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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 proceeding with the routine business of the House on behalf of hon. Members I would like to extend a warm and cordial welcome to 100 Grade VI students from St. Kevin's School in the Goulds, accompanied by their teachers Sister Mary T, Judy McDonald, and Marilyn Howard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

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

Mr. Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am making this announcement today on behalf of the hon. the Premier.

I am announcing today certain changes in Government's ongoing efforts to monitor the effects of the Hibernia Development. The purpose of this monitoring is to ensure that the Province takes full advantage of the project, with the maximum possible spin-off to local employment and the local economy.

Mr. Speaker, Hibernia provides unique opportunities for economic expansion in this Province. It is the Government's intention to ensure that every department and agency that has a role in this development focuses its attention on the project in a meaningful way. Already, a significant amount of work has been done. The Department of Development, for example, is continuing with the implementation of programs to

ensure that the local business community is prepared, to the extent possible, to capitalize on the opportunities provided by Hibernia. The Departments of Education and Employment and Labour Relations have carried out significant work with respect to training and education of the local workforce. The start of construction of the project also creates new demands on Government. For example, steps need to be taken to ensure that the social and environmental aspects of the project are appropriately monitored.

Mr. Speaker, I am announcing today the establishment of a senior level committee of public servants whose responsibilities will include the effective monitoring of all aspects of Government's involvement in Hibernia. This Committee will monitor and co-ordinate the activities of all departments and agencies in every aspect of the project. The Committee's role will include monitoring the compliance of all parties with the terms and conditions of the numerous project agreements in place. The committee will report to Cabinet through the planning and priorities committee.

In order to provide the necessary degree of priority to the committee's work, Government has decided that the committee have a full-time chairman. This will help to ensure that we have a continuous review of the project at all times and easy access to Cabinet or Planning and Priorities for the purpose of problem solving. I am pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Peter Kennedy as Chairman of the Hibernia Project Monitoring Committee. Mr. Kennedy has

approximately twenty years experience in the Newfoundland public service and has served approximately ten of those years as a Deputy Minister - in the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Department of Finance, and the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat. In addition to that experience he has served as Chairman of Newfoundland's Negotiating Team in the Hibernia negotiations from early 1986 up to their conclusion last month. That particular experience makes him especially qualified for this new and demanding role because of his intimate knowledge of the project and the contents of all the final agreements.

In addition to Mr. Kennedy, the following individuals will also serve on the new Committee, the Clerk of the Executive Council, Mr. Hal Stanley; Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy, Mr. Gordon Gosse; Deputy Minister of Development, Mr. Clyde Granter; Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, Mr. Clarence Randell; and the Deputy Minister of Environment and Lands, Mr. John Fleming.

Mr. Speaker, Government is confident that this structure will provide the necessary co-ordination that is required to ensure that the Province is fully positioned to capture the Hibernia benefits to the greatest extent possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Rideout: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the Premier's office, I guess, for sending me a copy of the statement in advance, although it was delivered by the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Speaker, let me say right off the top that the only thing worthy of note in this particular statement made on behalf of the Premier today, is the admission, public admission of negligence by this Government.

When this Government assumed office on May 5th, 1989 - the President of Treasury Board can shake his head until it falls off his shoulders if he wishes, but the fact of the matter is, when this Government took office on May 5th, 1989 it inherited an Hibernia Development Projects Committee, a monitoring committee, Mr. Speaker. Who were they? Peter Kennedy, Gordon Gosse, Hal Stanley and Clyde Granter, Mr. Speaker, the very same people whose re-appointment the Minister is announcing here today. Now, if that is not negligence of the highest order, I do not know what it is. It is a silly, silly statement.

The Government should be condemned for disbanding that Committee eighteen months ago. It should never have been disbanded, it should never have lost that year and a half of work that could have been done in developing new education programs and making sure that companies and businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador were ready for the Hibernia project.

It was negligence of the highest order for the Government to disband the Committee, but having said that, we are finally pleased that after eighteen months they re-appointed the Committee almost

body and soul, person for person, the group which they disbanded when they took office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

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

Mr. Rideout: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had a question for the Premier, but in his absence I will put the question to the President of the Treasury Board. Mr. Speaker, could we have some order while I am trying to put a question, please?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Rideout: Last Thursday, the Premier said the following in this House and for the benefit of the President of Treasury Board, I will just make a brief quote. He said, 'we acknowledge that managers of hospitals know more about running hospitals than the Minister of Health or the President of Treasury Board. We have a limited number of dollars. You, the managers, know how to provide the services within the limits of the funds available, so you make the decisions.' The managers of nursing homes and so on have now provided the public and the Government of this Province with certain information saying that frozen Budgets mean, in effect, that they will have \$60 million less to spend next year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House the Premier made the following statement again, and I want to tie the two together for the President of Treasury Board. The Premier said this: 'Like the

Opposition, they, the managers and the unions, do not know what they are talking about when they make those statements. In other words, when they say the effect is a \$60 million cut, 1,200 less jobs in the health care sector, they do not know what they are talking about' - the managers who were so good last Thursday, do not know what they are talking about. I want to ask the President of Treasury Board, who knows? The Ministers don't know, the Premier doesn't know, and the managers and the unions and the Opposition. Nobody knows! Will the President of Treasury Board tell us who knows, who has the answers?

Mr. Simms: Good question. Oh my God, (inaudible).

Some Hon. Members: Oh no!

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

The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, I would like to put this in context. The first time the Premier spoke about this issue he said that because of this recession we find ourselves in, it is necessary for the Government to not spend as much next year, in other words, freeze our Budgets.

Now we could have dogmatically said to all the hospital boards and the administrators and the chairpersons of those boards, do that, do this, do something else. But in our spirit of consultation and co-operation, we went to the people who were on the front lines. The Premier said, they know better than the Minister of Health, and I agree with him, they know better than the Leader of the Opposition, they know better than

the President of Treasury Board. We went to those people who were on the front lines and we asked them to come back with some suggestions as to how we can do that. That is the first part of the question. So that is what the Premier meant when he said they are on the front lines.

Now, the next part of the question was the Leader of the Opposition talked about the announcements that are being made, 600 jobs here, 500 beds there, something else somewhere else. The Premier said the hospital boards do not know what they are talking about in that particular matter, nor does the Opposition know in that particular matter, nor does the Nursing Home Association in that particular matter, nor does the Cabinet, nor does anyone. And the reason, Mr. Speaker? Because the decisions have not been made. Now how can anyone know if the decision has not been made? It is pure speculation, Mr. Speaker.

So I do not see any contradiction, I do not see any problem with it, and I fail to see where the Leader of the Opposition has any problem with that, unless he is deliberately looking for problems with that, Mr. Speaker. Now that is a very simple answer, without any arrogance. It is a very simple answer, Mr. Speaker, and I am glad to give it to the people of this Province.

Mr. Simms: Are you now confirming there will not be any cutbacks?

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

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, I suspect that when the Minister of Health was informed the Premier could not be here for Question

Period today, he was called to the Premier's Office and given a quick PR crash course in how to answer the questions, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Simms: Using trick words. Trick words.

Mr. Rideout: Now, Mr. Speaker, let me -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, let me ask the Minister of Health a supplementary. The Board of Directors of the Bay St. George Senior Citizens Home announced on October 22 past, not something they might do, not something that is speculation, but as of that date there was a freeze on admissions because of the Budget freeze next year. Now is the minister prepared to stand in this House and admit to this House that decisions, firm, hard decisions are now being taken by some institutions in this Province?

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

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to take a lesson in how to answer questions if the hon. the Leader of the Opposition would take a lesson in how to ask questions.

Now the Bay St. George incident. The administrator of that nursing home attended the meeting in Corner Brook when I carried the news out and explained that there was going to have to be a freeze and that we wanted to consult, we wanted their advice and all of this sort of thing. And I said to them, go back to your institutions and come up with some

suggestions. All of the boards went back.

Now some of them did not understand exactly that they were to consult with the Department of Health first. The administrator has been talked to; the Deputy Minister of Health has talked to him, and he misunderstood the process. But he is very conscientious administrator who knows the system inside out, Mr. Speaker, and he said, and the media cornered him - we are all public people. We know how the media grabs you before you have a chance to really get your thoughts in order. It happens quite often. It happened to me. Maybe I am human - and Mr. Bradley explained that he was approached by the media before he had a chance to put it in thought.

But what Mr. Bradley is saying is this. If we are going to freeze our budget, here are some of the possibilities. One possibility is that we will close fifteen beds, and in order to do that maybe we should stop filling these beds now. You cannot put people on the road, obviously. So, if a bed becomes vacant, we will not replace it. That is one possibility. However, Mr. Bradley does not yet have the authority to do that until his suggestions are brought back to the Department of Health and are studied by the Minister of Health and his officials, and a resource group, I should say, which has also made itself available to me. And at the end of the day we might say, look, it is impossible to close fifteen beds in St. George's, it might be better to close them somewhere else. That is a possibility. And we are the ones who are going to have to make that judgement call, because we are the

ones responsible. But up to the present time, there might have been a misunderstanding in Bay St. George's, but that is no longer the case. Mr. Bradley now understands that at the end of the day he might, indeed, have to close fifteen beds. I cannot say that, but that decision has not yet been made. Nobody knows that, not the Cabinet, not Mr. Bradley, not the Opposition, because we do not know what is going to come out at the end of the day, when all of this is analyzed. It has to be analyzed, it has to be examined at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

I have to stop the hon. Minister, he is getting (inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: That was a very wise decision by Your Honour.

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

Mr. Rideout: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, let me come back to the Minister of Health. The Minister tried to skate and flip-flop in saying that the administrator of this home got banged into a corner by the media and made an intemperate and perhaps ill-thought-out statement.

Mr. Speaker, let me quote from the printed statement issued by that administrator on October 22 - printed statement, not getting cornered by the media. 'The Bay St. George's Senior Citizen Home finds itself in a position of having to announce to the general public that a freeze on admissions to this facility will take place effective immediately', Mr. Speaker. Now that is not getting caught out by the media. How does

the Minister square that with the flippant answer he just gave to this House?

Mr. Decker: Very simple, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Decker: Very simple, Mr. Speaker. As I explained so clearly to everyone in the House except the hon. Leader of the Opposition, who is probably the only one who didn't understand it, the administrator in Bay St. George's just got a little bit ahead of the process. That memo is null and void. That memo does not exist.

Mr. Simms: It is not a memo (inaudible).

Mr. Decker: That press release, memo, proclamation, document, contract, whatever it is, Mr. Speaker, it does not exist. It is null and void. As of now the Bay St. George's Nursing Home will admit people as they were doing before the announcement was made. Nothing has changed. However, after his suggestions have been put to the Department of Health, have been examined by the Department of Health, the day might come that he might, indeed, have to close five beds or twenty-five beds. That decision has not yet been made, Mr. Speaker. But when it is made, the people of Bay St. George's, the Leader of the Opposition, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador will know it. No one is going to hide behind our decisions over here, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Rideout: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to give the Minister of Health another opportunity to confirm and display to this House and to the people of this Province his arrogance.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Listen, now.

Mr. Rideout: Will the Minister confirm, Mr. Speaker, that yesterday, here in the lobby of this building, he spoke to a nurse working at the Grace Hospital in St. John's, just as he was waiting to speak to the demonstration, and said to her the following, and I quote: if you did not have to get your increases we would not be in this mess. Is that a statement that the Minister made to a nurse in the lobby of this building yesterday? And did the Minister say that, in light of the fact that that was one of the freely arrived at - without a strike, without arbitration - collective bargainings in this Province this year?

Mr. Simms: True or false.

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

Mr. Decker: The simple answer, Mr. Speaker, is no. That statement was not made, Mr. Speaker. I have a lot of friends that are nurses. I happen to live with a nurse. I cannot guarantee that never in my life have I said that to a particular individual, I cannot guarantee that. But I can stand here, Mr. Speaker, and say that yesterday in the lobby of this building, I have no knowledge of saying to a nurse, from the Grace, that if it was not for your raise we would not have to do

this. I do not know anything about that.

But I did say to the nurses that I believe they are the backbone of the health care system, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Hear hear!

Mr. Decker: (Inaudible). I also did say that we hold them in a lot higher esteem than the previous Administration did when they gave everyone else a wage increase, Mr. Speaker, and did not give the nurses the increase that they deserved.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

An Hon. Member: How much more can you take?

Mr. Matthews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Fisheries. Last week the Minister indicated that the Port aux Basques fish plant may not re-open this year. Is it now official that this plant will not re-open in time for the winter fishery?

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

Mr. Carter: No, Mr. Speaker, it is not official.

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

Mr. Matthews: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary. Is there still a possibility that the Port aux Basques fish plant will re-open for the winter fishery? What arrangements has the Minister made in attracting a new operator?

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

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to build up expectations in that area. It would be cruel, I think. But I can say that there is a possibility, yes, that the fish plant will be operating in time for this winter's fishery. Nothing definite, mind you, but there are negotiations going on and maybe within a few days we will be able to say more about it.

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

Mr. Matthews: Further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister be able to indicate to the House and to the people of the Province if the Minister and his Department are offering any incentives, financial or otherwise, to attract a new operator, similar to that offered at Twillingate - a \$1 lease, \$30,000 a month management fee - in an attempt to have the plant re-opened for this winter season for the people and the employees in Port aux Basques?

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

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, I said a moment ago that negotiations were ongoing. And I am not aware at this point in time if in fact the people that are negotiating for the plant will require any kind of special help. I can only say that if and when they do make such a request, we will then look at it.

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

Ms Verge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My questions are for the Minister

of Justice about the meeting which took place at Corner Brook city hall Tuesday night on the Fisher Institute. Yesterday, the Minister of Justice told the House of Assembly, quote: 'at no time did I tell the Mayor of Corner Brook that if he decided to admit Ms Verge to the meeting that there would be no meeting.' However, Mr. Speaker, Tuesday mid-day before the meeting, the Mayor of Corner Brook told me that if I insisted on going to the meeting then the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Education would probably back out and call off the meeting. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the Mayor of Corner Brook, yesterday, told CBC radio 'On The Go' that he discussed my desire to attend the meeting with the Minister of Justice and that both of them, both the Mayor and the Minister, decided to keep me out. Mr. Speaker, how does the Minister of Justice explain the discrepancy between what he told the House of Assembly yesterday and what the Mayor of Corner Brook has said? Is the Minister of Justice calling the Mayor of Corner Brook a liar, or is the Minister now willing to admit that it was he, the Minister of Justice, who pressured the Mayor of Corner Brook to keep me out of the meeting?

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

Mr. Dicks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Member's own comments do not contradict what I say, in fact they back it up. Her initial comment is that she spoke with the Mayor and he indicated that if he raised the matter we would probably back out. The question as put to me in Hansard, which I read before I came in here as

well, and which she accurately repeated, is whether or not I ever told the Mayor that we would not have the meeting if she were in attendance. That is not the case and that is completely accurate in my reply. May I say as well, Mr. Speaker, that on behalf of the people of Corner Brook I would like to take very strong exception to her characterization of the Mayor as a liar, because I have been following the controversy, obviously, and this is an attempt by the Member to deflect attention from the real issue. I want to point out to the public, and Members of this House of Assembly, that the city of Corner Brook has endorsed the proposal and that the Member's interest in this -

An Hon. Member: (inaudible) with your liberal Mayor.

Mr. Dicks: Those sorts of comments are not productive, Mr. Speaker, and I very much resent them. They are not to the point. The point of the matter is that the hon. Member is trying to deflect attention from the true issue which is the Government's White Paper which has been accepted by the people of the Province and by the people of Corner Brook in particular.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms Verge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The people of Corner Brook indeed have not accepted the Government's decision to put Fisher Institute under Western Community College. The Minister will probably find that out in the next election.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member is on a supplementary.

Ms Verge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary is actually for the Premier. The Premier's executive assistant based in Corner Brook, Ed Joyce, said on CFCB radio yesterday, quote, 'I was working with Paul Dicks to help arrange the meeting.' If it was not the Minister of Justice or the Minister of Education who pressured the Mayor, either directly or indirectly, to exclude me from the meeting -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

This is an appropriate time to read to hon. Members the Standing Orders related to our questions. The Chair has been accepting this to an extent but I think we are overdoing it and I want to remind hon. Members about 31(d) of our own Standing Orders which says: Oral Questions must not be prefaced by the reading of letters, telegrams, newspaper extracts or preambles of any kind. The Member can obviously allude to it and the Chair has been accepting a sentence or so, but we are getting to the stage now where we are reading long statements. So the Member can definitely allude to it, but not read the statement.

The hon. Member for Humber East.

Ms Verge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was in the middle of my question when Your Honour rose. I will restate my question, minus the preamble. If it was not the Minister of Justice or the Minister of Education who asked directly or indirectly the Mayor of Corner Brook to exclude me from

the meeting, will the Premier tell the House if it was his assistant, Mr. Joyce, who asked the Mayor to bar me from the meeting?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Premier Wells: The hon. Member -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Premier Wells: It is sad to see that she has degenerated to this level. I can say with absolute certainty that if he did so, he did not do so on my request. I can say with great confidence, knowing the gentleman as I do, I have no doubt that he did not. And I am kind of sad to see the Member has degenerated to this kind of level of behaviour. It is really sad to see.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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

Ms Verge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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

Ms Verge: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary to the Premier. I accept the Premier's word. I honestly do not think the Premier himself was involved in any way in the skulduggery that his Ministers and his assistant were involved in with the Mayor of Corner Brook to exclude me from a meeting I had every right to attend. Will the Premier ensure the House of Assembly that in future his Ministers and his officials will not connive to pressure municipalities or other groups to exclude their MHAs from meetings?

Mr. Simms: A good question.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Premier Wells: Mr. Speaker, let me state clearly what the government policy has been and will continue to be in the future. Any municipality, municipal council, or other group in the Province, or other individuals for that matter, who wants his or her or their MHA to attend a meeting is most welcome. They will not find any resistance from any Member of this government. But, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to have any MHA direct the way Government conducts its meetings with any groups or individuals.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Right on!

Premier Wells: We are not going to pressure a situation where any MHA will intrude or pressure himself or herself on a meeting to which he or she is not invited, and in fact probably should not be participating as this Member seems to want to do all the time. I have attended a number of meetings where the Member has sat there, and I can only say that my experience at every one of the meetings is that it has been a political disruption, and it interfered with the meeting, and it has made a mess of most of the meetings.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Premier Wells: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding that, if any group want that Member or any other Member to attend a meeting with any Member of this Government the Minister concerned will ensure that the Member is entitled to

attend.

An Hon. Member: Right on!

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

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, based on what the Premier just said I have a question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member is not supposed to rise in his place and debate a question and answer that was given by somebody. The hon. Member is on a question.

Mr. Simms: The hon. Member has not even spoken yet.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member made a reference to what the Premier said.

Mr. Woodford: He did not say it. He said based on.

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

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has just made a statement and I want to ask him a question.

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry.

Mr. Tobin: How can he square with what he just said when the shipyard at Marystown sent an invitation list in to the Minister of Transportation for the christening of the Flanders with my name on it, and the Minister of Transportation took my name from it and said he was not sending me an invitation. How do you square that? I was invited by the shipyard.

An Hon. Member: Hear hear! Right on.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Premier Wells: Mr. Speaker, I do not know the details but I will find out.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Premier Wells: Mr. Speaker, I will answer the question.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Premier Wells: If they want somebody else -

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Premier Wells: - to answer it, they can get the answer from their side, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Before recognizing the hon. Member I want to apologize to the hon. Member for Burin - Placentia West, but hon. Members will realize that in the past some hon. Member getting up would make a statement about a question previously answered and then go and ask the question to another Member. And this is what I thought the hon. Member was doing. The Chair apologizes.

The hon. the Member for Fogo.

Mr. Winsor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question was going to be to the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs. In his absence I will ask the President of Treasury Board.

On March 29 of this year the Minister announced the guidelines for the Regional Recreational Facilities Programme. He also indicated that announcements would

be made as to the successful applicants this summer. Could the President of Treasury Board tell us if Cabinet has yet decided on the successful bids, and when will they be announced?

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

Mr. Baker: All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that I am knowledgeable about the fact that the proposal is being considered by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and when it goes through the various stages, it at some point will be presented to Cabinet.

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

Mr. Winsor: Since the President of Treasury Board is not aware, and the officials have told me it is before Cabinet, perhaps the Premier can indicate, and in view of the budgetary cutbacks and freezes for 1991/1992, is the Government still committed to the delivery of two facilities a year as was in the March 29 statement?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Premier Wells: I do not know what officials are misleading the hon. Member, but no officials could tell him what was before Cabinet.

Mr. Winsor: The Minister told me yesterday.

An Hon. Member: No he did not. I was next to the Minister, he did not say that.

An Hon. Member: What's that?

An Hon. Member: I was there when you asked him.

Mr. Speaker: Order please! Order

please!

Premier Wells: The basis for the question of the hon. Member clearly is unfounded, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Winsor: This question is again to the President of Treasury Board. In view of the fact that it has been announced that the budget for the different Departments has been frozen at the 1990/1991 level for 1991/1992, and in 1990 there were no new capital works or recreational facilities, can we conclude that there will again be none this year, as there were none budgeted last year?

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

Mr. Baker: The Member is confusing a number of things. Direction has been given to Departments to freeze their operational funding, to have a look at how the Department can operate, based on last year's funding.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Baker: Now, just listen now. Then they come back and we make decisions based on what we get back from the Departments. What the hon. Member is talking about is capital money and not operational money, and I can only assure the hon. Member that it will be dealt with in the process.

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

Mr. Hearn: Thank You, Mr. Speaker. Now that Bill C-21 has been rescued from the vindictive claws of the Liberal Senators, the

Minister of Employment and Immigration has announced that most of the provisions of the Act will take effect as of November 18th.

I ask the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations if she has contacted her counterpart to ask that the provision whereby Newfoundlanders can qualify, in most areas of the Province at least, with ten stamps take place immediately, because many of those who have had seasonal employment are now waiting to file, but cannot file until November 18th, which puts an added stress on them and their families?

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

Ms Cowan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Barbara McDougall is going to be in St. John's on the 29th of this month, and I have quite a lengthy agenda to bring to her attention. There are a variety of employment problems in the Province - those related to the fisheries, the Minister of Fisheries will be present with me at that particular stage, and a variety of other situations which relate to employment, and I will be at that time bringing that type of situation which you asked me to her attention, yes.

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

Mr. Hearn: Mr. Speaker, what the Minister has said is no, she has not as Minister responsible for labour relations in the Province, contacted her counterpart in Ottawa to ask her to hurry up and implement the provisions in the Act.

I ask the Minister, will she immediately, as the representative of Government and of the people out there who are starving, lining up at the welfare offices, immediately contact her counterpart and impress upon her the need to implement that section of the Act which will enable many Newfoundlanders, actually thousands of Newfoundlanders to apply today, not next week or the week after, but today for their UI benefits.

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

Ms Cowan: It is very easy to stand up, Mr. Speaker, and make a variety of statements sounding as if catastrophe is about to fall, and that there are thousands of people lined up at UI offices and so on, waiting.

My preference is -

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

Ms Cowan: I have been often in contact with the Minister of -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The Minister is experiencing great difficulty in answering, so I will ask hon. Members, please to extend her this courtesy.

Ms Cowan: What they are afraid to hear, Mr. Speaker, is that I have been acting in a very responsible manner regarding unemployment in the Province and they do not want to hear it.

The hon. Barbara McDougall, is well aware because of a variety of correspondence from me, from my colleagues, from colleagues on

that side of the House, I have been bringing the problems to her attention all summer.

I was not about to go and call the woman yesterday afternoon based on some figures that I yet do not have full grasp of and cry wolf before I am sure exactly what I can bring to her attention. What sectors are affected, what parts of the Province are affected, how many there are and so on, she cannot make decisions until she knows these things and when she comes to that meeting next week, I will have that information for her.

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

Mr. Hearn: Mr. Speaker, this is incredible, for people all around this Province to listen to the Minister state she does not care that they are lined up at the welfare offices.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister, in light of the fact that her Government has done absolutely nothing to help people obtain employment this year, many of them with any assistance at all, with any make work programs, with any fishery response programs, would have qualified long ago for UIC with their fourteen weeks. Now that they have the option of obtaining ten, will she do whatever she can to make sure that they will receive these benefits as soon as possible? Because when you get thousands of people applying after the 18th. the delays that will take place because of the onset will mean many of them will not get any benefits until Christmas. That is why it is so important for her to move immediately today and ask her counterpart if she would implement that provision immediately? And I

am sure it will be done.

Mr. Simms: A reasonable request.

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

Ms Cowan: First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me say that the gentleman is being totally erroneous in the statements that he has made that this Government has done nothing during the problems that have faced us over the last little while. I do not know what he calls the Fisheries Response Program, if that was not a positive response. I do not know what he calls our Employment Stimulation Program, if that was not a positive response. And we are continuing to monitor all the time to see where we can step in. But we have to be sensible. Again these people do not understand what sensible means. We have to see how the regulations that are now in effect are going to impact on the people in Newfoundland. I do not know how many have ten weeks. I do not know how many have five. I do not know how many have fourteen. Once that is known we will be able to make some sensible and responsible responses.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Question Period has expired, if I have told the time right again.

Answers to Questions for which Notice has been Given

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

Mr. Gilbert: A couple of days

ago, the hon. the Member for Kilbride asked what were the specific items removed during the second tender call for the Ossokmanuan Reservoir bridge, and why was the contract changed to remove these two items? The two items removed during the tender call were the following: strengthening of the ?? River bridge, strengthening of the Mountain Brook bridge. The two minor items were removed because the Department's estimated cost of the two items was a total of \$20,000, whereas the bid by McNamara on the original bid for the two items was \$70,000. My Department's staff removed the two items during the second tender call, as it was felt a lower bid could be realized by tendering the two items separately.

