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Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

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The House met at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker (Lush): Order, please!

Before recognizing the hon. member I would like to welcome to the galleries today on behalf of hon. members, members of the council of Arnold's Cove. The delegation is represented by the Mayor, Mr. Tom Osborne, and councillor Mr. Basil Daley, and the town manager Mr. Wayne Slade.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

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

I do not know if it is in order or not but I have been asked, on behalf of the people in my district and also the Labrador East Integrated School Board, that I would present to you Sir, a book of short stories of old Labrador. This is a book that is used in the schools in my district and I would think, Sir, it would be appropriate that I would present this to you as the Speaker and hopefully the Government will consider using this book in all schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you, very much.

Statements by Ministers

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to inform hon. members that the by-election in the district of St. John's East will be held on Tuesday, December 11, 1990.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Wells: If I thought all my statements would be greeted with such resounding applause I might invite some other resignations on the other side so that I could call some more by-elections.

Nominations will be accepted at the Provincial Court in Atlantic Place, until 2:00 p.m. Saturday, December 1, 1990.

Hon. members will recall that I indicated publicly the concern of the Government that this by-election not interfere with the municipal elections in the city of St. John's, and that Government wished to have the vacancy created on September 5 by the former member's resignation filled by the middle of December of this year. Now that the municipal elections are over I am pleased to announce that the Lieutenant-Government in Council has issued a proclamation ordering that the necessary writ of election be issued.

Mr. Speaker, hon. members will also recall that it has been our practice since May of 1989 to provide more notice of by-elections than the twenty-one days required by the Elections Act. In this case the by-election will be held twenty-eight days from when the writ was issued. The three major political parties have known for some time that a by-election was coming in this district before the end of the year and all have nominated candidates.

I look forward to the new Member for St. John's East taking his or her rightful place in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I first of all want to thank the Premier for sending me a copy of his statement in advance of the House opening. I want to thank the Premier for taking the first available opportunity now that the municipal election is behind us to call this by-election so that the people of St. John's East can have representation in this House, as they should. Secondly, and finally, I want to say to the Premier that we on this side of the House greeted the announcement with such enthusiasm because we are looking forward with a great deal of enthusiasm to having the record and the mettle of this Government tested for the second time in eighteen months in a by-election, so bring her on.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

Mr. Gullage: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs I would like to extend congratulations and best wishes to all the candidates who contested the municipal elections Tuesday, including those who were successful as well as those who were not.

I would like to welcome all new councillors and extend to them and to those who won re-election our sincere appreciation for their interest and concern for community affairs. I believe the blending of experienced councillors with newly elected members will serve

to offer new ideas and initiatives for improved municipal practices throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

A special word of appreciation is extended to all of those who were unsuccessful in Tuesday's election, and I sincerely hope that all of you will maintain your interest in municipal politics and that you will decide to run again at some point in the future.

We all recognize that municipal politicians make a most significant contribution as it relates to the development and the growth of our Province.

A special debt of gratitude is owed to all those individuals who retired from municipal politics yesterday. As a former councillor I can readily appreciate the many personal sacrifices that you made during your years in office and you can be assured that your contribution is recognized and very much appreciated.

As hon. members are aware, the election in central Newfoundland was an historic occasion as it marked the amalgamation of the new municipality of Grand Falls-Windsor. Interest was certainly high in this election with some thirty candidates in the field and I understand there was a record turn-out of approximately sixty per cent of the eligible voters.

The people of Grand Falls and Windsor are to be commended for the interest which they displayed in the election of a new Mayor and Council for a new town.

I want to congratulate Mayor-elect Walwyn Blackmore on his victory and to assure him that my

department will work with him and his council with respect to the formation of the new town which is to be known as Grand Falls-Windsor.

I also want to congratulate Mayor-elect Shannie Duff on her victory in the elections in the capital city of St. John's and to congratulate the successful incumbents as well as the new councillors who were successful in Tuesday's election.

Tuesday's election marked the retirement of a number of Mayors and, as the Minister responsible, it is my intention to write all of them a personal note of appreciation.

I think we would all agree that Mayor John Murphy of St. John's served the capital city with distinction for a period of nine years. We congratulate him for the excellent contribution that he has made to municipal politics during his years in office. As well, Mayor Fred Coates made a most significant contribution to the growth of Conception Bay South and he is to be congratulated on his fine contribution to municipal politics during his years in office.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to work closely with all new and existing councils in the interest of sound municipal government practices throughout the whole of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, obviously, we on this side of the House would like to join with the

Minister in extending our congratulations to all those people who ran in the election yesterday and were successful and those who were not successful and certainly to those who decided not to run. We extend our congratulations to the people in all of the municipalities involved, including the people who ran in the west coast of the Province in my colleagues districts and other places on the west coast.

An Hon. Member: They never got mentioned.

Mr. Tobin: As the Minister stated, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of us sitting in this Chamber who had the honour to serve as members on various councils throughout the Province. We realize the tremendous sacrifices that these people make, and I thank the Minister for paying tribute to them in that regard.

As it relates to the new council of Grand Falls-Windsor, Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a historic day. And I hope that instead of extending his congratulations to the new Mayor and telling him that his department will work with him and his council, with respect to the formation of the new town, that he will keep his commitment that was made to them on September 25th. That will be the right way to start off.

As it relates to the election here in the city of St. John's, let me say to the Member that we are very pleased to see a former colleague of ours become Mayor of the largest city as well as the other people who were elected.

Mr. Speaker, I can say that I had somewhat of a personal interest in

the election here in St. John's yesterday because my first cousin was elected to represent ward four, and I take great pride in that. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, I had another cousin elected Mayor of Dunville yesterday, so our family is alive and well. But in any case, Mr. Speaker, I join with them in offering our congratulations to these people. To Mayor John Murphy who no doubt served the city of St. John's with distinction over the past number of years that he has been there, we offer our congratulations; to Mayor Coates; and as well we offer our congratulations to the new Mayor, Mark Suter, who was elected despite the efforts of the Minister of Environment and Lands.

But in any case, Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see all the people who offered themselves for council throughout -

Mr. Simms: All the other mayors of all (inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Of all the other mayors, I said that in the beginning, of all of the other mayors and councillors including the west coast of our Province who were not mentioned here and -

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

Some Hon. Members: By leave!

Mr. Tobin: Thank you very much.

Oral Questions

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

Mr. Rideout: Thank you Mr.

Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President of the Newfoundland Medical Association, Dr. Peter Roberts, who is also Executive Director of the Grenfell Association, expressed some grave concerns about the affect on the quality of health care in this Province next year as a result of the Government freeze and Government cutbacks. Now, Mr. Speaker, in the past when similar experts have expressed similar concern the Premier has downplayed their concerns.

I want to ask the Minister of Health today: Now that the President of the Medical Association, a person who is also an administrator of one of the larger hospitals in the Province, has expressed similar concerns as that expressed by the President of the Hospital and Nursing Home Associations and nurses union and so on, now that that person has done that, will the Minister not concur with the opinion being expressed by those experts that the health care system in this Province cannot stand the shock treatment that the Government has in store for it next year?

An Hon. Member: Hear hear!

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

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, of course Dr. Peter Roberts is concerned. So is the Newfoundland Hospital and Nursing Home Association. So is the Government. We are all concerned if we have to make any cuts in health. I should tell hon. members that I have had several meetings with Dr. Roberts who understands perfectly well why we have to do what we have to do. We are not taking any delight or glee

in reviewing the expenses in health. We are trying to make sure that we live within our means as a Province. And we are looking at ways that we can save money, and we are hoping to save money in health wherever we can without impacting on the health and safety of the patients in the system.

Dr. Roberts, like other people in the system, is concerned, of course he is. And that is why he is involved in giving us assistance - the Newfoundland Medical Association - they give us advice publicly as well as in private, Mr. Speaker. And I can certainly understand his concern because I too am concerned. But we are not doing it with glee, we are doing it because necessity forces us into it.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Leader of the Opposition on a supplementary.

Mr. Rideout: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker the Minister will know that Dr. Roberts also yesterday expressed the view that the Province will lose highly qualified specialists as a result of the budget freeze in the health care sector next year. Is the Minister not concerned that we are feeling the immediate effect of that now and that in fact specialists and nurses in particular are now already beginning to leave the Province?

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

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, I am aware that Dr. Roberts expressed that concern that if we go ahead with a full total freeze on the budget there is a possibility that we could lose some specialists. Now up to this time no specialists

have left this Province because of any action which has been taken with the budget of the Department of Health. Because all that has happened to date is that we have increased the budget by \$150 million over the past number of years. So there have been no cuts in the hospital Budgets as yet and, consequently, doctors or nurses are not leaving this Province because of health cuts. I would be the first to admit that for the past fifty years, I suppose, doctors and nurses have been leaving the Province, as have doctors and nurses been coming into the Province, but what is happening today has no bearing whatsoever on what might or might not happen to the health budget, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Rideout: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So there is another expert now, Dr. Roberts, who is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has had, and I assume still has, a physician recruitment service in the Department of Health to assist hospitals throughout the Province to recruit doctors to serve here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Will the Minister confirm that this service is having increasing difficulty in recruiting doctors to Newfoundland and Labrador since the freeze was announced?

Mr. Simms: A good question.

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

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, as strange as it might seem, Newfoundland and Labrador has plenty of doctors. We do not have

a shortage of doctors in this Province. As a matter of fact, we have one doctor for every 550 people on the Avalon Peninsula.

We have a problem with distribution; we have a problem getting doctors for the Northern Peninsula and for Labrador, where we have 2,000 or 3,000 people per doctor. Our problem has been and still is a problem with distribution. If we could maintain the same level of doctors we have in this Province and get them to serve in rural areas of the Province, we would not have a problem. And the things which are happening to the Department of Health Budget has no bearing on this, this has been going on for the last generation and there are still no changes.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Torngat Mountains.

Mr. Warren: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the Minister of Health. Recently, the Minister advised this House that there are part-time nurses in Davis Inlet and Postville. I would like to ask the Minister if he could confirm that of the fourteen clinics on the Labrador coast, between Nain and Mary's Harbour, Lodge Bay, that there is the possibility that within the next two or three months there will be other clinics which will only have nurses on a part-time basis?

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

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, I suppose many things are possible. As I pointed out in answer to a question by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, it is difficult for the Province to recruit

doctors for Northern Labrador and the Northern Peninsula.

It is also difficult for the Department to recruit nurses for Labrador and the Northern Peninsula, and over in Burgeo and in certain other places throughout the Island of Newfoundland. Whether or not that will be worse over the next twelve or fourteen months, Mr. Speaker, I cannot make that judgement; I am not a soothsayer, I cannot make that prediction.

However, I can say this, that the Department of Health, in co-operation with the Grenfell Regional Health Services Board, is doing all in our power to recruit nurses for that area, Mr. Speaker. But it is not easy to do. It is a problem which has been with us ever since Sir Wilfred Grenfell came over here to practice, almost one hundred years ago. It is a difficult problem with which to deal. As a matter of fact, hon. members will learn in the not too distant future of some very imaginative ideas which we have to address this specific problem. I am just longing to be able to bring them to the House.

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

Mr. Simms: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Premier. Last Friday morning, he will recall, he tabled a summary of what he called expenditures on health care for the years 1986-87 to 1990-1991, and in so doing he told this House, and I quote from Hansard, 'In this current year, we increased the expenditure on health by nearly twice what the normal governmental increase was.'

We did virtually the same thing in the prior year.' Will the Premier now confirm that that summary of expenditures on health care did not reflect actual expenditures in prior years and was an inaccurate representation of the truth about health care expenditures?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Premier Wells: I will confirm one thing and deny the other proposition the hon. member made. The statement I tabled says 'Budget' not 'actual expenditure'. And if he reads my entire statement in the House, he will find that in each case I refer to the budgeted amount. That is my recollection. The Department of Health provided me with these figures as the amounts budgeted to reflect the commitments of the Governments -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Premier Wells: I will start again, Mr. Speaker, just in case that noise overcame what I am trying to get across and members do not hear it.

What was provided to me and I understood it to be - now if it is something else, I will have to go back to the Department and find out. What I understood from the Department is that what was provided to me were the budgeted amounts, and I think that is what I said they were in Hansard.

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

Mr. Simms: No, Mr. Speaker. I suggest the Premier read Hansard, because I quoted accurately what he said. And he said again, 'In this current year, we increased the expenditure on health.' It is

on page - well, whatever page it is, he can look it up himself.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask him a supplementary. In that same summary he tabled he also indicated that health expenditure increased by 10.28 per cent in the last fiscal year. Will he now admit that, in fact, in the 1989-90 fiscal year actual health care expenditures increase, not by 10.28 per cent, but by 7.2 per cent, some 3 points less than he claimed last Friday?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Premier Wells: Mr. Speaker, here is what I said: I have Hansard. I will read it. 'If you look at the Health Estimates, the increase in health care spending in this Province this year over last year's estimates, from the Budget documents tabled in the House by the Minister of Finance, the increase is \$61 million over last year.' Now, Mr. Speaker - I am sorry, I am reading from the Leader of the Opposition's statement. I said, 'I will do more than that, I will table the detail.' Then I went on to say, 'The figures show, Mr. Speaker, that in the year 1986-87 this increase was 7.4 per cent in the health care budget, and the increase in the general Government Budget was 5.62 per cent; in the year 1987-88 the increase in the health care Budget was 7.95 per cent.' I took the figures, or the Health Department told me - I did not do it, the Health Department did - they took the figures from the budgeted amounts to demonstrate the commitment of the Government putting forward the Budget.

Now everybody knows, Mr. Speaker, that frequently the actual

expenditures may be up or down, depending on a variety of circumstances. I do not know what the actual expenditures were.

Mr. Rideout: If the Budget is no more dependable than last year's (inaudible).

Mr. Baker: And you do not know what they are going to be this year.

Premier Wells: I do not know what the actual expenditures are going to be this year, and I do not know at this moment precisely what they were in the last fiscal year. The final figures, I believe, are not complete yet.

