purposely to interrupt the Minister he puts forward a silly quorum call and then we saw what happened, and gave you, Mr. Speaker, the problem of having to address several points of order, issues that need not have been addressed at all. And, of course, the end result was that the hon. Member from Port au Port, for what reason I do not know, heat of debate or whatever, but this is 1990, Mr. Speaker, and I do not need to remind you, Sir, or this hon. House of the efforts of the women of this Province and this country, and the tasks and hurdles they had to overcome to get some kind of sense of reasoning and credibility which they so rightfully deserved many, many years ago, what they had to do, and for someone in this House to use the phrase 'token woman' is totally unacceptable.

I would hope, as that hon. Member thinks about what he said in this House today, that he shows the intestinal fortitude and the courage to come out here and apologize to the Minister and apologize to every woman in this House, at the Clerk's table, and all across this Province and all across this country.

An Hon. Member: He does not have it, Tom.

Mr. Murphy: Now, Mr. Speaker, if I might, I have nothing but respect for the hon. the Member for Harbour Main who brought this resolution in today. I do not have any problem with the resolution in his first 'Whereas' and his second 'Whereas'. Of course, typically, partisan

politics again always finds its way into hon. Members opposite, and they bring in some silly 'Whereas' that kills and flattens the logic and sensitivity and goodness of the first two 'Whereases'.

Now, who to know better, Mr. Speaker, than the hon. Member from Harbour Main that this resolution obviously was written by the hon. the Member for Green Bay, or some such other Member? Because it makes absolutely no sense whatsoever, and I will talk about that a little later on.

An Hon. Member: By some other lunatic.

Mr. Murphy: But first of all, Mr. Speaker, let me talk a little bit about the labour movement in this Province and the tremendous struggle they went through over the years. And let me remind - as the Opposition House Leader referred to the histories of what we used to call the trade union movement years ago, when labour really found its place in the sun in Newfoundland. And I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, it was not under any Tory administration but under a Liberal administration.

I can remember the days when the Newfoundland Federation of Labour, under the leadership of people like Frank Chafe and Cyril Strong - the late Cyril Strong - and these gentlemen who worked so hard in this Province to bring the rights of workers to the forefront. And for the first time in the 500 year history of this Province, Mr. Speaker, they found a sympathetic ear in the Smallwood Administration and finally the workers in this Province found a place in the sun.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I suppose it was probably determined throughout Canada, not only Canada, but the United States, Great Britain, Australia, throughout the world as the greatest contract, the greatest labour contract that was ever signed. And some of the hon. Members who sit in this House today, and I think the hon. Minister of Fisheries was part of that Government, the most credible labour contract that was ever signed, that was ever heard tell of before, was a ten year collective agreement on the Upper Churchill Falls project.

Now, we can debate and argue about the other contract associated with Churchill Falls for ever in time, but the contract between Acres Canadian Bechtel and the building trades of this Province who, all of a sudden, came on the map, a ten year collective agreement, an agreement that showed the start of that majestic project and the completion of that majestic project without one work stoppage. Liberal legislation, liberal contract, and, Mr. Speaker, then we moved on. Then we moved on into the Moores years.

Now, you know, Mr. Speaker, the Moores' years were really not - and I do not mind saying this, Mr. Speaker, I will be totally candid and totally honest. The Moores' philosophy with the trade union movement was basically almost as solid as the previous administration. Premier Moores gave the trade union movement its fair share and sound legislation as time went on. But, of course, the sad part about it, as far the labour movement is concerned, is Mr. Moores moved on. Of course we all know what he is doing today, he is organizing the Meech

promoters all over the Province, and so forth and so on. We saw this morning and listened this morning to the business friends and colleagues of our friends opposite, who certainly have nothing to do with the trade union movement I assure you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Moores is now assisting this group in trying to make the Premier of this Province and his sense of principle, his sense of fairness in this whole Meech Accord, trying to make it look like some kind of self-promoted egotistical move on behalf of the Premier of this Province, trying to downgrade him, trying to shove him down in a hole. This is what Mr. Moores is up to today, along with his Tory friends who, I understand, Mr. Speaker, opened an office this morning in downtown St. John's. It is called Pro Meech Propaganda, and they are about to get in order. And I am sure there is lots of money around for these gentlemen, and we will have lots of rhetoric. If we do not have something by the end of the week, we will hear from these gentlemen, I am sure, all the sad things that are going to happen to this Province because the Premier took a stand.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I cannot fail in my own mind, that when I look at these people, it reminds me, Sir, of the oldest profession, do you sell? What do you sell in the name of principle? But that is for another time, Mr. Speaker.

Then Mr. Peckford arrived on the scene, and we know, Mr. Speaker, what kind of friend Mr. Peckford was to labour. We know what he did for labour in this Province. We heard new catch phrases called double-breasting, again to support the friends of the Tory party, the

entrepreneurs who could take the fiber, who could take the sweat off the labour movement in this Province, who could take it and when they did not get the contract at the inflated price, they would get this subservient company, this fictitious payroll company, to bid on the same contract and then they would go in. The option was to the carpenters, the labours, the pipe fitters, the iron workers and the boiler makers, their option was to go to work, Mr. Speaker, for non-union wages or stay home.