Petitions

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

Ms Verge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition of several Memorial University students attending the St. John's campus of Memorial, who come from all over the Province. The prayer of the petition is as follows: Therefore your petitioners urge the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reverse its change of policy and continue to permit social assistance recipients to retain a substantial portion of maintenance and child support payments as well as regular social assistance.

Mr. Speaker, these petitioners are protesting the Government's October 1 social assistance cut, which has resulted in a surprise

decrease in income for about 1,000 single mothers and their children. The drop in income amounts to up to \$115 a month. The petitioners, some of whom are single mothers who are affected and hurt by this change, are pleading with the Government to reverse that policy change and restore income to these single parent families who have lost money, and also to restore the incentive for single parents to seek court orders for family support, as well as to restore the incentive for judgement debtors to honour court orders.

Mr. Speaker, last Thursday during the Late Show, the Premier promised the House of Assembly, 'I do not have all the details at my fingertips, but I will get them and find out precisely what the situation is.' The Premier went on to repeat his basic commitment of fairness and balance. He said over and over again that he and his Government will always treat people fairly.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Member for Port au Port has pointed out the discrepancy in current social assistance regulations that is illustrated in a situation where a family on social assistance undergoes a change of marital status. Before marriage breakup, if the father living with the mother and children has a part-time job and earns some income, then the family is able to benefit by up to \$115 per month because the father's income from the job is classified as earned income, and the regulations contain a sliding scale formula for deduction allowing an incentive for the father to work. Now if the marriage breaks up and the father moves out leaving the mother with

the children, and the absent father, the estranged father pays child support to the mother, then the mother is unable to benefit from that payment of child support because all of it, dollar for dollar, is subtracted from the social assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I trust in the week that has passed since last Thursday afternoon, when the Premier promised to become informed about the details of the social assistance program and the harmful effect on 1,000 single parent families from the Government's October 1st decision, that he will now rise in his place and announce to the House and the public that the Government is reversing that change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Simms: No response.

Orders of the Day

Mr. Baker: Motion one, Mr. Speaker.

On motion, that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider certain resolutions, Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

Committee of the Whole

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

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

Mr. Chairman, I want to take a few minutes today to make a few remarks as we debate the Bill

before the House, under the name of the Minister of Finance, to borrow several hundreds of millions of dollars more on the credit of this Province.

Now, Mr. Chairman, lest anybody be wondering why for the last six days or so, I guess since this session resumed last Tuesday, the Opposition is taking all the time it needs and all the time it feels it might need to debate this particular Bill, just let me say a couple of things.

There is no way anymore, Mr. Chairman, for anybody in this Province to have confidence in the competence and the ability of the Minister of Finance. There is absolutely no way that we can have confidence in the Minister anymore. This Minister, Mr. Chairman, came before this House with a Budget on the 15th of March, introduced that Budget and made one of the most glowing Budget Speeches that any Minister of Finance, I suppose, has ever delivered. He told the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that he had a good news Budget. He told the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that he had a goodie bag for everybody, Mr. Chairman: There was increased money for the health care system in the Province, there was new financing for education, there was increased funding for social services, there were new capital projects here, there and everywhere. And on top of it all, Mr. Chairman, on top of it all, this Minister of Finance was such a great and competent Finance Minister, he could deliver all those goodies to everybody and still run a \$10 million surplus on current accounts. That was the message that went out over the public airways of this Province, because we co-operated and gave

the Minister of Finance the right to make his speech before the television cameras here in this Chamber.

So the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that night, Mr. Chairman, collectively breathed a great sigh of relief. This new Government, this Minister had delivered a goodie bag budget; they had delivered something good for everybody. There was no bad news in it. But, Mr. Chairman, we knew. We, on this side of the House, after a very quick glance at the Budget, knew that the Budget was a deceitful, fraudulent document and within hours of the Minister delivering that document in this Chamber, our finance critic and others were saying that as we were interviewed by the various media in the Province.

Why did we know that, Mr. Chairman? Why did we know that it was a deceitful, fraudulent document? Well, it did not take too much research, Mr. Chairman. First of all, the Minister of Finance didn't have the honesty and the integrity on the day he read his speech to this House to announce that he had ordered the Liquor Corporation to increase the tax on liquor. Now, that is a sure sign, Mr. Chairman. It is a sure sign of dishonesty and deceit when a Minister of Finance does not tell the House directly in the Budget document the revenue measures he is planning to impose, or ask Crown Corporations to impose on the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That was the first sign of a fraudulent deceitful document.

After we looked a little more carefully, Mr. Chairman, it was plain to see, knowing that the rest of Canada was entering into a

recession, knowing that the equalization formula was such that if there was a slowdown in the economy of Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia in particular, that the equalization formula would therefore dictate that there would be less equalization money flowing to Newfoundland from the Government of Canada. Any Grade III student, Mr. Chairman, if they knew about the equalization formula, could figure that out. It did not take a mad doctor of a genius to figure it out. But it took honesty, Mr. Chairman, to tell it to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and that is something that the Minister of Finance did not have and still does not have. Everybody knew the recession was upon us, everybody knew that the funds were going to be less from equalization and therefore should have budgeted accordingly, Mr. Chairman.

Those two things were bad enough, Mr. Chairman, but the Minister introduced a Budget to the House, and I believe within a short while after that the House adjourned for the Easter recess. Before the Budget debate actually began in this House, in April, Mr. Chairman, the Government had been verbally, and then in writing, informed by the Government of Canada that they would have a \$63.5 million shortfall on equalization - before the actual budget debate began. All the while our critic was going through his three and half or four days of brilliant oratory, telling what was wrong with this Budget, the Government, the Minister of Finance, knew that what that gentleman was saying was true, was true, that they had over-estimated and that they knew they had deliberately overestimated the

amount of equalization.

Now, Mr. Chairman, having overestimated it and then having deliberately covered up that error, and not having the honesty and audacity to come before this House and the people and admit it, they allowed a charade to take place in this House for thirty-five or forty days. The Budget did not pass in this Chamber in its final form until, I believe it was, May 29. It came down in the House on March 15, the House adjourned until sometime in April, the Budget debate began on April 4, and May 29 the Budget finally cleared this Chamber.

For twenty-five or thirty days this Minister allowed this House to be misled, for twenty-five or thirty days this Premier deliberately kept appropriate financial information from the Members of this Chamber. For fifteen or twenty mornings and nights Committees of this Legislature sat and examined a fraudulent set of numbers, Mr. Chairman. The Resource Committee of this Legislature, examining the Department of Mines and Energy, and Fisheries, and so on; the Social Committee examining Municipal Affairs and Health and all those, all those Committees, Members from both sides of the House, in good faith gave up their mornings and nights to sit down and deliberate over and ask questions about, and try to get answers to, a fraudulent set of numbers. Because the numbers were fraudulent. They were not real. And the Government knew they were not real. The Government knew verbally on March 30 and they knew in writing by April 4 that the numbers were not real.

What else did they do, Mr.

Chairman? It has not come to light yet, but we will be getting to it over the next few days, and it has not come to light because there are more important matters to address in Health and Education and so on. But only half this Government's problem on the current account deficit, Mr. Chairman, can be accounted for by the shortfall in equalization payments. Only \$63.5 million of a \$130 million problem can be accounted for by that one fact. The fact that you lost your \$10 million that you were budgeting for surplus on current accounts, and the fact that you are running up a \$120 million deficit, together mean that you are \$130 million, in total, behind.

So only half of that \$130 million can be accounted for by trying to blame it on Ottawa and less equalization - one half. What about the other \$60 million? How do you account for that? Nobody, Mr. Chairman, on the Government side, including the Minister or the Premier, has attempted to explain that \$60 million question mark that is still out there.

Well, it has come from a couple of areas, Mr. Chairman. It is now evident that the minister again, I suspect deliberately, but certainly the minister again grossly overestimated the revenue from retail sales tax. The take by this Government on retail sales tax this year is dramatically down, other Provincial Government revenues are dramatically down, so, therefore, Mr. Chairman, the Government has yet to explain to this House what has happened to the other sixty-or-so million dollars.

Mr. Murphy: Ask Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Rideout: It has nothing to do with Mr. Wilson on the other part. And if our Finance critic is correct, as he has proven to be so many times over the last several months, our Finance critic predicted the day the Budget came down that the surplus would be a deficit. By July, I think he was saying it would be \$45 million or \$55 million, and a few weeks after the Government admitted that it was \$45 million. A few weeks after, again in August, our Finance Committee was saying that it was going to be up around \$130 million or \$140 million, and finally the minister and the Premier admitted \$120 million. So the person with the foresight, the person who was able to predict accurately was not the Minister of Finance with the team of bureaucrats and advisors that he has, it was the Member for Mount Pearl, our Finance critic, Mr. Chairman, and he has been proven accurate on all three occasions.

Now, Mr. Chairman, if the Government, having been totally dishonest with this House and the people of this Province from at least March 30, wanted to be contrite, wanted to try to make amends, if the government wanted to convince people that, look, yes, we made a blunder, you can call it a deliberate blunder if you like, but we are now going to try to set a new standard for ourselves and set a new pace, if the government had done that, Mr. Chairman, sometime or another since this House opened, they would have been in here with a revised Budget; they would have been in here with a mini-Budget so that we would have before us the right numbers, so that we would be able to intelligently debate and ask questions about the revenue and the expenditures of the

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. But no, Mr. Chairman, that would have been the right thing to do. But the right thing to do automatically means that this Government will not do it.

Now, Mr. Chairman, if this Government will not do it, then it is the responsibility of this Opposition, something that we will continue to do for the next several days, weeks if necessary, to use this Loan Bill, which is a money bill, a borrowing bill, to try to elicit from the Government the true financial state of this Province. And if that takes us from now until Christmas Eve, Mr. Chairman, on this Bill itself, then that is what we will do.

The Government should have come in here with a mini-Budget. The government should have presented the truth to this House, and we could have debated that and got on with it, and passed the Loan Bill in the interim if the Government needed it. But no, the Government decided not to do that.

So the situation we have in this House now, Mr. Chairman, is totally of the Government's making. The Government has chosen that road, the government has chosen that path, and, therefore, Mr. Chairman, that means that we will be on this Loan Bill until we get the answers we are looking for. And there are a lot of questions, Mr. Chairman, which need to be answered. The Minister of Finance is not in his seat, but I hope he is listening or has somebody listening. Because I am going to monitor this debate very, very closely for the next several days, and if I don't hear the answers to the questions I am going to pose, this Loan Bill is not going through.

We can speak as often as we like on this, Mr. Chairman. There are no time limits. There is no seventy-five hours, no fifteen days. There are none of those time constraints that a Budget has around it, which the Government would have had to its advantage if they had brought in a Budget. This Loan Bill can be in this House until the March 31, 1991 if we want to keep it here, and we can keep going back and forth. Now nobody need rise over there if they don't want to; but those of us on this side can get up and make a few remarks, sit down and catch our breath and then get up again.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) warmed up yet.

Mr. Rideout: Our critic is only warming up, so I am telling the Government that they had better start providing some answers or this Loan Bill is not going through very, very quickly. I hope the Government House Leader is listening to this, as well, Mr. Chairman.

Now, Mr. Chairman, in the Budget of March 15th, the Minister estimated total revenues of \$1,393,946,000 from the Government of Canada, that is what he estimated.

Two weeks later the Minister was officially informed that the Province would receive \$63.7 million less, that meant, therefore, that the revised estimate of Government of Canada income to the Province, was \$1,330,246,000. Now, is that the revised figure, is that now the correct figure, is that now written in stone, is that what we are going to get, for sure? Does the Minister of Finance now know

that?

Mr. Chairman, a revised Budget or a statement by the Minister of Finance would tell us that, and, is it not important that this House know, when something in excess of 50 per cent of our Budget comes from the Government of Canada in transfer payments of one form or another, it is vital, Mr. Chairman, that this House know that, and it is fundamental to our parliamentary democracy that the Minister of Finance provide that information, either in the form of a new Budget or in some other form.

I have already made the point that the deficit now - it might be more tomorrow - but the last official figure we had means that the Government actually dropped at least \$130 million, because the Government was budgeting something in excess of \$10 million in surplus and now they are saying it is a \$120 million deficit; so the \$10 million is gone and \$120 million more is gone, so that is a total of \$130 million, not to mention some of the tax increases which came in this year, that had they not come in, would have meant the difference would have been larger, so if you look at -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: I beg your pardon?

An Hon. Member: About \$150 million.

Mr. Rideout: About \$150 million. If you look at the total fiscal picture, so far in 1990, this Government was not in a \$10 million surplus position. It was not in a \$120 million deficit position, it was probably closer to \$150 million or \$160 million, because you had to take into

account what would have happened if those tax increases had not kicked in.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Finance should also be able to tell the House what forecasts were used for those new numbers which he and the Premier gave to the people of this Province in October. In fact he should come to this House, Mr. Chairman, and produce them, and if there was a new Budget or a mini Budget, then, obviously those forecasts and those documents would be part of the Budget document itself, but we do not have any of that.

The only access we have is Question Period, trying to get answers from the Minister of Finance, who likes to hug his seat like a land lover likes to hold on to the land, that is the only access we have, or hopefully, in debate.

The new estimates that the Minister used to arrive at this sad story should be available to this House, and if there was a Budget, they would be available to this House.

Mr. Chairman, what about revenues, provincial revenues. We know now that revenue on retail sales tax is down, what about other major provincial revenues, is there any significant decline in those, Mr. Chairman? If it is, that is going to make the problem worse, yet the Minister of Finance has not made any effort whatsoever to tell us about provincial revenues.

And what about expenditure, what about the capital and current account expenditure for which the Minister is responsible, what is the most recent revised figures on expenditure?

If expenditure is up on current account, and if expenditure is up beyond what was projected on capital account, obviously this deficit situation gets worse. If it is down, obviously it improves, but what is it? The people of Newfoundland and Labrador have a right to know.

The Opposition have a responsibility to ask the questions, the Minister has a responsibility to answer them, but again, if there had been a Budget, Mr. Chairman, we would all know, because it would be included in the documents. So, Mr. Chairman, these are technical, I realize, so technical that they are not the appropriate type of questions to pose at Question Period perhaps, so it is only appropriate that they be posed in debate here in this Committee, but it is useless to pose them if there is going to be no response from the other side. It is useless and a waste of time to do it, Mr. Speaker, but we are going to continue to do it because we believe it is vitally important that those answers be arrived at. The people must know. We have seen in Question Period in this House over the last several days, I suppose perhaps the biggest farce that you have seen in this Chamber in years. When the Premier announced a \$120 million deficit a few weeks ago, he at the same time announced that there would be a freeze imposed on all Government spending for 1991-92. The Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker, went off to Corner Brook within a few days of that and met with the representatives of the hospitals, nursing homes, and so on in that region, and from the information that the Minister of Health gave to those people they were able to quickly calculate that a freeze of their

next year's budget at this year's level meant to them a 12 per cent cutback. They were able to very quickly calculate that a 12 per cent cutback meant to them \$60 million less to spend on health care in Newfoundland and Labrador next year. How did they arrive at 12 per cent, Mr. Speaker? Well, there is normal inflation, whatever that might run. A good guess is probably 5 per cent next year. There are salary increases next year that were negotiated this year. I believe that is 7 per cent, which is 12 per cent right there. Heat and light is gone up, not to mention that house supplies and all that is going to go up. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that those managers whom the Premier crowed so much about a few days ago were very conservative. When they say they need an additional 12 per cent next year just to be even, not to be ahead, Mr. Speaker, not to make any progress in improving the system, but just to be even, when they say they need 12 per cent I say to those managers, I believe you have underestimated that by a percentage point or two. But let us give them the benefit of the doubt, let us use their 12 per cent. Their 12 per cent automatically means \$60 million less they have to spend. Do you know what the Minister's answer was in Corner Brook under some questioning from those people? The Minister came into this House a few days ago and told us there was a great deal of understanding, and that the administrators and the managers were going to be as helpful as they could. There was almost a love-in between the people he was chopping and had to impose his chops, and him and the Government and the health care administrators. Listening to the Minister ask the questions you

would almost think there was a love-in out in Corner Brook, Mr. Speaker. Well, the only ovation, I have been told, not by one person who was there, or not by two, but by more than that, I have been told that the only response the Minister got by way of a clap, by way of showing some signs of appreciation for what the Minister was saying, was when he was asked the question, is the Government going to take responsibility for this? Because we are not, we are imposing what you are dictating and demanding to us. We are not going to take responsibility. The Minister made this revealing comment. He said I cannot speak for the rest of the Government, I cannot speak for the rest of the Ministers and the Premier, he said, but I can tell you I am going to take my share of responsibility. Bravo to the Minister. He went on to say, I am going to take my share of responsibility because we are a one-term Government anyway. That is exactly what he said in the room in Corner Brook with dozens and dozens of witnesses, Mr. Speaker. That is when he got the ovation, that is when he got the response from the hospital administrators, when he admitted to them that he was going to take his share of responsibility because they were a one-term Government. Now, the Premier should check this out because if other Ministers are going around the Province admitting that to the groups - the Minister thinks it is funny but this actually happened. There were several tens of people in the room and I have heard from a number of them. That is how the Minister sloughed it off.

An Hon. Member: Did you say that?

Mr. Decker: No.

Mr. Rideout: No, he did not say that like he did not say what I quoted today to the nurse.

Mr. Decker: As usual his facts are wrong.

Mr. Rideout: There are too many witnesses to this one I say to the Minister - too many witnesses to this one. I know you will skate, and you will try to skate and you will try to bamboozle your way out of it, Mr. Chairman.

An Hon. Member: You are in the corner now.

Mr. Rideout: You are in the corner, because there are too many witnesses, just too many witnesses and the Minister knows who they are, they were there from Corner Brook, Stephenville, St. Anthony, Deer Lake and Baie Verte and Springdale. There are too many, you cannot hide this one. And the Minister actually said it, and so he should, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rideout: Pardon?

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: Oh, yes, absolutely. I am glad it is rubbing off on you. Delighted, Mr. Chairman, and I hope the Minister listens to our predictions, Mr. Chairman, because they will be just as accurate as the budgetary predictions that our colleague for Mount Pearl has made on this Budget which we are trying to debate here today.

Now as I was saying, Mr. Chairman, after the Premier made the announcement and the Minister met with the hospital administrators, we then of course were in the

situation where the House had reopened, and obviously and naturally it is our responsibility to try to elicit the impact of this budgetary freeze on the whole system. But for the last several days they have been concentrating on the health care system, the education system, and social services in this Province. We have heard from dozens of hospital administrators. We have heard from dozens of senior citizens home administrators. People who speak for the nurses union, people who speak for NAPE, people who speak for CUPE. We have heard from them all over the last several days. And all of those groups, Mr. Chairman, fall into the category of the managers that the Premier talked about last week. When we begin the questioning on cuts in the health care system last week the Premier said: the people who know the most about the system are the managers, the hospital administrators, the home administrators, they know more about any of this than the Minister of Health or the President of Treasury Board. So we are not going to tell them where they have to come up with the savings. What we have done is to tell them that there is a freeze on their Budget. What we have done is tell them to go and look at your Budget and come back and tell us how you effect those savings because there ain't no more money. There is not a red copper. There is not another penny. You have to live on your present Budget and that is it.

Now, Mr. Chairman, those professionals, those managers have gone out, and in many cases, there is some left to go, but in many cases they have crunched the numbers. They have done the exercise. And they have gone to

their boards and in many cases their boards have approved the managers' recommendations. And it has been submitted to the Department of Health. In every case, Mr. Chairman, when you get up in this House and ask the Premier or the Minister about this board, like Valley Vista Senior Citizens Home out in Springdale, for example, who have done their numbers, who have gone to their board, who have got their boards approval for this dastardly deed, and who sent the board's recommendations off to the Minister of Health and off to the Department of Health. When you get up and ask the Premier will he confirm that this particular cut at the Valley Vista Home in Springdale means the closure of twenty beds and the layoff of fifteen employees: No, no, no, no that is not the case at all. It does not mean that.

Mr. Chairman, the Premier cannot out of one side of his face one day say that it is the managers who have the expertise to run the system, and we are counting on them to run the system, and they are going to run the system under a frozen budget, and the next day say the managers do not know what they are talking about; the unions do not know what they are talking about; the nurses do not know what they are talking about; the Opposition do not have a clue what it is talking about, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rideout: Can I ask the Table if there is any particular reason why I have three minutes left?

Mr. Chairman: The limit is half an hour.

Mr. Rideout: Oh! According to

Standing Order 49, Your Honour, the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier has an hour, every time they rise in this House except for Private Member's Day.

Mr. Chairman: We will just look at that.

Mr. Rideout: Maybe you can just look at that. Nevertheless now having said that, Your Honour, that is just to protect my rights, I do not intend to carry on for an hour without allowing somebody else an opportunity.

But as I was saying, Mr. Chairman, the dishonesty of this Government shines through in every example. It is not only in the Budget, but it is in how you react to when you have a problem. The Government has admitted a budgetary problem. And now, Mr. Chairman, having put the clamps to the people who have to impose the cutbacks, having put the clamps to the people who have to go out in the field and do the dirty work for them when we pose the questions in this House, what do they do? They turn around and they give a kick to those experts, to those managers, Mr. Chairman, the people they say they trust. They turn around and they kick them hard. And try to make the public of Newfoundland and Labrador believe that they are fools, incompetents, that they do not know what they are talking about. Yet the day before that they were the experts, the people that the Government depended on to run the show for them, Mr. Chairman.

So, Mr. Chairman, it is not good enough. The experts in the health care system, Mr. Chairman, have confirmed -

An Hon. Member: Point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Point of order.

The hon. Member for Mount Scio - Bell Island.

Mr. Walsh: Mr. Chairman, I am studying Standing Order 49, I may be absolutely wrong, but I would ask the Chair if they would -

An Hon. Member: You probably are wrong.

Mr. Walsh: - please check to see. Because I do not see where that unlimited, or the hour -

An Hon. Member: Not unlimited.

Mr. Walsh: - is there.

Mr. Chairman: Order please!
Order please!

Mr. Walsh: So I would ask you -

Mr. Chairman: Order please!

The Chair is having that matter checked out.

Mr. Rideout: To the point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Order please!
Order please!

Mr. Walsh: Just to the point of order again. I would not want the member - not that I would not by leave, of course - but would not want to set a precedent whereby he went beyond the three minutes that he is supposed to have left either.

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

Mr. Rideout: Standing Order 49 (2), Mr. Chairman. I think Standing Order 49 (2) is the operative order. It says: "The Premier, the Leader of the

Opposition, a Minister moving a Government Order" - the Minister of Finance has moved a Government Order, right, a loan bill - and a Member replying thereto immediately after such Minister" - so the critic from Mount Pearl, for example, would have an hour when replying to this particular bill. But the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier always have an hour, always - as a right, every time they rise to their feet, except for Private Members Day. That is what that rule means.

An Hon. Member: Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: So, Mr. Chairman, as I was saying, the Government has found itself in a financial mess because the Minister of Finance refused to pay any heed at all to the warning signs that the economy was starting to decline. And he was grossly over-optimistic not only in revenue from the Government of Canada but his own revenues, over which he has control, over which he does not need any advice from Ottawa in predicting how much they will be.

As a result of that, Mr. Chairman, the Government has to start a significant slashing of expenditure.

Mr. Windsor: He could not predict yesterday's weather.

Mr. Rideout: No, the Minister of Finance of this Province would not predict yesterday's weather, as my colleague from Mount Pearl reminds me. And there is a lot of truth to that. And in order to do that now they are going to make a savage attack on the health care system of this Province. Any improvement that was made over the

last year or so, about which the Premier likes to brag, will be totally wiped out, Mr. Chairman, and more besides. So there is going to be a savage attack on the big spending Departments - Health, Education and Social Services.

And that is where the Premier and the Government are going to look first, Mr. Chairman. And they have done that by a freeze which in effect is a cutback. Because as I said, Mr. Chairman, the administrators, the managers, have now identified why it is a cutback. Because there is inflation, because they have extra salaries, because they have heat and light and so on, that a freeze at this year's level means you have less for next year.

And Mr. Chairman, is it not ironic that this Government of all Governments, when the Government of Canada announced a freeze in one of the programs last year, I do not know, the EPF or something I believe it was, when the Government of Canada announced a cap or a freeze on that last year, you could hear the howls, Mr. Chairman, from St. John's to Nain from this Government. Were they howling freeze, Mr. Chairman? Was that the groan that was coming out of Confederation Building, freeze? No, Mr. Chairman, the howl that was coming out of Confederation Building was cutback - not freeze, cutback. Well, Mr. Chairman, if a Federal Government freeze is a cutback, then surely goodness a Provincial Government freeze is also a cutback. When is this crowd going to get serious?

Mr. Flight: Honourable.

Mr. Rideout: When is this hon. crowd - thanks to my friend for Windsor - Buchans. He is such a

great parliamentary expert, I always listen to his recommendations. But, Mr. Chairman, when is this Government going to preach today what they preached yesterday? When is this Government going to be consistent today with what they had to say yesterday.

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Chairman, we are paying a Minister of Social Services \$85,000 or \$90,000 a year to do nothing but talk about pickles and the mess of a previous administration. Now, if that is the only initiative you can bring to Government, go down to Government House with your resignation, boy, for God's sake.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) that too.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please! Order, please!

Mr. Rideout: That is all you can hear out of the Minister of Social Services. Go out and talk to the single and separated mothers in this Province who you took \$115 away from. That is who you should be talking about. Mr. Chairman, when you try to make legitimate points -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: Go out and talk to the fire fighters whom you just robbed \$2400 a year off. You try to make legitimate points in this House and you got a parliamentary buffoon like the Minister of Social Service or the Minister of Health talking about pickles or the previous administration or something of that nature.

An Hon. Member: Go back and fix

the moose.

Mr. Rideout: Go back to the hockey stick factories, and go back to the chocolate bar factories, go back to Churchill, Mr. Chairman. The Minister of Social Services is now part of a Government and it is now his responsibility to do something about the situation this Province finds itself in. You can blame it all you like, Sir John, on somebody else, but the people out there now know, Mr. Chairman. The calls are coming in from teachers saying, we were misled, we were hoodwinked into voting Liberal in the last election. I cannot wait for the next chance to come.