Mr. Speaker, when you go back and do the comparisons, all you can do is look at the Budget. And, Mr. Speaker, if you look at every page, we talk about the Government Budget that year, and the year 1988-89, the increase in the general Government Budget that year. It all talks about the increase we had in the Budget, the \$71 million, the general Budget increase, the overall Budget. Now, Mr. Speaker, just in case they did not pay attention, the top line is B-U-D-G-E-T, Budget.

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

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker, everybody in this House recollects last Friday morning, and I can tell the Premier that nobody in the House or anywhere else understood what he was saying to be estimates. Because clearly he said, as I just quoted twice, 'That will just demonstrate in this current year we increased the expenditure on health by nearly twice what the normal governmental increase was.' Clearly misleading, and

clearly deceptive.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Simms: I am not sure if it was deliberate, but I can tell him everybody assumed that.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. member is on a supplementary.

Mr. Simms: Let me ask him this question. Now, this is a clear question, as the other two were and he did not give us a direct answer to them. Perhaps he will on this one. Will the Premier also confirm that in the 1988-89 fiscal year actual expenditures on health care increased not by the 5.75 per cent he suggested last Friday morning, but, in fact, by 8 per cent, which was, in fact, two percentage points higher than the actual expenditure in the first year of his Government? Would he confirm that?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Premier Wells: I will get the precise figures as to the actual expenditures. I can only, at this moment, confirm what the budgeted amount was, which demonstrates the commitment. Now what was spent and why there was an overage, if there was an overage that increased the amount, I will get that and find out exactly where it was, what happened, where it came from, and advise the House, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Municipal and Provincial Affairs. This Government caused a delay in municipal elections by one year, with a promise that there would be boundary changes made to many of the towns throughout the Province. With the exception of one, Mr. Speaker, this did not happen. Yesterday we saw the town of Dunville hold a vote as to whether or not the people wanted to become part of the amalgamation proposal, and there was a very significant rejection of that by the residents of Dunville. I would now like to ask the Minister what plan he has to handle that rejection by the people of Dunville?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

Mr. Gullage: Mr. Speaker, the fact that they had that particular item on the ballot is significant in the sense that it is consistent with other councils throughout the Province who, during the amalgamation and feasibility process for the amalgamated groupings, also had plebiscites early on, when the hearings were held. Those plebiscites, or those petitions were considered by the commissioners throughout the feasibility process, and we will have to consider the views of the people in Dunville in the same context.

Whether or not Government decides that they should proceed with amalgamation is a separate question, but certainly we will have to consider the fact it appeared, from the figures I have heard, that overwhelmingly they have said they do not want amalgamation at this time. However, I think it is fair to say that I have not as yet as the

Minister gone back to the four communities involved - with Point Verde, you could say five communities. I have not gone back to them with a recommendation as to where the Government would like to proceed with that particular group of communities. So it is premature to say what the Government's decision might be. We have not made one. And we are in the process now of examining the Commissioner's reports and everything will be considered, including the way the people voted yesterday.

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

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I say to the Minister that democracy finally worked yesterday in Dunville because these people had an opportunity to an election or a plebiscite to vote on the amalgamation issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: Let me ask the Minister then, if he feels that this was such a good idea yesterday, will he consider providing an opportunity for the residents of all proposed groupings to have such a vote take place as the one that took place in Dunville yesterday?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. The Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

Mr. Gullage: As the hon. Member said, we have only dealt with some five groupings so far of the forty-two. And of necessity only fourteen groupings had to be dealt with by November 13, because of the year's deferral. There is another twenty-eight groupings that are ongoing as far as

discussion and study are concerned towards making a recommendation to Government, from my point of view and from the department's point of view. So we have a long ways to go, and we are still in the process of examining the forty-two groupings, five of which have been dealt with. Whether or not we would use a plebiscite in a given area with a particular grouping or whether or not we would use it with a lot of the groupings is a decision that would have to be made. There are several options we could take, but where possible we would like to see the communities come together by way of consensus and agreement.

And as the Minister, I have said, as much as I can I will continue to dialogue with the groups of communities that are involved and try to bring about a consensus and an agreement on that basis. That is the way the Government would prefer to proceed rather than to go the petition route or any other route that might be possible.

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

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, what has happened is that the Government, through its new regional service board, is eliminating the process of public input from the residents of various communities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: What took place in Dunville may not take place elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, let me put my supplementary to the Premier of the Province. Let me ask the Premier does he still stand by his statement that any town that does not want to be amalgamated will

not be forced to be amalgamated? And does that mean now that the residents of Dunville will not have to be amalgamated?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: A good question.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Premier Wells: I will stand by the statement that I made, not the hon. Member's interpretation of it. The statement that I made -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Premier Wells: Just go back. Mr. Speaker, they can read the statement that I made in Hansard. It is in Hansard ready to be read.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I want to put my question to the Premier again. Based on what took place in Dunville yesterday, and based on what the Premier has already said, that any town that does not want to be amalgamated will not be forced to be amalgamated, does that mean now that the people of Dunville will not have to be amalgamated?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Premier Wells: Now, Mr. Speaker, let me say again that what the hon. Member just interpreted is not the position of the Government. It never was, and it will not be. If they want it they can go and find it in Hansard.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Premier Wells: If they want it they can go and find it in Hansard. It has been repeated numerous times. And it is simply this, Mr. Speaker -

Mr. Simms: Tricks, little tricks.

Premier Wells: If the hon. members want the answer I am prepared to give it to them, but I am not prepared to stand here and try and ouch out the mouthings across the other side, Mr. Speaker. If they want it they can have it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Premier Wells: Now, Mr. Speaker, the position of the Government was, is, and for the immediate future will be simply this, that the Government will not force communities by Order-in-Council to be amalgamated. If we feel there are communities in this Province which should be amalgamated and they are being held up for obstinate reasons or not good reasons we will bring the proposal before this House so that the Government -

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

An Hon. Member: Use closure again I suppose! Why don't you use closure on that too? (Inaudible).

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

I want to remind hon. Members to my right -

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

I remind hon. Members to my right

it is Question Period and every Member is entitled to be heard in silence, and I ask hon. Members please to respect that long tradition and long Parliamentary rule.

I ask the Premier to finish up please.

Premier Wells: Mr. Speaker, we will not hide behind a Cabinet. We will come before this House and make known to the public of this Province the justification for any action in any circumstances where we feel that it is appropriate that amalgamation take place contrary to the apparently expressed wishes of one or more municipalities involved.

Now we will not hide behind it as the former Government would hide behind it and press things. There will either be approval of the municipalities involved or otherwise, Mr. Speaker, we will come before this House and answer to the people for what we do.

Now there are thirty Members sitting on this side of the House, if everybody over there voted against it, obviously the Government is going to have its way. I do not pretend that we are going to have a free vote on it or anything like that. What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that we will justify to the people of this Province, through debate in this Legislature, any effort to force amalgamation on any communities that do not want to.

Which I suggest Mr. Speaker is a very democratic and sensitive way to do things.

An Hon. Member: I suppose you wouldn't contemplate using closure on something like that, would you?

Some Hon. Members: No, no.

An Hon. Member: No, I suppose not.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

Mr. Matthews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Minister of Fisheries. I am wondering if the Minister of Fisheries could inform the House, in light of the severe state of the Gulf fishery, if the Minister has made a recommendation to the Federal Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Valcourt, as to what should be done to address the situation with the crisis, the severe state of the Gulf fishery?

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

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker I met with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans last Friday, I think it was, yes Friday, at which time we discussed the problems in the Gulf area. Yesterday I had the privilege of attending a meeting in Corner Brook, a meeting attended by, I suppose, seventy-five or more fishermen from that part of Newfoundland, with the Fishermen's Union in attendance. At which time we discussed at length the problems facing the people over there.

A number of suggestions were made with which we agreed, one being that maybe the Union would set up a special task force to study the problem and to make the appropriate recommendations to Ottawa. I undertook the subject to - with the approval of my colleagues - support that kind of an effort. And once that is done then there will be a formal representation made to the Federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Mr. Speaker, I should say also that I on at least six occasions have mentioned this, one way or the other, to the Federal Minister - the need for some kind of special assistance. Because it is well recognized that, certainly I think, the Gulf fishery is in far worse shape than the northern cod fishery. And for that reason we have been asking the Federal Minister to address the problem and to come forward with some kind of an assistance programme.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

Mr. Matthews: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yes, I agree with the minister's comments about the state of that particular fishery.

A supplementary to the minister. Can we expect, or will the Provincial Government, then, be participating financially in a compensation package to assist those who have been or who will continue to be negatively affected because of the state of that stock?

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

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, the question keeps coming up and I can understand, of course, why it is being asked. I guess my answer bears repeating, that it is a recognized fact, and Ottawa is not hiding away from the fact, that the problems in the Gulf area were brought on by virtue of bad management or poor management on the part of the Federal Government whose responsibility it is under the Constitution to manage the fishery resource. It has been that way now since 1949.

While in this case we cannot very well blame it on foreign overfishing, but certainly it has been badly managed and now we are paying the price for it. For that reason, and I think the union agrees and certainly the people whom I addressed yesterday agreed, it is a Federal responsibility. They are the ones who should come to the rescue. I made that point yesterday when I addressed the gathering, and it was generally agreed by those present that our approach was the right one and that we should, in fact, given the circumstances, insist that Ottawa come to the rescue and do what needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

Mr. Matthews: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The President of the union feels that both Governments should participate in an assistance package.

Let me ask the minister, is the minister today telling the people who fish that region that they can expect that the Provincial Government will not participate in a financial package to assist in their plight over the next number of years? That you will not participate, is that what you are telling them?

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

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, it surprises me that the hon. Member would try to play politics with such an important and serious matter, and to stand up in the House and expect me to commit the Province to what might very well be many millions of dollars. Because some of the measures that

will have to be taken out there to give that fish stock a chance to rehabilitate might - and I underline the word 'might' - very well mean a complete closure of the fishery out there. And with 100 long liners and many hundreds of smaller boats being affected, you are talking a figure well in the millions of dollars, in fact, tens of millions of dollars. Now, if they expect the Province to pick up the tab for that when it is not our responsibility, I think the Opposition is being very irresponsible.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Grand Bank.

Mr. Matthews: A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. It seems that every time we ask the minister will the Province participate financially to help fishermen and fish plant workers, we are being irresponsible. Well, I would like to suggest to the minister that I think we are being responsible, because these people are having difficult times.

A final supplementary to the the minister. Last Thursday, the Federal minister announced a \$5 million Fisheries Emergency Response Program to assist fishermen and fish plant workers who have had a poor fishing season. Will the minister consider a provincial component to top up the Federal program of \$5 million, particularly because these programs are labour intensive with their training components and so on, and always you leave some short-width materials to do the work they need done. Will the Minister consider, or will he make a commitment to establish a top-up material component to the Federal program?

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

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, there is already a small program in my own Department. I do not know what the amount is now, but I suspect the fund is pretty well exhausted.

But, Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister did, in fact, announce a program which I think speaks for itself. Obviously, in so doing he did admit that it was their problem and they are obviously now willing to do something about it. If there are further funds required, I have reason to believe they will be forthcoming from the Federal Government.

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

Mr. A. Snow: My question is for the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation, who recently announced that the Motor Vehicle Registration Office in Wabush will be closed at the end of November.

He stated in his announcement, here in this House, that there will be a savings of \$27,000 this year and \$83,000 next year. Can the Minister tell this House and the people of this Province how he arrived at these cost figures and computed the savings?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Speaker, I will get the figures and table them for the member tomorrow.

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

Mr. A. Snow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A supplementary question

to the same Minister. The Minister stated in his Ministerial Statement that a person purchasing a licence will have to pay an additional fee to the bank for this new efficient service which this regime is going to be implementing next year. Can the Minister tell this House and the people of this Province, if the Government, too, will have a cost to bear for this new service?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Works, Service and Transportation.

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Speaker, when I announced that we were closing down the Motor Registration Office in Labrador City, I pointed out that this Government had a program in place by which, as soon as we could get the legislation through the House, we would be able to enable the chartered banks to service the people of not only Labrador, but people all over the Province. And, as I said, there will be a fee of one dollar to the person who goes into the bank to use that service, which he would pay the bank, or he could still go through the regular routine and use the postal service and mail it in. That is the only charge there will be, and there is no cost to Government.

Mr. Speaker: Question Period has expired.

Petitions

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island.

Mr. Walsh: Mr. Speaker, I have a petition today on behalf of some 250 students and seventeen teaching staff of the Eugene

Vaters Collegiate here in St. John's. Although they are two separate petitions, Mr. Speaker, the only difference in the prayer of the petition is the third word: one says we, the students, the other says we, the staff. With the indulgence of the House, I will combine the prayer in both. It says, we the staff, we the students, of Eugene Vaters Pentecostal Collegiate of St. John's, Newfoundland, wish to express our profound disagreement with having a Morgentaler abortion clinic opened in our Province. It is our belief that the unborn is indeed a person and should be accorded all rights and privileges granted to every other individual in Canada. We respectfully request that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador use all means at its disposal to ensure that such a clinic is not permitted to operate within our Province.

I present this petition on behalf of those, and I point out to all members that it is with pleasure that I also add my signature to the petition.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Before the hon. member goes further, I should point out to hon. members that I do not think the petition meets the exact requirements of the House in terms of its prayer. I inform hon. members of that, and if they want to accept the petition, that is fine. Is that okay?

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker, we have always made exceptions for people. As long as they want to address a prayer to members of the

House of Assembly, if it is done properly or relatively properly, we don't have a problem with listening to the prayer.

Mr. Speaker: Fine.

The Chair just wanted to inform hon. members.

The hon. the Member for Mount Scio.

Mr. Walsh: Mr. Speaker, as I said, I have absolutely no problem with adding my signature to that particular petition. I believe that even the beginnings of the clinic on LeMarchant Road have had, what I can only describe as, I suppose, in support of John Murphy's stand, a clinic that was established literally through the backdoor. And I suppose one could describe it as even going a little further than that, that almost as a thief in the night a building was purchased, leased, and set up as a clinic without really disclosing what was going to happen in that facility to council or, to my knowledge, to the Newfoundland Medical Association, which has jurisdiction in this particular area.