That is what the Peckford Administration did for the construction trades in this Province, Mr. Speaker, who went downhill after the Smallwood years. I remember projects started by the Smallwood Administration when the hon. Member for Harbour Main - he sits in his place and he will not look - but he knows what I am going to say is right. When we didn't have enough tradesmen, Mr. Speaker, in this Province to supply the projects started by the Liberal Administration, to complete the job, and we ended up with all kinds of travel card labour people in our Province, pipe fitters, boilermakers, ironworkers, from where would you think they came from. They came from New Brunswick and La Belle Province, and worked side by side here in Newfoundland, and again we showed that we were their neighbours. All of that went downhill after the explosion on one side of the Gulf and the other side of the Gulf, poof, and today, Mr. Speaker, we know that \$100 million later all of that material has been dozed over. Tory knowledge, Tory wisdom, and when they dozed it over Mr. Speaker, they did not only bulldoze the materialistic ends of the lower Churchill

project, but they dozed the aspirations of the trade union movement with it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, last year, and the Member alluded to the promises of this Administration. The people of this Province had options, Mr. Speaker, they had options. They could have gone to the polls and returned the inventors of Sprung, the inventors of Bill 59, the inventors of paddywagon policy, the inventors of billyknocker bullyism, that is what I said, Mr. Speaker. That is what happened.

You know, Mr. Speaker, why these people over there could not negotiate, they could not negotiate with the NAPE individuals the last time out, because you were not allowed to negotiate in jail. You were not allowed to negotiate in jail. And he has the gall, the adulterated audacity to stand in his place and bring this resolution before this hon. House, the very Minister who was the Minister of Labour for the previous Administration. It is incredible that he can even stay here, Mr. Speaker, after bringing this type - I swear Mr. Speaker, the hon. the Member for Green Bay must have wrote it and the hon. the Member for Harbour Main could not have even read it, before he read it today. It makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. In saying that, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to carry on for another minute while I find something here.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Murphy: That is right.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it is incredible the wisdom of the Opposition House Leader. Of

course, if you are here thirteen or fourteen years something has to rub off. So every now and then he shows a little bit of 'I know what is coming next', wouldn't you expect that.

Mr. Speaker, you know the hon. the Member for Placentia who obviously has not only had a tough week, but a tough day. Yes, something happened today that caused a little bit of turmoil, look at him, just a smiling Member representing his District. He passed this on to me. The Member for Green Bay reminds me of a poem, the Cabinet Boy. I had better read this first, Mr. Speaker. The dirty little nipper/took his hundred grand/ and followed Brian the skipper. I do not know if that is - no, no point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Simms: Fourteen Ministers the Premier has and his back bench is abuzz'n/perhaps the Premier should resign/ then we would have a baker's dozen.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

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

The hon. the Member for St. John's South.

Mr. Murphy: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on the wisdom that I have condensed and so eloquently orated in this House today, and when you consider that I would like to look the Member for Harbour Main directly in the eye

and tell him that I can agree to his motion, only up to, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to move an amendment, seconded by the hon. Member for St. Barbe, and the following amendment would read that the third 'Whereas' be deleted and the following added;

WHEREAS the present Administration has worked hard to foster a good labour relations climate; and

WHEREAS the previous Administration created a destructive labour relations climate.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The Chair would like a copy of the amendment and will probably recess for a moment afterwards to check to see if the amendment is in order.

Mr. Simms: Could I just make a general comment while Your Honour is waiting?

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: I will make a mild submission because we only heard it verbally, we did not catch it all, we would like to have a copy, too, if there is another copy.

In listening to the wording, my recollection of amendments, the purpose of amendments, is to make a resolution more acceptable in the Legislature, and it seemed to me using the words, the previous Administration created a destructive labour relations climate, are not very timely words in order to try to make the resolution more acceptable to the House. I am not so sure that this would be, not only unparliamentary, but I am not so

sure that it would be very conducive to making the resolution much more acceptable to the House. Your Honour might want to consider that when he recesses and has a quick look at it.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Development.

Mr. Furey: Your Honour, (inaudible - technical problems) the reason that the hon. Member asks for this is completely unacceptable to the Government. What is acceptable is to replace the present Administration failing to foster a good relations climate, with something that is acceptable to this Government, and that is that the present Administration worked hard to foster a good relations climate, and that the previous Administration created a destructive labour relations climate. What we are saying is that we want to amend it to get rid of that which is unacceptable to us, yet acceptable to the Opposition, and replace it with something that is acceptable to the Government, and I believe acceptable, if you are being honest at all, to the people of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will recess for a few moments.

Recess

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The Chair has considered the amendment put forward by the hon. Member and rules that the amendment is in order.

The hon. the Member for St. John's South.

Mr. Murphy: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. (Inaudible - technical problems) Minister stood up and said that, I think the amendment is obviously in order and I certainly respect your judgement. Mr. Speaker, I think this Government has shown initially that we have nothing but admiration and respect for the trade union movement in this Province whether it be the public service or whether it be in the private sector. And given the limitations and understanding the nature of what is in front of us and the dollars that are needed to address all of these collective agreements, that this Government is now finding itself forced to sit down and deal with.

I know, Mr. Speaker, and I have nothing but total confidence in my colleague, the President of Treasury Board. I know from dealing with him that he has nothing but - and on behalf of unions dealing with him, I might add, dealing with the President of Treasury Board on behalf of the unions, he has nothing admiration and respect for the union movement in this Province.