Mr. Efford: Not according to the following you had last weekend.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Chairman, again you see the value of the \$85,000 or \$90,000 salary that the Minister is getting, concerned about an event last weekend. Be concerned about the state of social services in this Province. That is your only concern. That is all you are getting paid for, and do it and respond to this House through the way you do it, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Efford: I would want some money to pay off your debts.

Mr. Rideout: You never had to pay off any debt belonging to me, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible) did so.

Mr. Rideout: Your debt. Mr. Chairman, do you see that hon. gentleman over there?

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

Mr. Rideout: He was like it when

he was over here. He would get up and make a misleading statement that caught the headline. Whether there was any truth to it or not the damage was done, and he has not changed one bit. He was irresponsible when he was over here and he is just as irresponsible today.

Now, let me come back to the Health Care Budget, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: No, Mr. Chairman. Forty-four days is better than zero days, because that gentleman will never get there.

Mr. Efford: You are going to get some surprise.

Mr. Rideout: I will get a surprise, yes.

Mr. R. Aylward: (Inaudible) another shipyard. (Inaudible) another shipyard?

Mr. Tobin: Well, he will not be in the Cabinet very long.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Chairman, it does not matter to us whether the Minister of Health or the Premier doesn't like the questions that have to be asked about those cuts, it does not matter to us that the Government is refusing to address this freeze as a cut. The truth is now starting to get out, Mr. Chairman, from one end of this Province to the other. This freeze is exactly what we are saying it is, a cut. It means that the Boards will have less money to spend.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the other Minister who has tried to do some fancy skating over the last several days is the Minister of

Education. The Minister of Education is going to run out of skating room pretty soon, because the school boards know, the school trustees know, everybody involved in education knows that a frozen budget means for them at least twelve or thirteen per cent less money to spend next year.

Mr. Baker: No.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Chairman, here is the President of Treasury Board saying no. Well, Mr. Chairman, is it not a fact that you can pretty well count on a 5 per cent inflation rate next year? Would the President of Treasury Board confirm that? Is there going to be zero inflation, do you think?

Mr. Baker: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: Well, Mr. Chairman, we are moving slowly along.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

Mr. Rideout: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let us go back to the health care system now. The minister has confirmed you can count on around a 5 per cent inflation rate. Is it not a fact that a number of parts of the health care system have 7 per cent salary increases coming to them next year?

An Hon. Member: Most of them, if not all.

Mr. Rideout: Most if not all, some already negotiated. Is that not a fact?

Mr. Baker: It averages out to a cost of 5.5 per cent, yes.

Mr. Rideout: Well, the system is

saying 7 per cent.

An Hon. Member: How about (inaudible) the health care system?

Mr. Rideout: Let us take the Minister's figure. I think the association's figure is conservative, by the way, but let me take the Ministers, 5 per cent for inflation and 5.5 per cent for salaries, which is 10.5 per cent. What is going to be the cost of heat, light, and maintenance for those plants next year? It is going to go up some. It is not going to stay zero. It is not going to go down. Let us say it goes up 1.5 per cent. Now, everybody knows light bills alone have gone up more than that, the price of fuel oil has gone up more than that, but if the cost of operating and maintaining the plant only goes up by 1.5 per cent, we already agreed on 10.5 per cent, then there is 12 per cent. So how can the President of Treasury Board with a straight face say that those experts in the health care system are not telling the truth?

Mr. Baker: No, I say you are not telling the truth.

Mr. Rideout: I am only using their numbers.

Mr. Baker: Well, you are using them wrong.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Chairman, the President of Treasury Board just voted yes for each of the numbers. And I gave him the benefit of the doubt on two of the larger ones, the salary bill and the cost of running the plant. I think it is going to be more than that. I have not mentioned the increased cost for supplies next year. Are jobs going to go down

or go up?

Mr. Baker: A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Baker: I would suggest to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Chairman, in terms of his use of numbers, if he were to simply say that there are 25,000 employees, each of them getting a salary increase of 5 per cent, we can add all those together and say that the costs are going to increase by 125,000 per cent next year. That is what he is doing, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Rideout: That is not even a good point of foolishness, Mr. Chairman, let alone a point of order. Do you know what I would say? I would say that is the kind of math the Minister of Finance used when making up the Budget. Because it will be just as much off base, have just as much validity, and be just as far out, Mr. Chairman. What Math is it anyhow? Is it Base 10, or base 2, or did he introduce some new program since I gave up teaching?

One day before this House closes this session, Mr. Chairman, the Premier, the Minister of Finance, the President of Treasury Board, is going to have to confirm that freeze means cuts and cuts mean layoffs. The House is going to be open as the hospital boards get their recommendations in, and the Government has to make budgetary decisions in the latter part of

October or November. So the word has to go back to the boards. And don't you worry, when the word goes back to the boards the word will not be long coming back to our office. Don't you worry about that, Mr. Chairman. Before this session ends, sometime just before Christmas Eve or whenever, the Premier and the Minister of Finance are going to have to confirm what boards are now saying, that freeze means cut; they are going to have to confirm what we have been saying, that 12 per cent less money to spend on health means 1,200 jobs out of the system, it means 300 or 400 beds out of the system. They are going to have to confirm that the cut in education means several hundred less teachers next year. Those things will have to be confirmed, so the Ministers can enjoy their skating now. The Ministers will even be able to continue skating for perhaps the next month, but sometime in November, Mr. Chairman, the jig will be up, sometime in November the approvals for the cuts will go back to the hospital boards and back to the nursing homes, and then they will be back on the floor of this House. And, I suspect, we will still be debating this loan Bill when they come back here.

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

Mr. Tobin: Well, Mr. Chairman, I have a lot to say about the debate as the rest of my colleagues do, and as the evening progresses and the days progress and the weeks progress, we will have a lot to say on this piece of legislation which is before the House.

Ms Cowan: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Chairman, was I

recognized, or was it the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations? Who was recognized here? Will she stop interfering when I am trying to speak? I will not be shouted down by that Minister, Mr. Chairman. And not only that, she is not in her seat.

Anyway, there are some issues here I really want to get into.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Yes I am. I have my notes, Mr. Chairman. The Minister of Employment and Labour Relations interrupted when I was standing up to speak and probably I should say to the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations that she should be working hard in her Department to try to do something with the unemployment level this Province has reached in the last year and a half, since she became Minister.

Statistics will show that from July 1989 to July 1990 there were approximately 11,000 less people in the work force in this Province. Is that a record of which this Minister is proud? That is what this Minister has presided over.

Ms Cowan: (Inaudible).

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

Mr. Tobin: That is what this Minister has presided over, the cut of 11,000 jobs in this Province. That is something of which to be proud. She mentioned this afternoon the Fisheries Response Program. We have never seen a Fisheries Response Program since she became the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations. And furthermore, Mr. Chairman -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: No, she has not. No, she has not and the Minister -

Ms Cowan: Yes she has. The workers (inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: You mentioned the Fisheries Response Program today. That is what we had when we were in Government and you abolished it. Furthermore, she has done absolutely nothing to stand in this House and support the people who are trying to get employment.

Then she brought in the Employment Generation Program and what did she do? She had it all approved, all the jobs were approved, their grants were approved before we had a chance to deal with it and before businesses in this Province had a chance to benefit from it. So I would suggest to the Minister that instead of trying to shout across this House when somebody else is speaking, and not from her own seat, she should go over and deal with the problems in her Department.

Ms Cowan: (Inaudible) something to say (inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: It looks like she wants me to continue talking about her Department and the lack of initiative. Where was she when the students in university had to miss their classes because of a strike? You stood by and did absolutely nothing as Minister of Labour.

Where are you now when schools are closed in this Province today. Today the schools are closed in this Province because of the action of the President of Treasury Board when he cancelled -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: That is right. Because the President of Treasury Board will not honour an agreement between the student assistants. Where is the Minister of Labour when these students are home today? Where is she when developmentally children are not in their classroom today? Where? Where? Where is the Minister of Labour when this Government makes a deal with the union and then will not honour it?

That is what the Minister of Labour should get involved in. What is her position, Mr. Chairman, as it relates to the actions of the Minister of Social Services, the vicious attack on single mothers in this Province by the Department of Social Services? What is the position of this Minister? Mr. Chairman, as a former President of the NTA in this Province, what is her position on trying to strip the teachers pensions? Where does she stand in these issues.

Mr. Chairman, if she wants to continue to interrupt when I am speaking, I can tell her that I can list an awful lot of things she could be doing for the people of this Province, by whom she was elected

And the President of Treasury Board is there, Mr. Chairman, with a big smirk on his face as he goes around -

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: No, I will not sit down. And I might have more to say about the Minister of Social Services as the days go by. There is one thing I have to say about the Minister of Social Services. Today, myself and my colleagues from Humber Valley and from Fogo

were going to lunch and we met a gentleman down in the basement, in the walkway. He was a man who has a problem with Social Services.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) a problem, too.

Mr. Tobin: Yes, he has a problem with Social Services. And do you know what he did? He went to the Premier's office.

Mr. R. Aylward: Go on!

Mr. Tobin: Yes, to see if he could see somebody. And, Mr. Chairman, like the Minister of Justice who put the policeman on the doors to keep the Member from Humber East out -

Some Hon. Members: What? What?

Mr. Tobin: Like the Minister of Justice who put a policeman - and I still do not know if he was armed with a nightstick or not, but we will find out - what did the Premier's staff do? The Premier's staff ordered the man out of his office, because he wanted to talk about Social Services, and threatened to bring in security and have him fired out.

An Hon. Member: Now.

Mr. Tobin: That is what the Premier of this province does with poor people who have a problem. But I have to say one thing, Mr. Chairman, and I will give credit where credit is due, he came here this afternoon and the Minister of Social Services did meet with him. And I commend him for that. But the Premier of this province, I was told by that gentleman that the staff of the Premier's office -

An Hon. Member: That is not true.

Mr. Tobin: Well, what I see is true.

An Hon. Member: Tell us where you saw it.

Mr. Tobin: No, I can not get into that, can I, John? The staff, Mr. Chairman -

Mr. Simms: Probably under a rock, was it?

Mr. Tobin: The staff of the Premier's office - Mr. Chairman, one thing I learned from my days as a social worker and my days here, and I think we all should practice it as politicians, as well, and that is to remember one thing. That to the person who has the problem it is indeed a big problem or he would not come to us. And every politician should operate, Mr. Chairman, with that idea in mind. And for the Premier of this Province or his staff to threaten to have security remove that man, was like what the Minister of Justice did in having a police officer bar the member for Humber East from a meeting. Is that what we are coming to in this Province, policemen and security guards threatening everybody who wants a meeting, or wants to enter a meeting?

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) a meeting you weren't invited to?

Mr. Tobin: What?

Mr. Hewlett: She wasn't allowed to a meeting she was invited to.

Mr. Tobin: Let me say to the Member for Bonavista South, you know the night I was elected, in 1979 -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Nineteen eighty-two.

Mr. Tobin: Eighty-two. In 1979 I was elected to council.

An Hon. Member: Eighty-five.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) one beer.

Mr. Tobin: No, Mr. Chairman. If he did, he bought it. There was nothing free with us. I can tell you one thing, that the Member knows there were people who came into our function from other parties, who worked on other campaigns. The Member for Bonavista South, I believe, was looking after the door for us that night and extended a warm welcome to all of them. So the Member for Bonavista South knows full well, Mr. Chairman, that I practice an open door policy no matter who wants to come in, even when he was working as part of my campaign team.

Now, let us go further.

Mr. Efford: Don't tell me anything else.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Chairman, I have no intention of telling the hon. Minister anything else. He is a hard man to penetrate. That head, Mr. Chairman, is not going to be penetrated very easily, so I am not going to tell him anything, I will be kind to the hon. gentleman. But that is what is happening in this Province, security guards wherever you turn. And for the Minister of Justice to tell the Mayor of Corner Brook that he would not go to the meeting if the Member for Humber East was there is, to me, despicable conduct. And I do not think that any Member who sits -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Chairman, is that Parliamentary? A Member, Mr. Chairman, of this Legislature who occupies the position of Minister of Justice should not be doing things like that. And if the present Minister of Justice continues the way he has, continues giving misinformation to this House, as he did on the single mothers' issue, as he did on the situation in Corner Brook, then the Premier should immediately remove him and put the Member for Bonavista South in as Minister of Justice. And I can tell you right now, from my experience with the Member for Bonavista South, that he will be fairer, Mr. Chairman, make no mistake about that. The Member for Bonavista South spent too long living in Marystown to be anything but fair.

Mr. Chairman, maybe sometime we might get the Minister of Social Services to live on the Burin Peninsula. Now I can assure you that it would take more than one decade to educate him in fairness, but if he were there long enough, he would probably be able to come to terms with fairness, as my colleague from Bonavista South has.

And there are other issues. Today, Mr. Chairman, there are children in the proximity of this city who are home from school because of a labour dispute that is taking place. And there is no need whatsoever for that dispute to be taking place except for the cuts in the budget of the Department of Education last year. And I do not think the Minister of Education is solely responsible for that, nor would I blame him for being solely responsible that.

An Hon. Member: For what?

Mr. Tobin: For the cuts in your budget last year as it relates to the student assistants programme.

But the President of Treasury Board, the man who makes out he is a socialist in this province, the man who ran twice, ran here and could not get elected then ran in Ontario and could not get elected for the NDP, if he was still in Ontario, Mr. Chairman, I wonder what would have happened to him. But I can tell you, with his attitude on cutbacks, he wouldn't be President of Treasury Board in a Bob Rae regime. No, he could only survive in a strong Conservative mentality.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Chairman, I do not know who sent this note over, but I can assure whoever it is I could not care less.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) your friends, through.

Mr. Tobin: They are my friends, there is no doubt about that. There are other issues facing this Government as it relates to the financial mess they have put us in. The Minister of Health is going to have to stand in this House one of these days and explain to myself and my colleague from Grand Bank why there are going to be a significant number of layoffs in the new regional hospital; why the Blue Crest Senior Citizens Home in Grand Bank is going to have a significant number of layoffs; and why there will be in excess of \$1 million less going into the health care system next year on the Burin Peninsula than there is this year.

And he is part of the Government's mismanagement package we see in front of us every day. And for the Minister of Health, yesterday one of the nurses said, How come we are living in the poorest province in Canada yet we have the highest paid Premier? Well, if you wanted to see a man trying to squirm around circles, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Simms: Yes, Sir. I must say, he was a bit (inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: I tell you, if you ever wanted to see a Minister of Health taken off guard. And the nurses were right. How can we as the poorest province in Canada have the highest paid Premier? Why?

Mr. Murphy: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Now, I can tell the Member for St. John's South that when the present Premier was Leader of the Opposition, he was the highest paid politician in Canada. As Leader of the Opposition, he was higher paid than the Prime Minister of Canada, when he was raking \$50,000 from some secret trust or whatever it was. I do not know. But we all found out he was getting \$50,000.

How can the Premier of this Province today - and it happened yesterday and I saw it - have a chauffeur-driven car when he is getting \$8,000 -

An Hon. Member: What?

Mr. Tobin: What? I will tell you what.

Mr. Hewlett: And a brand-new Ford Taurus on top of that.

Mr. Tobin: When he is getting

\$8,000 -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tobin: The Premier has a chauffeur-driven car. He has a man who gets out, with his uniform on and a cap, and opens the door and lets the Premier in, and lets his two assistants get in the back.

An Hon. Member: Go away.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Chairman, I do not know if the Member for Carbonear is intentionally misleading the House or not, but the Premier of this province is chauffeur-driven almost every time he moves down there, unless he is going home or coming to work. In fact, there is a gray Oldsmobile sedan, a great big spanking new Oldsmobile, pulls up in front of the door -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: - yes, right. No, this is the other one - pulls up in front of the door, and the gentleman gets out. Now, Mr. Chairman, that is a fact.

An Hon. Member: If that is not a chauffeur, what is it?

Mr. Tobin: If that is not a chauffeur, what is it? A gentleman with a uniform on gets out -

An Hon. Member: And opens the door for him.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: I will tell you, if the Member for Carbonear is embarrassed by it, he should tell the Premier. Because the people of this Province are going to know and the people of this Province should know, that the Premier - I

am not saying it is wrong, probably it is all right, I do not know. But the fact of the matter is, if he is chauffeur-driven in a limousine say he is, never, mind saying he is not. And that is happening day in and day out in front of this building.

And I will tell you something else. You cannot close hospital beds and throw the sick and the suffering on the street and provide a car allowance to the Premier and another three or four cars to his office. And do not say there aren't, because we can list them.

The Grey Oldsmobile, where is that? Where is the Grey Oldsmobile?

Mr. Murphy: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please! Order, please!

The hon. the Member for St. John's South, I remind him he is not in his seat and he cannot rise on point of order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Tobin: Yes, Mr. Chairman, you have to be in your seat. And I will tell you something else. I don't think hon. colleagues should laugh at my colleague from St. John's South. He is a new member. He did not come in here with a very big majority, and we should understand that he is still learning the rules.

Mr. Murphy: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for St. John's South, on a point of order.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member for Burin - Placentia West has made a categorical statement here, that the Premier is driven in a chauffeur-driven car. Now if the member has something to substantiate that, then he should table that in this House so that all members are aware of it. If not, he should not make that accusation, because he does not know it to be true.

Mr. Hewlett: To the point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!
Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Green Bay.

Mr. Hewlett: To the point of order, I have myself seen the new blue car parked in the parking lot and the Premier enter a chauffeur-driven car - two witnesses.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!
Order, please!

An Hon. Member: It is blue now, is it not?

Mr. Hewlett: (Inaudible) car allowance (inaudible).

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

The Chair is ready to rule on the point of order. There is no point of order, it is just a matter of a difference of opinion between hon. members. There is no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Burin -

Placentia West.

Mr. Tobin: The Member for St. John's South has confirmed what I believed all along and that is that the caucus were not aware that the Premier was using a chauffeur-driven Oldsmobile. And I have seen it. I saw it yesterday morning at nine-thirty out in front of the building.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) left hand or your right hand (inaudible).

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!
Order, please!

Mr. Tobin: Now it is coming out.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

Mr. Hewlett: Oh, you are sensitive now!

Mr. Tobin: That is a sore point. And I hope the media picks up on it, wherever they may be. I hope they will pick up on it, that the Member for St. John's South is upset with the Premier. Because if he was not upset, he would not react in that way.

Mr. Murphy: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: You should not react in that way if you are not upset.

Mr. Murphy: (Inaudible) don't know what you are talking about.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Chairman, do you hear the way he is interrupting?

Mr. Tobin: Ask the Deputy Premier or the President of Treasury Board to deny that the Premier is

brought here with a chauffeur in a Grey Oldsmobile. Ask the Deputy Premier to deny it. Ask anyone to deny it?

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Oldsmobile. What is the Minister of Justice saying now?

An Hon. Member: Whatever he is saying, it is difficult to listen.

An Hon. Member: He wants to know how (inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: No, that is not what you said. Mr. Chairman, I can tell you that that is a very sensitive issue. And looking at the reaction I got today, it looks like an issue that we as an Opposition should tackle. As an Opposition we should put that issue up front.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tobin: As an Opposition I think we should put that issue up front and let the Premier deny that he has a chauffeur, Mr. Chairman. Let the Premier deny that. If the Premier for St. John's South is not chauffeur-driven -

Mr. Murphy: The Premier for St. John's South?

Mr. Tobin: The Member for St. John's South, what is he prepared to do if the Premier acknowledges he is chauffeured? What are you prepared to do after what you just said in this Assembly?

An Hon. Member: Resign.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: He is an employee, I suppose. He is an employee. I

mean, the Member for Carbonear does not know either. I do not know if he is full-time or not. I know he wears a uniform.

Mr. Simms: The Minister of Public Works will probably be -

Mr. Tobin: Yes, the Minister of Public Works could probably tell us.

Mr. Simms: (Inaudible) the arrangements.

Mr. Tobin: I just might. I just might, because I have seen it. As a matter of fact, I can tell you more than that if you want me to, at the right time. Because I even checked. I can tell you that the first time it came to my attention was the time you opened up a building in on Kenmount Road somewhere. I mean, don't think that we are in the Opposition doing nothing, because I can tell you fellows that everything we are doing, Mr. Chairman, is strategically timed. And the issue of the Premier being chauffeur-driven in this City will be brought out at the right and appropriate time.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: I do not want the evidence given away yet. But I can tell you, if we have to do that, we will do it.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there are other issues. They can close down hospital beds, they can have the mentally handicapped children out of school, they can have the educational system in this Province in a mess, they can do all of that, but yet they can have the Premier of this Province with a chauffeur in an Oldsmobile car, over and above the one he bought

with his \$8,000, I would suspect. And I can tell you right now, that is not good enough. That is not good enough.

Mr. Murphy: No, he should have a stretch limousine.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Chairman, there is one stretch limousine here.

An Hon. Member: Are you talking about Bugdens?

Mr. Tobin: Yes.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: No, I have to get on with a whole pile of issues.

Mr. Chairman, let us talk about the problems in this Province today in the area of fisheries. Yesterday, my colleague and friend from Eagle River presented a resolution to this House. I know he spoke very eloquently on the fishery, and he is a very sincere individual. I would suspect he has a fair amount of knowledge on the fishery issues in this Province, particularly in Labrador. I will give him full marks for that. But I do not think there is anybody in this House with more knowledge in the fishing industry than my colleagues, the Member from Grand Bank, the Leader of the Opposition, who was Minister of Fisheries, and our present Minister of Fisheries, all of whom in the debate. They all spoke in the debate, as well as my friend and colleague from Torngat Mountains. I think everyone in this House, particularly the Member for St. John's South who tried to speak, and from what limited knowledge you would expect him to have on the fisheries, I think he did a good job. But

putting all that aside, we all have a lot to learn as it relates to what is taking place in the fishery.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the Member for LaPoile has stood in this House and not asked the question as it relates to his fish plant in Port aux Basques not being opened. He worked very hard to get the attention of the media, but I would suggest to him that that was cheap publicity. He should be asking questions about the livelihood of the people he represents, but not once did he stand in this Assembly and ask a question as it relates to the fisheries problems in his district and the fish plant now closed. So, I suggest, Sir, that you start looking after your constituents, as well. Everybody is free to say what they want to say in this House, provided it is within the orders and the approval of the Speaker, and you have to be right to make what suggestions you wish. I respect you for that but I can tell you one thing, you should look after your constituents.

Ms. Cowan: He does. He is an excellent (inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Now, Mr. Chairman, she is interrupting again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: This bigger fish that is coming in Port aux Basques with no fish plant, is going to be devastating to the fishermen of that area. Over the years I have had the opportunity of knowing many of these fishermen, from Isle aux Morts, Burnt Island, Fox Roost, Margaree, and the whole coast. From the time I was a young boy growing up I got to know

these hardworking, dedicated, fishermen in this Province. They are some of the finest people you could ever meet; some of the finest people you could ever meet live on that Southwest Coast. The situation they are facing is difficult because it is their livelihood, and it is not good enough for this Government to be doing absolutely nothing. It is not good enough when the Minister of Fisheries has to go down to the Radisson Plaza to a Fisheries Conference and announce it looks like the fish plant may not open in Port aux Basques. That is not what these people want to hear.

Mr. Dumaresque: What are you saying about (inaudible)?

Mr. Tobin: I was complimenting you, Sir, on the presentation you made yesterday as it related to your resolution. The Winter fishery on the Southwest Coast has to be looked after, and it is not being done at this point in time. I feel, Mr. Chairman, for the men and women who depend on that fishery and the fish plant this Winter. It is going to be a hard time. I would like the Minister of Fisheries, when he gets up to speak in this debate, Mr. Chairman, to tell me whether or not there is any truth or substance to what has been circulated in Marystown, which is that the fish plant in that town may go down now until June. Would the Minister of Fisheries be prepared to answer that when he speaks in the debate? I would appreciate it, because that is devastating. The Marystown Shipyard is at a very, very low peak. There is nobody working in the Marystown Shipyard now compared to what they were four years ago. Compared to four years ago, it is now a very, very, quite

place.

Then you have the secondary processing plant in Burin that is not doing nearly as good as it was supposed to do, or has been doing.

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: I can say to my colleague, the Minister of Social Services, that I will not say what he just asked me to say.

Mr. Murphy: Fifty-one thousand (inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: Now, Mr. Chairman, the Member for St. John's South - I want to talk about the problems in my district under this Bill, the problems with the fish plant and the problems with the shipyard. He stood in this House last year and never opened his mouth when they were closing the plant on the Southside, but don't expect me to do the same. If it were not for the Member for Kilbride and the Member for Grand Bank there would not be an issue raised. You didn't speak on the plant on the Southside, so don't try to stop me from speaking about the problems in my district. There is a very serious problem on the Burin Peninsula.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

I wonder if the hon. member would just take his seat for a minute until I inform the House of the questions for the Late Show?

It is now four o'clock and I will inform members of the questions for the Late Show. 'Please be advised that I am not satisfied with the answer to my question on student assistants by the Minister of Education and I would like it place on the Late Show.' That is

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

'I am dissatisfied with the answer to my question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs re the cuts of pay to fire fighters.' The hon. the Member for Grand Falls.

'Please be advised that I am not satisfied with the answer to the question re UI benefits by the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations.' That is the hon. the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes.

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West. The hon. member has two minutes left.

Mr. Tobin: I was talking about the problems in my district, and the Minister of Social Services should know it. I will give you an example of what has happened.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Tobin: I do not know what he is talking about, Mr. Chairman, unless he is talking about the christening the Minister of Transportation had up there when he christened the ferry. Or maybe he is talking about the do they had up there from three ridings, Grand Bank, Fortune - Hermitage, and Burin - Placentia West, which worked out to less than seventy couples per district. Unless he is talking about that, Mr. Chairman. If that is the big thing. As a matter of fact, I know people who were given tickets and would not even go to the dinner, they played darts instead. I know a fellow who had a ticket but would not go to the dinner, Mr. Chairman, he played darts instead and came to visit his brother after. But that is something, Mr. Chairman, that we will deal with at a later time.