I totally support the prayer of the petition, I totally support the stand of the students and the teaching staff, because a clinic like this, in my own personal opinion and in the prayer of the petition, is certainly not required, as, at this point in time, there are three locations in our Province under the auspices of the Newfoundland Medical Association, three hospitals in St. John's, Corner Brook, and St. Anthony, which are operating, in my belief, within the law as prescribed. I say that only simply because, based on statements in the media today,

abortions have already taken place at that clinic, and I understand they may have taken place without the prior approval of the clinic by the Newfoundland Medical Board, and I stand to be corrected.

But if that is the case, they are already open and operating outside what I believe are the rules and regulations of this Province. I have absolutely no hesitation in saying that the facility should be closed, it should be boarded up, and if we had the power, or maybe if I had the power, Morgentaler would go back on a plane tonight as quickly as he came into the Province last night.

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

Ms. Verge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Premier and the Minister of Justice have said publicly, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has to abide by the Canadian Constitution and has to operate within the parameters of our authority. The Federal Constitution reserves unto the Parliament of Canada exclusively authority to make criminal law, and that authority is restricted by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. So I would suggest to the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island that he is presenting his petition in the wrong arena.

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

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, this petition really deals with two issues. One issue is the issue of abortion which, as has been rightly pointed to by the hon. the Member for Humber East, belongs to the Federal jurisdiction. And there is a law in this nation

which, at this moment, makes abortions legal in certain particular circumstances. As the Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island pointed out, abortions, under certain circumstances, under certain conditions, are indeed performed in this Province at this time.

Now the second issue which this petition alludes to is the issue of where surgical procedures will be performed in the Province. This is more than an abortion issue, Mr. Speaker. This is a broader issue. It has been the policy of Government, the previous administration as well as this administration, that all significant surgical procedures be carried out within a hospital. The reason for this, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that the safety and the health of the person on whom the procedure is being performed is carried out up to a certain standard. In hospitals there are accreditation committees which decide whether or not a particular doctor is qualified to perform a certain surgical procedure. There are checks and balances within the system.

Now, once we change that policy and allow medical procedures to be carried on outside hospitals, we have to be prepared to allow cardiac surgery to be carried on outside hospitals, we have to be prepared to discuss the possibility of performing operations on people who have cancer, urology operations, Mr. Speaker. There are a whole lot of implications that we will have to consider if and when we are forced to take one particular procedure outside hospitals.

Now, Mr. Speaker, all medical procedures are not performed in

hospitals. There are certain exceptions. Vasectomies are performed in doctors' clinics. The Department of Health refers to lumps and bumps, certain very minor operations performed in doctors' offices in this Province. Now we are met with some things which have happened over the past number of days. I understand there is a private facility in this Province at which abortions are being performed. If that is the case, and I have no reason to doubt that it is, then our policy is being challenged.

Now Government has certain obligations, Government can do some things. First and foremost, we have to decide whether or not we are going to maintain our policies, and we will arrive at that position after we have received the top medical advice we can get in this Province. We have to decide whether to maintain our policy, whether to change our policy, or whether we are going to develop a new policy, Mr. Speaker. And that, I should tell hon. members, is being done.

Even as I speak we are trying to make sure that the policy we have in place is not based on moral grounds, religious grounds, but that it is indeed in the best interest of the people in our Province. And that is what we are doing. We are re-examining our policy. If we find that it is the right and proper policy, in keeping with the way health care should be delivered, then we will stand by our policy. If we find that our policy is not in keeping with the way modern medicine is practiced, then, Mr. Speaker, we will have no choice but to consider changing that policy.

And as we consider whether or not

we are going to keep the policy or go with a new policy, we will bear in mind petitions such as this petition which has been presented today and other petitions, Mr. Speaker, other letters, other phone calls which have been made to my Department, to the Premier's Department, also to the Department of the Minister of Justice, as well as to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Orders of the Day

It being Wednesday, Private Member's Day, Motion No. 20, the resolution submitted by the hon. the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes.

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

The resolution on the Order Paper is a fairly straightforward one and I will just read the BE IT RESOLVED that the House urge the present government to exempt education from the announced budget freeze and to fulfill its commitment to fund - in the words of the Liberal manifesto - "improvements in our education programs" on which "our future economic success depends."

Mr. Speaker, the development of the educational system in this Province has been a long, hard, battle. Quite often, over the past number of years, as more and more people have come into the public forum to express their views on education and the system of education - when I talk about the system I am not speaking now about our denominational or unique

system of education, I am just talking about our overall system of education in the Province. As more and more people talk about it, we find you have the armchair philosophers, everyone has an answer to what is wrong with our system of education.

One of the fingers pointed, of course, is always on the financial side, whereby a lack of financing hurts our educational system, and there is no doubt that to a large degree that is true. But in a Province like Newfoundland, when we go back and look at the history of the development of the education system, we understand that there are a number of other factors that greatly influence what has happened in relation to where we are presently in the system in the Province.

Two of the major factors will be history and geography, perhaps geography more so than any other factor that affects our educational system today. When the Province was discovered and eventually settled by settlers from Europe - I suppose, despite the fact that they were supposed to be brought back every year to England, people began to jump ship and settle down in the little coves and hamlets all around the Province, and as other people came and settled here, they settled mainly for the fishery; people know if you are going to fish, consequently you find a harbour or a sheltered cove, and we had a whole number of settlements springing up all around this great Province of ours.

As the small communities or hamlets began to grow and families began to spring up there and move in there, the first thought of parents was for the education of

their children. Those historians who are among us realize that in the early days the education of children in a place like Newfoundland was not an easy task. Most of it was down to earth, basic education, the type actually not greatly unlike that which the Minister of Finance recommends in his courses at university, that we should know more about the boats and the bays. And, to a degree, there is nothing wrong with that in proper perspective. But education was teaching them how to live and how to make a living, many of them realizing they were going to spend a lot of their time in the small areas where they grew up.

That has changed very slowly and, over the years, eventually we came to the point, I suppose, where teachers were hired in the different communities, quite often paid for by the people themselves, and then eventually by church groups and what have you. Some of them were just ordinary people in the community who had perhaps a better grasp, or some degree of formal education, who were hired to try and teach the young people the basics of education. Then gradually the larger centers began to grow and develop and, of course, systems of education began to develop in those areas. But, yet, in many of the small areas around the Province we still had very small educational systems, schools springing up in some places mainly due to the impact now of churches.

that were growing in the different areas of the Province, different types of churches. And in each little cove we had the church school basically, taught by a member of the clergy or by somebody usually hired by the

clergy. This system has not changed too much over the years until perhaps very recent years. And if there is one reason why today the children of Newfoundland are said to be, and I stress the word "said," lagging behind their counterparts in other Provinces, then we can point to geography perhaps moreso than any other factor.

Even in very recent years it has been extremely hard to attract highly qualified teachers - if that solves all our problems - to certain parts of the Province. It is only in very recent years that many of our own students have had the opportunity to go to university and obtain degrees in teaching, whatever, and then go back to their native towns and villages and begin to instruct their friends and the children of their friends.

So the system has developed slowly. But yet the Province of Newfoundland, despite the fact we had so much going against us, and if we compare Newfoundland to any other Province in Canada, geographically we get clobbered. Many of the other Provinces are newly created - specifically we can look at Western Canada. And none of them are as diverse geographically as the Province of Newfoundland. So when you talk about larger and more efficient systems and more efficiency in the use of your funding and personnel, we are behind the eight ball, not because of economics or the level of education, simply because of geography.

However as the years progressed so did our system of education. In the early 1970s the per pupil expenditure in the elementary, secondary education system was

only about 52 per cent of the national average. Fifty-two per cent back in the early 1970s. In 1988, a couple of years ago, the percentage had increased to over 80 per cent. A lot of people argue - and they will present the argument to the Government opposite as they did to us, and they will continue to do so of course - that you are not putting as much money into education as other Provinces in Canada. That is true. But recognizing that our per person income, our per capita income, is also less than any other Province in Canada, we are not doing too badly.

The Minister responsible for Manpower and Labour Relations - or Employment and Labour Relations, I should say - undoubtedly will speak on this because she was one who always advanced the argument that we are not putting enough money into education, we are lagging behind the rest of the country. That was the favourite topic of many of her speeches. And she was right. In the sense that we were not. If you are looking at dollar and cents. But what she was not saying was that as part of the per capita income, every Newfoundlander is putting more money into education than any other Canadian. Which says something for the value held by the people of this Province for education.

And as I say, in 1988, in a short eighteen years, we had come from 52 per cent of the national average to over 80 per cent. That is not too bad, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker. These figures are taken from the Task Force on Educational Finance. A task force report compiled and submitted by the now Minister of Education.

In 1969 the pupil-teacher ratio was the second highest in Canada. The Member for Exploits would be interested in hearing this because he was heavily involved in statistics during his term as president of the Newfoundland Teachers Association. And we always talked about the pupil-teacher ratio and how important it was to have a low ratio. Well, in 1969, and the other figure I used was 1970 when we were only 52 per cent of the national average, also coincides with the time the Liberals were being kicked out of power in Newfoundland.

The pupil-teacher ratio was the second highest in Canada. In 1987, another eighteen year period, during eighteen years of Tory rule, we might add if we want to be partisan, but let us try not to be in this argument, it was down to the Canadian average.

During that period the ratio dropped from 24.4 to 16.8; 24.4 to 16.8, it is ever lower than that right now. The rate of improvement was greater in Newfoundland, despite our economy, the rate of improvement was greater in Newfoundland than in any other province in Canada. Facts again from the Task Force on Educational Finance, words directly from the Minister of Education.

Enormous progress had been made in the two decades, reducing the wide gap which existed between the amount of educational expenditure in the Province and the Canadian average, and in reducing the inequality of educational opportunities between provinces and other regions. All these quotes are from the Task Force on Educational Finance, just in case

you think I am making them up.

However, despite the effort by the previous Governments, we spent about \$900 less per pupil, on Elementary-Secondary education than the average expenditure in Canada. Despite the fact that the gap was narrowed, despite the fact that our pupil teacher ratio was reduced, we are still spending about \$900 less per pupil than anywhere else in Canada.

You might argue and rightly so, as I did in the past, that we have less money to spend, we can only spend what we have and that is a good argument, but it would take close to \$120 million, an infusion today of \$120 million to make us equal in relation to expenditure per pupil, that is perhaps a little too rich for the blood of the President of Treasury Board at this time, and it was too rich for our blood, but we narrowed the gap.

The gap did not stabilize, the gap did not widen, we narrowed the gap from 52 per cent of the Canadian average to 80 per cent of the Canadian average. From a 24.4 ratio down to about 16 to 1 ratio.

The objective might be difficult to reach, given the economic situation which has always prevailed in the Province. We believe the effort was necessary and worthwhile because we frankly believed then as we do now, and I quote from the Liberal Manifesto that 'our future economic success depends more on the improvements we make on educational programs than on any other single factor.' Many members opposite might remember that quote, it is taken from your 1989 election campaign.

An Hon. Member: What is happening Mao?

Chairman Mao Tse-tung. A little quote.

Mr. Hearn: Oh. I have not read any of the Chinese proverbs at all. I thought you said, what about now, and if that was the question, I will tell you.

The record of the Liberal Government: What have the Liberals done in the first Budget that they can truly claim as their own, 1990? Have they continued to narrow the gap that we narrowed, have they continued to lower the ratio, have they continued to improve the lot of students and teachers, etcetera?

Well, they placed a freeze on school tax equalization, number one. They increased operating revenues after promising to fully equalize, after promising to fully equalize, after just staying on track the same course that we had set. No minister came in with the way prepared for him so well, as the Minister of Education, and he goofed on it.

You know, if the President of Treasury Board had only had the opportunity to come in and pick up where the Minister of Education did, what a system of education we would have today. But he increased operating revenues to school boards by how much, Mr. Speaker, being a former teacher yourself, by seven-tenths of 1 per cent. Since this is nearly four percentage points below cost increases, school boards have less money to spend this year than they had last year.

Reduced substitute teaching days by 10,000, wiping out in one fell swoop, essential, professional development programs for teachers. Placed a freeze on

hiring of teacher aids for handicapped students. Reduced funding by more than 50 per cent for hospital schools in St. Anthony, Grand Falls and Corner Brook.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hearn: What are they going to do next year? And that is the question. What have educational authorities been told to do next year? They have been told to decrease in teaching units, in addition to savings resulting from declining enrollments, besides the few teachers we lose every year, and our numbers are going down, our per pupil numbers, they have been told to decrease the numbers above and beyond that. They have been told to decrease the administrative staff. There is a further decrease in the cost of substitute teachers. In fact, the Department of Education has sent out staff allocations to school boards for 1991-92 and they tell us that no plans, the Premier yesterday in his answers said, nothing has been done yet, we have not decided on what we are going to do, and yet staff allocations have been sent out to school boards for the coming year that will reduce the number of teachers by 200, and they have identified another 350 teachers for layoffs in the following two years. What a massive slashing of the number of teachers in the Province. What is that going to do to the pupil-teacher ratio, Mr. Speaker?

In addition, at least fifty assistant superintendent positions have been targeted for elimination. Facts right from the Department of Education. What did the Department have to say to school boards about operating grants for next year, Mr.

Speaker? They said freeze the per pupil operating grants. discontinue the decline in enrollment adjustment grants, decrease the subsidy for board operated transportation systems from 100 per cent to 90 per cent. So boards are going to have to use their own money next year to pay for the busing or they are going to have to charge students.