I also can honestly say, Mr. Speaker, that over the next year and years that we will find out that not only are the NDP perceived to be friends of labour in this Province, but this Liberal Government will be friends of labour in this Province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Fogo.

Mr. Winsor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak on the motion so ably put forth by the

Member for Harbour Main and certainly not the amendment put forward by the Member for St. John's South, old landslide Murphy himself. It was interesting to hear him speak, in fact, interesting to hear both Government Members speak on this important resolution put before them, because of the failure of both to address the real serious labour concerns that there are in this Province.

And I concur with the Opposition House Leader that the President of Treasury Board is going to have a difficult year. The negotiation process that is already started with all of the collective agreements expiring some 25 thousand people are negotiating contracts. It is going to be very, very difficult.

And I was quite pleased when some time ago the President of Treasury Board at the last minute was able to negotiate a settlement with the nurses, a good settlement, one that the nurses justifiably needed. And I was quite proud and pleased that he was able to do so.

I was much more disturbed though when shortly after that the President of Treasury Board sent letters to every teacher in the Province circumventing the process of collective bargaining, warning teachers: do not expect too much, do not put your expectations too high, because the amount of money that we had given out to the nurses is not available to everyone. And as my colleague from Grand Falls indicated to the Minister, the Minister and the President of Treasury Board cannot engage in that type of negotiating if he wishes to have negotiating in this Province that is conducive to the well being of the Province.

A last ditch effort has managed to provide essential services for the sick of the Province, but the health care is now in shambles. There is no question about it. I had a call yesterday from a constituent who has been in hospital now just about two or three weeks waiting to have surgery, and it has been put on hold because of the inevitability of the labour dispute. The people who were expecting good medical care in this Province have now to rely on certainly less than top notch medical care. In addition to that, I heard the Administrator of one of the large hospitals in St. John's, say yesterday, that it is not much point for people to come to the hospital to expect routine medical work because they will not be able to handle that kind of service now, because of the demands on the system from the emergency wards in the hospital. I say to the Minister, this is pretty serious stuff.

These x-ray lab technicians operate at full capacity for most of the year and now the backlog that is starting to accumulate after one week and if it continues on into the second or third week, it can only detract from the health care that our people should and must have. In addition to that we see the likelihood of the support staff in this Province going out on a strike in the very near future. I think the President of Treasury Board is now in the process, I think, this Saturday, he indicated he would be negotiating with them.

I was alarmed to see his comment in the paper that he didn't know what to do. I think he has since tried to clarify it for the House by indicating that this was only a part of the statement, and it was

not the statement in its entirety, and I would like to caution the Minister that this kind of thing does nothing for negotiating, negotiating through the Telegram, when you belittle the people you have to negotiate, telling the President of the largest labour union in the Province, NAPE, that once he gets over his ego tripping and everything else, then perhaps he will get down to some real serious bargaining and this is certainly not the way that the collective bargaining process takes place.

I am also quite concerned, I know the little bit was going on with the collective bargaining process for teachers and I think I even heard the Minister of Labour say under her breath at one time today 'a strike is a legal part of the bargaining process.' While it might be so, it is certainly not a very desirable method of achieving labour peace in this Province. We have serious problems.

The NTA is now engaged in, across the Province meetings, and I see the two colleagues, the former Presidents of the NTA are now conspiring there, in an attempt to settle the labour unrest with the teachers. I don't think they are going to be very successful because during the last election, workers in this Province in the public service and teachers in large parts, supported a number of the people opposite based on the belief that these people were going to give them substantial salary increases, improved pension benefits and a number of other things, and what we find happening so far, is, contract stripping, pension benefits being reduced and 'thirty and out' being challenged and questioned, and all kinds of things happening that are

certainly not endearing the -

An Hon. Member: 'Thirty and out' (inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: No, he wouldn't dare say 'thirty and out'. He said yesterday though, when someone spoke on pensions, he said teachers have a right to be concerned. I don't know if it's suggestive that in this next round of negotiations what we saw being proposed as legislation yesterday is about to be rescinded and some new legislation introduced reducing benefits and so on. It is certainly not going well in the public service.

The Member for St. John's South, when he spoke - it's a knack that -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: What's that?

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: I am not going to engage in that kind of debate. The Member for St. John's South, when he spoke, kept referring to what happened previously. There is no question that there were some serious labour disputes in this Province in the mid-1980s. There had been serious ones in the 1970s and I suspect serious ones in the 1960s. But that does not solve the problem of tomorrow. We jokingly, sometimes kid the Minister of Education about telling them that some of his ideas are yesterday's, but we were only joking when we do that. What we have to do, as a Government, and as a people is to look for tomorrow and the President of Treasury Board is into some difficult times.

We on this side of the House

cannot agree with the amendment put forth by the Member for St. John's South, so I think that since there is a dispute as to the acceptability of this amendment, the important thing is to agree on the resolution itself, the resolution being:

BE IT RESOLVED that this House urge the Government to foster a good labour relations climate in the Province and that it negotiate in good faith with its own employees to ensure that public services are not disrupted in this coming year.

And I think people on both sides of the House can support it. To make it even more acceptable I move seconded by the Member for Menihek the following subamendment 'That all WHEREASES including the amendment be deleted so that we can ignore any of the confusion and debate, and the House can vote on the resolution itself, but none of the WHEREASES.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair would like a copy of the subamendment.