I can tell you one thing, there are problems in my district like never before, unemployment, people gone to the Mainland who have never gone before. They were in my own district, in my own neighbourhood as a matter of fact. Some of my good friends have moved away to the Mainland, and their families are home while they go away to try to make a living, and that is very serious. They are people, Mr. Chairman, who have worked in Marystown for years and absolutely nothing has been done to the system. That is serious. And if the fish plant in Marystown goes down as they are saying it is going to, until the June 30, for six months, I can guarantee you that that is going to be disastrous.

Because if it was not for the Federal Government work, on one ferry they had this year, she would have been a destitute place to live. And I can tell you, boy, it is hard stuff to see people who have worked all their lives having to pack their bags and move away all because, Mr. Chairman, of the economic policies of this Government or lack of them. This Government took a shrimp trawler that was supposed to be built in Marystown and shifted it to Norway because the conservative (inaudible) that Premier. That is what happened to this Province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: When you see that this government's economic policy is to create jobs in Norway and not, Mr. Chairman, in Marystown, Newfoundland, that is wrong. When you look at this government's policy as it relates to the Hibernia development, to leave out the Argentia area, that is wrong. The Argentia area should not be

forgotten about. As a matter of fact, I can tell you something else. The action of this government, leaving Argenticia out of the Hibernia development, is the major issue in the election in Dunville.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

Mr. Tobin: I will get back to it, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. the Member for Green Bay.

Mr. Hewlett: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to have a few words, if I might, please, on this particular piece of subject matter. When I was very young, Mr. Chairman, when Mr. Smallwood was Premier of the Province, I was a student back in those days and I can remember he was a great orator and he used to go on at great length about the great Liberal Party and the tremendous advances it had given the Province, especially in the areas of health and education. And he went out of his way on nearly every possible opportunity to identify the Liberal Party of this Province with a progressive social policy in these areas.

Today, Mr. Chairman, we have a party in Government that carries the title 'Liberal' but from its behaviour since it has come to power it is obvious that the Government is anything but liberal in any known sense of the word.

Mr. Chairman, in terms of our education system, the current Government is going to bring about cuts which are going to see regular teachers being laid off. We have already seen instances of

substitute teacher time being cut back and children being sent home from school. We have the shortest school year in Canada, and now we are faced with kids having to come home from school if their teacher is sick because there are not enough substitute teachers. So, Mr. Chairman, this is the way this current Liberal Party is treating the legacy of Mr. Smallwood in the matter of education.

Another matter that Mr. Smallwood in his day was very proud of were the strides in health care in this Province. When I was two weeks old, Mr. Chairman, I was taken very seriously ill and had to be taken to hospital by dog team, passenger snowmobile and then, finally, automobile to get to Grand Falls Hospital, which was a company hospital, and then my father had to pay cash dollars to get me taken in and have my life saved. That was back in February of 1952.

Since then, there have been strides in health care. The hospital opened in Springdale later on that year, in 1952 as a matter of fact, and unfortunately I had over the years a number of occasions to need to use that particular facility. That particular facility today, Mr. Chairman, is in hard times. The last Budget brought down by the hon. Dr. Kitchen removed fifteen of twenty-five beds in that particular facility. The current proposed freeze under this Administration is going to have similar effects.

The Administrations of the various health care boards around this Province were asked to prepare impact statements as to the outcome of a freeze next year in the health care system. The

impact statement that the Administration in Springdale will be sending in to the Government will indicate that a further two beds at the Springdale hospital would be lost.

Twenty-four beds for the first time ever will be closed down in the senior citizens home, and approximately twenty people laid off to accommodate the approximately \$600,000 to \$700,000 impact of the freeze in that particular health care system in Green Bay.

We have seen, Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Social Services cut payments to single mothers under the guise of fairness and balance. This is a form of Eastern European Socialism, where, in order to make everybody equal, everybody is reduced to the lowest common denominator.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hewlett: The Berlin wall has come down, Mr. Chairman, and the Wells wall is going up. I have written the Minister in the last few days with regard to a particular problem an individual had in my district.

We have a situation where the day the Minister of Social Services was sworn in, I saw him on the TV. And just after being sworn in, a microphone was shoved in front of his face and he was asked what his priorities were and he said, I am going to have to help the widows.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I have a case where a man in my district obtained a moose licence this year. Unfortunately, he passed away before he could use it. The particular situation is such, that

the Wildlife Department will not allow a neighbour to shoot the moose for that particular widow. So I have written the Minister of Social Services to intervene with his colleague, so that if he is truly interested in helping the widow, hopefully this particular widow will have moose meat this winter because one of her neighbours will be allowed to kill the moose on her behalf.

Now, Mr. Chairman, this particular party, when in opposition, made a cause celebre about rising power rates; even power rates that had to rise by virtue of inflation, were nonetheless blamed on the Peckford Administration. Since coming to power, this particular Administration has removed the \$40 billion subsidy to the Power Distribution District, a subsidy that has to be passed on to the people -

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!
Order, please!

Mr. Hewlett: - of the Province who have higher power rates.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member for Green Bay, but there is an awful lot of conversation going on to my left and I cannot hear the hon. the Member for Green Bay.

The hon. the Member for Green Bay.

Mr. Hewlett: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister of Social Services and his colleagues hate the truth when they hear it and they try to drown it out. But as the Bible teaches us, speak the truth and the truth shall make you whole.

Mr. Chairman, they have also

introduced the payroll tax on power. This is going to affect negatively the consumers in our Province. And to ensure that the Budgetary measures they put on the power utilities are carried through to the consumer, they restructured the Utilities Board so that it would be more a friend of the large companies and less a friend of the consumer.

Not only were they not satisfied to bring about negative budgetary measures with regard to power rate increases, they restructured the Public Utilities Board so as to ensure that the consumers got it socked to them all the way, Mr. Chairman. This is the Liberal Government.

Mr. Smallwood, would be very much ashamed of you all. Because there is no liberalism in you anymore, you are ultra right wing conservatives. And to my former principal, the hon. the Minister from Gander, I would say the following: he has taken a nasty habit of going around union leadership and writing individual members of unions.

Now, Mr. Chairman, prior to my becoming an elected politician I had the occasion to do public relations campaigns for my former employer, the Premier of the Province, and there were many times, Mr. Chairman, when I was sorely tempted to go around union leaderships to explain government's position. But even though the Peckford Administration was often called right-wing by the labour movement at the time, Brian Peckford always prohibited me, on every single occasion, from going around the union leadership and appealing directly to union members, because we were elected the Government and the leadership

of the union was elected by their membership. I was never allowed, although at times sorely tempted, to appeal directly to the union membership.

Ms Cowan: And you were never allowed to let a union leader speak to the Premier.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) don't you do that. Don't you (inaudible) me.

Mr. Hewlett: That is correct, Mr. Chairman. He was quite at liberty to call me what he wanted, but one thing I did know was his instruction, and his instruction was not to bypass, not to insult the union leadership of this province, but to deal with them and not go around them directly in any public relations campaign to the union membership. And I am sorry to say that my Grade IV principal is guilty of doing just that.

Ms Cowan: Why didn't he meet with union leaders?

Mr. Hewlett: Mr. Chairman, there were many meetings with union leaders. I do not think the current Minister of Labour has any lectures to give any administration on the face of this earth with regard to labour relations. And the current Minister of Labour, Mr. Chairman, is also the Minister responsible for job creation. And since this Government came to power there has been a steady erosion of jobs in this province. They got elected on a promise to bring home every mother's son. We hope every mother's son doesn't come home, Mr. Chairman, because all that means is that he is getting laid off in Toronto and coming back here to join the already growing

rolls of unemployed people in this province.

Mr. Chairman, we have this free and open Government concept. Fairness and balance. We see an attempt on the part of the Minister of Justice to prevent the Member for Humber East from attending a meeting, a meeting that was not a private meeting between Cabinet Ministers and the Municipal Council of Corner Brook, a meeting that involved a number of public interest groups, a meeting which a Member of this Provincial Parliament should have had every right to attend. But it was a heavy-handed police-state type tactic to keep her out.

I have seen evidence of it before, Mr. Chairman. I had a petition coming my way from the people in the Harry's Harbour - Jackson's Cove area some months ago and the President of the Green Bay Liberal Association prevailed on the local people in the area to give her the petition. Not send it to the duly elected MHA, but to give the petition to the Liberal president who was going to come in quietly, present it to the Minister of Transportation and thereby get the pavement and presumably get the credit. Well, do you know what happened, Mr. Chairman? She did come in, she delivered the petition, she got no pavement, and she got no credit. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Hearn: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It is a privilege to be able to say a few words on the loan Bill, especially in light of the effect we see upon the financial situation that has been perpetrated upon the people of

Newfoundland by the Administration across the way. Quite surprising, after listening to the Budget presented by the Minister last spring with such enthusiasm, desk thumping, applause from his colleagues and so on -

An Hon. Member: His own applause, too.

Mr. Hearn: And his own applause. He deserved it at the time. He thought he deserved it. And the people of Newfoundland all thought the Minister had done a tremendous job. However, maybe in his haste - I do not blame the Minister, because the Minister of Finance really only presents what is given him by his officials. Most of the work done on a financial budget is done by Treasury Board and, consequently, the Minister just delivered undoubtedly what was handed to him by the President of Treasury Board.

Then the President of Treasury Board has to be excused somewhat, because he can only work realistically with the facts and figures presented to him by the Ministers of the various Departments. So, all in all, the blame goes back, I presume, to the incompetence of the different Ministers who presented an inaccurate picture to the President of Treasury Board, who had to try to decipher it all and pass it along to the Minister of Finance who, in turn, had to try to interpret it for the people of the province. But whatever the case might be, we now realize that the tremendous hopes and aspirations of the Minister of Finance cannot be delivered to the people of the Province and a number of people across the Province are suffering greatly because of it.

One of the major concerns that a number of people have at present is not in what is happening in relation to projected layoffs in the educational system, in the hospitals, nursing homes, and other agencies, cutbacks within Government itself in the various departments, because when we talk about cutbacks in departments, we are talking about taking out of action people who have been in certain jobs, some of them for quite some time, not the removal of summer employees as the President of Treasury Board said but people who have been in there for years have been given layoff notices. Many of these doing worthwhile jobs that have a tremendous effect on what transcends down to the field level. Consequently the affect across the Province is going to be horrendous. But it is not only, what is happening in relation to the layoff of the number of people but how it is being done. Before anyone got a chance to assess the impact of the mistakes made by the Minister in his Budget presentation Government tried to cover up for such mistakes and for such oversights by bringing in programs which would say to the people, do not worry, we made a mistake. We are out \$120 million, \$130 million, \$140 million or \$150 million, but do not worry about it we are going to take care of it all ourselves. And therein lies the mistake, because of change in financial implications, within and outside of the Province, we had a negative affect on the Budget. Then if the Premier and his Cabinet had consulted the groups and agencies first, before they started making blanket statements about cutbacks and hold-the-line budgets and so on, we would not have half of the concern and worry that is there today. Because

anyone will admit to you that yes, perhaps there are dollars that can be saved maybe by finding a better way to use some of the dollars that we have. But it can only be done in consultation and co-operation with those who are directly affected.

So if we just come on with the heavy hand and tell people that we are going to take away from them, that we are not going to give them the dollars that they need to operate, the hospital boards must lay off people, that they must cut back on their services to the poor and the sick and the aged, and if school boards must lay off teachers, refuse to bring in substitute teachers, refuse to have seminars for teachers who have been in the system for quite some time and need upgrading, who miss the seminars that have been offered by the boards and by the department. If we have to take people out of the departments that deal with the people in the field, and let them know what is happening, who prepare them for changes that take place from time to time within the different divisions and administrations, then we are negatively affecting the total population. Proper planning could easily have solved some of the financial problems without such a drastic affect on the people. Now we see some withdrawal on the part of Government. The original statement, yes, we are going to cutback X number of millions of dollars; we are going to eliminate X number of jobs; are now being tempered with: well we have not finally decided yet, we are looking at the overall picture, we are trying to see what we are going to have to do to balance our Budget.

Now if we had said that in the beginning - which would be a good political approach to it, number one - but if we were truthful then it would be a realistic approach also, because perhaps in light of the downturn in the economy, which affects not only Newfoundland but the country and the world generally, we are going through hard times. And I am not trying to give the Minister of Finance or the President of Treasury Board a way out of the present situation because many of the problems they face are ones of their own doing, but if they had taken their time and analyzed the present crisis then perhaps they could have alleviated a tremendous amount of the uncertainty and concern that has been placed upon the shoulders of those who are further down in the systems. Why was this done? It was done mainly to try to slough off the blame for what is going to happen in relation to layoffs, lack of care, and lack of attention to school boards, to hospital boards, to different agencies, where Government can turn to the people when they complain, and they will complain. There will be people in the streets before this year is over out of concern for how it is affecting their own lives, and the answer from Government will be, as we see already, do not talk to me, talk to the school board, the hospital board, or whatever, they are the ones who are making the decisions.

School boards decide when to open and close schools, the school boards decide which teachers to hire, school boards decide which substitutes to bring in, hospital boards run hospitals, do not talk to us, but what they are failing to say is that an ultimatum has been given hospital boards, and

school boards, that you are going to have severe cuts in your budget in relation to your needs. Government can quite easily say we did not cut the budget of school boards, we did not cut the budget of hospital boards, but what they are saying is, we did not give them an increase to meet the increased costs during the present year's operation. The news today is carrying a statement which says that the cost of living next year will undoubtedly be much greater than the average increase in wages. So if the CPI goes up and if wages do not match that we are further behind already without any cuts. Now if the Government does not even meet the cost of living then people are going to be X number of percent dependent upon the raise, dependent upon the cost of living, dependent upon other factors such as increases in heat and light, whatever. Individuals are going to be that much further behind next year. The operations of a hospital board, school board, or whatever, will increase by several millions of dollars.

It is interesting to see how people scurry in when they realize they are short in the House. We went through one embarrassing situation last term.

An Hon. Member: They are coming in to hear you.

Mr. Hearn: I was thinking that. But the one consolation you had, of course, was that the Minister of Development was there and he was going to make sure this time he was going to call, I am sure, a division. He certainly was not going to sit there this time and call a point of order. There is absolutely no doubt about that. The situation is that the Government has caused a tremendous

amount of concern in Newfoundland by the way it has approached the present financial crisis.

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible).

Mr. Hearn: The Minister of Social Services is interjecting, as usual.

Mr. Efford: Now be nice.

Mr. Hearn: I am going to be nice. I am trying to be nice to everybody. The Minister of Social Services is going to be a very, very busy individual. The only thing that saved the Minister from being in a position where he would blow his budget completely, and perhaps half the budget of the Province, is that the Federal Government in its wisdom stacked the Senate so that it could push through Bill C21, and only for that we would have thousands of people lined up at the welfare offices. In fact it was starting to happen, and will happen over the next few weeks in the interim. But just imagine if Bill C21 had not gone through, and if the Minister was faced with the prospect of having every Newfoundlander who got between ten and fourteen stamps lined up in his office. And what was the option? There were not any options. They would be there. The Department of Social Services would be an extremely busy department. However, realizing the competency of the Minister, we realize that he would graciously look after these individuals, and he would. But it is terrible for hard working Newfoundlanders who, through no fault of their own, live in areas where there is only seasonal employment, and who got ten, eleven or twelve weeks work this year, to have to resort to Social Services.

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

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

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

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

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

Debate on the Adjournment [Late Show]

Mr. Speaker: It now being Thursday, we now debate the motion to adjourn. I trust these are in order. If not the Table can inform me otherwise. The first one is, Mr. Speaker, please be advised that I am not satisfied with the answer given to my question re: UI benefits by the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations. The hon. the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hearn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Earlier today I asked the Minister if she had contacted her counterpart, the Minister of Employment and Immigration in Ottawa, to impress upon the Federal Minister the need to implement the entrance requirements in relation to Bill

C-21 so that people in Newfoundland who have this year obtained between ten and fourteen weeks, and who now have been, well they are basically in limbo, they are laid off but cannot file for UI because they do not have enough stamps, and they have to wait another month, practically, before they can apply, because the Minister stated yesterday when she brought in the new regulation that they would come into place on the 18th of November.

I say to the Minister my concern is that on the 18th of November what will happen is several thousand people, who up to now between now and then, will have obtained ten weeks of insurable earnings. Most of them through no fault of their own because in several areas this year we had a very late fishery. The fishery was extremely late starting, and, of course, it did not go on beyond the end. It ended at the same time. Many plant workers in particular, seasonal construction workers also, found themselves in a position where they scraped up ten, eleven, twelve or thirteen weeks of employment and had a job to do that. Some of the plants stretched their own ability to provide the extra couple of weeks so that people could get ten or eleven weeks of employment. But they could not, in many areas, find fourteen weeks. They just could not find it.

Perhaps, because of what happened this year, proved the fact that most Members in the House would say Newfoundlanders just do not go out and look for ten weeks and then line up for UIC. In many parts of the Province you are very lucky to get ten, eleven or twelve weeks of employment in the fishery, especially when it comes

to working in fish plants. So, we have thousands of people right now around the Province who have between ten and fourteen weeks, who have had no income, none, since perhaps the end of August, the middle of September, and their bills are running up. I talked to one woman yesterday who called, her husband has not been able to find employment enough this year to draw UIC, to obtain stamps enough, he only needs five or six stamps right now, he is a construction worker. She herself obtained eleven weeks employment in the fish plant. She has not been able to draw UIC. They have the same bills everybody else has, light bill, mortgage payments, et cetera, no income coming into the house. She knows now that she will be able to file on November 18, but you have a waiting period, then if you get everyone coming into together, which is what will happen, you are going to have complications at the different offices and Members all around in this hon. House will be getting calls saying, look, I have a claim in for three weeks, four weeks, and I have not heard anything about it. But it is going to be worse. You are getting them now.

Mr. Walsh: (Inaudible).

Mr. Hearn: And the parrot from Mount Scio - Bell Island, Mr. Speaker, -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Hearn: - is interrupting, but you are going to get a lot more because you will have all of this influx of claims at the different offices and humans are humans, despite the great field of computerization which we now have, it sometimes complicates the different forms that are sent in

and, consequently, people are going to be without for several weeks to come. So from now, October 25th. until November 18th. we have about four weeks there that should not be there simply to fill a vacuum.

Now the Federal Minister says her officials have to become familiar with the requirements and I appreciate that. But if the Federal Minister is made fully aware of the implications of that decision, then perhaps she will make a special provision in relation to the entry requirements so that our people here in the Province, and I am sure elsewhere in Canada, will be able to apply immediately so that they can start drawing UIC, so that they can have dollars on their table, not having to line up at the welfare office to feed their families.

So what I am asking the Minister is if she would, as we did yesterday, follow our example and on behalf of the Government telex or write or phone the Minister in Ottawa and stress to her the importance of having this bill implemented immediately as far as it concerns the residents of the Province of Newfoundland.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms Cowan: Mr. Speaker, Bill C - 21 became law yesterday. Within three days I am going to be sitting down face to face with the individual who brought that bill to the House of Commons.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms Cowan: I do not like the idea

of an impersonal fax, a telephone call or whatever, I want a face to face meeting with the Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms Cowan: Now, I am absolutely aghast, aghast at the sanctimonious attitude of that Member who asked me this question here today. It was the fault of his Tory buddies in Ottawa that -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms Cowan: - the variable entrance requirements were not adjusted months ago. Months.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms Cowan: He talks about Liberal Senators. I might remind that gentlemen that this House voted unanimously to have Bill C - 21 held back.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms Cowan: Then they forgot that.

When constituents started knocking on the door all reason went out the window, which is the way they governed in the Province prior to this, and why we are here today, because they were so easily influenced by a knock at their door from a constituent.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Ms Cowan: Yes, our Government has a great deal of compassion for those people who have been affected by the fisheries and the lack of work this summer in the Province. We have brought it to the attention of the hon. Barbara McDougall on many occasions, and will do so again, bringing up that very problem that the Member has brought to our attention, again an

example of callous Central Canadian Tory attitude towards this Province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms Cowan: Where were they, where were they trying to get the variable entrance requirements changed, I did not hear anything about it, no, but it took Liberal Senators to try to draw the attention of the Canadian Nation to the mess that was being made of the unemployment problems for people in this Province. Now, I am glad at any time to stand up and answer questions in this House about the responsible attitude that I and my Government are taking towards the unemployment problem in this Province.

I just wish that before questions were asked by people in the Opposition, they would stop and look at their own conscience and ask themselves what they have done. So, Mr. Speaker, before I sit down, let me say that once again I am glad within a few hours that I am going to be sitting face to face with the hon. Barbara McDougall, I will have with me the Minister of Fisheries, the Minister of Social Services, Members of the House who come from areas where there is a real problem with employment; they will be there and we will talk to her face to face in a human way and present to her the very real problems of our constituents here in this Province. I look forward to it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Before recognizing the hon. the Opposition House Leader, if the House would permit, I just want to

comment on a matter that relates to the dignity and the respect for all hon. Members.

The Minister, when she was talking, I know that the Minister is a new Member, but I thought it an appropriate time to point it out to all Members that we do not refer to: that Member, that gentleman. It is: the hon. Member and this is for a very important reason, so that we maintain dignity and respect for each other.

The hon. the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I have an issue which I would like to pursue, which I raised yesterday in Question Period. The Minister is not here today, but presumably the President of Treasury Board, might have some comments to make on it.

To me, I think it is a very serious situation quite frankly, I shall try to run through it as briefly as I can in the five minutes that I have, in the hope that Members Opposite, particularly Government Members, will realize this is a very serious situation and the decision which was taken was totally inappropriate, and I hope the Government might consider or reconsider reversing that decision.

I am referring of course to the notice that was sent out to fire fighters who were on long-term sick leave or disability and the change in policy which dictated in this memo, which dictated that fire fighters will not receive statutory holiday pay while they are on long-term disability or on sick leave, having been injured in fires or whatever the case might

be through no fault of their own.

It effectively means that a person, whether he is off because of illness or because of an injury on duty will lose about \$2,400 a year, that is effectively what this decision means, and since 1972, I say to the President of Treasury Board, since 1972, eighteen years, and maybe before that, we went back as far as 1972 to research, there has always been a provision in the collective agreement covering fire fighters, which states, and I want to quote it, Article 16 in their collective agreement states that, and I quote: " Employees who work on a rotating shift basis shall be entitled to payment in lieu of fourteen statutory holidays". It is right there in the collective agreement, Mr. Speaker, and of course fire fighters here in St. John's work on a rotating shift basis.

I also want them to have a look at Article 14 in the collective agreement, and Article 14 in the collective agreement as well makes reference to this issue, and it talks about leave for injuries arising out of fire fighting duties, and if he would get a copy of the collective agreement and have a look at it himself, he will see that an employee who is unable to perform his duties because of a personal injury received in the performance of his duties, this is Article 14 now, another article: "shall report the matter to his officer in charge and the employee shall be placed on injury on duty leave with full pay."

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: No no no no no. Workers' Compensation, Mr. Speaker, is the next section, if

the hon. Member wants me to go through that. No, this is full pay when they are on injury on duty. And I just read Article 16 which states clearly that anybody working on a rotating shift basis is entitled to payment in lieu of fourteen statutory holidays.

So Mr. Speaker, at the present time I understand there are -

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker, if I could have a bit of quiet, this is a serious matter.

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Mr. Simms: At the present time I understand there are a number of fire fighters - maybe ten or a dozen, not that many, a small number, therefore a small amount of money involved in this whole issue in my understanding. They have, through no fault of their own of course, earned these sick leave benefits, and they have been guaranteed these sick leave benefits for the past eighteen years. And at no time was there ever a dispute with regards to statutory holiday pay for those members of the fire fighters who were off on sick leave, long term sick leave or disability.

And more seriously of course was the specific incident or issue that I raised yesterday concerning Donald Jarvis, who happens to be a fire fighter whom we are all familiar with because of tributes paid to him here in the House of Assembly, when he had suffered fifty degree burns to his body. And he is an individual who voluntarily went in to risk his life to save somebody else's life during a serious fire on Bannerman Street I think it was, in St.

John's. He could have taken the easy way out and decided not to go in, he could have but he did not. He is the type of fire fighter that we would all like to have protecting us.

And unfortunately, because he did that, he is now home trying to recuperate, and he receives this hand-delivered memo saying that his pay has been cut by \$2,400. I think that is a pretty sad situation, Mr. Speaker. And the other point I want to make is this. That he was told during his recovery by management of the St. John's Fire Department that all the benefits that he now enjoyed would continue during the time of his rehabilitation, and up until such time as he returned to active duty. We all know the Minister of Municipal Affairs spoke eloquently in the House, and we think that they have made this decision and issued this directive on poor advice, without fully researching it and without considering the ramifications.

So I hope, as a result of the matter being raised in the House of Assembly - and the Fire Fighters Association are getting a meeting now by the way, finally, with the Minister, he agreed to meet with them later on. He would not meet with them yesterday but he agreed to meet with them later on. I spoke to the Minister privately and I had the impression from talking to him that he was not fully cognizant of all the details. For example, the fact that it has been in place for seventeen or eighteen years, and these kinds of things. So it may very well be one of those situations where an official in the Department, a senior official, may have sent the memo out, may have showed the Minister, and the

Minister glanced at it or looked at it, I mean that happens, we understand that.

But I do hope, because of the seriousness of the issue, that the Government will take note of it, will look at it seriously, and in all seriousness reverse this decision. Because it is perceived to be a very callous decision and an unfair way to try to grab back a few thousand dollars on the backs of those people who perhaps risk their lives more frequently than most of us.

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

The Chair recognizes the hon. the President of Treasury Board. The Opposition House Leader, when he was speaking, called for order, and the Chair followed and called for order. And I have to say that from many Members, particularly to my left, there was absolutely no response, the conversation carried on the same as usual.