These measures will reduce operating revenues to boards by 8 per cent to 10 per cent below their current levels this year, and we are not looking at inflation at all. If you take inflation into account then, Mr. Speaker, the reduction will be anywhere from 13 per cent to 15 per cent, a 13 per cent to 15 per cent cut in educational spending in the primary, elementary, and secondary educational system. Now surely. Members such as the President of Treasury Board, a former teacher, the Member for Exploits, and the Member for Conception Bay South, former NTA Presidents, are not going to stand by and let Cabinet dictate, the financial minds in Cabinet, the Minister of Finance, dictate to them that they are going to have to cut the system of education so drastically.

What did the Department have to say about increased taxation and other uses? Besides cutting, they also told boards they are going to have to try and come up with more money. Increase their revenues from School Tax Authorities up to 20 per cent to 30 per cent. Increase fees for student transportation. User fees, introduce user fees. Going to school now on the bus, Johnnie, you have to have your quarter in your pocket. Increase charges to high school students for

textbooks, besides what they are paying now, make them pay more. We know what books cost to parents. Maybe put in a rental fee for textbooks in the primary and elementary grades also. So, Mr. Speaker, they are really going to sock it to the poor people out there. The Government is going to sock it to teachers, to parents, to students, and this is the Government that was going to do away with School Tax Authorities, now they see them as a scapegoat for Government, and they are saying it is a good thing they are there to bring in some extra revenue that would not be there otherwise. By the time this Government gets through with education, Mr. Speaker, we will once again have the highest pupil-teacher ratio in Canada, we will once again lose ground in our twenty year effort to bring the per pupil funding somewhere near the Canadian average. And I will have a little more to say about that as I clew up.

We will return to the area of huge disparities in education between rural and urban Newfoundland, and our educational system will regress in quality and performance. This is the inevitable result of the Government's policy. And I plead with the Government, I plead with the members over there who know better, former teachers, people like the Minister of Mines spent so much time on school boards -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

Mr. Hearn: If I could just have half a minute to clew up, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: By leave.

Mr. Hearn: - who spoke so eloquently in my district on Friday night talking about his concern. He spoke with optimism for the future, but there will not be any optimism, I suggest, unless changes are made in the direction in which the Government is headed in relation to educational funding.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

Mr. Efford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes. I do not know if I am going to take the full time of twenty minutes allotted to me, but I will start out with the intention of trying to be as brief as possible and give other speakers in the House of Assembly an opportunity to speak on this particular bill, especially members from this side because I think it is important that we, as members of this Government, speak, and speak very clearly on to what the Oppositions game is here in this House of Assembly and the fearmongering and the false information that they are putting out to the people of this Province. And unfortunately it is just natural human instinct that some people do believe the untruths and the misleading information getting out. And to start off about the resolution: Whereas the Liberal party's 1989 election Manifesto said very clearly our future economic success depends more on the improvements we make in our education programs.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Efford: Yes. There is nobody, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House who will disagree with that. Whether you are a Liberal, whether you are a Tory, whether you are NDP or whether you are any particular political party or any individual in the Province, the future of the Province depends on the education programs that you put into your school system and your education system. Yes, quite clearly we all agree with that. I have often said that as Minister of Social Services in the few times that I get the opportunity to speak and we talk to different groups in the classes and the children of the Province, I often refer to the children of our Province as our greatest resource for the future. Bar none. You can talk about fishery, mining, lumber mills, paper mills or anything else, the children of today are the greatest resource for the future. And any government would be derelict in it's duty, Mr. Speaker, not to put in place a good education program to protect and properly educate those children for the future development of the Province.

But let's not confuse the issue. The mentality of the Opposition is to say very clearly, throw more money in and you will improve education programs. That is not so. We are presently spending in this Province \$738,411,500 in education in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador with a population of 500,000 people. And the former Minister of Education can stand all he likes, although he does in a very low tone, unlike some of his colleagues over there who blare, bawl and say nothing, he did make a few points there that as an Opposition Member he certainly has the right to do. But when you get a population in

this Province of 500,000 people and you spend \$738 million on education programs and then somebody, whether it be the people involved directly in education, the people involved directly in political parties or any citizen of the Province, saying that we have to put more money into the programs in order to improve the education programs of the future. Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely false, that is absolutely wrong. There is something wrong when the only way we can deliver a good system is to keep pouring more and more money into it. There is no way you can improve the system, there is no way you can increase the programs or give better programs by just keeping pouring money into it. So, what the Minister of Education wanted to do - a very qualified Minister of Education - and I do not say it because he is a political colleague of mine, I will say it clearly at anytime anywhere in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador that he is the most knowledgeable Education Minister that we have had in the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador since Confederation in 1949, bar none. With an education background and the information and resources that he has as Education Minister there is nobody who can even come up in the backseat to him. So, he certainly knows very clearly of the educational needs of the past, of today and of the future. Now, the hon. Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker, doesn't have to take a back seat to anybody in this Province. It is quite clear that when the Minister of Education looked at his programs and looked at the cost of delivering these programs, it was a wise decision to talk to the educators, the administrators, the school boards, and all the people

in the Province involved in education. Where is the money being spent? Are the children in this Province getting the best bang for their dollar out of the amount of money that the taxpayers are putting in education? Is it necessary to have the Cadillac system of school boards that we have in the Province? Is it necessary to have as many school board systems as we have in the Province? Is it unwise to ask questions to find out if the money is necessary? Can we use that \$738 million and spent it in a better and more efficient way, so that the children who are now not getting the programs, who are not getting the materials they need to get their education in the school system, that you could direct more of that money down to the front lines, down to the level of the children in the system? Anybody, Opposition mentality, Government mentality, or anybody who criticizes that has got to have something wrong with the logic of their reasoning, and their common sense way of thinking, to say that we must put another \$800 million, or that we must put another \$1 billion to improve the system. No, that is throwing good money, Sir, after bad. It is almost as bad as the pickle, almost.

Mr. Speaker, in my own district of Spaniard's Bay, my own district, and I would not only say it in the House of Assembly, I would also say it in the school board office in Spaniard's Bay, when I drive past that building in Spaniard's Bay and see the Cadillac system they have there, the cost of the facility itself, the cost of what they purchased on loan. When I see the number of people employed in that school board office there, and then I drive to the next community and walk into a school

where there is not even a suitable classroom, not a lunch room, not a staff room, or anywhere where I can go and stay for five minutes without being totally nauseated by the decor of the inside of the building, clapboard falling off, shingles falling off the roof, water coming down through the roof, and I look at the school board in Spaniard's Bay, there is something wrong with the system. The former administration allowed that to happen. The former administration allowed the system to build away without putting efficiency controls in place to provide that the students themselves were getting the best value out of the dollars that we the taxpayers of this Province are putting into the education system. That is one of the problems, Sir, that the Minister of Education and this Government has to address.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible)
million -

Mr. Efford: We have not decided, nobody has made any decisions. Are there going to be freezes? Are there going to be teachers laid off? Are there going to be students lost in the school system, in the education program? Are there going to be programs cut out? Are there going to be any lost in administration? There are no decisions made. It is all very simple, every Minister, including myself, and the Minister of Education, have looked at the Budget today, and the Budget which will be the same next year. We went out and asked the people, ask the educators of the Province if you can deliver programs just as efficiently, can you streamline areas where there is waste, areas where there is not necessary to put the amount of money in, and

can you live within budget? When the decisions are made there will be some justification for some of the comments coming from the opposition, if some of the things they say are factual. There probably will be less teachers in certain areas, and probably there will be an increase in another area, but for the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes to stand up and tell us today that we have decided we are going to charge children on school buses money, the cost of transportation to and from school, that is wrong. That is the impression that is out in the general public and you, the Opposition, have put that out. If the people of this Province listen to that over the radio, it is the same as what we have been saying all along, it is fearmongering among the people, and putting the fear of something that is not happening out there. Once you talk about something and once you say it in the House of Assembly it gets over the news media as if it is an act of truth, and we are going to charge children to transport them to and from school. That is wrong. Now, what should we do? Should we continue like the former administration? Should we drive the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador farther and farther in debt? Is that going to solve anything? There has to come a point in time, like any business, and this Government is no different from any business in this country, whether it be Newfoundland or any other province, all businesses are the same, you have to take in money in order to spend out money, and if you do not spend that money wisely in your business, if an owner of a business would rather take the money and go off galavanting around the country on trips and not put the money directly back in

his business he will go bankrupt. If the Ministers of Government would take that money and spend it irresponsibly and keep borrowing and borrowing, and the amount of borrowing is greater than the amount of revenue coming in to pay the financial obligations that you have on your interest and to deliver the programs people are going to lose out on programs and the Government will eventually end up bankrupt. Make no mistake about it.

What did the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance, and all Ministers of this Government have to deal with when we took over? Four hundred and eighty-five million a year going out in interest payments. One hundred and eighteen million dollars going out on debt retirement. Almost \$600 million a year to go out on interest and debt retirement. What was budgeted last year? \$696 million. We spent enough on interest and debt retirement this year to cover the whole Budget on education throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Now there has to be an end. Anybody with any common sense in the world, you just cannot keep paying out that type of interest and survive, unless your revenues are coming in. And the revenues are not coming in in this Province. We have a debt in this Province of \$5.4 billion. Now if you divide that up among the population in this Province, I believe it works out to something like \$12,000 per individual. I think if you divide it up it works out to about \$12,000 debt per individual, for every man, woman and child. The Opposition do not say streamline. They do not say improve the delivery of programs.

They say spend more money. And I can understand their logic in that, because that is the reason why we are in debt this day, because seventeen years of Tory Administration resulted in what is happening today, that we are \$5.4 billion in debt and going further.

Now why are we going further? We are not going further because we are borrowing more. We are going further because it is taking every dollar of our revenues to pay out for interest payments and debt retiring. I tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Social Services I would love to have a potful of money, I would love to be able to go to the Minister of Finance every day in the week and say, I need another \$10 million, I need another \$5 million, because I could sure find 10,000 places to spend that amount of money, Mr. Speaker. But the sensible, the logical common sense is that the money is not in the revenues. The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has been left in debt by the former administration. And you can keep repeating the figures over and over and over. They are not going to get any better. They are only getting gradually worse and worse, because as interest rates inflate so goes up the cost to the taxpayers of this Province to try to deal with that debt. The Minister of Education is not unlike any other Minister with responsibility in Government today, the responsibility of the Minister of Education, knowing full well, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Finance cannot provide him with extra monies next year. It is absolutely impossible. Unless we get lucky, unless some Lotto, some miracle comes our way, there is going to be the same amount of money to spend in 1991-1992 as there is today.

Now how do you deal with it? You can close your eyes like the former Tory administration, you can close your eyes and say it is not there. And you can go out and you can borrow, but very shortly it will end. So you make the wise decision, you use the same amount of money, and you deliver the same service or even a better service to the people who need it. That is common, logical, business sense that any Government Member, any Government Minister should have in his head to deliver assistance to the people, Mr. Speaker.

And they talk about things. I give you an example of how we can deliver a program with the co-operation of the community in the education system where it costs very little money. And if I remember correctly there are about 400 kids who are benefitting from this program for a minimum fee of about \$75,000, total cost to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. A simple thing like a school lunch program. If we had been the type of individuals to go out and throw away a lot of money, we could have just as easily delivered the same program for the cost of a \$500,000, because we could have put in the Cadillac system, and could have paid everything. But we asked for co-operation between the community, between the school system, and between the Government, and we got a positive response where everybody co-operated to deliver that lunch program to the children in three schools here in the city of St. John's. And for a mere \$75,000 we have in excess of 400 children, Mr. Speaker, receiving a school lunch program.

Now why can we not take a major number of programs that are

developing in the education system on a day to day basis, use the same talk, the same partnership agreement. Once everybody accepts, Mr. Speaker, the responsibility that there is no more money, the end of the money tree is gone. You cannot reach your hand out and pull in hundred dollar bills of a tree that is no longer producing. And I think today, Mr. Speaker, except for the few people, knowing full well that they have a job to do as an Opposition, except for a few people on the Opposition, the majority of educators in this Province, not all, we will never get all to agree, that is impossible, but the majority of educators in this Province, Mr. Speaker, realize the financial problems facing the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. And they believe in co-operative partnership with educating programs, the community people and the Government, Mr. Speaker, that we can improve the system, and we can deliver a better system, and we can deliver a better education program without spending more money. We can curb. Some people are going to have to bite the bullet. Some people are going to have to say, well I do not agree with this, but not everybody. You cannot please all the people all the time. But that is not our object, that is not the objective of this Government. We have an obligation to the taxpayers and every individual in this Province to deliver an education system where every child, every student in this Province, has an equal opportunity at a decent and a fair education, Mr. Speaker.

And, as the Member from St. Mary's - The Capes pointed out, we have problems. We have geography problems, no question about it.

We have remote areas in Newfoundland and Labrador where it is very difficult to deliver a good education program. But we are addressing those areas, Mr. Speaker. We are looking at what it costs to deliver a programme into an urban area like St. John's, Gander or Corner Brook, and then comparing that to what is the disadvantage of living in St. Anthony, Conception Bay. There are rural communities, there are fishing villages outside the urban areas where the schools are not as large or the schools are old. We have to address that.

But if we do it with logic and some common sense in mind, Mr. Speaker, we can accomplish that. And there have been no decisions made. There are no layoffs being announced, there are no transportation costs being put in place, there is nothing going on but discussions, Mr. Speaker, discussions with educators or qualified people who are the experts in the system who know full well, keep in mind the bottom line is that this Province is in debt up to the top of its head.

The former administration proved their inability to properly financially administer this Province in the way a good administration should act. For seventeen years they did what they wanted to do and it did not work. The only thing they can do now is pop up every thirty minutes in Question Period, or they can make their speeches, but it is not going to change. They are the Opposition, they are not in the decision-making place. We are the Government of the day, we are making the decisions in the best interests, Mr. Speaker, of the children of this Province: delivering an equal and fair

education programme to all children and not just focusing on getting re-elected and making decisions on political views. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Winsor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In all that the Member from Port de Grave said, a little bit of it made sense. He gets so political about it, he just can't stay out of the political sideswiping and everything else. This is a serious issue which is being addressed here, perhaps the most serious issue to have faced Newfoundland in a very long time. Because we have a Government here which said in its Budget Speech, delivered by another educator, 'Mr. Speaker, education is the key component of this Government's long-term economic strategy. We are committed to improvement of quality and accessibility of educational opportunities throughout the Province. The measures announced today will enhance the efficiency and equity of our educational programmes.'