Mr. Winsor: All the 'Whereases' -

An Hon. Member: In the amendment or in the -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please! Order, please!

The Chair will just recess for a few minutes to see if the subamendment is in order.

Recess

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The Chair rules that the subamendment is in order.

The hon. the Member for Fogo.

Mr. Winsor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Having that out of the way I think that this House can now get on to dealing with the real serious issue that there is the real possibility that we could have serious labour unrest in this Province during the coming months, and the President of Treasury Board has a terrific onus on his shoulders to see that essential services in the operations of this Province can continue as they should.

The Minister of Employment and Labour Relations when she did have her few brief comments, spoke very little about labour relations in this Province. She spoke more about things that were happening in her Department or had not happened, and I am kind of amazed that in the second year of her mandate we have yet to see any double-breasting legislation. The Member for St. John's South spoke of the need to have double-breasting and suggesting all kinds of motives as to what had gone on. The Minister has now had ample opportunity to prepare double-breasting legislation. In the Estimates Committee on two years following the Minister has indicated that double-breasting legislation was being prepared. We have waited and waited for the legislation to be brought before this House -

An Hon. Member: They're coming to get you.

Mr. Winsor: Coming to get you. The ambulance is coming to get the Minister of Social Services, he said, to come and take him away.

But the Minister has got some serious problems. The Workers Compensation Board that she referred to and the problems that were there, it was only recently, this week, I think, or late next week, we saw the example of the troubles at the Workers' Compensation Board in a letter that the Chief Executive Officer wrote to the Minister, calling her to respond to a crisis that was occurring in the Workers' Compensation Board, and I think I saw another article in the paper that suggested some three-quarters of all the cases that had gone before the Tribunal had either been changed or significantly altered when it got back to the Workers' Compensation Board. So the Minister has some serious labour problems on her hands.

The President of Treasury Board I am sure will have to do the serious negotiating to solve the problems of the collective bargaining process. But the Minister has to facilitate it by getting her own house in order. We have labour unrest throughout the Province. The truckers out in Grand Falls and Central Newfoundland area are having serious problems. The Wooddale Nursery Workers, layoffs in these areas. There are all kinds of labour unrest in this Province that the Minister must address if we are going to have peace in the labour movement.

So I urge the President of Treasury Board to get on with fostering good labour relations in this Province, to keep his curt remarks from being published in the paper and to see if this Province can go on to improve its educational system, its health care, and the other services that are so essential for our people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Stephenville.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. K. Aylward: It is with great pleasure that I speak in this debate, but I find it somewhat ironic though, to tell you the truth, Mr. Speaker, to have the Opposition Party in this House trying to tell us about labour relations. We will take advice from a lot of people, but I am not so sure we are going to listen to exactly everything you tell us about labour relations. I think the debate of the resolution is good to have because labour relations are very important in this Province, and a good labour climate is very important for the development of the offshore, and other developments in the Province, and for the economy. In order for the economy to thrive you have to have a good labour climate, and you have to have a good mood in the labour relations sphere, and unless you have that you run into problems.

The previous Government who were there for a long number of years, seemed to have lost control when they were there, especially in the last three or four, of the labour relation situation in the Province. One can only come to that conclusion, basically, because of the many disputes that occurred and the way that those disputes were handled. When you go back and look at the headlines from a couple of years ago you would not know that the Opposition who are here today, were the Government of the day and were dealing with the situations that we have to deal with now. I went back and had a little look, Mr.

Speaker, at some of the press clippings of the day and it was very interesting actually.

An Hon. Member: You are the Government.

Mr. K. Aylward: We are the Government and we are going to deal with it. We are doing all kinds of things, but you have to remind the Opposition once in a while about what they used to do, so that when they tell us what we should be doing we can look back and say, well, we are going to try, and that kind of thing. You have to remind them once in a while, and I do not like to do this, but once in a while I just have to do it. I am not doing it to be nasty, or anything like that, I am just saying we have to have a level playing field in the debate. All I am trying to do is to make sure that the debate that is occurring is very level, and that both sides present their case, and present what they would like to see happen.

Obviously, our Minister of Employment and Labour Relations has been trying to clear up, and clean up, the things that were left there, a number of the issues that were not resolved when we took over the Government. She is doing a good job and we are going to see some changes happen in the next little while, but those changes take some time. Legislation takes time. Give us a little while. Twelve months is a long time, I know, in some people's minds but in politics it is not very long at all, especially when you are trying to make some changes. But, just a reminder, Mr. Speaker, of the negotiating strategy as outlined by the previous Government when it came to NAPE. I have here a

special bulletin from the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees which was put out back in 1985-86 and the cover of the bulletin says, 0 - 0, The Collective Bargaining Attack, and Bill 59, the Legislative Attack, so those memories are not that long ago.

One of the things that we have to do as a Government is try to make, I suppose, a repair job with the labour movement, and rebuild the confidence of people in Government, in Government negotiators, and how Government treats the labour movement. That is a tough job to do because they still do not trust the Government as they should, and deal with the Government like they should. That is not our fault. We inherited a situation where we have had to come in and try to deal with the problems. So we are trying to do that.