Now hon. Members might not be aware but if there are five or six conversations going on it makes it very difficult to hear an hon. Member speaking. I do want to point out to hon. Members, that in this regard, when an hon. Member himself or herself calls for order, then certainly the onus is on the House to pay attention to that. Many times the Speaker will not rise to ask for order because some Members like that and I have to try and accommodate that style, unless I feel it is too disorderly. But if an hon. Member himself or herself calls for order then hon. Members ought to feel that they should respect that request.

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

Mr. Baker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all I would like to comment that I think that your speech is right on, and that is the way things should be in the House. With regard to the fear of the Opposition House Leader, he made the point in his five minute dissertation that in fact he was very satisfied with the answer given by the Minister, that the situation was on the way to being resolved to his satisfaction, and that in fact meetings have been set up between the firefighters and the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I am just going now by the information the Opposition House Leader gave me. Therefore he really was not dissatisfied with the answer given by the Minister, and the steps taken by the Minister in the interim, so it is kind of surprising that he would try to make a point here that he is dissatisfied with the answer given by the Minister. I do not know if there is any point in me reiterating what the Minister told him in Question Period. He simply said that the pay for statutory holidays, quite correctly, if a person is working on rotating shifts receives pay for so many statutory holidays, and that there was no provision to indicate that any person on long-term disability, sick leave, pension, or whatever the case may be, would receive similar pay for statutory holidays. These people would receive their regular salary as indicated in the Collective Agreement, and that the extra amount for statutory holidays -

Mr. Simms: (Inaudible).

Mr. Baker: I am just telling you what the Minister said to you. The extra amount paid for statutory holidays was in fact paid in the past incorrectly, and

that there was no authority to do so, and this was discovered by, I believe, his Deputy Minister in going through the Fire Department and having a look at the operation of the Fire Department. I believe that is what he indicated to the Opposition House Leader. The Opposition House Leader indicates his satisfaction with the answer and the fact that talks are now underway between the Minister and the firefighters. An arrangement has been made to have meetings, and that is precisely what he asked in his question, would the meetings be set up to discuss the situation and so on, so obviously everything has been handled totally to his satisfaction.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The next answer to be debated is from the Member for St. Mary's - The Capes stating his dissatisfaction with an answer given to his question on student assistance by the Minister of Education.

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

Mr. Hearn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am almost afraid to ask the question because I was so intimidated by the answer I got from the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations, after I asked a very mild and direct question, to be personally attacked. I know she did not mean it, Mr. Speaker, because she was smiling when she viciously attacked me. My question is to the Minister of Education, a person I know is extremely concerned about the present situation, so I presume I will get a straight, factual non-political answer from him. The Minister is

well aware that the present situation as it relates to the student assistants is causing a tremendous amount of concern at the local level. We have three agencies who are directly involved, the Government, the Minister of Education, who is certainly responsible ultimately, the President of Treasury Board who handles the purse strings and is in charge of negotiations on behalf of Government, and the school boards, so all these three agencies play some part in delivering whatever contract is arranged with teachers, student assistants, or whoever the case might be. Then, of course, we also have the union representing the student assistants playing a part. Somewhere in the total exchange of information, in the exchange of dollar amounts, or in the exchange of information, there is a mix-up, and what is happening is a number of students are not in school today, nor were they there yesterday, and may not be there until the situation is resolved. These students are not only the ones who are directly affected because they have no one in to care for them, in relation to student assistance, and I am speaking of the students who need personalized aids in the schools. I am talking about other students who are not in school because the bus drivers would not cross the picket lines, and consequently returned the students to their home.

Today I had a call from some parents who were extremely concerned about the situation, who fully realize that buses cannot just stop in the middle of the road and let students off, and if they are not going to proceed through the picket line and into the school yard then they have no

alternative except to bring children back home. But all they are saying is look, we do not care who is at fault, somebody or everybody is at fault, and we have two concerns. Concern No. 1: because of the mix up, wherever it is, our students are not in school, the handicapped children are not receiving the attention that they need. And secondly, the regular students are prevented from going to school because of the complications that have ensued. The other concern is what kind of an example is this setting to our children whereby it seems that, you know, if you do not want something well then everybody gets out and yells and shouts and protests instead of trying to arrive at a reasonable settlement and getting the children back to their classes.

So perhaps what I would like to do, I will stop a little bit early to give the Minister a couple of extra minutes, if the Minister would, for the sake of clarification, try to explain to the House and to the public what really the situation is at present. I know it is a complicated one. I fully understand that, and we will give the Minister all the time he needs to try to clarify the situation for the House.

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

Dr. Warren: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. I am pleased, in fact, to respond. I thought today I might have made a Ministerial Statement on it, but I did not because I knew discussions were ongoing and I wanted to wait until later. So I thank the hon. Member for the question.

I would like to go back a little bit and say that one of the first initiatives that we took as a Government was to institute the current Student Assistant Program. It was administered by the Department of Social Services previously. There had been a committee established, perhaps by my hon. friend, to review that. That Committee recommended that this program be transferred to Education and with the support of Social Services that was done last year and we put a substantial amount of money into it.

But it was not long after that, of course, when the student assistants sought the approval for collective bargaining and the process began.

The second point I would like to make is that we are concerned about what is happening in the present time. All of want to believe that equality of educational opportunities is a basic goal in our society, and that people who need help are the ones who should get it first and these are people who are now being mainstreamed and integrated into the system and they should be in school and we are troubled. As a Minister I am troubled that they are out of school. Because not only as my hon. friend said, does this set a bad example for all students, but these people themselves are saying, why me? I have special problems. In the past I was isolated and put into a special school. Now at least we have many students in regular schools and mainstreamed in regular classes for many activities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Dr. Warren: And these young

people ask: why am I being treated differently? Why, Mom, am I not going to school today? And that troubles the parents and it troubles the Government and it troubles me as the Minister of Education. So I am really concerned about the dispute, and I want to indicate where we are now in it, as the question indicated.

I might say in the Memorandum of Understanding of September 28, 1990, and this is complicated, as the Member knows.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Dr. Warren: In the Memorandum of Understanding signed September 28, 1990, it was agreed that student assistants in the employ of the employer prior to the date of certification, will be rehired for the 1990 - 1991 school year within two weeks from the date of this Memorandum of Agreement with the same number of hours per week as they worked prior to the certification order, subject to the following conditions. And this is where the interpretation of these conditions is causing the dispute at the present time. They will be rehired with the same number of hours subject to the following conditions: One, the needs of the student. Last year some students needed five hours of help a day; this year, because we mainstreamed students, they may only need three. So if we do not need a person for five hours it is understandable that we might hire some for three or two. Perhaps there are students who have left the district. We found there were some students there last year who are now in another district.

The second condition was the

existence of students requiring the service of a student assistant. They may have been relocated, as we have said.

And thirdly, other good and just cause reasons relating to disciplinary action. There may be some reason why a student is not there this year.

So there are some problems with the interpretation of these conditions. In other words the Government agreed to restate the program, to bring the hours up to what was done last year, subject to these conditions, and we did that. We provided an extra \$500,000 early in the year, after it was all assessed, to bring it up to last year's level. And in fact we provided some extra money to pay for the increase in the wages that were negotiated this year.

So that has been the matter of dispute. Now I am very pleased to say that after late night meetings last night and some discussions today we are getting much closer. In fact I was informed just a few minutes ago that there are only thirty-six of the 400 persons, there are only thirty-six now, which is a matter of some discussion. And my officials and Treasury Board have been meeting today and they are having discussions. All the others are agreed. All the others have been approved.

We have -

Mr. Tobin: Why has it taken so long?

Dr. Warren: Mr. Speaker, the discussions are ongoing. I do not want to do anything that might in any way jeopardize what is going

on today. My hope is that tomorrow morning - and I ask the union to please come back and sit down with us tomorrow, and try to resolve the few that are left. There are seventeen boards, where all of them agree. In fact there may be twenty boards this afternoon out of the twenty-eight boards where all the agreements are accepted. Everybody is ready to go back. But there are a few boards where there may be a problem of interpretation of these special conditions.

Now I ask the union - I am not blaming anybody - I am not blaming the school boards, Treasury Board, or the unions. I am saying this is a problem. Please let us, the boards, the Treasury Board and the union sit down tomorrow morning, so that Monday morning those young people can go back to school with their friends and their brothers and sisters.

Ms. Verge: Where you never put them.

Dr. Warren: And I am optimistic that that will happen, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: It is moved and seconded that this House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? All those in favour, "aye". Those against, "nay".

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: Then the Chair has no choice but to ask hon. Members to join me this evening at 7:00 p.m.



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(Hansard)

Speaker: Honourable Thomas Lush

Thursday

October 25, 1990

The House resumed at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Baker: Motion one, Mr. Speaker.

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

Committee of the Whole

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

The hon. Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I wish to have a few words to say tonight in this historic debate, great and historic debate. As a matter of fact I brought along a whole pile of reference material to have a glance at as I go through, all kinds of notes, - yes, Central Newfoundland. - I was looking for the Member for Exploits to see if his phone number or his name is in the Central Telephone Book but his number is not there.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to talk about a number of topics obviously because of the wide ranging debate we are permitted. Many of my colleagues on the front benches over here or the back benches will want to participate as well throughout the evening. We have many, many topics to address. A lot of problems that we wish to try to get answers to particularly on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who have duly elected us to perform the function and role as that of an Opposition. We will try our best to get answers from the Ministry and from the Crown. The Government backbenchers of course perform their role very well too by sitting there and being counted

as votes when the time comes, by interrupting, hackling, and they do a marvelous job at it. Some of them much better than others.

Mr. Chairman, the first topic I want to deal with is the topic of the process of dealing with legislation. I refer specifically to the Legislative Review Committee process. I wanted to have a few words about this new process.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Right.

I am quite prepared that the outset to acknowledge the initiative by the Government by bringing in this process, very pleased to acknowledge it. I am strongly supportive of the process. In fact during my leadership bid a couple of years back it was one of the planks in my particular program.

An Hon. Member: What was that?

Mr. Simms: The introduction of the legislative review process to allow particularly Mr. Chairman, private members of the Legislature a chance to have more input and more involvement in the legislative process. I think it is a marvelous idea, fantastic initiative and I am very, very pleased that the Government saw fit to do it.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: I will mention my friend from St. John's South. I will talk about my own brief experience on one of those committees and I have not had a lot of occasions to participate, but I did on one occasion. I replaced the Member for St. John's

East for a two week period I guess or maybe a three or four week period. During that three or four week period the committee I was participating on was chaired by, very ably by the way, by the Member for St. John's South, I do not mind saying publicly.

An Hon. Member: What?

Mr. Simms: Yes, very ably. We had public hearings in Labrador and on the West Coast, in Central Newfoundland, in Clarenville and here in St. John's, dealing with two significant pieces of legislation that I presume are coming forward in this Fall sitting. One being the one I think the Government House Leader intends to call next, whenever it is, the Regional Services Board. The other one of course being the amendment to the Labour Relations Act or the amendments to the old Bill 59, as we would all know it. Those are going to be two very, very interesting, hotly debated no doubt, pieces of legislation.

While serving on that Committee, under the chairmanship of the Member for St. John's South, I must say the process and the opportunity that we gave to the public and to interest groups to appear at public hearings and express their views on that legislation, really made you feel good I think as a member of the Legislature. I really felt good about it quite frankly. Regardless of what their comments were, even the Government Members because it is after all Government legislation. Most people that would appear, quite frankly, had a lot of problems with the legislation, both pieces of legislation. But the Government Members on the Committee in particular held their cool and

they did not get upset with people, they gave them the right to say whatever it was that they wanted to say and get off their chest. After all that is the purpose of the process and that is why I think it was such a successful process. The chairman, as I say on the committee that I was involved in, certainly restrained his partisanship for the most part. Not always, nor did I at all times, but for the most part, we tried to question the witnesses that appeared. The reason I am making the point and making such a big to-do about this process, is that I am fearful now, I have a real fear that the Government House Leader may try to circumvent this process and might try to take certain pieces of legislation out of the hands of the Committee and bring them directly to the house in an attempt to try to ram the legislation through.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Precisely.

I have that fear. I admit and I confess that I have no concrete evidence in this instance. I have no concrete evidence and I confess to that, but I hear rumblings from the 8th Floor of Confederation Building right down to the Main Floor of Confederation Building and right over to the 5th and 4th Floors of the West Wing in the new building. You can imagine where they come from. You know where they are coming from, and there are rumblings that the Government House Leader might resort to his dictatorial approach that he showed last year, particularly on a number of occasions, and might decide now that he is not going to let the Legislation Review Committees and the private Members

of the Legislature do their job. He is not going to let the public have the right to appear and express their views. He is going to try to ram through and slip through a number of pieces of legislation in the House.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: The Government House Leader asks me which pieces. I mean, Mr. Chairman, I do not think I would be foolhardy enough to tell him which ones we are talking about because that would only invite him to do it. We will just wait and see if there is any truth to the rumbling, that is my whole point.

An Hon. Member: I thought your office was down in the basement.

Mr. Simms: My office is not down in the basement, no not yet, unless the hon. Minister knows something that I do not know. It is quite possible. We are not quite sure where our offices are going to be to be honest with you, but I know where the Government offices are going to be.

Anyway, Mr. Chairman, I wanted to just say that at the outset because I hope there is no truth to those rumblings. I hope the President of Treasury Board, the Government House Leader, can get up in the House and assure Members of the House on both sides, private Members who have played a very vital role in seeing the legislation process, the legislation review process, proceed. I hope he can get up here and put an end to those rumblings and say, I can assure you, I can assure Members of the House - that is what I would love to hear him say it would be music to my ears - of Assembly that I

will not be using the dictatorial approach that I used last year. I will not be trying to ram legislation through but I, in fact, intend to put through all legislation requested by the committees. That is the best way to put it. If the committee requests it well that is the way that it should go, out to the committees.

There is nothing on the Order Paper that I have seen, quite frankly, nothing of an emergency nature. There is nothing on the Order Paper I can see that is of an emergency nature which could not be sent to committees except, there are some housekeeping pieces of legislation which we are very much used to from this Government because that is all they have put through, I guess, up until this stage.

An Hon. Member: They might be considering changes of departments again, I suppose.

Mr. Simms: Yes, they might be considering changes of departments again, names and all that stuff. The housekeeping stuff I am not concerned about. I put that out to the President of Council because I know he is going to get up and speak in this debate shortly, and he will perhaps like to relay any fears there might be.

Mr. Chairman, a couple of other topics I wanted to talk about. I wanted to raise a couple of parochial issues from a constituency point of view about Grand Falls and Grand Falls - Windsor, sorry, Grand Falls - Winsor. One thing I will comment on, of course, is the amalgamation process. My friend, the Member for Windsor - Buchans, and I have had our differences on this issue

for the last 15 years but the issue of amalgamation for the two towns has been ongoing since 1970, I suppose, so that is 20 years. Over the years we have been able to, as it appears now at least, work out our differences for the most part. There are still some items that I am not totally happy with that the two towns agreed upon recently when they agreed to amalgamate.

I felt there should have been a longer term commitment from the Government for the capital infrastructure funding and I felt, as does the Member for Exploits I know -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: So it does not matter what the people think of the area? I think it matters a lot what my constituents think, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hewlett: Council has asked the Board if they took place yet.

Mr. Simms: I believe the constituents that I represent do matter. Yes, I say to the Member for Exploits. They have expressed to me their concerns about these two particular items: the lack of a long term commitment on the capital infrastructure upgrading funding and, of course, the lack of a more positive commitment on the water treatment plant. That is the one thing I really am bothered about and would have liked to have seen a more firm commitment.

I was about to say, before the Member for Exploits blew up, that I am sure he supports my opinion in that regard and that he would like to see a firmer commitment on the water treatment plant because

I know he supports it. He would like to see it done. I know he does and that is what I was about to say, so please do not get too defensive.

Irrespective of those two particular minor points, I suppose, they are major points in the minds of many, minor in some. In the minds of some it is minor and in the minds of others it is major. The Member for Windsor - Buchans and I have agreed to put aside our differences now and work towards the positive amalgamation of the two communities involved and the two communities represented. We had an interesting, in fact, we talked about it quite frequently, it is only tonight the Member for Windsor - Buchans and I had a conversation about amalgamation. One of the issues he and I discussed - I thought I might be able to encourage him to participate in the debate. - tonight a way to allay the concerns and fears of those people out in Grand Falls and Windsor who did not like the idea of amalgamation because they felt they might lose the identity to the communities. The names, for example, of the communities, a lot of people did not want to lose the name Grand Falls, a lot of people did not want to lose the name Windsor.

The new council, I presume and I understand, will likely be charged with the responsibility of identifying a new name perhaps for the new town. For the moment it is Grand Falls - Windsor.

An Hon. Member: Central City.

Mr. Simms: So regardless of what the new name might be, if the new name is something other than Grand

Falls - Windsor, if it happens to be the City of Exploits as some people have thrown in or whatever, the Member for Windsor - Buchans suggested and I agree with him whole-heartedly, a way to allay the fears of those people who are afraid of losing identity as a community is to keep the electoral districts named in the same manner as they are named now. Boundaries would be the same, the City of Exploits, but there would be a Grand Falls Member, Grand Falls District, because you can call a constituency by any name you wish. It does not really matter. You could call it Grand Falls and you could call it Windsor - Buchans, the same as it is now. I think that would help allay some of the fears people might have.

An Hon. Member: What district?

Mr. Simms: Well, now there is another interesting. I was wondering if the Government House Leader would be prepared to toss out that suggestion. It has come up in the past.

Mr. Chairman, you know that there have been some newspaper stories speculating about whether or not I was going to stay around in politics. I said publicly I have given consideration to my future in politics from time to time, as I presume everybody does. I have made no final decision on what I am going to do but if there is one thing that might force me, as Mr. Smallwood used to say, I do not want the district to fall into the wrong hands. If there is one thing that might force me to run again would be if the Government brought in legislation to amend the electoral boundaries so that Grand Falls - Windsor, the towns, became one constituency and particularly if my friend from

Windsor was going to be the candidate in that particular new constituency, I might be -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: I say to the Minister of Development, he better not be too cockie about that. I would say if you quickly turn around and whisper to the Minister of Forestry and Development he might say, 'Keep it down Chuck. Keep it down. Don't go pushing him.' Anyway, Mr. Chairman, I would be quite prepared. I believe I would get a significant larger majority than the Member for St. Barbe got in the last election in fact if there was some kind of a runoff in Grand Falls - Windsor.

Nevertheless, I am pleased that the process has virtually been completed, and one significant thing that has evolved from all of this and I want to point it out on behalf of my friend from Windsor - Buchans and I, we are very proud of this fact, everybody is aware of it, there are 31 candidates seeking office for the Municipal Council of Grand Falls - Windsor. Thirty-one, seven for mayor, and the remaining running for either ward or at large. Thirty-one candidates, seven for mayor. Thirty-one candidates.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Simms: Well I would not be prepared to make any prediction at this point in time but I suspect, with seven candidates running, anything could happen. But we will see what happens. May the best person win, and the best person is the best person for the town. That is what is most important.

We have thirty-one candidates

running. In big St. John's, a gigantic city in Newfoundland - how much larger, seven or eight times larger than Grand Falls - Windsor, which now has a population of 16,000 or thereabouts - in St. John's with 100,000 odd people they have, I understand from the Member for St. John's West, the Minister of Energy who is an expert on these matters, tells me that there are 29 candidates only running in the City of St. John's. Now he may not be totally accurate but I am sure somewhere in that area. Twenty-nine candidates in the whole of the City of St. John's running for office and in Grand Falls - Windsor, the new Town of Grand Falls - Windsor because of the interest in amalgamation because of the exciting times over the next few years in particular in moving that new community forward, there are 31 candidates running for office. I think that all of those who offered themselves for office should be commended. I only hope that the public, the people, and the voters in those two towns get out on election day November 13 and vote for the person of their choice. It is very important. These people have offered themselves and for the future of that Town it is very important.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: I beg your pardon.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Sure, the Government House Leader went in the right direction on that particular amalgamation without doubt and it is something that I supported before that. I eventually came around to being a fairly strong supporter. I think, of

amalgamation. I was not always. I do not mind saying. The Member for Windsor - Buchans can tell you, I was not always supportive of it but I certainly was in recent years. In fact, the Government House Leader will recall that, as a Government, we made a commitment to the towns, and the Town of Windsor in particular, for capital infrastructure funding of \$12 million over a five year period and that was meant to be the catalyst to get on with the amalgamation question of Grand Falls and Windsor.

Yes, the Government has moved in the right direction, I believe. I support it now. I do wish, as I said with the two exceptions, there was a further commitment on those other two items. I will not repeat them again, the hon. Member knows what I am talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I said at the outset I wanted to talk about two parochial issues. Amalgamation was one.

Well, if my time is up, I will sit down and I will get up again another time. That is no problem. I have no big fear of standing up again a second time.

The second item I wanted to talk about, and maybe the Minister of Forestry could - I see him making notes there now, so I have a funny feeling he is going to get up and attack me for my role. Oh, you are not going to speak.

I will give you another issue and maybe you would like to get up because I would like to hear what your comments are, quite frankly. I am talking about Abitibi-Price. The Minister would be aware, and maybe other Ministers are aware

and maybe they are not aware, but the General Manager of Abitibi-Price has recently spoken publicly out there to a service club and in his speech I think he made reference to continuing restructuring that is going on at the Abitibi-Price operation in Newfoundland.

Specifically, I am interested in what is going on at the Grand Falls mill. The last time there was restructuring at Abitibi-Price on December 18, 1989 the Premier announced in the House the closedown of one of the paper machines. That was the last time there was a restructure.

The General Manager says they are still going through restructuring, making restructuring changes, and that the mill itself now is going to come under a new internal division of Abitibi's corporate organization in Canada. They have to operate as a business team, naturally. They are going to have to prove themselves over the course of the next little while, the next couple of years, probably, or whenever.

My question is to the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture and what I would like him to comment on is, does this concern about - because there is still concern about the future, obviously, if they are saying the companies must be profitable and if they do not do it within a period of time, in the next two or three years or whatever the period of time might be, then one has to speculate that, presumably, they will not be there. Presumably, that is what they are saying.

I wonder where that puts the commitment given by the company and announced formally in the

House on 18th of December of last year by the Premier when he made the statement about the hydro development? That is really my question. Because that is a multi-million dollar project as the Minister knows, if the company is restructuring, if the company is talking about the mill in Grand Falls paying its own way and so on, and they are going to be given a certain amount of time to prove themselves, then you have to assume that if that does not happen, then maybe the hydro project is in some jeopardy. That is what I would like the Minister to tell me, if he has had any current or recent word from anybody at Abitibi-Price or has he talked to anybody from Abitibi-Price? I understand they have a new Vice-President now, I gather Mr. Vatcher has moved on. There is somebody else new. I have not met the gentleman.

There would be some concern because that was held out on 18th of December of last year when the Premier's statement was a bit of positive news associated with the very negative news of losing a couple of hundred jobs because of the No. 6 close down. I think he indicated there would be an environmental assessment process for project and I gather that is still being proceeded with but construction of the project then was supposed to begin sometime I am not sure if it was late this year or early next year. Maybe the Minister can refresh my memory. The start up date of the construction of the project. I forget what he said. It was going to be an EIS for the Hydro project

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Abitibi, the Premier

mentioned in the statement the 18th of December. He then said the start up date for construction was going to be sometime after the EIS process had been completed.

I would like to know from the Minister if he does have any information? If he does not I would just simply suggest that maybe it might be a good idea for him to contact him and have a good discussion with him if he does not have any feel for it, because I would be interested in knowing for one and I am sure the people of Grand Falls - Windsor would be extremely interested in knowing as well whether or not the commitment is still there to proceed with the Hydro project. Because while it is good for Abitibi-Price it obviously in a short-term, for a period of time a year and a half or two years, or how ever long the construction will be, would be good for the economy of the area because of some jobs that would be generated and so on for that couple of years.

Mr. Chairman, I think I will just conclude my remarks for the moment and see if anybody else on the other side is going to get up and have any comments. If not, I know that many of my colleagues on this side are chomping at the bit and anxious to get up and ask the Government about more details, provide more details on the major issues of the day, the cuts proposed by the Government, the freeze, and all those kinds of things. I got some information on that which I will pursue and address some time over the course of this debate within the next two or three weeks or whatever, months, whatever. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. the

Minister of Forestry and Agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Flight: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have just witnessed the equal of the conversional fall on the way to the Damascus.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Flight: The hon. Member for Grand Falls gets up, Mr. Speaker, and wants to get on the bandwagon. The tone will be nice but the facts will be right as well. Mr. Speaker, for at least 15 years, the hon. Member got elected in 1979 first time I think.

An Hon. Member: 1879.

Mr. Flight: Nineteen hundred and seventy-nine. Mr. Speaker, most of the people in Grand Falls - Windsor for the first ten of those years, wondered if indeed he could really pronounce the word amalgamation. Nobody was sure that he could pronounce the word amalgamation. As a matter of fact, one of the most interesting statements he made and would of been within the past year since we became Government was, the media questioned him on his thoughts on amalgamation and why he has not been more involved in the process. I think the interview was in the Grand Falls Advertiser, and his response was: 'Well it is not really an issue, none of my constituents ever talk to me about it, it is never raised with me so therefore it is not an issue.'

Mr. Simms: That was five years ago.

Mr. Flight: No, it would not have been five years ago. Well even if it was five years ago the Paliser

Report came in in the early 1970s.

Mr. Simms: Yes, but nobody was talking to me about it, nobody asked me about it.

Mr. Flight: Mr. Speaker, he is welcome now to get on the bandwagon. We all know why, Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member suddenly believes that the amalgamation is - Mr. Speaker, he is known as the weather vane, his ear is close to the ground in his constituency and he knew what the people of Grand Falls have been saying this past year and how they resented people being critical of amalgamation. He knew his constituency was finally saying, 'Look never mind the conditions, never mind the \$12 million, it is right to do so let us do it.'