Mr. Speaker, these were good words. We thought that education was on a new path in this Province - a new path - because there is no question in anyone's mind that the key to the future of this Province is an education for our young people. And despite the advances that we have made, despite the fact that we have, over the last seventeen years, increased the per pupil spending on education to about 80 per cent of the national average, the fact remains that this Province still has the highest dropout rate in this country.

It was attempted many times to

-- solve that problem because, as the Minister of Social Services talks about and talks about so rightly, many of the people who are on social services, need assistance, have low educational backgrounds and it is imperative that we deliver an education to these people so they can improve their standard of life and the standard of living for this Province.

What we have happening now, though, with the intended cutbacks - we will not say announced cutbacks, the intended cutbacks, because we know they are coming, educators out there know they are coming; they have been told, you have some serious cutbacks coming in education, at a time when we need to spend more on education. Because we are still, I think, some \$900 per pupil short of the national average on spending for education in this Province. We still have not reached the national level at a time when the educational standards in this Province is below that of our mainland counterparts, and that is not right.

The Minister of Social Services spent a lot of time talking about, I guess, the abuse of spending in education, and he talked of the school board offices he sees well equipped and everything else. Perhaps the Minister should also find out what proportion of the Budget is spent there, the educational Budget. Is it the \$60 million which is needed, or the \$40 million, whatever it is? Can he save that \$40 million there that we are going to have to cut back? I suggest it is not there, not there by a long ways.

We know some of the things that are going to happen. The President of Treasury Board has

already alluded to the fact that Programme Co-ordinators are going to be sent back into the classroom.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) and seventy-five, is it?

Mr. Winsor: No, I did not say that. That was not me, that was my colleague. I think it was fifty he meant to say, and you got carried away and took it to be 150. But what has happened, more importantly, in the education system now, and the Member for Exploits knows and the Member for Gander knows, is that teachers are demoralized.

The educational system is not now functioning as it should.

Mr. Baker: It is functioning fine.

Mr. Winsor: The President of Treasury Board says it is functioning fine. How can he say to me in all honesty that it is functioning fine when we already -

Mr. Baker: Teachers are doing a good job.

Mr. Winsor: Teachers are doing the job in the classroom they have been paid to do, but there are other things happening in education, there are undercurrents.

We already know that curriculum committees to which teachers contribute so much have ceased to function, and that can only be injurious to the education system in this Province. And all the things the Minister of Social Services talked about eliminating is not going to solve this Government's deficit, it is not even going to come close to it. So major cuts are coming in an area where this Province cannot afford to have them made, in the

area of education.

Now my colleague from St. Mary's - The St. Capes alluded to the fact that our geography might be responsible for some of the problems we have in education, and there is no doubt about that. In the school system in which I taught students were bused some twenty miles each way, perhaps a total of about forty miles, a forty mile radius from the centre, which is a long way, and that accounts for tremendous costs in education. But what are we going to do about it? Are we going to eliminate that?

Mr. Hogan: (Inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: Does my friend from Placentia have something to say?

Mr. Hogan: (Inaudible) twenty mile (inaudible)?

Mr. Winsor: Twenty mile radius, yes. Forty miles both ways, a twenty mile radius. And that is expensive when we have to put three or four buses on to accommodate people in our school system. But what are we going to do? Can we slash that?

We know that under the previous administration one of the things they did to attempt to address the problems in education was to provide equalization funds to rural schools in an attempt to bring them closer to the provincial average. But what we now find happening out there is that the situation is going to regress, we are going back to the pre-seventies era, when education was not important.

This Government committed itself to three principles it said: Equality, Effectiveness and

Excellence in Education. What we see happening, though, is the reverse, which is going to occur because of the cutbacks that are coming. And we know they are. The President of Treasury Board has indicated that they are coming and what they have done is they have started what they call a process of consultation. I say that is some consultation, when you go out, tell them what is going to happen, and then say now, tell us how you are going to live with that. That is consultation alright, the same kind of consultation we had with health officials, the same kind of thing the Premier said today concerning municipalities.

He said, we will not make them amalgamate. This Government will not do it, the Legislature will do it. Perhaps this is the kind of consultation which is going to take place in education and it is going to come back to the House of Assembly and be pushed through, things which are going to seriously erode the quality of education for our people. And what is more disturbing, and teachers out there are starting to see it and perhaps the Minister of Labour, is the Premier's attitude to it all.

Mr. Doyle: It is the Minister of Labour's (inaudible) anyway.

Mr. Winsor: The Minister of Labour, a former NTA President. But the Premier was very flippant when my colleague from -

Ms Cowan: (Inaudible) nothing to say.

Mr. Winsor: The Member for Conception Bay South is right. She had nothing to say. Teachers are well aware that the Member has

had nothing to say.

Ms Cowan: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Name her, Mr. Speaker. (Inaudible) CBS last night for all your Liberal efforts.

Ms Cowan: Don't confuse Liberal efforts with Tory efforts.

Mr. Simms: Yeah!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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

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

Mr. Winsor: Mr. Speaker, I did not mind acceding to the Minister of Labour. Because she has had so little to say on education, I was just keenly listening to see if she was going to address some of the concerns that were addressed to her in her meeting with teachers in Conception Bay South a little while ago, when she and the President of Treasury Board attended a meeting out there.

But yesterday my colleague from Humber Valley asked the Premier a question on education, on cutbacks in substitute teaching days, and the Premier warns - and this is the kind of arrogant attitude the Premier has set, which is out there in the school system now and is so frightening. Because even though we have been told there is going to be some consultation, the Premier warns them: 'However, Mr. Wells added, what this Government cannot and will not do is allow the taxpayers of this Province to be browbeaten into providing unlimited substitute teacher days under these kinds of pressure tactics.'

Now, Mr. Speaker, there were no pressure tactics. There was nothing like that at all. The Premier, for some reason or other, seems intent on fostering bad relations.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: Yes, I have sent a clip of that to Exploits. The Premier seems intent on escalating the already bad relationships that exist between the teachers of this Province - which, I might add, the President of Treasury Board started with his two infamous - we will not call them famous - letters which he sent into the living rooms of every teacher in this Province, personally addressed. No one knew why they were getting... as a matter of fact, he sent one to my wife, who happens to be a teacher. She did not know what she was doing getting a letter, she said, from Wince Baker. But when she opened it - ah!

Mr. Speaker, what is happening here in education is the Government, which was going to focus so much of its attention and energy into education, is now out stripping the system. The implications and ramifications of such an event have only to impact adversely on this Province.

Dr. Warren, to whom the Member for Port de Grave referred so often, spent so much time - I recall sitting in his class in school, I think it might have been at Memorial some time ago, and he talked of how wise it was to spend dollars, and the best dollars that could be spent were dollars on education, because dollars on education could only improve the economy. All of a sudden, that is gone.

The Member for Port de Grave talked of the tremendous deficit we have in this Province. Wasn't some of that for building schools, universities, educating teachers, so that Newfoundland could take its rightful place in this country? Was that money wasted?

I remember Premier Smallwood saying that the thing he did which was his downfall and caused him to be turfed from office was to educate teachers. Because once they were educated they went out in the community and were the people who worked against him to get him out of office.

So what he thought was his greatest legacy, Memorial University, became the thing that took him from office.

An Hon. Member: It was the right thing to do.

Mr. Winsor: To get rid of him from office?

An Hon. Member: No!

Mr. Winsor: To spend money on education?

An Hon. Member: Education?

Mr. Winsor: Right, it was the right thing to do, it was a good thing that we must continue. For example, the previous administration put a system in place where we were going to put more guidance counsellors into the school system. I think it was ten a year or up to fifty, I think it was, I cannot remember the number that were going to - fifty I think it was, that were going to go into the system.

An Hon. Member: One year left.

Mr. Winsor: One year left. I am afraid that this administration in its attempt to save dollars is going to pull the rung on that programme. And if it does, that is wrong. Because what has got to happen is we have got to keep our young people in school. One of the things that we have to do is to convince them of the value of an education. We still unfortunately after forty years have a mind-set in many of our young people that school is not important. It is terrible. As a teacher for a number of years I used to shudder when I saw what was happening for the last eight to ten years. Students with little ambition, for a number of reasons, some of which related to the economy, that there were not great things happening to the economy out there and they saw no future when they got out of school. But whatever it was it is out there, that mind-set that we have to change.

An Hon. Member: Yes, you fellows created that mind-set.

Mr. Winsor: If we created it you have the responsibility to fix it. And what you are doing is gutting the system -

An Hon. Member: Right on!

Mr. Winsor: - tearing it apart bit by bit to make the system worse. Much worse.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: Yes. The President of Treasury Board talks about how he is going to make it work. I hope the President of Treasury Board makes it work. Because I think this Province will suffer drastically if he does not make it work. But he started the seeds of

destruction, he has sown them already. The seeds of destruction for the education system are now being sown. There is no question. It is out there now in the system, and because of the kind of relationships that are existing now between this administration and educators in this Province, then if he cannot reverse in the next week what is going on, it only gets worse. It is amazing how educators now out there have just suddenly switched their, I suppose, political allegiance and their thoughts, to think that this administration is intent on destroying what has taken seventeen years to build.

Some Hon. Members: Don't be so foolish.

Mr. Winsor: Now the Member from St. John's South says don't be so foolish. Well, I am only telling him what teachers are telling me, what educators are telling me.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: I am sure the Members are being told. The Member from Exploits was told in spades I think two weeks ago out in Exploits what teachers were saying. The Minister of Forestry, his explanation -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: The Member from Gander? I do not know if he has met his teachers out in Gander yet or not. It is amazing that they have not called me to tell me what you said. I am quite amazed.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: Conception Bay South? Yes I know they went throughout Conception Bay South.

I know all about your meeting in Conception Bay South. I have some friends out there.

An Hon. Member: What about the one in Exploits?

Mr. Winsor: The one in Exploits. And the Minister of Forestry quoted the Minister of Education and said I do not know why you are complaining. You have to have cutbacks in education, I have to have cutbacks in Forestry. Now, I do not know what the analogy was between the two, but that is what he indicated.

Mr. Speaker, this administration in 1989, one of the things it said it would do would be to significantly change the school tax system. Abolish, I heard from many of the candidates. The Premier has said that, no they would not abolish it, and in fact it would have been abolished last year had it not been for the Minister of Education who would not let the President of Treasury Board have his way. And perhaps the former Chairman of the Avalon Integrated School Board might have had some input into keeping that system in place. But I heard the Minister of Education being interviewed at some meeting he attended in Gander and he said that, yes, some changes were coming. We might eliminate it or we might make some changes. The changes he alluded to were to raise the exemption rate and authorize that board to collect more money.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have no doubts, I will go on record. I thought the school tax authority was a reasonable way to collect money. But we did not campaign in the election telling people that we were going to eliminate it, to

build a false sense of hope in the people that these things were going to occur. What we did was we were forthright and honest with the people about education, forthright and honest.

An Hon. Member: Stadiums.

Mr. Winsor: The Member refers to stadiums. It was your Minister who stood in his -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: - who stood in his place in the House last May, I think, and announced a new regional recreational facility program that was going to be announced by July, and four months later he has not announced one program. I can tell the Member for Bonavista South that I do not think he has any intentions of announcing one. Deception in the House. What is wrong with a stadium for Fogo Island or for Bonavista North, Mr. Speaker? What is wrong with a stadium for Bonavista North?

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: What is wrong, Mr. Speaker? Aren't these people entitled to recreational opportunities? Mr. Speaker, they are entitled to the same opportunities that a child in St. John's is. Just as in the education system we have to increase spending in rural Newfoundland to bring our rural schools up to the equivalent of our urban schools. What is wrong with having the same equality? If we are going to talk about equality and excellence, we have to talk for all our people, not just a few.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed changes

that have been given to the school boards: they have been given and told some of the areas that they have to address: text book replacements, rental fees for text books in certain grades and so on, the school boards having to pick up a portion of the busing costs. The Member for -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: Who said that? The school boards have been told. They were told last weekend by officials in the department. The school board people were told to consider the impact of the following and they were given a whole list of things that will be considered to save some \$15 million. Then we want another \$25 million saved on salaries.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

The hon. the Member for LaPoile.

Mr. Winsor: No options, reality. You know this.

An Hon. Member: You were pretty good, Sam.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, regarding the Private Member's Motion that is on the paper today from the hon. the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes, I wonder from whence it came. If you look at the different parts or recitals involved in this Private Member's Motion one would be left with the impression that probably it is a bit of Blarney. Maybe it originated from the Blarney Stone some night downtown.

An Hon. Member: The Blarney

Stone, where is that?

Mr. Ramsay: But to get a little bit serious about it, Mr. Speaker, the recitals there do pose some problems and the problems are, in fact, that they are not perfectly clear, and secondly they are not wholly truthful in their presentation here to the House today.

Some Hon. Members: Now! Now!

Mr. Ramsay: Now the first recital, I might note, they sort of harp on the word 'improvements' in the first recital which reads "WHEREAS a Liberal Party 1989 election manifesto - a word somewhat debatable, it sounds almost like there are ulterior motives in the writing of this manifesto - but the quote is, 'Our future economic success depends more on the improvements we make in our education programs than on any other single factor.' Granted that is fine. But the keyword in that which was lifted from a hot document, so to speak at the time, very well read and even some of the elements of our campaign at that time were taken and replicated by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition at the time in some of the announcements that he made to the Province.