I was very pleased to see the nurses received a fair settlement. A situation which over the years had declined, we were losing a lot of nurses and so on. It was very important for the health care of this Province that that situation change. I was noticing the other night on a news clipping, one of the nurses who was being interviewed said, or one of the representatives said that it was going to make a difference for them in keeping nurses in the Province in the health care sector. I think it was a good move. Again, I think one of many that is going to have to occur to see a repair and to see an improvement in the labour relations of this Province.

The other things that you have to understand too, we are trying to deal with an attitude and trying

to deal with the problems that have really festered and festered and festered and, especially, from under the previous Government. I think that is a fair comment to make. Although, I must say the present Opposition House Leader when he came in there, he was trying his best at that time when he was the President of Treasury Board. He tried his best. He made some movement in that area and tried to do, I suppose, a major repair job, and was trying to do that at the time. But I feel very confident that the present President of Treasury Board is, I am sure, really going to show what the collective bargaining process is all about, and is going to show how effective you can be when you deal with people in a fair and balanced manner. So I have no doubt about it. I have great confidence in the Minister of Treasury Board in dealing with the variety of collective agreements and so on that this Government will negotiate. I have great confidence in him as does this Government.

I think that over the next two, three, or four years and then onwards, onwards, and onwards after that, once we are re-elected a number of times into the future, and into the year 2000, that you are going to see an improvement in labour relations in the Province. Some moves are being made, some legislation is being reviewed.

The Minister of Employment and Labour Relations is reviewing a number of pieces of legislation to try to deal with some of the problems, such as, double-breasting in the construction industry, and such as essential services to be provided in a variety of health care

sectors and other sectors involved with the public service, that are of an essential nature. These are being done by the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations and by the President of Treasury Board. They are working to try and put forward some solutions to the problems that have festered. Mr. Speaker, they have festered. There is no doubt about it. They have festered, festered, and festered.

I remember being in the House of Assembly in 1986 when we had the people being hauled off and thrown in jail for standing at the picket line. While it was an illegal strike there was the picking and choosing of what was going on. I remember wondering how come there were only so many people taken off the picket line and thrown in jail. And it was a very, very difficult time. There are still a lot of bitter memories for people, I think, in the public service who were involved in that strike, and those are the types of attitudes that we have to try to repair. We have to try to repair the damage that was done way back - not that far back mind you - and, you know, so it is a tough job to do.

We are trying, I mean we are trying to deal with it head on and trying to do the best we can. It is not easy especially when you are trying to improve the economy of the Province. It is a full-time job in doing that, but it has to be done. It is job that has to be done and it will be done. It will be done by this Government. I have no doubt about it in my mind.

The headlines of the previous years are going to be replaced and I think they will be replaced. They are getting replaced by more

positive discussions and more positive headlines which we will see, I believe, a more constructive attitude and atmosphere within the labour relations of this Province. So, that is changing. That is due in large credit to the Minister responsible for Treasury Board and also for Employment and Labour Relations.

A number of initiatives that we are going to be bringing forward as a Government will be outlined in the near future. And as they do -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. K. Aylward: Many, many, many pieces of legislation. And I do not want to name them all off, Mr. Speaker. I mean, I could be hear all day, but I will tell you that when they come in I believe that they are going to be very progressive and constructive. And as we get into it -

An Hon. Member: Do not forget that we are going on the road with the labour legislation.

Mr. K. Aylward: That is right.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. K. Aylward: And of course, we also have the Legislative Review Committees. Again, a great Liberal Government bringing in a nice new system to allow for the review committees to deal with legislation, input from the public. I mean, you know, they are not used to it out there, Mr. Speaker. I think a lot of people are not used to it and that it part of the problem, but they are going to get used to it after a while, you know. But it is a good system. That is a good system.

That was a good thing we did, brought that in, and now it will allow for public input into a variety of pieces of legislation as affecting the labour movement for example.

And as that occurs, then hopefully that again is a consensus building type of way to go in the building of new legislation in this Province. And it is the first time it has been tried and I believe that it is going to work even better as we get the kinks out and everything else, but I think it is going to work very well. Again, it is a mechanism to allow for the building of attitudes and of bringing people into the process, because a lot of times the problem with labour relations is that people feel like they are left out or that they are not being talked to and so on. But as I said, you know, being accessible and so on.

And of course the Opposition House Leader knows about that as he was the Treasury Board Minister for a period of time. And he was trying. He was trying. I give him credit, he was trying to repair the job that had been done, the bad job that had been done by his predecessors and so on. But that is okay because we are picking up the pace and we picked up the pace a great deal as a matter of fact, and a lot of progress has been made.

So when the Opposition presents a resolution and introduces a resolution or a Private Member's motion into the House talking about labour relations, they have to be credible when they do that, and they should be credible in doing it and in bringing forward a resolution which outlines some initiatives that this Government

can take, or that the House of Assembly and Members can take. But we have to make sure and let them understand that we are trying to do our best and it is going to take some time. It is going to take some time to repair the job that was done.

You know, it is like when you get up and you are asking why don't you do this today and why don't you do that today. If I was in the position only two months ago or three, four or five months ago to have it done, and I did not do it, I am not so sure I would be so, you know, high and get up and jump up in my seat and say here folks, here is what you should be doing, you know and telling us off. I would be a little hesitant in doing that because I would be saying to myself aren't they going to say to me how come you did not do that when you were there. And I think that they should be cognizant of this when they are getting -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. K. Aylward: Yes, that is right. And, you know, as the Member for Bonavista South said earlier talking about the labour climate as it was, I mean there was a time when industry had a very difficult time in this Province. They were scared to come in here, they did not know what was going to happen in the labour relations sphere of things. They did not know whether or not there were going to be major problems.