Now Mr. Speaker, I might tell the Member it is too bad he missed the function in Grand Falls the other night. The hon. Minister of Justice so kindly asked me to represent him at a certain function.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Ms. Verge: I did not get acquainted with that either.

Mr. Flight: No. The hon. Member for Corner Brook, the finest Member Corner Brook ever had, I might say Mr. Speaker, ever representing any constituency in the City of Corner Brook. Kindly, Mr. Speaker and considerately, the finest member that ever represented Corner Brook. Certainly of the current crop.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Dicks: Thank you.

Mr. Flight: Now, Mr. Speaker,

this is serious stuff. As I said the Minister of Justice, kindly and considerately asked me if I would stand in for him to officially open a building in the new town, in the Town of Grand Falls - Windsor. Mr. Speaker, the irony suddenly dawned on me as I was sitting there waiting with all the Supreme Court Judges and the Provincial Court Judges behind me. It suddenly dawned on me that for 15 years I have sat over on the opposite benches and I had begged on my knees for the Government to do something in Windsor, that I might have the privilege of opening a building one day in Windsor.

The construction of such a building would have provided some economic benefits for Windsor, would help increase Windsor's tax base and would help offset some of the businesses that had left Windsor because of the atmosphere fostered by the hon. Member for Grand Falls for ten years. Lo and behold I found myself opening a new court house. Mr. Speaker the hon. Member did not even have the interest to come to Grand Falls and take part in the opening of that building.

Ms. Verge: (Inaudible)

Mr. Simms: I got the invitation (inaudible) morning.

Mr. Flight: The fact is he was not there. Mr. Speaker, after working and begging practically to have a building open in Windsor, I finally found myself opening a building in Windsor one and one half years after this Government took office.

An Hon. Member: You had nothing to do.

Mr. Flight: It is now part of Windsor, the plaque says. It is written on the plaque.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Flight: It is what is going to be on the plaque that is going to count hon. Member for Placentia. Never mind who had what to do. As the people from Grand Falls - Windsor walk in and my constituents from Buchans, Badger and the odd straggler from Placentia East goes in the inscription will read opened by the hon. Graham Flight.

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Flight: No mention, Mr. Speaker, - even the Chief Justice could not get it in the record that there was anything -

Mr. Simms: Oh yes he did.

Mr. Flight: He said it but I did not see it in the record anywhere. There was no reference made to it. The plaque will read opened by the hon. Graham Flight representing the Minister of Justice - who was in his own district doing very important business that we have heard so much about - and the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation, the hon. David Gilbert. That is how the plaque is going to read.

Mr. Tobin: Justice would not be done to that plaque unless your picture was on it.

Mr. Flight: Nothing on that plaque saying that the present Member for Grand Falls would even consider building that particular building in Windsor where it should have gone, nothing about the efforts he put into it, only

opened by the Hon. Graham Flight.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) Windsor in ten years. Tell us about the fairness of balance. Tell us about the fairness in balance when they were in power.

Mr. Tobin: Graham, is your picture out there on the plaque?

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Flight: Now Mr. Speaker, I must for a second, deal with the second aspect of the hon. Member's speech. It has to do with Abitibi-Price and the restructuring. As you will know, the first restructuring took place when number six was shut down two hundred and forty-three to 247 people lost their jobs. The great bulk of them, thanks to the intervention of this Government and our working with the union and with the Company, arranged most of that group would leave the work force with a good severance package, a pension plan that allowed them to live with dignity, and without having any real need to re-enter the work force. I must say, Mr. Speaker, both the Company and the union indicated an appreciation for the role the Government of Newfoundland played and the various ministers involved played in helping to bring about that restructuring and those arrangements.

But the Member is right, in recent times there has been another restructuring and this time it is not the restructuring in Grand Falls. It is a restructuring of Abitibi-Price, the corporate body. The mills in Newfoundland, in Grand Falls and in Stephenville, and a mill, as the Member will know in Scotland has been designated as a unit.

The Member is right. There have been some great problems in the mill in Grand Falls. These last two years and certainly this last year, the mill in Grand Falls has been losing money up to a certain point, that is public knowledge. The local management indicates the amount they have been losing per month and anyone would know that cannot go on. It can only go on so long. The Company is aware of it and, of course, the union is aware of it. The encouragement the Company has given is to simply say that there will be - obviously this cannot go on forever - and it is hoped that over the next two or three years, the productivity and the cost-effectiveness of the labour force, and of the mill itself, will be such that the mill will turn around its operation, and will indeed show a profit, or at least stop losing money at the rate that it has been losing money.

I think they are confident, as I am confident, that the work force in the mill will indeed rise to the occasion and the Company will continue to spend the kind of money on modernization that will make it possible for that mill to turnaround so there will be no question about its future. I agree with the hon. Member that if this continues, if the situation we have had the past until midsummer, for a long period of time who knows what would happen. The mill has been losing money at a rate of close to \$1 million per month. It would be foolhardy to think that would go on forever. I accept senior management's position that they have restructured the management of that mill and the mills in Newfoundland with a view to allowing them to turn things around, giving them the time and taking advantage of the

modernization that they will do and giving the work force time to readjust under the new labor management agreements.

Mr. Speaker, I find the people in Grand Falls, the company, the officials, the employees are confident they will indeed accomplish what has to be accomplished and the mill will continue to make first class paper, will continue to be competitive, and will continue in the long run to provide the kind of economic benefits to Grand Falls that Grand Falls - Windsor has provided since it was first established.

With regards to the hydro development, I might tell the hon. Member for Grand Falls, he would be interested in this, when I was first notified of the restructuring - I might tell the hon. Member I was notified before the local company management held a press conference or notified the union or notified anyone else, out of courtesy the management notified me about the restructuring, answered any questions I had and addressed any concerns. - I put it to that local management, I said look this past 20 years any member of the House of Assembly or anyone who wanted to talk about Grand Falls was told do not bother to talk to the local management of Grand Falls. It is okay to go see them but they are simply caretakers there. They do not know what is going on because decisions are made in Toronto. That is the way it was and the Member knows that.

There was a feeling that regardless of the problem if you wanted to get to the bottom of it, you could not always accept the advice or information given by the

local management, although it was given in honesty. The feeling in Grand Falls was that they were simply running the mill. They were not part of the decision making process in regards to the long-term outlook of the mill and whether or not there was going to be modernization. When monies were involved or major changes involved in order for the Minister of the day or anyone else to determine the exact situation they would have to go to Toronto.

The local management agreed and admitted they were aware that was the feeling not necessarily the facts, but the feeling local resident management was not making management decisions but they were made in Toronto. They said, Mr. Minister, if you wanted to get to the bottom of what is happening here you will have to go to Toronto.

I accepted in good faith what they said to me and I said now tell me something when I want to have information on the Grand Falls mill two months after this restructuring, will I still have to go to Toronto as I did? The answer unequivocally was no. We will make the management decision. Now, obviously I suppose if Abitibi-Price decides they are going to spend \$300 or \$400 hundred million then the board of directors will make that decision, but the everyday -

Mr. Simms: Or if they decided not to proceed with the hydro development.

Mr. Flight: Or if they decided not to proceed not with the hydro, yes.

What is interesting also though I would tell the Member is prior to

this restructuring, Mr. Vatcher and head office people were responsible for the hydro development in the sense as if I wanted to get up-to-date information I probably would have to telephone Toronto or go to Toronto. Now, the local management, Mr. Collez and he deals as he says. There is another vice-president in charge of this particular unit and the decisions on the hydro development and the rest. Commitment is there financially. As far as I can understand, up to a month ago there was no change in Abitibi's intention of continuing on with the hydro plant. They are into the environmental process. They have hired and retained and spent a lot of money, I might tell the hon. Member, on consulting companies who have identified a joint partner, because it is going to be a joint partner operation. They are proceeding full speed ahead.

I asked Mr. Collez exactly what is the situation with the hydro plant right now. Generally, he told me what I pointed out to the hon. Member. There was a commitment there - this was days after I was advised that the restructuring had taken place. His position was that anytime in the next week or two or three, which would be about now, that he would advise me exactly what the status of the plant is.

I would say to the Member, unless he is aware of something that I am not aware of, the last conversation I had relative to the hydro plant was within the month.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Flight: No, I do not remember. They were going full

speed ahead, they wanted to get the environmental studies behind them. Their position was that while the environmental studies were being done, the engineering work would be done and assuming no problems with the environmental impact studies, they would be starting construction right away.

I do not want to be nailed to a specific date, but we would assume that if the commitment was made, if there was no problem with the environmental study, they would move into construction of the plant.

Mr. Simms: As far as you know, they are going to be proceeding.

Mr. Flight: Yes, as far as I know right now. And within the next week or two I will have Abitibi confirm that and if there is a major change I think it would be incumbent on me to advise -

Mr. Simms: (Inaudible) be so forthcoming. What about the new electoral riding of Grand Falls - Windsor, will you run?

Mr. Flight: Now, Mr. Chairman, I never believed that the hon. Member was so nervous in his district.

An Hon. Member: More nervous now!

Mr. Flight: More nervous now. He wanted to indicate Mr. Chairman, - I get a lot of questions in Grand Falls asking about the district, will Grand Falls and Windsor be one district? Most people will be saying I hope it is, we will get rid of you know who.

I keep telling them, Mr. Chairman, there is no relevancy in the amalgamation of Grand Falls - Windsor with regards to the

electoral districts. I point out that there are seven or eight members in St. John's and the electoral boundaries go down over rooftops and in around streets, so no difference. However, some people try to figure it out, but they have started to accept it.

Now, tonight was the first time though I heard the Member looking for a way out of any possible realignment so that indeed Grand Falls Windsor may be one electoral district. He pointed out, Mr. Chairman, that the name Grand Falls is so important to the people of Grand Falls that one way to make sure that they do not lose that identity to keep Grand Falls, is to make sure that the town of Grand Falls, that little community, one town, Mr. Chairman -

Mr. Tobin: What have you got against the people of Grand Falls?

Mr. Flight: That one town would continue as an electoral district known as Grand Falls. And that way of course, the name of Grand Falls would always be associated with it. I have no problem with it. The only thing - there was a point of order. I have no problem with that. I have no problem with Windsor - Buchans.

Mr. Simms: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I have a problem with it. Unless the hon. Minister will just yield or something. The Minister just said you were surprised because you heard me trying to find a way out of running against him in a new Grand Falls - Windsor electoral riding.

Mr. Flight: That is the way I read it.

Mr. Simms: And the way to do it

was to keep the names Grand Falls and Windsor.

Mr. Flight: Now that is the point of order.

Mr. Simms: Mr. Chairman, I would like the Minister to admit when he stands that, in fact, it was he who suggested that to me just before the House opened. I did not suggest it at all.

Mr. Chairman: Order please! Order please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture.

Mr. Flight: I simply suggested to him, Mr. Speaker, because there is some confusion we will retain the name of the electoral district.

Mr. Simms: Oh, so you suggested it. Not me at all.

Mr. Flight: But what surprised me was when he jumped on it as a way of saying, one way to make sure that Grand Falls is always associated with the present town of Grand Falls is to retain the electoral district. But Mr. Chairman, I have to say to him though that if the Premier, in his wisdom were to decide to change, decide to have redistribution -

Mr. Simms: I might have to run again. I might be first.

Mr. Flight: Mr. Speaker, you would have to remember that Buchans, Millertown, Badger and Buchans Junction would have to stay a part of that.

Mr. Simms: What was your majority last time?

Mr. Flight: More than 41 like there was the time before.

Mr. Simms: Yes but what was it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Flight: More than 41 and it did not take the University to get me in the morning after.

Mr. Simms: So what was your majority?

Mr. Flight: If the Member in the election of -

Mr. Simms: The majority was 100 in the district.

Mr. Tobin: What was yours in 1979?

Mr. Simms: Mine was 1,700.

Mr. Flight: Seven hundred.

Mr. Tobin: Yes. In 1982?

Mr. Flight: Minus 84.

Mr. Speaker, I would remind the hon. Member for Grand Falls that I never ever went to bed having conceded the election and woke up the next morning and have someone tell me I won.

Mr. Simms: So as a matter of fact you went to bed losing the election and woke up the next morning and still lost.

Mr. Flight: I went to bed knowing I won the election, Mr. Speaker. I never went to bed thinking I had lost the election.

Mr. Simms: Yes you did, in 1982.

Mr. Flight: After he got a pink slip from the University telling all the students in University

that he had won by 41 votes because he had gotten 120 something votes out of a potential 130 votes in the university, and he knows why. The jobs in certain parts of my district paid the price, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tobin: Where were you to from 1982 - 1985?

Mr. Simms: We are talking about majorities here now. You be quite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Flight: The only member, Mr. Speaker, in my memory and I got elected first in 1975 - I was a student of politics prior to that - that I ever knew that lost an election in his own district -

Mr. Simms: You lost one in 1982. What are you talking about?

Mr. Flight: He lost one in his own district, Mr. Speaker and then won it, but sat in the House after he lost it. I did not sit in the House after I lost it.

Mr. Simms: No. That is right. You did not.

Mr. Flight: No wonder the Member did not speak. The first Session passed and he had not spoken.

Mr. Tobin: You (inaudible) because you remembered that phone call 50 years ago.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Flight: I also remember, Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member for Placentia.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chairman: Order please. Order please.

Mr. Flight: I also remember the hon. Member for Placentia during a certain election being on a bus with the Premier. The bus was travelling down the road towards his district and the Premier says: "My, look at that crowd there," he said to the Member. "Ah," the Member for Placentia said, "Premier, they are here to meet you". The Premier opened the door and they almost eat him. It was a mob waiting.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Flight: A mob, Mr. Speaker, waiting to attack the Premier and he did not know the difference, Mr. Speaker. I will tell you -

An Hon. Member: They almost tipped over the bus.

Mr. Flight: Almost tipped over the bus with the Premier in it. Now Mr. Speaker, I will tell you, he should stop talking about memories-

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

Mr. Flight: We all have long memories Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

Mr. Flight: We all have long memories. The Member for what is his name, Burin - Placentia, you could not miss that phisog on TV, the look on the face Mr. Speaker. It was a shock. Was it 1979? In 1985, Mr. Speaker, the prosperity crusade.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we could get into some interesting things here. I think I will sit back now Mr. Speaker for a minute and we will see if there is anymore enlightening comments coming from the hon. Member for Grand Falls or

the hon. Member for Burin East or the Member for Springdale or Corner Brook.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible)

Ms. Verge: Did we get any enlightenment about the newsprint industry in his speech?

Mr. Flight: There was no intention to get to it, there was no intention to enlighten the hon. Member about the newsprint. I might tell the hon. Member though -

Ms. Verge: I know the Linerboard Mill is closed, I know that.

Mr. Flight: Do you know that for sure?

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Flight: Is that right? Where did you find that out, the meeting in Corner Brook a couple of nights ago? Did you get that information at the meeting in Corner Brook?

While I am on my feet, Mr. Chairman, I am amazed at the patience of the Minister of Justice, the hon. Member for Corner Brook, for what he has had to listened to over the last couple of days. I felt like tugging on the sleeve of his coat and saying, Mr. Minister for the best part of 15 years I sat over there and I was not allowed to go to a meeting in or out of my district that was attended by a minister. I have the proof of it. People now who are sitting in the same committees attending meetings with me or with the hon. Minister said I was present six years ago at a meeting.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Flight: They are still in leadership roles in the various areas. I was sitting in a room when I was told by the Minister -

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

Mr. Flight: or the Minister's EA, or the Deputy Minister not include the member from the Opposition in that meeting. What kind of a gall has the member for - she thinks she got creditability in standing up and arguing that. What kind of gall does the Member for Humber East have to try to convince so piously say that he was barred out of a meeting and how the democratic system was being abused. Well she knew, she took part, she cooperated and supported every member of the Opposition, since she was a minister, being kept out of meetings with all the ministers. Whether it was in their district or on their business, she should be ashamed of herself.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please! The hon. Member for Burin - Placentia West.

Mr. Tobin: (Inaudible) Member's time is right but what he is saying is not right. Never, Mr. Speaker, when we were in Government did we arm guards and put them on the door.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please! There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister for Forestry and Agriculture.

Mr. Flight: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Since I am not going to be provoked anymore I will take my seat.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. the Member for Kilbride.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to congratulate the hon. Minister of Forestry and Agriculture for a very entertaining speech. It is the best I have heard him do in this Assembly since he has been here, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Aylward: There was no substance to it, Mr. Speaker, but it certainly was entertaining.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Aylward: It was very entertaining, Mr. Speaker. I wish to note when he did start his speech he was making some reference to the new Grand Falls Court House, I believe, which he had the privilege to attend the official opening of the Grand Falls Court House. He opened it, yes, I understand he opened it, Mr. Speaker. He was chastising the Member for Grand Falls, Mr. Speaker, for not going to the opening.

I remember the day that it was opened, Mr. Speaker, because I am critic for the Department of Work, Services and Transportation. I did get a press release from that Department, from the hon. Minister when he put out his press release about the opening which I appreciated. In that press release, I do not have a copy of it right here now, Mr. Speaker, but the hon. Minister of Forestry and Agriculture was so proud to have opened the building. In that press release it said that the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation and the Minister of Justice were the ones who would be doing the official opening. His

own Minister forgot to mention him, Mr. Speaker, his own Minister forgot to mention him in the press release. It was only by chance that he got there in the first place, Mr. Speaker, because the Minister of Justice happened not to be able to get there. I guess it was an afterthought that he got there in the first place. Certainly it had to be an afterthought, because the plaque had not been prepared. I would say the people in the area will probably try to delay putting up that plaque for maybe another two years and see what happens in the next election. Probably, Mr. Speaker, if things do change around, I am sure the present Member for Grand Falls will be a Minister in the next Government, Mr. Speaker, in this House and I am sure the day after he is elected he will have a plaque prepared for that building, an appropriate plaque for that new building, Mr. Speaker.

The little plaque for the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture will be one for the back door probably, Mr. Speaker, we could get him one for that. Mr. Speaker, I was not planning on speaking in this debate tonight.

Some Hon. Members: Sit down, then sit down.

Mr. R. Aylward: But, Mr. Speaker, I was more or less forced into it because of the past occurrences over the last several months now concerning a contract on a bridge in Labrador, Mr. Speaker, and the way the Ossokmanuan Bridge Contract was handled by the Department of Works, Services and Transportation. Mr. Speaker, first when that started sometime in August I believe, I saw a little press release in the paper

explaining, supposedly explaining, why the Department of Works, Services and Transportation threw away or made a gift of \$1.3 million to a construction company in this Province. The only explanation that was in this news release was it was a bad administrative error.

Now I really do not know what an administrative error was. It was not an explanation that I would give when I was a Minister. I would try to be a bit more detailed about it, than just saying administrative error. So because I did not understand and maybe it was because I am possibly not as intelligent as the Minister - he might have assumed that I would understand - but because other people especially people in the media, and people in the construction industry asked me, what is an administrative error? What could have caused the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation to make a gift of \$1.3 million to a construction company in this Province?

First when I came across this, Mr. Speaker, it was not so much the \$1.3 million, because the new tender had not been called in the first place. What I was concerned about was that the Department had let a contractor off the hook for the bid bond that should have been in place for the contract that was signed. I guess any administrator of any department if they see a good deal coming across their desk they should highlight that. Now I note the Department's estimates on this contract in the beginning was over \$7 million. I believe \$7.2 million was the original estimate that the Department had for this contract.

Now when you put out your tenders

and you get them back, and one of these tenders happens to come in under \$7 million, or under your estimate, \$6.8 million I believe it was in the beginning, something under \$7 million, I would say that the administrator of that Department would have highlighted this and said, well now we have a good deal on this one. We certainly have to make sure that this contract is signed as soon as we can.

When I was in the Department, I wanted to be informed of certainly any good news that the Department had. This item would have been highlighted by the staff in my Department. Most of the same staff are still in the Department and I am sure they would highlight it and let the Minister know - if he was around during the summer. I guess he was, but I imagine he took some vacation time. But if he was around, he probably would have been briefed one day during the week with the suggestion we are saving here, from our estimates, somewhere near \$1 million on this contract. We certainly have to get the contractor to sign this one on the dotted line so we can get the savings for the Province. About August, I would imagine, Cabinet was becoming aware of the blunders of the Minister of Finance in these estimates for the budget of this year. I guess about August they were finding out they were some \$40 million, \$50 million or \$60 million short in their budget. I can see the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation around the Cabinet table hopping up right away and saying, look, I have \$1 million saved for you right off the bat. Here we have \$1 million, and we start from that \$1 million.

What happened, Mr. Speaker, was the Minister not following up what was happening in his Department and not giving the proper instructions to the staff of his Department to make sure this was signed, to highlight it, to put it on your calendar two or three days before the contract acceptance date runs out. Someone around the Department had better check this to make sure that it is signed and if it is not, get it over to the contractor as soon as possible. So, Mr. Speaker, I would imagine that would have been what happened. But, lo and behold, the date passes, the contractor sends in the next day, suggesting that the 30 day limit has passed. I do not wish to take up my tender bid, and we let it pass.

I guess the next option to the Minister then was to say, okay, we have the number two bidder on the list. So the normal procedure then was to go to the second bidder. Now we are already after losing the good deal we had, somewhere near \$1 million savings, on the first contract, we have lost that, we have thrown that away already so, we will have to go to the second bidder if only for the reason that it is in Labrador, a very short construction season, we do not have any time to waste, we have to get this contract under way as fast as possible, so we will look at the second bidder. The Minister decided - okay he took a chance, or his staff recommended him - to take a chance and do a second bid, a quick bid, and it took, I believe, two or three weeks to see if they could get a better price than the second bidder.

That is taking a chance on spoiling a full years construction

season in Labrador, which is a big risk, a risk which I would have taken seriously but maybe the Minister did not understand. So, he did take the chance. What happened when the second tenders were called as far as I could find out at the time, the tenders went out, they were sent back and the same contractor was the lowest bidder on the next contract, but the \$700,000 bid bond was lost from the last contract and his next price was \$1.3 million dollars higher than his first contract. That in my mind was enough to cause a stir, to ask some questions on it again. The media wanted some questions answered. I wanted some questions answered. So, I thought it was because of the two problems we have now, the first tender was blundered and lost and all that money was gone. Then there was a new tender put out and the second lowest bidder was not asked which resulted in the construction season being delayed somewhat. Then there was a second tender put out and the same contractor got it again. Something suspicious kept coming back to me as to what was happening. The Minister was still saying there was an administrative error in the first place. I thought it was serious enough at the time that I was not getting any more answers from the Minister or the Department except that is was an administrative error. There was nothing else that I could get out of them.

I thought it was serious enough at the time to write the Auditor General and request that the Auditor General, an independent third party, an employee, I suppose, or an agent of this House, a person who will eventually I know look at it anyway and it would only speed up

his work if he looked at it right away, found out there was no problem with it, maybe he would not have to do so much work next year when he goes through the department's books. It was not going to cost any extra money to have him go in and look at it.

Had he gone in, had the Minister said or the Premier at the time suggested that he go in, it probably would have cleared up the matter right away. Anyway the Auditor General wrote me back and suggested it was not appropriate under his guidelines, under his present Act for him to look at it now, but he would highlight it and look at it when the money had been spent which was more in line with the guidelines which the Auditor General has to follow right now. So, he did suggest that sometime in the next year he would look at it. But again in my mind, I thought, well the money is spent then if there is something wrong with this we are still out the money, we are not going to get the money back. I thought under the Auditor General's Act there is a special provision there that the Lieutenant-Governor in Council could suggest, order if necessary or instruct the Auditor General to go in and have a look at this even though it was not under his mandate, the Lieutenant Government in Council can.

This is more or less what they did with the Sprung operation. They were not too long ordering the Auditor General to go have a look at that but I figured they would because of the seriousness of this, and the seriousness of the provincial budget at the time and I would expect they hoped they might have been able to save some money by having the Auditor General look at it and if there

was something wrong with it, stop it right away.

So I sent a letter to the Premier requesting that he would instruct, through his Cabinet, the Auditor General to go have a look at what happened with this contract and explain to the public of the Province, through me if necessary, if there was something wrong with this. Had the Premier looked at it and said well yes, let us get rid of this, get the Auditor General in there, I have nothing to hide, let us get him in there and straighten it out once and for all. That is what I expected he would do. That is the type of person I thought the Premier was. He seems to portray that image around publicly but Mr. Speaker, lo and behold, after a few days I got a letter back from the Premier suggesting that there was an administrative oversight and the series of events as mentioned in your letter of August 9, 1992, Mr. J. F. McGrath.

So he came back with the same administrative oversight reason again. No other explanation, do not know what an administrative oversight is, still nobody explained to me what happened in the Department for this administrative oversight. Was it the fault of one person? Was it the fault of five people? Was it the fault of the Minister? They did not know.

Mr. Speaker, when it came back it was suggested in the Premier's letter, he did tell me in his letter that the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation did take a bit of a gamble and figured that if he retendered the job he would get a better price. That was the Premier's explanation. He says in this 'The Department of

Works, Services and Transportation felt that by recalling the tender it would get a bid lower than the second lowest bid in the first round.' Indeed that is what happened.

The lowest bid in the tender recall was lower than the second lowest bid in the first round by some \$200,000. Then he went on I trust the item, just finishing off his letter which was not too important. So the Premier suggested to me right away that the new tender call saved this Province \$200,000. I suggested I would have to accept that.

Then I checked around a little more with some of the contractors who are familiar with the type of work and were familiar with the contract and one of them said to me, but the second contract, the second tender call, had at least two items were removed from it. Then again I tried to find out once more what was removed, and how much it was worth. The Premier admitted in this House that his Minister did not inform him that these two tender items were removed. I do not know why the Minister would do that. Certainly when I was in Cabinet, if I was trying to deceive my boss, I would expect I would know where I was going. It might have been an oversight again on the Minister's behalf, it is quite possible that it was. But at least the Premier suggested, or told me, in an answer to questions in this House, that he did not know that there were any items removed from the tender.