And the keyword 'improvements', it does not say improvements at any cost. And this is something we have to look at. When the financial situation that the Province is in is a difficult one brought on by a global recession, brought on by the fiscal policy of our Federal Government, which in turn the Federal Tories putting an interest rate policy in place, which in turn caused the recession here in Canada prior to being caused anywhere else in the

country or in the world, in the western economy, and we then look at, Mr. Speaker, why are we in the situation we are currently in with regard to finances? Partially because of misspending of inappropriate Government funds in the past, that the funds were possibly put into the wrong areas, the priorities were incorrect, as our party philosophy versus the Opposition's party philosophy. We have a little bit more of a bent towards health and education and economic development than they did in the past. They tended to support other policies a bit more.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I might want to bring to your attention that in the second recital there is also a gross misrepresentation of the facts. Now they say in the second recital the announced policy of the Liberal Government is to freeze 1991-92 funding. I know of no such policy announcement, as such. I know it is being touted as a possible consideration for those involved in the administration of services throughout the Province. And this is something that they are examining to see if they can live within that. But as was said yesterday some departments may have to have a small increase in funding, some may have to have a decrease in funding.

I might add that there is a possibility that the hon. Member for Fogo may even allow us to suggest to him that if he wants us to consider economic restraint with the Fogo Island ferry that is currently operating, maybe there is a possibility that if the \$25 million that is being committed for that project were to be looked at and put into health and education as a measure of your own effort in this regard. Saying

that that \$25 million is being considered for that is the kind of thing that you and the people of Fogo Island, who feel very good about the ferry system as it is now working might be able to say, well, Mr. Speaker, you know, maybe we can wait a little while for this and maybe that would be the kind of thing that we could look at. The \$25 million that we speak of, you cannot have your cake and eat it too. You cannot have better opportunities for teachers. You cannot have it all. You cannot have improved working conditions and improved numbers of teachers. You cannot have lower enrollments of pupils than that, Mr. Speaker, and still allow for the variety of new initiatives that are being brought about because it just will not happen, the money is not there.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Ramsay: Well we speak to him in jest as being called Zamboni Sam. Now Zamboni Sam wants a new arena. Now granted that is a very good thing for the people of Fogo; the idea of having a new arena. But you cannot have your cake and eat it too. And I look at my own district; we need funding to get our swimming pool brought up. But I am sure the people, when we are thinking about the difficulties with the health care system and the education system that may be brought about because of the economic recession in Ottawa, that maybe such a thing as the swimming pool that was promised by the previous Government and not delivered, may be something that we have to look at delaying, because it was delayed by the previous Government in not so economically strenuous times, and therefore now we look at it and say, maybe that is the kind of

thing that we have got to look at holding back on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ramsay: Now another thing I might say is that criticism of this Government is something new. We are a new Government and criticism is something we welcome. We take the committee program, the Resource Legislative Review Committee, the Government Services Legislative Review Committee, we take the Social Legislative Review Committees on the road. We invite criticism of Government policy, and it is the first time ever in the history of the democracy here in Newfoundland that we allow for good, open criticism of Government policy, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

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

An Hon. Member: Do you see what you are doing? You have him up on a point of order now.

Mr. Simms: The hon. member has just said something that is not accurate and he knows it is not accurate, because he tried to pull it -

Some Hon. Members: Sit down. Sit down.

An Hon. Member: He is a new member in the House, and you, the House Leader, an experienced man like you, getting up and interrupting. Shame on you.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Simms: The hon. member knows the difference, because he tried to pull it at two or three public hearings and I had to correct him two or three times. It is not the first time in history that this Legislature has sent committees around to hear people make contributions on various topics, and various issues. It was done before as he knows full well, so he should not deliberately try to mislead the public.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Development to the point of order.

Mr. Furey: The hon. the Opposition House Leader should know that the hon. the Member for LaPoile said that this is the first time in the history of this Legislature that there have been Legislative Committees set up to hear -

Mr. Simms: No, he did not. No, he did not. You had better check Hansard.

Mr. Furey: - legislation, to travel around the Province, and he is absolutely correct. I think it is absolutely absurd for the hon. the Opposition House Leader to get up and disrupt this member's fine speech.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Opposition House Leader to the point of order.

Mr. Simms: I have to correct the Minister of Development, because surely he would not want to mislead the public either. For example, there was legislation on the Newfoundland flag and a committee went around the Province holding public hearings. So he should not try to mislead the

public.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The Chair has heard enough submissions on the point of order. There is actually no point of order, but a difference of opinion between hon. members.

The hon. the Member for LaPoile.

Mr. Ramsay: Speaking of what this Government has done, well this Government invites criticism because we want better policies for the people of this Province. We invite criticism by going out to the public of the Province and offering to them input into the decisions that this Government is making with regard to the difficult financial situation we find ourselves in.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I might add that we have not bragged enough. As was said recently, the good things we have sort of said... Well, we are not a bunch of braggarts going around saying, Oh, good. Look what we did. The thing is we have done a lot of good in this Province; we have brought in a lot of new policy initiatives in the Department of Education. I might add that the hon. the Minister of Education has done a darn good job for the people of the Province and the education system in general, in such a short time, in bringing in the initiatives that are there and the new direction that education is taking in this Province.

Now, I might also note that the White Paper on post-secondary education as it lies, there seems to be some difficulty in the Opposition as to exactly what is happening with this White Paper.

I speak of my own area of the Province, Mr. Speaker. On the West Coast of the Province we speak about the Stephenville headquarters of the Western Community College. Now the Western Community College, which will soon be the headquarters looking after all post-secondary institutions, clear of the Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, on the West Coast and on the Northern Peninsula, is an area which Stephenville as a decentralized location, an area which with a reasonable population, and an area which can certainly benefit greatly, as well as the whole community college system on the West Coast can benefit greatly, through Stephenville as the headquarters of the Western Community College. Now, we have the hon. member opposite, the Member for Humber East, who is not here right now, but she may certainly offer up the fact that Fisher Institute, which is a good institution on its own, but the fearmongering that has been happening in the Corner Brook area in trying to discredit efforts to make the Stephenville area as the headquarters for this, is certainly not indicative of good and fair play as far as offering to the people of the West Coast of the Province a good community college system which can be developed and further the education of those involved in our area of the Province. It is something that has to be addressed.

Mr. Murphy: That is right.

Mr. Ramsay: We look at the hon. Member for Humber East who got up and commented on the abortion question there earlier, and it was amazing she did not disagree with the Government in her contention.

An Hon. Member: She did not disagree with the Premier.

Mr. Ramsay: She did not disagree with the Premier. I was appalled to think that she was not in opposition to what was being offered up. I suppose when you offer a suggestion that does not offend the sensibilities of the judiciary, and does not offend the sensibilities of -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Ramsay: - the religious groups in the Province -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

An Hon. Member: Sit down will you!

Mr. Ramsay: I am sorry.

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Simms: On a point of order. It is clear on Private Member's Day that the rule of relevancy is generally strictly adhered to and the hon. member is certainly not touching on the relevancy issue at this point in time. I suggest that he be ordered to be relevant.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Simms: He is not relevant to the issue. It is only a twenty minute debate.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for LaPoile.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I might add now, with regard to education in the Province, if we look at the third recital or the resolution part of the Private Member's Motion which the member brought forth, he wants to ask the House to exempt education from a freeze if there is a freeze, and fulfil its commitment to fund, to quote from our document, improvements in our education programs on which our future economic success depends.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I offer to you some of the things this Government has done to improve education in the Province in the short period of time in which we have had to rule the Province as far as the education agenda goes. I might say that the annual capital grant for school construction was increased by 35 per cent, from \$20 million to \$27 million, Mr. Speaker. A good Liberal initiative. I also note that the school tax equalization grant, Mr. Speaker, was increased by 122 per cent since this Government took office, from \$4.5 million to \$10 million. School board operating grants were increased by 4 per cent and now amount to a total of \$40,400,000. Scholarships have been improved; funding for scholarships was increased from \$82,000 to \$282,000. What else? The Student Assistance Program was improved. A budget of \$2.5 million was established to help improve access to a higher quality of education by children with special needs.

What else is there? Distance education. We have expanded the Distance Education Program, Mr. Speaker. The distance Education Program has been expanded to another ten new sites, to be added to the current twenty. That is thirty sites of Distance

Education, something which we are revered for throughout the country. We also look at the Lighthouse Schools Project, another initiative of this Government, one that is improving the knowledge of the computer systems in remote areas and also in the different board areas which normally do not have the access to computer terminals, hardware and software. That is a \$1.7 million initiative on the part of the new Liberal Government, Mr. Speaker. This is a bit of bragging, but it has to be done because the message is obviously being thwarted and misrepresented by the Opposition and the good news is not getting out. So let us hear some more good news.

As part of changing the approach to our curriculum an Implementation Committee has been brought in. We also note the new initiatives in curriculum modification, focusing on economic development. There was a symposium held and over 190 delegates attended that and tried to work with the people. The people were open to criticism, Mr. Speaker. We are open to the criticism of the people of the Province and people from outside the Province, to give better Government consulting with the people of the Province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ramsay: Another thing we are looking at, Mr. Speaker, is guidance services. We have, in co-operation with the Federal Youth Strategy Program - we cannot deny the assistance of the Federal Government - added \$1.5 million to career counselling in all high schools in the Province. Now that is a good initiative, Mr. Speaker. And, I might add, I give

a pat on the back to the Federal Government for that. As well, we have improved the resource materials for school libraries - \$250,000 more spent on providing instructional resource material for school libraries; \$175,000 being allocated to purchase resource materials written by Newfoundland and Labrador authors. You know, assisting our people in the Province who are in the field of writing textbooks and in the field of writing new Newfoundland and Labrador books, on Newfoundland folklore and whatnot.

Also, we have brought in a program to assist in retaining students in the school system. Student retention is improving and dropout prevention (inaudible) through this programme. The public awareness programme, using tv and radio ads -

Mr. Simms: Propaganda! Don't pay any attention.

Mr. Ramsay: - and posters. That in turn, Mr. Speaker, will help us to improve the educational system in the Province.

Now there is much, much more, another full page, Mr. Speaker. We have Student Achievement. We are currently assessing the way that students achieve in comparison to other Provinces in the country and the way that the students have performed. And we are currently implementing a programme so we can see where attention needs to be given to the people of this Province.

Also, the White Paper on post-secondary education. This, as I mentioned before, is certainly something that is long overdue in bringing first year

university education to the different areas of the Province and making sure that the people in the various regions are offered the same opportunity.

The Student Aid programme was improved to the tune of \$1.7 million, Mr. Speaker. Another good improvement of the Liberal Government. Now, first year university courses are now being offered, as I mentioned, in Labrador West. That was one of the things I might note that the hon. the Leader of the Opposition might have sort of lifted out of the Liberal manifesto, as they call it, and used it as part of his own campaign platform, because they took it away on the left hand and wanted to give it back on the right. I am sure that people understand exactly what happened there.

And planning underway to add third and fourth year university to the Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, a place which I attended way back when. Not so far back as other Members here, but maybe. Also the Fisher Institute expansion. We are not political as far as making sure that things go in their proper place. The Fisher Institute, they were over there talking about maybe we would get back at Corner Brook, they were saying. Oh, terrible! The Liberals are going to get back and take away what was rightfully theirs.

The \$8 million Fisher Institute expansion is going ahead as planned, Mr. Speaker, and we made sure that politics played no part in the educational agenda of this Government.

Another \$2 million spent on the post-secondary initiatives fund.

It certainly is something well worth it and we wanted to create initiative and innovation and programme planning at the post-secondary level.

Another, computer managed learning, \$70,000 at the Cabot Institute and Fisher. The early childhood education programme at the Fisher Institute, \$80,000 more for that. Twelve first-year university courses developed for Distance Education to the tune of \$179,000. Automotive service education programme at the Gander campus, at the Central Newfoundland Community College, and industry participating with Government. We are open to industry's contention to us that we should participate, and if they criticize us, then we will work with them to make sure that we offer better education to the people of the Province because industry is the beneficiary of it. And, as I might note, it was said in our manifesto, as it was described by the others, that our future economic success depends on education. Well, it is with this kind of work that we are doing with the people of the Province in allowing criticism to come to this Government and also in allowing the participation of the people and industry in seeing to it that this kind of thing goes.

Now I also might add that we increased post-secondary operating grants from their previous total by almost \$5 million this year. Now this, of course, is allowing us to offer education to a point where we can educate the teachers from all over the country. Because we have now gotten to a point where other teachers' colleges and that throughout the country do not offer space. If we have space available, we will

educate and give back to the rest of the country a little bit of something that they, in turn, offer to us in transfer payments. We will educate some people so that they, in turn, the ones from Ontario and that, can be educated in a good educational environment here in this Province.

I might add, in conclusion, as far as our education process goes, there is a five year plan underway to see to it that in spite of the educational difficulty that will result as a result of the financial constraints -

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

The hon. Member's time is up.

Some Hon. Members: By leave, by leave!

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

Mr. Woodford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the resolution today presented by my hon. colleague, the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes, is pertaining to education, and to not only propose cuts in education, some of them are proposed, but some cuts have already taken place. The Member for LaPoile spent the first thirteen minutes of his speech talking about swimming pools, recreation centers, and ferries, and if that is relevancy I do not know what it is, when you start making comparisons to every other thing in the Province besides

education and what pertains to the resolution. And to say to the Member for Fogo, for any member in the House to say, would the Member for Fogo give up the right, or give up the \$26 million - I think that is what the figure was, pertaining to a new ferry for Fogo - to put into the school system. Now for any member to say that it tells you about the - I was going to say the intelligence, but I do not usually get down in the mud like that. The Minister of Development worked for years, the last eighteen months, to try and get the Bonne Bay ferry back, and he got it back just to be used in the summertime. There is nothing wrong with it, but for him to get up and make those comparisons. Did I hear the Member say anything about taking the ferry off the Gulf? This is an necessity for these people, for the people from Fogo, and I would not hesitate to even suggest it. As far as I am concerned it is a disservice to the Member for Fogo and for the people he represents. Talking about members opposite saying there are no cuts, well, Mr. Speaker, I will give you some examples of some real cuts, cuts that have already not been proposed, cuts that have already taken place. Again, I will say, like I said last night, if any member wants to get up after and tell me I am wrong, good enough, but those are cuts that have taken place. I think there are eleven or twelve members opposite that have spent years in the classroom, years teaching, whether in elementary, primary, high school, university, or whatever, they spent time there. They know how hard it is today to try to work in the education system we do have, with the funding we had in years gone by, and with the funding we have today. No one knows better

than the people who spent time in the classroom, and I venture to bet that if you talked to them privately today they would express some concerns, some real concerns, about what has already taken place in the education system. Those are things that have already taken place in midterm. The Member mentioned the new computer program, the \$2.2 million put into the schools, commonly known as the Lighthouse Project, but the Member did not go on to say about the difficulties that the school boards and the teachers in the high schools have ran into concerning this project. The money was put in place, but when they looked at coming back to the school boards for operating funding to run this program - in fact, Mr. Speaker, I can say without any doubt, that I do not know but the program in the Humber Valley area is already scrapped because they cannot find the funding to operate the system once it is put in place, and there is no extra funding for it. If there is extra funding it would have to come out of operating, and God knows that school boards today are only operating on a shoestring budget in any case. That is one program that is a good idea, an excellent idea -

Dr. Kitchen: \$700 million (inaudible).