Now that is not to say that we can solve all the problems. We are not saying that, Mr. Speaker. What we are saying is that we are trying to solve the problems. You have to deal with things front on

and head on and go at the problem, but you can only do so much in a period of time. As we are the Government over the next ten years, I mean in the eighth year they can get up and say well here is your record in labour relations. Now, if we did not do a very good job then they can condemn us and that is the way you do it. That is the way you are supposed to do it.

But to get up and condemn us for this, this, this and this, when we are attempting to resolve the problem and trying to resolve the problem and we have made some inroads in doing that, we have made some. There is a lot more to do. But in doing that the process has to be understood, and I think they will have to understand, you know, that it will take some time to do it.

So, when we are talking about their criticism I say to them that they should be constructive in their criticism, constructive by offering suggestions about how to resolve problems, ideas, as a matter of fact, because a number of Members opposite have some good ideas and when they were in Government some of them did. Now mind you some of them did not, and, of course, I am being a bit more kinder probably than I should and some of my colleagues will probably tell me that. But still some of them do have some good ideas and some of them did have some good ideas when they were in Government. The point of the matter is -

An Hon. Member: The hon. Member is not sure.

Mr. K. Aylward: I think I am sure of that.

But the point of the matter is very simple, Mr. Speaker, we as a Government are trying and are very much so going to deal with the problems that are out there, and in doing that we are going to try and make sure that we consult with people. We are going to talk to them. Hopefully they will be into the committees and making briefs to the committees, and maybe the committee will go on the road, and go to Stephenville and go out to Central Newfoundland.

An Hon. Member: Labrador.

Mr. K. Aylward: Labrador, go out and listen to people who want to have a say or an input into legislation that affects them, and that is the problem.

Now a lot of times the legislation is brought in and people do not realize it or what the impact might be, and there is not much that they can do after. Then it takes another process of months and years to change the legislation. So the new initiative of this Government and this House of Assembly is to bring in Legislative Review Committees. It is an excellent example of democracy at work and allows for a contribution to the debate, a contribution to the process among everybody who wants to be, and that is an important part of it.

I think that should be commended by the Members opposite as a very good initiative. It is a positive one. When I was in Opposition we never had that, and we never had much, mind you, when we were there, but we tried our best. We were a good Opposition I thought, but we tried and I would have wished that process would have been in place when we were in Opposition, because it would have

allowed for us in Opposition to have input into legislation and so on instead of having to wait until it came into the House of Assembly and trying to get caught up on reading the bills and so on and so forth. I think it is a good process and it is going to work.

But I say to the Members opposite that let us be credible in the criticism, especially when you go back, and anybody who wants to can go back, I have all kinds of headlines here, away back when, in the last few years, and they outline a whole range of things that did not happen or negotiations that did not go very well. I would say that as we move along and as we try to do our best to negotiate collective agreements and we will, we are going to do it in consultation with people. We are not saying we are not going to have problems, we are going to have problems, no doubt about that. We will always have problems, Mr. Speaker, we always have them, but what we are saying very simply is we are going to try and talk to people; we are going to deal with them; we are going to sit down and talk. I have great confidence that the President of Treasury Board and the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations are going to create a good atmosphere for labour relations. I think they are going to create an atmosphere which allows for collective bargaining to take place in a positive fashion, and hopefully will get rid of the negativism that has been there for such a long time, because it has been there for a long time, it is time it was ended, it is time it was put to rest, and at least you negotiate the issues, you battle out the issues and you talk about them, discuss them and so on, and you get a collective agreement at

the end of the day.

But we have to remind the Members opposite when they are going to criticize us let us remember the previous record and let us be constructive in that criticism I say, because we are going to do the best we can and we will do it. And we will do it with constructive suggestions. They are expecting us to solve a problem overnight, which they know you cannot do, a problem which has been allowed to fester for years, it is just not right. I would say to some of the Members who get on with that type of criticism, I just have to go back and I have all kinds of headlines here that I could send them to have a look at, what they used to do, union Leaders and so on in jail and this kind of stuff.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. K. Aylward: Well, there are a couple that I can go over for a second before I clue up. Here we go, we have, 'Cashin demands Peckford and Verge stop playing politics with the courts.'

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member's time has elapsed.

Mr. K. Aylward: Well, thank you Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your indulgence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: A good job.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Harbour Main.

Mr. Doyle: When I spoke in the debate for the first twenty minutes today I was clueing up by saying that in the Province of

Newfoundland and Labrador, right now, there is a lot of discontent in the labour movement right around the Province. There is a lot of disruption around the Province right now in the labour movement. The potential for even further disruption in the labour movement this summer is even greater, Mr. Speaker, when you consider the fact that you have approximately thirty unions, I believe it is roughly around twenty or thirty unions, whose contracts have either come due at the end of March past or is about to become due, thirty unions. So you have an awful lot of potential for a major, major disruption in the work force of a lot of unions around the Province. For the President of Treasury Board to make this statement that the President of the largest public service union, NAPE, Mr. March, for the President of Treasury Board to make the statement that he is -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Doyle: The President of Treasury Board, yes - that he was only feeding his ego, and getting involved in temper tantrums and doing his own union workers harm, really does not do much to create an atmosphere of goodwill among the workers of the Province. Naturally, what the President of Treasury Board is involved in, I think we are all aware of it, it is one of the oldest ploys in the area of labour negotiations that you can mention, and that is to try and pit the worker against the union. That is what Government is currently engaged in at the moment, trying to pit the worker against the union and trying to create some division within the ranks. That is what the President of Treasury Board is trying to do

right now.