Now when this letter was written to the Premier, no doubt, both sets of tenders were in place. The second set of tenders did not have any item in it. But when I

asked the Minister about the items that were removed, he said they were minor items. They were only estimates of \$20,000. Our Department only estimated them at some \$20,000. But Mr. Speaker he knew, at the time, of the tenders that were submitted, the bid by the company who was lowest had an estimate for these items in their tender. And he knew at the time, Mr. Speaker, that the subcontractor that gave a bid - I have a copy of it here if anyone would like to see it - gave a price on these two items, had a price in there for some \$50,000, and that subcontractor's price excluded accommodations and transportation for the people who were involved.

Now we have a discrepancy here where the Minister suggested the Department's estimates on these two removed items were \$20,000. I know for a fact, and the Minister gave it to me the other day, that he said McNamara, one company, had some \$50,000-odd he knew that at the time he wrote the letter. But the subcontractor who bid these two items, item one was worth \$62,000, Part D was worth \$62,000, and Part E was worth \$55,800. There is a copy of it right here. And then, if you add the transportation and accommodations for the people who are going to work, the main contractor's bid on this item Part D and Part E, was \$80,000 and \$72,000. So the items that were removed were worth some \$152,000.

Now the Premier has said to me that we have saved \$200,000 and right there is \$152,000 of it for less work that we have. We have not saved \$200,000, so this letter is misleading. I do not suggest that the Premier tried to mislead me intentionally because his

Minister' did not give him all the information. But when I brought that to the Premier's attention, he did not seem to think much of it.

I know the Premier that I served under, one of our Members at one time was not straightforward with him and he did not remain in Cabinet for very long after, I remember that was some time before I was in Cabinet. Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the Premier did not make some kind of an issue of this.

Mr. Speaker, to date my enquiries fell on deaf ears to find out what happened in this. When I asked the Auditor General to look into it, he was unable to on his own initiative. When I asked the Premier, through the Cabinet to get the Auditor General to look at it, it was refused by the Premier. He would not have the Auditor General look into it. So Mr. Chairman, the last hope I have in this Province to have some independent person look at this, the only avenue that was left to me as a resident of this Province and not necessarily as an MHA in this House, but as a resident who is upset that we have \$120 million deficit because of the mismanagement of our Minister of Finance. Mr. Chairman we have \$1.3 million minimum thrown away by the Minister of Works, Services, and Transportation. I went to the ombudsman of this Province, Mr. Chairman. He does not have very long in his office because of this Premier and this Government. He is going to be banished, but I have no other avenues, Mr. Chairman, and the pitiful excuse that the Minister of Finance and the Premier used when they suggested they are going to banish the Ombudsman's office

was that we have 52 Ombudsmen, ombudspeople or whatever you want to call them, in this Assembly and we do not need an Ombudsman. The only place in the world, Mr. Chairman, the free democratic world, the only place who does not need an Ombudsman.

I do not know if the Premier believed all the publicity for example the T-shirts that went around, 'Clyde Wells for Prime Minister,' and believed so much in that type of hype that he thinks he is going to act in this Province, Mr. Chairman, above the law. As I heard on one of the news items the other day, 'Who guards the guards.' That is the quote they used, 'Who guards the guards.' If you look at the trend of what this Government has done in 18 months, Mr. Chairman, when you talk about who guards the guards, 18 months they have been here but what have they done in 18 months to protect the general public of this Province, people who might be upset with the Government. I know the Premier could not believe that anyone in this Province might eventually get upset with him but let me tell him they will. They will catch on to him. They will get upset with him, Mr. Chairman. But in this Province to date, in an 18 month Liberal regime, Mr. Chairman what have we seen? What type of Government? What message is going out to the people.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, we had a consumer representative on our Public Utilities Board who was doing a good job, regardless of who he was, he was doing an excellent job and the general population of this Province finally had some confidence in our Public Utilities Board. There was some glimmer of hope that their

view was being heard when the large companies, the Light and Power at the time, or Hydro, or Telephone Company, or whoever would come before them, there was some glimmer of hope in the consumers of this Province that the consumer representative would make a difference, Mr. Chairman. He did make a difference if you follow the history of what happened since the consumer representative was on the Board.

I know the Member for St. John's South is not interested in providing a fairness or a balance, he is only by the skin of his teeth Liberal Member, so if he would go back out there in the room where he was before I would be quite happy. All right, Mr. Chairman, then we have in this Province, in the 18 months what do we have, who guards the guards again, Mr. Chairman.

The next item on the chopping block was the Ombudsman. I just went over that a little bit, Mr. Speaker, but he is supposed to be one of the guards of the guards, of the Government and probably of the whole Legislature, Mr. Speaker.

We have the consumer representative axed from the Public Utilities Board, Mr. Speaker. In his place we have a Department of Justice public servant serving in some manner that I am not clear on yet, Mr. Speaker, what he is supposed to do. He is an employee of the Department of Justice. He is a public servant and he does not have nearly the freedom of the representative on the Public Utilities Board.

The next thing the ombudsman is shot, Mr. Speaker. Nine hundred and fifty-six complaints I believe

it was last year, the ombudsman had. Now, Mr. Speaker, those 956 complaints will definitely fall on deaf ears if they go on that side of the House and you will see Monday where one of those complaints came from, the Member for Torngat Mountains.

Mr. Speaker, so we have the Public Utilities Board gutted, Mr. Speaker. We have the Ombudsman Office banished, Mr. Speaker. The next thing, Mr. Speaker, we are going to have an Auditor General's Act, I think we have an Auditor General, he was fired publicly, I believe. He was more or less told he was going to be laid off publicly. I know it was a mistake. I am not blaming anyone for that, Mr. Speaker. The first that the Auditor General, Joe McGrath, who was in that office knew that he was not going to be Auditor General was at a public meeting of his peers, not very courteous, but a mistake. The Member for Gander -

Some Hon. Members: (inaudible):

Mr. Aylward: Well, he definitely fired him. Okay if it was not a mistake, then you fired him publicly. You fired him publicly. I expected more from you actually. I was going to suggest that it was a mistake.

Mr. Speaker, now we have an Auditor General's Act that is coming before here that already has been criticized by the Federal Auditor General as being not a sufficient Act. There is no value for dollar judgement or accounting, and I am not an accountant so I do not understand much about it. It is not in there, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, and what else do we

have in the 18 months - it is happening, it is building a bit more over time, Mr. Speaker - over the last four or five months? What do we have in our legal aide system, Mr. Speaker? The poor of this Province cannot get legal representation because Government will not put enough money into the system to allow them to get lawyers, Mr. Speaker. That is shameful and you know where that shows up the most, Mr. Speaker. Last week when the Minister of Social Services put out his edict or last month when he put out his edict, that the Department of Social Services is going to take back \$115 a month in maintenance payments to single mothers in this Province, Mr. Speaker. They cannot even question that. The Ombudsman is not going to be around to help them out, legal aide is not available to them because no lawyers will take on the case, you will not give them enough money. So, who suffers, Mr. Speaker, when there is nobody around to guard the guard. The poor, the sick, the children in this Province are the ones who suffer, Mr. Speaker, because of what that Minister is doing. Mr. Speaker, to get back to the contract for another couple of minutes, I do not think that I have to much time left, but to get back to this Ossokmanvan Bridge Contract again to see what the attitude of this Government is. Besides all of these items which shows the attitude of the Cabinet and Government that we have in this House, the last option left to me to find out the truth of what happened to the contract in Labrador was to go to the Ombudsman. So, I would expect yes, we will have the Ombudsman go look at it, get a third party independent view or independent story of it and probably he would

come out and say that someone left it on their desk and someone went on holidays. Maybe he would do that Mr. Speaker and that would be the end of it. But what did the bungling Minister of Works, Services and Transportation do, Mr. Speaker? He sent the Ombudsman a letter saying he could not investigate it. He forced the Ombudsman of this Province into the Supreme Court of Newfoundland to try to get a ruling on his Act to make sure that he could go in and do a review of this contract.

Mr. Speaker, if that is not a cynical dictatorship, I do not know what it is. It is a dictatorship and all of these items show the attitude. Now the attitude is not very public yet. The public of this Province is not aware of this attitude yet but they will be. The best comments I have heard in the last little while, two people working at VOCM Radio Station said it to me. Two Ministers were down there in the last month on the Open Line Show, two Ministers. I can not remember which one now. Maybe the Minister of Social Services is one. Both of them said to two people at that radio station, 'We will be a one-term government.'

Mr. Speaker, that is the first thing they have said right since they have been elected. Mr. Speaker there is one other Cabinet Minister in this House who said that recently. The Minister of Health said it out in Corner Brook to a meeting. He got a standing ovation for it. The only one he got for the night, Mr. Speaker and I am glad to hear that.

I am sorry the Premier's Executive Assistant is not here right now because there is a lot of talk about saving money in this

Province, Mr. Speaker. I know that the Premier's Office, I am not sure how many cars they have assigned to them yet, I know he is driven around by his chauffeur most of the time. Except one day when I happened to be standing on the steps when his Executive Assistant was holding the door of the car open for him and he looked at me and walked by that and got in his car and drove off with his Executive Assistant standing there looking puzzled. I do not know why he was so frightened of me seeing him get into that chauffeur driven car, Mr. Speaker but there is one other vehicle that I recognized assigned to that Premier's Office and that is a blazer. The Premier's Executive Assistant has been using that vehicle quite often to go to Bally Haly to play golf all summer.

I do not know if that is a way to save money. It certainly is a way for him to save money. He is probably not getting the \$18,000 allowance that the rest of you are getting every year to drive a car, Mr. Speaker.

I would say that in a very short time the public of this Province will catch on to the deception that is being inflicted upon this Province by the master of deception who is not in the House today, the Premier.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Minister of Works, Services and Transportation.

Mr. Dave Gilbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Whenever I hear the Member from Kilbride talking I am reminded of a line from Tennyson and it says 'From the long necked geese of the world that ever hissed this praise.'

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Dave Gilbert: That is what the Member from Kilbride is beginning to sound like. He cannot find anything good to say about anyone anymore. He has reached a stage that now he is beginning to fit into the Opposition mode. He was over there before and he thought he was in Government. Now all of a sudden he realizes he is in Opposition. He is trying to become good at it.

An Hon. Member: Inaudible.

Mr. Gilbert: He is trying to do the job. The only way he realizes he has to do this is become bitter and not to say anything good or honest about anything that happens. Now as I have tried to explain to the hon. Member over the last week or so, that the Ossokmanvan Bridge Contract was a dreadful mistake. And the civil servants that worked in that office - if he was the Minister, anyhow it was seventeen years and when I got in, I did not want to get into this and really come down too hard on those people over there because they accuse us of blaming them for everything that happens but I really did not. - When I got down and started to investigate this, you know what I found was happening in the Contracts Division in my Department? What was happening is that in the sloppyness that had crept into the system over the 17 years, there was no need to go back within the thirty days. The contractors were out doing jobs and calling and asking, what about our contracts? This was a common practice that went on in that department and now all of a sudden, when I find out that this dreadful error was made by a civil servant down the line too far, he

got a reprimand for not doing his job. As far as I am concerned, the management that was built up over the seventeen years those members over there were in power let this sort of sloppiness filter into the system. Believe me, we will take care of this and we will correct this, have no worry. But let me tell you that the reason for it was sloppiness from the previous administration.

The Member made a few remarks about the first contract and the second contract, and why we did not award it to the second tenderer. The reason we did not award it to the second tenderer was because according to the records when I had them checked out, my officials told me that the first contract for McNamara fitted perfectly within the system and there was no reason why that contract should be turned down, other than the fact that someone in my department made a terrible mistake. We could not go to the second contract, we had to call a second tender.

Now the member made great remarks about 'they changed from one tender to the other'. There was a minor change put in because my officials felt that in the first contract it was overpriced. They then dropped it out because they felt we could do it cheaper sometime down the road; \$20,000 dollars was the change in that contract. The member, again hissing his dispraise, tries to change \$20,000 dollars, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. R. Aylward: A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. the Member for Kilbride, on a point of order.

Mr. R. Aylward: Mr. Chairman, I asked the minister yesterday, or two or three days ago, for the estimate of the two items that were taken out of it and he gave me an answer. He must have forgotten it already or he did not read it, because McNamara's first bid, the original bid for the two items, was \$70,000 dollars. He had that when the Premier wrote his letter and he knew it, no matter what your estimate was.

Mr. Chairman: There is no point of order, it is just a disagreement between hon. members.

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Chairman, the estimate we put in, our department when we were calling the tender, was \$20,000 dollars.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation I had not recognized.

Mr. Gilbert: Whose side are you on?

An Hon. Member: Yes. Good question.

Mr. Gilbert: He is fair. He is scrupulously fair. You can see that when you have a member up making a great speech.

If I really wanted to get down into the mud with the member, and I would not do that, I would bring up things that happened in their administration. At least we call contracts. It is not like in the Cat Arm deal, where you extended it without calling any contracts. Remember that? You know, I would not want to get into that. I would not want to remind the Minister of Cucumbers, the money he cost the people of

Newfoundland, the \$20 million dollars he cost them. I would not be like that at all. I would not really want to remind the member of stuff like that, but I will point out - I do not want to take up too much time, because I want all those people over there to have lots of time to talk.

In conclusion, I am telling you that we have no worries at all about the investigation, as we have said from day one, whether it be the Auditor General -

An Hon. Member: Why do you keep blocking it?

Mr. Gilbert: - or the Ombudsman or anyone else. When it is all over, the one thing they will find out about it is that it was an inefficient civil servant left there by the previous Government who made a mistake, and we have to correct it right now, thank you, and it will not happen again.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Kilbride.

Mr. R. Aylward: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just have to make a few comments on the last item the Minister mentioned. The Minister might remember that in his answer in this House last week he admitted that his Department has yet to put procedures in place to rectify this situation. Unless he has done it in the last three days, there are no -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. R. Aylward: I will read it when I finish this. The next time I get up I will have the reference. I could not get it in time. The Minister said in this House in answering a question I

put to him that he hopes this would never happen again. Now he just said this will never happen again. Since this happened this summer, what procedures has the Minister put in place to see that it will not happen again? You know what they are, zero. Because I know more about his department than he does.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. the Minister of Social Services. I recognized the hon. Member.

Mr. Efford: Oh, I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. I was listening to my hon. colleague across the way and I did not hear what you were saying.

I thought the former Minister of Agriculture would have stayed in his seat and waited for a few minutes so that I could correct some of the things. I want to correct one thing before I get into my few remarks about the condition of the Province, especially the financial condition of the Province. He made the comment that two Ministers made a statement to a couple of reporters or some of the staff at VOCM that we were only here for one term. Well let me assure you of one thing, it was not the Minister of Social Services. Because the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador will be here many, many more terms than one in this Province. I can assure you of that. In fact, I plan to get re-elected at least three more times before I even consider retirement - at least three more elections, and that is another fifteen years. As long as I can hang on to a few of the pickle books, I will probably stay on a lot longer than that.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. the Member

for Kilbride - I was trying to remember his district. That is how much of an impact he makes over there in Opposition. I think the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation made one point, that he is trying to fit in as an Opposition member. He has not done it too well yet, but I suppose after being in Government for seventeen years you really do not understand how the system works. It is pretty difficult to get in as an Opposition critic, because you have to learn the system all over again. You would think that after seventeen years most people would have a knowledge of the operations of Government and what is going on so they would automatically fit in and get into Question Period and know how to be critical of a particular department. But with the exception of one or two Members over there on the other side, we see very little evidence of any Opposition mentality or fitting in. They are not in their seats now, believe me. They are not in their seats now.

The Ombudsman - 976 calls in 1989. That is about an average week for me, an average week for the Department of Social Services. Without exaggeration, quite seriously, that is about an average week for the Department of Social Services. There are a couple of people in enquiries, the Executive Assistant, the secretaries in my office and myself, and of the calls you could total up that in any average week we get 975 calls.

Did you ever look at the Ombudsman's report at the end of the year? Do you ever read it? Somebody phones in or writes a letter and they explain that they are going to get evicted from

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. The best answer he has ever given in a report was that he called up the Department, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing, spoke to an individual, 'and he assured me that nothing else could be done. Sorry, but thank you.' That is the type of report you get. Just take the report some time and read it.

Quite clearly it has been stated that we have fifty-two MHAs in the House of Assembly. Do we have fifty-two ombudsmen? You do not have to name them ombudsmen, but you certainly have fifty-two MHAs who are elected by people in the districts and the responsibility of MHAs in the districts is to take calls from the people. That is a responsibility. It is very clear that your responsibility is there. And any Minister in Cabinet who does not have the time to answer all the calls from his district personally, has the advantage of using an Executive Assistant. That is not something created by this Government, so why do you want it repeated? Why do you want somebody else sent out there, pay them a salary, three or four people, to do the same thing? I think it is a pretty relaxed situation. Nine hundred and seventy-six calls in fifty-two weeks. That would average less than twenty a week for - how many people in the office; the Ombudsman, an assistant-

An Hon. Member: Eight, or ten, or something.

An Hon. Member: No, it cannot be.

An Hon. Member: Two or three investigators.

Mr. Efford: Not only does he only get twenty calls a week, but

apparently there were only ten of those twenty that he could deal with in one week; and that has cost this Province close to \$275,000 a year? That is almost as bad as the pickle factory; almost as bad.

The other reference they made was to the representative of Consumer Affairs.

Ms Verge: We cannot deal with that.

Mr. Efford: Cannot deal with what? Do you want to ask me a question on it? You have not asked me a question this year yet, so you may as well start now. I will sit down and let you ask me a question.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

The Hon. the Member for Humber East.

Ms Verge: Thank you, Chairperson.

Mr. Chairman: On a point of order, or (inaudible)?

Ms Verge: No, the Minister yielded.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Ms Verge: I would like to remind the Minister that I have asked him several questions about his decision to cut social assistance for 1,000 single parent families in the Province, and he has not given me a satisfactory answer. I am waiting now for the Premier's review.

But I was interjecting there a moment ago on the subject of Government's decision to disband the Ombudsman's Office. The Minister may not realize this, but

the Ombudsman was appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council on the unanimous recommendation of the House of Assembly, members on both sides, four years ago. That was a second appointment, in each case for a ten year term, and we are now only four years into that second year term. Therefore, the Government is going to have to pay the salary of the incumbent for the balance of this ten year term, which is six more years, and therefore, where are the savings? Where are the economies?

Chairperson, obviously the real reason the Government is getting rid of the Ombudsman's office is that this Government cannot take criticism. This Government pressured the Mayor of Corner Brook the other night to block me from a meeting discussing the future of the Fisher Institute in Corner Brook. As the daily newspaper in Corner Brook pointed out in an editorial this evening, this Liberal Government seems to be afraid of taking criticism or exposing itself to criticism; this Government seems to take elaborate pains to shield itself from criticism, and obviously the decision to get rid of the Ombudsman's office is just one more sign of that kind of dictatorial attitude on the part of the Government.

I will yield now to listen to more of the Minister of Social Services, and watch him dig his hole deeper.

Mr. Chairman: Before I recognize the Hon. the Minister of Social Services, for the benefit of Hansard I think the Hon. the Member for Humber East was using the microphone of the Hon. the Member for Grand Falls, to make sure that there is no mistake.

Ms Verge: And they do not confuse us.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. The Hon. the Minister of Social Services.

Mr. Efford: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now I know why the Province is in such a dismal mess. When an Hon. Member stands in her place for ten minutes after starting out to ask a question and I am still wondering what the question was, or what the plan of the comment was, after seventeen years in Government and the past year and a half in opposition, you still do not know how to ask a question. I tell you, I may get an hour or so on the weekend, when I am not over in my office working, and I will sit down and write three or four questions for you for next week, so you will have some idea how to ask a question.

I did not really support what she was saying this afternoon about the Mayor of Corner Brook. I am not so sure she is actually giving the right information to the House, about if the Mayor really did say what he was supposed to have said, according to the Member for Humber East. But I will tell you one thing, if he did not, he should have. He should have. After the statements that have come out of this House of Assembly from the Opposition in the last couple of days, he certainly should have locked the doors and barred you out. If he did let you in, I would be awfully upset with him.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) terrible.

Mr. Efford: It is not terrible, because it is absolutely unbelievable how much politics -

she never asked me a question in the House of Assembly today about the fact that I was over in Corner Brook. I sat down and met with the Status of Women Council and the Single Moms Association over there.

Let me tell you some of the facts. She was not there then, but she was sure on the phone before I arrived. I do not think she was on the phone after I left. I think the reports and the answers you got to the questions after I left, I think she realized she was beating against a dead wall. Because now the single parents and the Status of Women Council in western Newfoundland know who is right and who is wrong about the situation.

Let me go one step further. She did not try to get into the meeting I attended. You did not request to come to the meeting, that you were representing the single parents of Newfoundland & Labrador, and you did not ask to sit down at that meeting, did you? I would have loved to have you at the other end of the table after I was finished talking and they agreed with everything I said. I wish you had been there.

Let me give you some of the numbers and let me give you some of the concerns from the Hon. Member from Humber East. How many single parents are in Corner Brook, in that area? Let me tell you. There are three hundred and ninety. Let me give you another bit of information. How many single parents receiving maintenance income went to the Single Moms Against Poverty for requests since the order came down from Department of Social Services? How many?

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Efford: I am asking you. You are representing the area. How many? Thirteen out of the three hundred and ninety have made representation. And I suspect, if the truth was known, that those thirteen were phoned by you and told to do so.

After Question Period the other day a petition was presented by the House and I got up and I commented on the petition. One of the very things I commented on was that less than 1,000 people received a maintenance income and 5,700 were not receiving one. Not once in eighteen months did that Hon. Member show any concern for those 5,700 single parents at all.

To make matters even worse, 390 are in our own district. Only thirteen have made representation to the Single Moms Against Poverty on the maintenance income issue. After 390 and the 13 there, what about the remainder of single parents who have never received maintenance income. What about them?

Where is your genuine concern for those single parents? It is an issue that that Hon. Member is playing politics with and there is no genuine concern. That is the fact of what you are doing.

Copies of answers. When the hon. Member was Minister of Justice, what did you say in that? Let us get the spouse's to pay maintenance income for single parents so they will not be a drain on the taxpayers and they will not have to go to Social Services to get support for their families. The spouses are supposed to pay. It is here. I will read it exactly as it says.

Have I got my bifocals set up right? This is one of the main reasons the program was set up, but with the Legal Aid budget an objective will be forwarded to us because there is no wherewithal for the Legal Aid Commission to give representation to these single parents, so it is all unnecessary. There is an unnecessary dependence on Social Assistance.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, 'as I have mentioned, as a result of default there are additional demands placed on the public purse since beneficiaries of court orders are not getting the maintenance. They are often on hold because they have to turn to Social Services. We may ask why should the taxpayers and citizens of the Province generally assume the financial obligations of the defaulting spouses and parents to provide adequately for their families.'

She was then the Minister of Justice. That was the Minister of Justice, the same person who stands up in this House of Assembly, the same person who phones every single parent across the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to have a march on Confederation Building. What did they tell you when you asked them to march on Confederation Building? Tell the truth. What did they tell you? Did they say yes, or did they tell you no, we are not going to march on Confederation Building because we know in most areas what the Minister of Social Services say is correct? They told you that, did they not? How many single parents have I met over the last week who have said to me, and I do not lock my doors, I do not hide behind the curtain, I will meet with the

people at anytime, how many single parents have said to me I wish I had the opportunity to go back to school to be retrained, to be re-educated; I only wish I had the opportunity to get into the work force? Now, Mr. Minister, you are giving me that opportunity, you are giving me an alternative. Why not call out tomorrow morning to the Single Moms Against Poverty, in Corner Brook, and ask them what has happened since I was out there the other day? Of the thirteen people who were receiving maintenance income and it is discontinued, what are they doing now? Ask about the problems. They have told the single moms - they have sent the officials in Social Services - now they are offered better alternatives and they are happy about it - the thirteen. Now what about the remaining 373 or 383? What about those people? Sometime you had better take some really genuine concern, now that you are on the Opposition, now that you are in the position. You could have done something about it, because when you were a Minister in Government that is when all the rules and regulations were drawn up on the Community Development Program. And what was the best thing that was offered on the Community Development Program when you were in Government? They made these decisions which they criticized me for two days ago in the House of Assembly, that you must be earning less than 75 percent in order to get on Community Development. I did not make that rule, you did.

An Hon. Member: Change it then, will you?

Mr. Efford: Just wait. Who made the decision to put single parents on the side of the street picking up garbage.

An Hon. Member: You did.

Mr. Efford: Who made that decision? I took that away. You talk about motivation. Who left in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador when they went out of government 23,000 people dependent on social assistance? Who left that.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Efford: It was that administration under the leadership of what we see sitting in the front row. Make no wonder most of the members are gone. They are ashamed to sit in the House of Assembly and listen to this. There are 23,174 people on social assistance now. That is what we inherited, 23,174.

An Hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Efford: Can't you understand english? I have a bit of a Port de Grave accent, but surely you can understand it. Let me tell you one thing, Sir, let me tell the hon. the Member for Grand Bank one thing, you will never get me to say that I am ashamed of my Port de Grave accent. Do not ever think that, Sir. I will hold my head high with you any day in the week, do not worry about that. It got me this far and it will get me a lot further, I can assure you of that much.

But I can tell you one thing about it, if you are going to be in the House of Assembly and you are going to truly represent the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and you are going to truly represent the people who are less advantaged than we are, then let us be honest about it. If we are going to stand up in the House of Assembly, and I will accept the

question any day in the week, in fact I am bored sitting in my seat getting no questions. Anytime you want to ask a question, I will answer it. I know what is happening in the Department of Social Services. I do not have to run out behind the doors and get on the phone and say, Deputy Minister, tell me how many people do we have on social assistance, how many single parents do we have?

I know what is going on in my own district, I know what is going on in the Province, unlike the Member from Humber East, who did not even know how many single parents are in Corner Brook, let alone in the Province.