Mr. Woodford: And so they should. That is coming from the Minister of Finance. Make no wonder that education in this Province has been hit, and is going to be hit, with that kind of an attitude, believe you me. The Member for St. John's South said last night, in reference to the Member for Fogo; because you have a vested interest. Well, I guess his wife is a teacher, and maybe

he has got a vested interest, but he has to remember that he has a lot more constituents to represent than his wife. He has a lot more constituents in the district of Fogo than his family. But notwithstanding what was said last night, talk about the ten or eleven former teachers that were on the other side of the House and are still there now, do they have a vested interest? I know a lot of the teachers on the other side of the House, and some of them in their second term that are welcoming the pension they had with the NTA, and now the MHA pension rolls right into it. So, don't members opposite start casting aspersions on members over here about vested interests. That is a very, very, very vested interest. Now, I can name hon. Members, I do not have to, they can just look around but I think you should -

Ms Cowan: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: You are one.

Mr. Woodford: I mean the Minister of Labour should not -

Mr. Tobin: A total traitor.

An Hon. Member: What?

Mr. Woodford: I guess the old saying, Mr. Speaker, that what goes around comes around. And the Minister of Labour is one of the people who is going to know all about what goes around comes around in the next few months. I guarantee you that, especially in the next couple of years.

Another program; the Member for LaPoile mentioned the school libraries. Wonderful additions to the school libraries. Do members opposite caucus once a week?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Woodford: Do they caucus once every three weeks.

An Hon. Member: I do not know.

Mr. Woodford: I will ask this question: when in caucus does the Premier or any of the Ministers responsible for each department let the members, the backbenchers, know anything about what is coming down?

Mr. Tobin: The Ministers do not know, the Premier tells them, he is a dictator.

Mr. Woodford: Because I am sure, and I can say now unequivocally something else that was mentioned today about the school boards not having been told about proposed cuts or any cuts. I can go back to last Thursday. In my district last Thursday morning the school boards were told what they had to do for a proposal in cuts and education in that area and to have it back in seven days. I saw it. It is a twenty page report. If members opposite do not know anything about it we will probably be able to arrange a meeting so we can show it to them. A twenty page report on proposed cuts. Members opposite should ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs about the memo that went to the library boards in the Province and what cuts they were asked to make. Ask him if it is not true they were asked to cut 4.2 per cent on every library board in this Province. Ask the Minister if that is not true. Ask the Minister how many employees will have to go if this cut actually goes into place.

An Hon. Member: Ask him. Ask him.

Mr. Woodford: I have a problem he is not here.

Mr. Tobin: He is not even here.

Mr. Woodford: He is not here.

Mr. Tobin: He is on a world-wide tour.

Mr. Woodford: I will tell the members opposite to ask the people in their districts who are serving on the library boards what they have to do over the next little while and have it back to the Minister by November 30th. Ask them, because if they do not know by this time next week I can certainly let them know exactly what it is.

Now, you talk about increasing funding to library boards. Now granted -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) last two years.

Mr. Woodford: That is right. Yes, it has been increased. But when a library board in this Province, which has no jurisdiction and no say whatsoever in the increase in wages of the librarians in this province, they have no say. That is done by government under a collective with NAPE or CUPE. They have no say in that whatsoever. So, when the wages were increased that automatically goes out to the library boards. And who has to pay it?

An Hon. Member: The library boards.

Mr. Woodford: The library boards have to pay. That is who has to pay it. And I would go as far to say, Mr. Speaker, that the cuts the library boards are asked to

make in this Province today are exactly the figure, exactly the dollar value of the increase in wages. Not one cent less and not one cent more.

Now, Mr. Speaker, just a few points on the cuts that have already been made in education. We have said that there have been no cuts made. Can anybody remember about the hospital school and what happened to them just a few short months ago? What happened to them?

Mr. Simms: That was an improvement to education.

Mr. Woodford: An improvement to education, an improvement to people who have no other choice or no other avenue for an education, and that is not a cut? That is an actual cut. The substitute teacher part of it right in midstream, it is one thing to cut in midstream, but it is another when you make it retroactive. I said it last night in the House, I am saying it today, and I will say it tomorrow if I have to, and the Premier says that nothing, in a question yesterday in response, the Premier said to me, nothing has been done retroactively in that respect as far as I know.

Mr. Tobin: That's lies.

Mr. Woodford: Now I can prove, I have the figures, I have the stats of exactly how many days that the school board in Deer Lake was cut this year, 548 days knocked of this year's substitute days. No warning. No nothing. Just chopped.

An Hon. Member: Still there were no cuts, they say.

Mr. Woodford: Well they are only

two of the cuts I said so far, the hospital schools and the substitute teacher days, not only cut, but to add insult to injury they were made retroactive.

Mr. Simms: Retroactively?

Mr. Tobin: Yes, two of you are traitors.

Mr. Woodford: Not a member on the other side -

An Hon. Member: Murphy said he does not believe it, it is a (inaudible).

Mr. Woodford: He probably does not. And I say the member, knowing him, I say if he saw the figures, and it were explained to him that he would not believe it. A lot more members as well.

Mr. Tobin: If he does not know, he should resign.

Mr. Woodford: But there are 540 -

Mr. Murphy: (Inaudible).

An Hon. Member: Yes, change the subject.

Mr. Tobin: Go out and get Roger to take you for another drive, boy!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Woodford: But, Mr. Speaker, 548 days has been knocked off the Deer Lake School Board's allocation, the substitute days this year that are retroactive for the months of February and March of 1990.

Mr. Tobin: There is truth for you.

Mr. Woodford: Now from September to March, like I stated last night, they got 1,326 substitute

days to try to get through for six or seven months of the year. Now how can a school board that is use to 2,700, due to necessity, now they do not even have enough left for substitute days for sick leave.

So what did the bureaucrats in the Department of Education say?

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Woodford: Mr. Speaker, there is one thing to have a meeting, and it is one thing to be here in the House of Assembly, and it is another thing to have five or six meetings ongoing when a member is trying to speak. I do not mind a bit of noise, but at least they can have the courtesy to step outside if they want to laugh and talk. And is an example, I would say, of what they are doing with some of the departments they are running.

Well, Sir, I will tell you one thing. If I have to stand in this House and be judged on intelligence in comparison with the Minister of Finance, brother I tell you I will not have to be here for long, I tell you that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Woodford: If you want to sling mud, Sir, I tell you I will match you any day.

Mr. Simms: Right on!

Mr. Efford: What is that all about?

Mr. Woodford: Now student loans. You talk about actual cuts with regards to student loans.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Woodford: I am not talking to the Minister of Social Services.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Woodford: I was talking to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

I ask members on both sides of the House for their cooperation in giving the hon. Member the opportunity to be heard.

The hon. the Member for Humber Valley.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Woodford: Mr. Speaker, what about the student loans? The Member for LaPoile mentioned all the extra money in the student loans. Yes, there was money put in the student loans, Mr. Speaker, but what happened just a few short weeks ago to student loans? Fifteen hundred or sixteen hundred students at the university walked up to get there cheques and without any consultation or communication they were told no, I am sorry, but you get paid, if you are taking the five subjects, the full courses, you get paid, yes, no problem, but if you are taking four you will get paid on four-fifths and if you are taking three courses, you will get three-fifths. Now they were not told, they were not warned. And students today, I do not have to tell any member in this House, is finding it hard enough as it is to try to plan to get themselves through university rather than all of a sudden to be hit with a cut, something that they had not

planned on. Now Mr. Speaker the school boards. I heard Members opposite in the last few days talk about consultation and communication. Now if examples of consultation and communication are what we have seen in the education system even in the last few months, it leaves a lot to be desired.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Woodford: The school boards were told in no uncertain terms right in midstream without any warning, that this is what you have to operate for the rest of the year with regards to substitute teachers. And you can go on into the Student Loans. Is that consultation and communication? You can go on into the schools, the hospital schools. Is that consultation? You can go on into libraries. You can bring it out into the library system. I would say in that one they have asked, but in asking, at the same time they told them how much they would have to be cut.

Now Mr. Speaker the enrollment. I would be remiss if I did not say anything about the schools in my area of the Province. I am talking about a rural area of the Province and I would like to make just a few comparisons, and one of the Members opposite mentioned something earlier and he sort of agreed with me.

Out in the city of St. John's and this area you have a better opportunity, I suppose, for the schools to operate in a more efficient manner because of the fact that the enrollment is up. From my information enrollment around the city of St. John's has increased over the last number of years. It has not decreased. But

when I talk about a school board like the one in Deer Lake for instance that lost 126 students in one year, and that on the per capita grant that has been paid to the school boards for the operation of schools in this Province, Mr. Speaker, is substantial, no fault of anybody except for the fact of the economy.

But in making comparisons or in drawing analogies about what would happen in a small school in Deer Lake or Jackson's Arm or Sop's Arm or anywhere in that particular area of the Province, when that many students leave the school board the same school is there, the same school busing is in place, the same heat, light, fuel, everything stays the same. The bill pretty well stays the same, unless you happen to close the school. And they do not have any way to recuperate that money. They just come in at the end of the year in June and look at what the enrollment is for September, and all of a sudden they are down 126 students. There is no way to pick that up.

And I think that that is one area that should and could be looked at for some improvements. The only other way it could be picked up is if there was an increase in school taxes. That is the only way I can see. I do not know of any other way, unless they raise the money through the schools.

But to have 126 students knocked out of a school board and absolutely no other compensation for it, they find it hard to operate. And then on top of that to add any other expense to it at all such as now this this year substitute days in the classroom, when they have not even got enough left to fill the sick leave days.

In order for any in-service, workshops, professional development, it would have to come out of operating. So that makes it that much worse.

So I would say, especially to the Minister responsible for Treasury Board, to keep that in mind. I think that Members on both sides of the House have been affected by that particular problem in regards to the declining enrollment. I do not think that is just something that is happening in the Deer Lake school board, I think that is happening all over, especially the rural areas of the Province where we have people looking for work, cannot find work, they usually move to -

Mr. Speaker: Order please! Order please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

Some Hon. Members: By leave.

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order please! Order please!

Mr. Grimes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise anytime in this House when there is a matter relating to education being debated. I understand that Members opposite in particular have been taking the opportunity to ask questions, both here in the House and elsewhere, as to why I have not spoken about teacher concerns in particular, not necessarily general education matters recently. But I am a firm believer in the collective bargaining process, having participated in it many times

myself.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Grimes: I think when that is left to the people involved in it directly, the President of Treasury Board and his officials on the part of Government, and the NTA bargainers and their people on their part, that more progress will be made than any statement that I could make here in this House or anywhere else.

So, as I have said, Mr. Speaker, before I get to the few comments about this motion, this resolution today, as I said in meetings of teachers publicly, if I wanted the right and the opportunity to publicly talk about, in any critical fashion, actions that this Government has taken relative to teachers and education, I can go and sit as an independent or join the Members Opposite, which I have no intention of doing, and speak freely then as I chose, but I have a forum within this caucus on this side of the House in which my views are well known on education and educational matters, and when I say that to teachers in public meetings they understand and know that that is still the fact.

I do not think anything that anyone else can ever say would ever plant a real doubt in anybody's mind about any commitment that I have to education, teaching, the profession for which I trained, the profession at which I worked proudly at for almost twenty years, the profession in which I was very fortunate to be a leader of an organization well established and recognized in the Province for a short period of time, and no apologies from me

ever for any of that now or any time in the future.

With this motion, Mr. Speaker, this resolution today, there are a couple of problems with it which leave the Members on this side, including myself, to vote against this particular resolution. I would like to spend the couple of minutes which I have just to spell out exactly why this resolution is flawed. Some of the things in it are fine, but the resolution itself is so seriously flawed that I could not imagine myself voting for it, and certainly members on this side are not going to vote for this resolution.

What you have is some reference to one particular part of the Liberal Mandate. That was talked about and discussed during the election, it was also reiterated in the Throne Speech on the opening of the House on two different occasions, 1989 and 1990, in which education was referred to and re-affirmed as one of the real priorities of a Liberal Government in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

And now, just because the same Government is dealing in a fiscally responsible way with a temporary setback in the finances of the Province, people are trying to suggest that that means there is no longer a commitment to education or to health or to anything else, and that is just not the case.

No matter how often Members of the Opposition or anyone else try to twist that and make two and two add up to four, it just does not add up. The commitment is clear, as mentioned by the Member for La Poile, that in only two Budgets there have been drastic increases

in education related expenditures by this Government, brought in by this Minister of Finance.

Now, the speculation is that next year, because of financial difficulty in the Province, spread across the whole country and throughout all of North America, that we might not be able to continue on with the same level of increases, and from what I understand, everyone with whom I talked to in the Province understands that serious, sensible approach to fiscal management.

Now, people will talk about cutbacks and so on, from the Opposition or whatever, but that in fact is not in existence. The only action taken to date is the one relating to substitute teacher payment in this fiscal year, which is causing some difficulties, mainly because of what happened in April, May and June last year at the end of a school year, and now we are trying to manage that cutback over a shorter term than the full twelve months. It is causing some problems, but it is being managed in the very best manner by school boards and teachers.