The President of NAPE, Mr. Speaker, has made the statement, a very strong statement just last week that the Government is not telling the truth in its public statements. I do not know if that is false, or if it is true. I am not privy to the inside negotiations that have been going on. Certainly, the President of NAPE is privy to what is happening around the negotiating table. I would image he is sitting around the negotiating table on times. He has made a statement just recently that the Government is not being totally truthful in its public statements.

An Hon. Member: That is not true.

Mr. Doyle: That is not true, is it? Whether it is true or whether it is false it is a very strong statement for the president of a union to make. I think one of the reasons the President of NAPE is saying that, is that the Government is putting forward in the negotiating process some very unrealistic proposals, especially, to the lab and x-ray people in concessions.

Mr. Simms: In concessions, dozens of concessions.

Mr. Doyle: Yes, dozens of concessions. It is unbelievable some of the concessions that the President of Treasury Board is asking the lab and the x-ray people, for example, to take.

I cannot understand for the life of me why Government would ask the lab and x-ray people to take reduced workers compensation benefits. Now I would have liked to hear the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations today or the

President of Treasury Board tell us why the lab and x-ray workers are being asked to take reduced workers compensation benefits. I really do not know why that would be part of the deal, Mr. Speaker.

This is a good one. I do not know if the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations has been given information by the President of Treasury Board, as to what Government is trying to do with maternity leave for the lab and x-ray people. They are asking them to take reduced maternity leave. I would love the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations today to have given us some information on that. Surely, she must be aware of what is going on.

An Hon. Member: Ask for it in Question Period tomorrow.

Mr. Doyle: Yes, I will be asking that question, maybe. If I can get on Question Period tomorrow. We have so many Members on this side, Mr. Speaker, who are so anxious every day that we have to line up. But Mr. Speaker, I would have liked the Minister of Labour, the only woman in the Cabinet, to have addressed that issue today to explain to us why the lab and x-ray people have been asked to take reduced maternity leave. That seems a little bit outlandish to me. These are things they already have in their contract, and the President of the Treasury Board is trying to strip it down. Why the President of Treasury Board would ask the lab and x-ray people to eliminate seniority in transfers and promotions, to eliminate the whole concept of seniority and transfers and promotions, I would have liked to hear the Minister of Labour address that point, as well. And from what we are told, from what

we are reading in the newspapers, it is Government's intention to make it almost impossible for the hospital support staff and the lab and x-ray people to take sick leave. That seems to be another bone of contention, that the President of Treasury Board is trying to strip that from the contract of the lab and x-ray and the hospital support staff.

These are very basic things which the union has worked very, very hard for over the years to have put into their contracts, and when they come to the bargaining table and see the President of Treasury Board trying to take away such basic things as sick leave and reduce the maternity leave, then, Mr. Speaker, you can hardly blame the President of NAPE for some of the remarks he has made about the President of Treasury Board.

I wonder what the Member for Exploits - as we sit over here and watch the Member for Exploits and the Member for Conception Bay South, both of whom were involved with the NTA, former Presidents of the NTA, and to see these people sit over there day after day and not have the courage to open their mouths to say anything about the current state of labour problems in the Province, is beyond me. Now, you could not shut him up over there, Mr. Speaker, you could not shut up the Member for Exploits. I remember standing in a public forum with him about two years ago, out in Avondale, standing before a packed hall, in which I had a vicious personal attack made upon me by the Member for Exploits.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Doyle: Well, it was not vicious and it was not too

personal, but, Mr. Speaker, one would think that when the hon. Member finally took the reins of Government, from the remarks he was making that night, that all was going to be okay on the labour scene. I remember, as well, standing in a public forum with the Member for Conception Bay South during an election campaign, in 1989, and listening to the Member waxing eloquently about the new Government she was going to be part of, and how teachers - and we were speaking to a lot of teachers that day - were going to find the difference when the new Government took office. Of course, they had every confidence in the fact that it would be different, especially if the Member for Conception Bay South was elected, because she was a former NTA President, as well. Mr. Speaker, a lot of these things have not taken place, and now we are on the verge of every hospital in the Province being brought to its knees. Not only are we seeing the 650 lab and X ray people out on strike, but there is a good possibility that you are going to have another 5,500 people from hospital support join them before too long; I believe they are going to be taking a strike vote on Thursday evening, and they will be in a position, I believe, to hit the bricks on Friday morning.

Mr. Baker: They are not going to do that.

Mr. Doyle: They are not going to do that. Well, we are very, very happy to hear that, Mr. Speaker. The President of Treasury Board has just revealed to us that they are not going to go out on strike on Friday morning. Well, I am sure that is great news. And it is probably news to NAPE, as well, is it?

An Hon. Member: Oh, no.