The solution proposed by the Government to talk about fiscal responsibility and so on says that every sector will probably have to share equally in any restraint. This resolution says that education, as much as it is one of the major priorities for this Government, should be exempt. And there is nothing better that I would like for education than to be exempt, but then what does that say about health care? Does it mean we have to have twice as much of the onus borne in the health care sector? Every sector will share in any kind of restraint

equally. That is what the Liberal Government here has proposed and that is what we are going to support today.

Mr. Speaker, as I understand any amendments proposed from this side, they may want to propose some themselves as their mover of the resolution closes debate before we vote.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Grimes: But because of the fact we are going to share equally, we cannot support this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tobin: You turned your back on them.

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

Mr. Tobin: He never betrayed the teachers, I will tell you that.

Mr. Hearn: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the hon. member did not have more time, because he was digging a beautiful hole for himself.

I just wish the teachers of this Province had been in the galleries looking at their former leader, whom they looked upon as the champion. And perhaps when he was in that position he was for the teachers, but now, being brainwashed by the Premier of the Province, here he is up mouthing pious platitudes - you know, why Government has to make the decisions they are making. Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. Hopefully, teachers will at least get a copy of what he has said today. Unfortunately -

Mr. Simms: He has to say that, or (inaudible).

Mr. Hearn: Well he is being told to say it. That is his penance.

Mr. Simms: When they nailed him yesterday on the car, he had to do it.

Mr. Hearn: Well, I am not going to dwell on the - one other point I would like to make about the reference the member made to why they could not vote for the resolution, and he talked about the Liberal manifesto, which was only part of the total (inaudible). The Liberal manifesto quoted nothing to do with the resolution. The resolution just says, that the House urge the present Government to exempt education from the announced budget freeze and fulfil its commitment.

It does not matter what the commitment was, exempting education from the freeze is what is important. Because nobody over there, more so than that member who just spoke, knows more about the effect of a freeze on educational funding than the member himself.

Mr. Simms: He was complaining about it five years ago, remember.

Mr. Hearn: He certainly did.

I am amazed, also, at the choice of speakers we had this afternoon. The Minister of Social Services, who knows so little about the system of funding education in the Province, I will not say the man is not interested in education, I am sure he is. He sees only so well the disadvantages of a good education. But certainly when we have so many teachers over there, people who know directly what the implications are. We are not just

talking about a cut or a freeze in funding. It is not like cutting ten miles off -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Hearn: Not at all, that is why I said I am surprised other members who are directly involved did not speak.

Ms Verge: Ten teachers.

Mr. Hearn: The ten teachers, the ten people who are directly involved in education, who understand as the Minister of Social Services does not, as the Premier does not. If there is anybody in this House who does not understand about the education implications from what he has said, it is the Premier of this Province.

Mr. Simms: Right on!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hearn: He just does not comprehend the seriousness. It is not like cutting ten miles of roads from the Minister of Transportation's Budget, it is not like cutting \$10,000 or \$10 million off the water and sewer projects. Those are capital things. They are important things.

Mr. Simms: They are already doing that.

Mr. Hearn: But cutting educational funding goes much deeper than that. The implication down the line is extremely important.

Ms Verge: (Inaudible) cut the single mothers (inaudible).

Mr. Hearn: Let me make a few remarks, Mr. Speaker, and I will

come back to the Minister of Social Services.

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible).

Mr. Hearn: If you can keep him quiet, Mr. Speaker, I will come back to the Minister of Social Services in a couple of minutes. But there are a few other important points I have to make.

The Minister of Education in his report on educational finance, a good report done by the Minister, commissioned by the former administration, because we felt the minister was a very competent person to do it. He proved he was a very competent person to do it, and passed in a very comprehensive report.

One of his main recommendations was that the first thing should be done was an immediate - immediate - injection of \$50 million into the educational system, and then the cost of living allowance and so on be factored in after. This was above and beyond full equalization in relation to the tax equalization program that was introduced. Two budgets have occurred since and there has been no action.

When I spoke earlier, Mr. Speaker, I talked about our system of education, how it has developed, how we have done so very well when we look at our history and geography.

One of the points always raised by the former Presidents of the NTA, the Members for Exploits and Conception Bay South, was the lack of funding and how we are so far behind the Canadian average. I showed that during the years of the Tory administration we narrowed that gap. We are still a

significant amount behind the Canadian average, but the Minister of Education uses two words quite often: efficiency and effectiveness. When we look at the Canadian test of basic skills, a test which measures our students in comparison to the other students in Canada, we realize that by the time of graduation our students are within five per cent of the top graduates across the country on the average. That is not bad when we have a 20 per cent gap in funding and when we look at the history and geography of the Province.

Mr. Speaker, the effectiveness and efficiency of our system is amazingly efficient. We are extremely efficient. Either that, or the other provinces, when we look at their geography and the money they put into their systems, are extremely inefficient. And I would like to think that we are extremely efficient. Why? Because we can talk about facilities, and they have improved over the years; we can talk about centralization, and we see it being forced upon people now whether it be in the educational system or in relation to municipal structures. But the key component in any educational system is the teacher. That is what is extremely important regardless of where that teacher is operating, and because of the dedicated people we have in this Province, that is why we are so close to the Canadian average when we look at everything that we have going against us.

The Minister of Education said a few days ago, when we were talking about cutbacks, that the cutbacks in substitute teachers, the 10,000 days that were cut off, which really eliminated professional

leave - 80 per cent of the days are non-discretionary, as we have pointed out, sick leave, other leave, compassionate leave, and so on. About 20 to 25 per cent of the days, really boards have some flexibility for professional development. Once the cuts were made retroactive, back to the start of the financial year, where the days that were used in April, May and June kicked in, most of the professional days that teachers have have been eliminated, and the former Presidents of the NTA know that so well. Former teachers over there know it so well. Other people probably do not understand it, and I would not expect them to. Consequently, they should not be talking about it.

But the minister said the cutbacks were do to tough financial times, times of restraint. It had to be done. The Premier, in answering questions a couple of days ago, said what was the truth as far as this Government goes, he said that they felt there was abuse in the use of substitute days. That is why they cut back, because in their arrogance they thought there was abuse and consequently whipped away so many days from the teachers without any consultation.

Now, let me go back to the Minister of Social Services when he talked about the lunch program - a tremendous program. I congratulate the minister if it is developed in partnership, and he said a partnership agreement was developed. Consultation with the other agencies involved, the right and proper way to do it. The elimination of the substitute teachers days, the elimination of the student aid programs, the cuts which are presently being proposed were not and are not being done in

consultation with the different agencies, they are being done arbitrarily. And to make it worse, not being done arbitrarily by people in the educational field who know what they are talking about and who understand the implications, they are being dictated to by people who have dollars and cents on the brain - balance your budget regardless of cost.

You cannot deal with an education budget strictly on a dollar and cents basis. The Minister of Finance might not know the difference although he should, but the Minister of Education certainly does know and he was praised by the Minister of Social Services and I join in that praise. He is a tremendous person, except he does not have the intestinal fortitude to stand up to the Premier, like all the other people over there on that side.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Hearn: Well, the minister says he does. Let it be noted, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Social Services is the only one who is saying that he will stand up to the Premier, and somehow I believe that. I believe that might be factual.

The minister talked about the cadillac system of boards. That is a little bit different from the statements made by the hon. member and all other hon. members a few years ago, when they talked about how tough boards had it. Maybe the Minister of Social Services should talk to his colleague, the Minister of Mines, and ask him if he thinks school boards have a cadillac system. That member spent a number of years as

chairman of one of the biggest boards in the Province. And it was not easy slugging, because time after time after time he was quoted as saying how tough it was for boards. And it was tough, because there were few dollars. But at least they were trying to help them, and bit by bit that gap was narrowing, bit by bit they were doing a bit better, bit by bit they were seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, but now that light, all of a sudden, turns out to be a train that is smashing the educational system and putting us back twenty years.

The Minister talks about scaremongering, and he talks about points we brought up. Let me tell the hon. Minister that the points I listed today are things that are actually being told to school boards by people in the educational field, by the Minister, by members opposite, and by people in the Department: these are the possibilities, here is what will happen. But the Minister himself admitted that there are going to be cuts. He said, after accusing us of scaremongering.

An Hon. Member: Fearmongering.

Mr. Hearn: Fearmongering, scaremongering, the same thing. He goes on to say, the Minister of Finance has told the Minister of Education there is no more money.

Mr. Efford: No extra.

Mr. Hearn: No extra money - okay? - to use his own words. More, extra, what is the difference? It is the same thing - more, extra. No extra money. Now, what does it mean if there is no extra money? It means there is no increase. If there is no increase, it means in

relative terms there is a decrease. We have not factored in the fact that teachers have not settled yet in relation to their agreement. If they get anywhere near what other organizations got, other bargaining units, then there will be a considerably larger amount of funding needed next year in the educational budget.

So, as the Minister stands and tells the people around the Province there is no extra money - you talk about fearmongering - what he is saying is that you go along on last year's dollars, which is what has already been said, plus you must take cuts, because there will be a 12 or 15 per cent increase overall if you factor in teacher's salaries, if you factor in the regular grants school boards will get, whatever. Even a 5 per cent increase in the education budget will be around \$40 million. How do you save \$40 million in the educational system? Can you cut school busing? Well, even if you cut it all out it is only \$22 million. So if you cut 5 per cent or 10 per cent you are cutting off \$2 million or \$3 million. If you charge students you only add another \$1 million or \$2 million. Do you cut in the Department of Education? What do you cut there? It has been cut to ribbons. And those who have not been cut are leaving. So you do not save there except a few salaries.

You ask the School Tax Authorities to bring in some more money, so you add another few million. But the only place - 75 per cent of the educational budget is in teachers' salaries. So where do you cut? You cut teachers' salaries. How do you do that? You readjust the pupil-teacher

ratio, and that is the only way it can be done significantly in order for the Minister of Finance to balance his Budget next year.

So, when the Minister of Social Services stands up and talks about no extra funding for education he is verifying every word we said, that there is a freeze, there is going to be a reduction in services; it has to be a significant one, there will have to be teacher layoffs and there will have to be all other kinds of playing around with the financial structures.

And let me say to the Minister that the points raised today about the freeze in per pupil grants, the decline in enrollment grant and all that, these are not just figures pulled out of the hat, these are facts. These are the things that educational authorities have been told to do.

Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate thing about this is that people over there who know something about education are sitting back and saying nothing. The former Presidents of the NTA should be ashamed of themselves; the former teachers should be ashamed of themselves. Because the effect is not going to be on the teachers, their friends or their own pensions or whatever, it is going to be on the children of this Province. Consequently, we are just urging, and that is all the resolution says, the Government to reconsider what they are thinking about: some of what they have done already, some of what they are in the process of doing, and some of what they are considering. Some of what they are thinking about, we are urging the Government to think about it.

Because if you do not, the educational system that everyone has worked so hard to develop, the progress that has been made - we have children in this Province who come out of school who compare with anyone across the country. Well, now, it is not that our level of education is bad, our students compare with anybody. Why do they leave the Province? Not because of our educational system. Because there are no jobs. Why, the Premier himself admitted his son had to leave. I believe a graduate engineer, if I am correct. Why? To find a job. Not that he is not an educated person, to find a job. Our students are coming out of our schools quite competent and capable. Why? Because we have made the best of what we had; we have always tried in educational circles to move upwards.

What you are suggesting now is going to be turning the whole thing around. The Minister of Social Services is upset again because the truth hurts. One thing about that Minister, he is a very straightforward Minister. Whether it is good or bad, he does not mind saying it and he knows, he knows, that every word I am saying is truthful and correct and he knows the effect on his children, on my children and everybody else's, that there is going to be a downturn in our educational system if the present trend continues.

So, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we are urging the Government, the present Government to exempt educational funding from the announced budget, exempt the Department of Education from the freeze and fulfill the commitment you made when you said: 'Improvements in our educational

programmes on which our future success depends. It is the most important thing for the future of this Province.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side are concerned with the future of the Province. The future of the Province lies in the hands of our young people. Their future depends upon their level of education. Consequently, we support the resolution, and I presume now that at least the Minister of Social Services, hopefully the teachers, and perhaps the others, will also support the resolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Those in favour of the motion, please say 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: Those against the motion, please say 'nay'.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the 'nays' have it.

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Division

Mr. Speaker: Call in the members.

Mr. Simms: We are ready, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Ready?

An Hon. Member: Okay, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Those in favour of the motion, please rise:

Mr. Hewlett, Mr. Hearn, Mr. Doyle, Mrs. Verge, Mr. Simms, Mr. Tobin, Mr. Woodford, Mr. Hodder, Mr. A. Snow, Mr. S. Winsor, Mr. Parsons, Mr. Hynes.

Mr. Speaker: Those against the motion, please rise:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Carter), the hon. the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Efford), the hon. the Minister of Works, Services, and Transportation (Mr. Gilbert), the hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands (Mr. Kelland), Mr. Hogan, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Crane, the hon. the President of the Council (Mr. Baker), the hon. the Minister of Development (Mr. Furey), the hon. the Minister of Health (Mr. Decker), Mr. Walsh, Mr. Noel, Mr. Gover, Mr. Penney, Mr. L. Snow, the hon. the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture (Mr. Flight), the hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs (Mr. Gullage), Mr. Grimes -

Some Hon. Members: Shame! Shame!

- the hon. the Minister of Finance (Dr. Kitchen), the hon. the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations (Ms Cowan) -

Some Hon. Members: Shame! Shame!

- the hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy (Dr. Gibbons), Mr. K. Aylward, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Dumaresque, Mr. Short, Mr. Langdon.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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

Clerk (Miss Duff): Mr. Speaker,
'ayes' twelve, 'nays' twenty-six.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion
lost.

This House stands adjourned until
tomorrow, Thursday, at 2:00 p.m.