Mr. Doyle: No? Okay. We are very, very pleased to hear that, Mr. Speaker, that the strike vote is not going to be taken, I guess, on Thursday night, and you will not have all these people hitting the bricks. But, from what we have been reading in the papers, negotiations with that particular group is virtually at a standstill. And at a time when tact and a little bit of diplomacy is in order, it is very, very, disturbing to hear these types of remarks made by the President of Treasury Board.

Unless the Government is prepared to establish a better labour relations climate and get down to negotiating in good faith, then we are in for some very, very tough times this summer. I make no wonder that the Government is now anxious to get out of the House of Assembly. That is all you can hear buzzing around every single day. The Government is anxious now to get out of the House of Assembly and to have it closed, because they have so many unions they are trying to negotiate with they do not want to see the House of Assembly open, and they do not want to be in the position of being open to public scrutiny. That is why we see the Government House Leader ramming through legislation, trying to get the House closed so that he will not be open to public scrutiny. Well, it is serious business when you get down to it.

When you are talking about the lab and X ray people, and when you are talking about the hospital support people, you are not talking about office workers, as important as office workers are, you are talking about hospital workers,

very, very important people, people who cater to the sick, the dying and the suffering in the Province. It is very, very, serious business when you get down to it, and we cannot afford to have the President of Treasury Board engaging in vicious personal attacks upon the public service of the Province. Of course, the Government attacks are not only confined to the lab and X ray people, or to the hospital support staff, the teachers, as the Member for Fogo mentioned a few moments ago, are also, we are told, receiving a very rough ride from the Government. Some of the information we are receiving, Mr. Speaker, indicates that all is not well on that particular front, either. We will soon be getting into the end of the school year.

Mr. Hearn: (Inaudible) should be worried, he said.

Mr. Doyle: Yes! That is a good point my colleague, the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes, makes. The President of Treasury Board indicated in this hon. House only a couple of days ago that the teachers have every reason to be worried. The President of Treasury Board has indicated that the teachers have every reason to be worried over the next few weeks.

Mr. Windsor: And the Member for Exploits nodded in agreement.

Mr. Doyle: And the Member for Exploits, of course, and the Member for Conception Bay South, seem to be in agreement with that philosophy. What we are hearing, of course, is that 'thirty and out' is being talked about. You are hearing about the teachers' pension plan, which is being tinkered around with as well, Mr. Speaker. And this party, this

Government, tried to recruit an awful lot of teachers to run for them in the last election and, of course, they wound up with the Minister of Labour and the Premier's Parliamentary Assistant.

Mr. Hearn: And the Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Doyle: The Deputy Speaker is a teacher, as well, is he?

Mr. Simms: The Speaker is a teacher!

Mr. Doyle: On and on it goes, Mr. Speaker. Labour discontent everywhere in the Province. You have the truckers out in Central Newfoundland. As the Member for Grand Falls indicated when he spoke, you have the truckers out in Central Newfoundland who are receiving no support at all from the individual who should be out there talking about it, the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation - not receiving any support at all - and when we question him in the House on it, all we can get out of him is, Oh, it is an old problem. It has been around for a number of years. And you can just see the arrogance seeping out of him, instead of being out in Grand Falls trying to make a contribution to getting that particular issue settled. We question the Minister in the House of Assembly and all we get from him: Oh, it's an old problem. It is an old problem.

We have the loggers strike going on in the Province right now and no attempt is being made by the Minister of Labour to try to deal with that matter. The Government is going on its way as if it was normal, and you sometimes wonder, Mr. Speaker, if they all have collective amnesia over there, if they all have Alzheimer's. All

they have to do is read their policy statement of a couple of months ago. One would think, Mr. Speaker, you were living in an utopia, as far as labour relations in this Province are concerned.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Doyle: Mr. Speaker, I am going to close the debate now.

Mr. Hodder: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!
Order, please!

On a point of order, the hon. the Member for Port au Port.

Mr. Hodder: Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize to the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations for the remarks I made earlier in the day. They were intemperate and incorrect and I should not have said it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.

Ms Cowan: I thank the hon. Member for that apology.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the Sub-amendment, please say 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: Those against the sub-amendment, please say 'nay'

I declare the sub-amendment passed.

All of those in favour of the amendment please say 'aye'.

Mr. Simms: The amendment is deleted (inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: On a point of order.

Mr. Baker: I think (inaudible - technical problems) sub-amendment effectively eliminated all the 'Whereases', which means now the vote on the amendment as sub-amended simply is the original 'be it resolved that' clause, and there would really be only need for one vote at that point, my understanding would be.

Mr. Simms: There is no vote on the amendment, because there is no amendment.

Mr. Speaker: Now, then, we are to the main resolution. All of those in favour of the main resolution, as amended, please say 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: Those against 'nay'.

I declare the resolution as amended, carried.

An Hon. Member: As sub-amended.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader.

Mr. Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to inform hon. Members that tomorrow we will be dealing with third readings and Committee stages as indicated on the Order Paper today. I believe it goes down as far as Order 12. So Orders 2 to 12, I believe, is the material we will be dealing with tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the

Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker, just for clarification, if for some strange reason something happened tomorrow to move that stuff quickly along, because half of it is third readings which should not take too long, and he has to call a bill, can we presume he will call the bill he started yesterday, the Education Bill, that one bringing the two Departments together, or whatever it was?

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Thank you.

The House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, at 2:00 p.m.