Do you know, out of the 6500 single parents, how many of those people are able-bodied? Do you know how many are able-bodied, can actually go to work? No, that she does not know. Let me tell you. 3,300 out of the 6,500 are able-bodied. How many out of those numbers actually can go into the work force? How many? - 2700. Because of children and they cannot get baby sitting services.

You have to look at your numbers, you have to do your research. That is another lesson you should take from the Opposition. Never ask a question in the House of Assembly unless you know the answer, I will give you that tip. Then you would not be making so many mistakes in the House of Assembly. Probably you would be helping some people. So, it is fine to sit over there and criticize, but the people out there realize what it is all about.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot stand on my feet and sit down again without making reference to what I have in

my hand. I cannot. And it is not humorous all the time when you are dealing with it, because I have a clientele that I am dealing with on a day-to-day basis and when -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Efford: No pickles at the Cabot Room at Hotel Newfoundland, none, Sir. I will never do anything that I am ashamed of doing, and I am not ashamed to admit it. Let me tell you, if I had some of the money that has gone into just the lighting structure of this alone to give to some of the single parents - how much, \$6 million to put the lighting in there? If I had the \$23 million, how many single parents could I put through a retraining program in school? Instead of opening up a book and the first thing you look at on the first page is Bev's Favorite Dip, that type of thing. I have to say no to single parents and to the hungry in this Province, and I open up my desk and look at that. Cucumber Cooler: Boy, oh boy, oh boy.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Efford: Mr. Chairman, I could answer that. It is too bad that I am in the House of Assembly and there are people in the audience. Believe me, you would get your Bev's Dip. I can assure you that, Mr. Chairman. I know what the former Minister of Social Services' capabilities were, I inherited his job. I inherited his office, I inherited the administration, I inherited the mess, and I have been 18 months since trying to straighten it out.

An Hon. Member: No wonder you are working 18 months (inaudible).

Mr. Efford: Talk about used to the Cabot Room at Hotel Newfoundland. I was there 18 months before I could figure out what this little gadget was to automatically turn on the TV. I thought it was a TV over in the corner. I was not used to that kind of style where I come from.

An Hon. Member: It was not a microwave, was it?

Mr. Efford: I walked into another room and I saw this big black machine in the corner with all these gadgets on it, walked in another room and saw a refrigerator. I could not figure out what I would need that for. I do not have time to get clear of my phone, let alone go out to the microwave oven, or out to the refrigerator, or out to the bar. How could you possibly as Minister of Social Services get time to use the like of that?

An Hon. Member: To get a bottle of pickles, yes?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Efford: I walked in another room.

An Hon. Member: The pickle factory.

Mr. Efford: When I stopped to find my way around the office, I walked in another room and I opened the door. The refrigerator was there and there was a few pictures and old stuff there. I did not mind that, that was using space, it used to be in storage. I opened another door and I walked into this big fancy bathroom and shower basin.

Some Hon. Members: What? What?

Mr. Efford: Now I am the Minister of Social Services. I am supposed to be representing the poor of the Province, and look what I have to walk into. Did I build the bathroom? Did I build the (inaudible). You talk about the hon. the Member from Humber East. Is that the type of things we are concerned about, or the people of the Province? If we had the monies to do it, we had the monies, Mr. Chairman, to give to the poor of the Province. Let me tell you something else I inherited, an average family of four...

An Hon. Member: Did you find the camera?

Mr. Efford: I found it, after several weeks, by the tape recorder and by the microphone, by one of those things you record on, by the VCR under another television.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Efford: Under another television.

An Hon. Member: Was it a colored TV?

Mr. Efford: Let me tell you what I inherited, let me tell you what the former administration is praising up, and why I should encourage single parents to stay on social assistance - \$475 a month for a family of three, \$475 a month. And do you want to seriously sit over there and say that I, as Minister of Social Services, should encourage single parents to stay on social assistance? Give them the \$115, just give it to them, never mind the 5,700 who are living on \$475 or less, give the people who are receiving maintenance \$115. What

are we up to? \$475 and \$115 - \$590. Now take the \$590 and start dividing it down. What do they get out of it? They have two kids to put in school. They have to buy clothes. They have to pay their food bill. They have to buy the essential things of life which they need, day-to-day basics, toiletries. Split that four or five hundred and fifty out. Now what am I offering them instead of that?

No incentive. Make no wonder we get families depressed and we get single moms depressed and sitting home with nothing to do, no stimulation for themselves or their children. Make no wonder you would. Four hundred and seventy five dollars a month. I spend that some weeks on entertainment, and I expect another family to live on it?

If I am going to continue on with that, then I am nothing less than a hypocrite. If I am going to stand in this House of Assembly and say that I can go out on the weekend and I can spend four or five hundred dollars and I expect a single mom with two children to live on that, then I am a hypocrite.

I want to hope that the single parents of this Province get something better, and one of the better things you can offer them is to start recognizing that there is a problem and offer them some independence: give them back some initiative, give them back some pride in themselves, give them some opportunity. They are human beings and they deserve an opportunity, they deserve a better chance at life.

One of the things, and the former minister knows full well what I am

saying, the very least.. you can offer them, is a job on community development programs. That is the least you can offer them. The very least.

An Hon. Member: In what way (inaudible).

Mr. Efford: The very least. Five dollars and thirty five cents an hour. The hon. Member, the hon. Member who is so concerned about the food banks, let me read a little poem to the Hon. Member. The Member spoke of food banks, /He spoke with quiet reverence, /The poor, he said, were often on his mind, /Not his whopping severance."

Some Hon. Members: Hear! Hear!

Mr. Efford: Mr. Chairman, I tell the Hon. Member over there, when he is talking about the food banks, think about the stretch limousines, the fifty dollar cigars, the two hundred and fifty dollar tips, the hundred thousand dollar severance pay, and so on and so on. If we are going to be straight, if we are going to shoot from the hip, let us start shooting and be able to take the bullets as they are coming at us. Let us not be one-sided.

But I can tell the hon. Member, I can tell every hon. Member on that side of the House of Assembly, that when a single parent, or a poor person or family in this Province is offered something better, they are willing to take advantage of it. The least you can do is start offering. Do not force it down their throats and say this is the only thing I am going to give you. I am going to give you social assistance and nothing else. I am going to encourage you. I am going to support you. I am not going to

say to you, that is where you should stay, on social assistance. That is wrong. One of the questions your people asked me the other day in Corner Brook was What about single parents? They have children. How can they go to work and have kids? Who is going to pay for the baby sitting services? Do you realize you have been their representative for ten years and you never once conveyed the message to the single moms in your district that the Department of Social Services will pay for baby sitting services, for day care? You did not tell them that, yet you will stand up here in the House of Assembly and you will point your finger at me.

An Hon. Member: You have social workers.

Mr. Efford: I have what? I hope we do have social workers. We have fifty more now than you had when you were minister. I hope we do have them. Let me tell you something else. We have implemented training programs for social workers. This is the first time ever in the Department of Social Services since Confederation. So do not get me started on you, Sir.

What we are talking about, Mr. Chairman, is the right thing to do for the people of the Province, the right administration, the right direction to show people, and not only people on social assistance. Every minister in Cabinet can do the same thing. Let me tell you, Mr. Chairman, very clearly that when we leave the House of Assembly, whenever it may be, in 2040 or 2045, I can assure you there will be nothing like Mount Pearl, like this. And if there are any extra millions of

dollars to go around we will not be putting it in cucumber pots, we will put it in the pockets of the poor, Mr. Chairman.

An Hon. Member: There will be no limousines.

Mr. Efford: There will be no stretch limousines - use the correct word, stretch limousines. Mr. Chairman, I know why there are no questions being asked.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

Mr. Efford: I realize, Mr. Chairman, why there are no questions being asked of the Minister of Social Services. I realize why, because the hon. the Member for Humber East has not done her homework. For seventeen years she had not done it. And she is sure not going to do it in Opposition, because she will not get the information by calling this minister, let me assure you. If she wants me to meet with her people, I will meet with her, anytime I will meet with her people. You will not be barred if your people request it, but if you phone me directly, that will be a different story. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

The honorable the Member for Grand Bank.

Mr. Matthews: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, let me begin by saying yes, we realize the Progressive Conservative Party was in power in this Province for seventeen years. But in seventeen years they did not become as arrogant as this crowd became in seventeen months, I will tell you that. We saw that administration come to power on all kinds of

election promises, what they were going to do for the people of this Province, and what have we seen? If you ever saw a move towards a closed Government, Mr. Chairman, it is over here: doing away with the ombudsman; policemen on doors with nightsticks keeping MHAs from meetings. That is what we are faced with in this Legislature. That is what we are faced with. What a farce! What a farce!

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Matthews: Now, Mr. Chairman, I would for the jewel on the backbenches to be quite. He goes around telling people he is the jewel of the backbenches. Yes, we know what a jewel the rest of them over there thinks he is. That is why he is no longer chairman of caucus. He should be quite now. He should be quite. Now, Mr. Chairman -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Matthews: Yes, we have seen that. Let me talk about the Ombudsman, Mr. Chairman. Four years ago, the Ombudsman was appointed by this Legislature, a unanimous appointment by all members of this Legislature, many of whom are right here tonight, and I believe the Minister of Social Services might have been one of them - he might have been. Yes, he voted for it. A unanimous vote. We advertised for the Ombudsman as much as we advertised for Doug House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Matthews: We advertised the Ombudsman's job as much as we advertised for Dr. Doug House. What I am saying is that it was a unanimous appointment of this Legislature, with three members of

the Opposition of the day speaking in favour of the Ombudsman being appointed for a term of ten years - three members. Who were they? The now Minister of Fisheries is one, the now Speaker of the Legislature was two, and there was one other. Who was it?

An Hon. Member: The Minister of Forestry.

Mr. Matthews: The Minister of Forestry. Now even though you are going to abolish the Ombudsman, as has been pointed out already this evening, you are going to pay him for the ten year period anyway. So he may not serve his ten years, but it going to cost the taxpayers of this Province ten years in wages for what you are doing.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Matthews: Oh yes. Oh yes. That is what it is going to cost you. How much did Valdmanis cost? How much did Valdmanis cost?

An Hon. Member: Were you paying him while he was in jail?

Mr. Matthews: How much did the chocolate factory cost, and the rubber factory? How much? How much did it cost the Province?

An Hon. Member: Not as much as Bill Sprung.

Mr. Matthews: No? Maybe it did not. I will be the first to admit that Sprung cost the Government money that it should not have cost, I will be the first to admit it, but I will guarantee you one thing, that this administration is now spending millions of dollars on an Economic Recovery Commission that, at the end of the day, will be the Liberal Government's Sprung.

I said last year in a debate in this House that it is fine to stand in your places and knock Sprung, but with each administration and each Government, with passing months and years, there will always be something else that will roll off the tongues of the electorate about whatever administration it is. There will be one that will roll off the tongues of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians about this administration. It is starting to slip off the tongues already, after eighteen months.

I would suggest to hon. Members that they should control their exuberance and their arrogance. Because I can tell you something, there was a noticeable difference in the attitude of Members opposite in October month than in June month. I can tell you there was a big difference in the attitude and the feelings over there. You might come back this evening in a chipper, up-mood, but I can tell you you are not a very happy lot, nor should you be. Nor should you be, because in eighteen months you have done more financial damage to this Province than has been done in the past eighteen years - eighteen years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Matthews: I want to comment about a few other things the Minister of Social Services brought up. When he was over here I really thought he cared about the people of this Province and the poor. I really thought he cared. He fooled me like he fooled a lot of other Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. But if he is sincere about cutting fat -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Matthews: Oh yes, as hard as it was I listened to you. I have heard many times before about Bev's special dip, and this and that and something else. Every time you get up you talk about it.

I would say there are a lot of people out around Newfoundland today who would like some of that dip, it would probably get them through the night without being hungry. But I will guarantee you one thing, they will not buy any dip by you taking 115 bucks a month off them. And that is what you did, you took \$115 a month away from them.

An Hon. Member: We gave them twice as much.

Mr. Matthews: You did not give them twice as much of anything.

An Hon. Member: We gave them dignity along with their money.

Mr. Matthews: Dignity at what?

An Hon. Member: Work.

Mr. Matthews: Work at what? Education? The only work you brought forward, and I do not know what the real meaning or reason for it is, is clearing brush. Now it might be connected with something that has happened over the last few months, I am not sure. But there is a coincidence between the brush clearing and what happened to you. Now I did not run into the moose, you did, and shortly thereafter there is brush clearing all over the Province so that people can see moose when they dart out towards the highway. That is what you offer people, clearing brush. And if that is the best you can stand in this Legislature and boast about, taking \$115 from single

parents and clearing brush; I make no wonder you quote from the pickle book.

The other thing I would like to tell the Minister of Social Services, since he got down in the gutter with my colleague, is that I am telling you something -

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible)..

Mr. Matthews: No, you did not get down with her, because she would not have you there with her.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

Mr. Matthews: Old chicken wings better be careful up there. He should be careful, because he has gotten himself in trouble a number of times in this House already. He is only a rookie, I realize that, but he should be careful.

But I want to say to the Minister of Social Services there are more people on social services in this Province today than there has ever been before. Now he talked about how many were there when he inherited the mess. Well, there is a bigger mess today under your administration, Mr. Minister; thousands more people today on social assistance than were there on May 5, 1989 - thousands more.

And let me tell you something else about it, that your district offices out and about this Province do not have a big enough budget; you have cut them to the bone and they are not able to service their clientele around the communities. Any Social Services office with long distance calls to be made do not have enough money to be able to service the clientele.

An Hon. Member: Oh!

Mr. Matthews: Now you can 'oh, oh', all you like. I do not care how often you get up. They do not have enough money in the Social Services office to be able to make long distance calls to social assistance recipients they want to service in this Province. Now that is the truth of it, if you want to know. You can get up all you like, you still will not alter that fact. No more that is wrong Bill, that is the right Bill. The same as you sneaked the telex out over the wires on the single parents issue. You did not announce it, you sneaked it out over the wires through your fax machine, and the people who were being affected got the notice in their envelopes or heard on the news that it was coming into effect October 1. That is caring and compassion and openness, that is communication and consultation, that is doing everything aboveboard. But, then, how can it be expected.

Now let me say to the Minister that if he seriously cares about - do you think you are impressing someone by spitting out numbers? I am telling you what is happening out and about the rural communities of this Province. No, I am not making it up as I go. I know in some areas and communities of this Province collect calls have to be made by people who can least afford it - accept collect calls. I am telling you, John, you think you know all that is going on out there, but you do not.

Now if you really want to get out and help the poor, I am telling the truth. If you do not know that, you do not know everything about Social Services and what is going on.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Matthews: No,-- they are not only giving me the information, they are giving other members the information, as well.

An Hon. Member: That is wrong.

Mr. Matthews: You would like it to be wrong, and I can understand that.

An Hon. Member: How many calls did you get on that subject?

Mr. Matthews: On what subject?

An Hon. Member: The one you are talking about.

Mr. Matthews: What is that, single parents? I got too many calls on it. I should not have gotten either one. One is too many, because it should not have been done. You are hurting those who can least afford it.

Now we are here tonight to talk about a loan bill, some \$325 million dollars that Government left on the Order Paper since last spring.

An Hon. Member: I got too many. I brought it up in the House the other day, if you had been listening. You do not pay attention to what is going on.

Mr. Matthews: I do not know why some members on the other side do not -- maybe they are not afforded the opportunity to speak, I do not know. BUT why do they not get up and participate in debate? It is pretty serious stuff. We are here in a Province now that is projecting a \$120 million deficit and the Government is here asking us to pass a loan bill of some \$325 million. That is pretty serious stuff, particularly from a Government who told the Province

they were going to have a \$10 million surplus this year.

Let me just go over the financial record of this Government. In 1989-1990, the Minister of Finance stood in his place with his first Budget, which in essence, for the most part, was our Budget. They came into power and brought it in, and at the end of it they announced, I believe, somewhere about a \$90 million surplus.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Matthews: No, but he put \$20 million in the pension funds or something, so that left him with about \$7 million. That was last spring. In your Budget Speech this spring you said you were pleased to report to the people of this Province that you had a \$70 million surplus, and they just about beat the tops of their desks over there. Then you went on and delivered your Budget Speech and said that at the end of this fiscal year you were going to have a \$10 million surplus. Then the Premier came on in August and said, 'we are going to have a \$120 million deficit' -- a \$130 million difference in six months.

Ms. Verge: In two months.

Mr. Matthews: I mean from when the \$10 million surplus was announced. Half way through the fiscal year, we see a \$130 million change. Then, of course, they put out the orders to freeze off on education and the Province goes into turmoil; and they go out to the health care people and say, Well, you know best what to do but there it is. You operate next year on this year's dollars. With inflation, workers' compensation, salary increases and all that, you are only getting 1990 dollars. So

tell us what the situation is going to be, because you know best.

Then they come back and tell the government and the people of the Province what it is going to mean, that there are going to be layoffs, there are going to be bed closures, and the Premier for the last two days stood in his place and said that is not necessarily so. In the last two days it seemed as if the Premier started to back off a bit.

Maybe his economic statement of August might not be as serious he was saying. It might not be that serious now. He is starting to back off a bit now that he sees what is happening, with people coming and shouting his doors down. We have seen that happen with him before. He does not like that kind of situation. We saw that happen when the people of Grand Bank wanted their fish plant kept open.

So it makes you wonder, Mr. Chairman, what we are doing here debating a \$325 million loan bill. I do not know if I want to pass a loan bill of any amount to turn over to this Minister of Finance, because you really do not know what he is going to do with it or what the situation might be in another four months. Maybe it will be a \$50 million deficit. Maybe it will be a \$200 million deficit. I do not know.

But can you believe a Minister of Finance who stood in his place a few months ago and talked about a \$10 million surplus and it is now a \$120 million deficit, and after taking about \$180 million in new taxes from the people of this Province in two budgets he is still saying we could be between a \$120 and a \$150 million deficit?

The other interesting thing is, where did the surplus come from last year? Where did it come from? The President of Treasury Board would know. Where did it come from?

Mr. Hon. Member: The people.

Mr. Matthews: The people. Oh. Seventy million dollars extra came from the people. Well if that is correct, if the President of Treasury Board says a \$70 million surplus came from the people, there was no need to tax them an additional \$100 million last year, you could have taxed them \$30 million and had a balanced budget or a projected balanced budget.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible)

Mr. Matthews: People in southern Ontario. Oh! Because first when you said it you sort of indicated it was Newfoundlanders & Labradorians. But I knew where it came from, so at least you are being up-front with it all. But what I am saying is, how can we trust this Minister of Finance?

In his first Budget he tried to argue to the people of Newfoundland & Labrador that we were not the highest taxed people in Canada. I am sure we can all remember that. Remember when he tried to tell us we were not the highest taxed people in Canada, and then he got pressure and pressure and pressure?

What did he admit then on television all across this Province? That he did not understand the formula for calculating tax. Remember? What did we get in his Budget? A new payroll tax. Now when the Minister announced it and came back, and when we scrutinized the

Budget and asked him who would pay it, he did not know. What for? He did not know. We went through five or six weeks of the payroll tax and he did not know, and consequently no one else in the Province knew who would be paying or for what.

Seriously, is it any wonder that we are facing a \$120 million deficit with that kind of behavior by our Minister of Finance? Is it any wonder? The Minister of Social Services probably thinks he is doing a wonderful job, but how can he defend things like that? How can you?

I want to refer to the Minister of Forestry and a few things he said. He said a number of things, you know. He made comments about my colleague from Humber East going to a meeting in Corner Brook, which she should have done. I would say if it had been most of us in this Legislature, we would probably have been locked up. I will tell you there would have had to have been a big policeman when I would not have gone to the door. I will tell you that. And he would have had to have had a big nightstick when I would not have gone to the door.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!
Order, please!

An Hon. Member: It is your imagination. It was in your imagination.

An Hon. Member: What kind of a motor is attached to your mouth?

Mr. Matthews: Mr. Chairman, what I was going to say is that if there was anything that the Minister of Justice could have done in Corner Brook to guarantee the re-election of the Member for

Humber East, he did it on Tuesday night. He caused more political damage in the Corner Brook area than anything else that could have been done.

Now we know the Member for Humber East defeated the Premier last time, and she will defeat whoever runs against her next time. Let me tell you something. The Minister of Justice is not held in very good stead in Corner Brook now, but after Tuesday night I will guarantee you he is in big trouble.

An Hon. Member: I could go home and beat her next time.

Mr. Matthews: You had a job to beat where you were. I would say the only thing you will beat the next time will be a drum, and you will be singing Happy Birthday up at Nickerbockers.

I just want to mention to the Minister of Forestry an editorial in the Western Star today, titled 'Verge left out'. I just want to tell the Minister, and read a little. 'It seems the Liberal Government cannot take a little criticism. In the meeting Tuesday night in Corner Brook, between Education Minister Phil Warren, Justice Minister Paul Dicks and community, municipal, and business leaders, pains apparently were taken to shield the Government Ministers from any political jabs from Lynn Verge, P.C. Legislative Member for Humber East.' Then it goes on and says, 'Stopping Verge on the steps of City Hall did not stop her from continuing her campaign to stop the amalgamation of Fisher and Western Community College. Indeed, it may have served only to fan the flames even higher.'

Now I want to say to the Minister of Justice -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Matthews: Mr. Chairman, let me just tell Members opposite that the only way they are trying to defend this action, which I am sure most of them find despicable, is to laugh about it. Because I am sure that a lot of them over there cannot believe that a Minister of Justice and a Minister of Education, on an educational matter as serious as this one has been to Corner Brook, and I know what it has meant to them, because I was minister before and met with the board a few times.

An Hon. Member: How many Liberals (inaudible)?

Mr. Matthews: I did not question whether they were Liberals when they went to my meetings. I did not question how many Liberals were there. When the board set up a meeting for me, I went to meet with whoever was there, and I did not care if they were Liberal, or Rhinoceros, or New Democrat.

An Hon. Member: And if the board said no, they did not come in?

Mr. Matthews: The board had no reason to say no when I was going to a meeting, because they knew I did not care who I met with.

An Hon. Member: Why would you want to go where you were not invited? I am just wondering, why would you want to impose yourself when (inaudible).

Mr. Matthews: Why would you want to go somewhere you are not invited? Because some of us have the intestinal fortitude to be in places we think we should be

without being invited. That is a good answer. Have you ever gone to places in your district where you were not invited, and you thought it was in the best interests that you be there?

An Hon. Member: No, because I am not that ignorant. If I am not invited, I (inaudible).

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

An Hon. Member: You are afraid to go.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!
Order, please!

Mr. Matthews: Well I am going to tell you one thing, if you are not as ignorant, you are not showing it here tonight.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!
Order, please!

I want to remind hon. Members that it is unparliamentary to be interjecting and interrupting a speaker when he is addressing the House.

Mr. Matthews: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do not want complete silence. It does not bother me that the Minister of Forestry is over there going on as he always does, it does not bother me one bit, because to me it shows just one thing, just how bad he feels about what happened in Corner Brook, how bad he feels along with a lot of others over there - a big policeman with a nightstick protecting the Minister of Justice.

I want to go back to a comment that I think was made by the Member for St. John's South, who is not now in his seat, about the limousine. We all know the

episode of the limousine and the tip, the stretch limousine on a trip somewhere to the mainland. Almost every second day you can go down on the main steps of Confederation Building and see the Premier being picked up by a chauffeur, by a car chauffeur-driven, a Government car. Almost every day! It happened yesterday morning, as a matter of fact. I saw it myself. A fellow with a big hat on, in he gets in the front, two of his boys in the back, closes the door and off they drive, while the faurus is in the Premier's spot, which he is getting \$8000 a year for, parked in the spot and he drives away, chauffeur-driven.

The Member for Mount Scio-Bell Island is up there shaking his head again. Now he was blaring and bawling about the \$1000 tip, or the \$1000 limousine on the mainland. Now he is shaking his head about it down here to his Premier.

Some Hon. Members: We do not believe you. We do not believe you.

Mr. Matthews: You do not believe it? You do not believe it happened?

An Hon. Member: I do not believe it. (Inaudible) table some more cost (inaudible).

Mr. Matthews: I do not care what you table. The thought that is important now is what this Premier and this Government is incurring on behalf of taxpayers of this Province.

An Hon. Member: You will not table the \$120 million deficit.

Mr. Matthews: Table what expenses

you are incurring. Like I said, go back to Valdmanis. You have been in Government now for 18 months, you have your second budget in, the worst budget this Province has ever seen. You said it was the best. It turned out to be the worst.

I guess it is like the nurse said last night, which all the Province saw on television, when they talked to the arrogant Minister of Health who was being a little bit of a showman because the cameras were there, being a little bit of a showman, a little bit cocky.

An Hon. Member: Did a good job too.

Mr. Matthews: You did an excellent job for us. You did an excellent for us. That nurse looked him in the eyeball and she said, Minister, if you want to look at cutbacks and restraint, look at your own Premier. He is the highest paid Premier in Canada. Why does he not start with himself? That is what the people out in the Province are saying today, and everyday and every hour they are saying it more and more. That is why, by the way, the members opposite -

Mr. Decker: How about giving up per diems, 125 bucks a day?

Mr. Matthews: I will give up my per diems if you will give up your minister's salary and turn in your \$8000 car. My per diems right now mean as much to me as your thirty-odd thousand dollar minister's salary, you see. It is by comparison, it is all relative. You give that up and I will give up my per diems, gladly.

Mr. Flight: What about your meal allowance, will you give that up

too?

Mr. Matthews: What meal allowance?

Mr. Tobin: What about your colleagues' What about their's. How much is your (inaudible)?

Mr. Matthews: Hold on now. Just leave them alone. Do you see the reaction I got when I talked about the Premier being the highest paid in Canada? Do you see the reaction I got when I talked about the Premier being chauffeur-driven around this City?

Mr. Walsh: I am sorry. It is not that I do not believe the hon. Member, but where I have not seen it, it is hard to accept.

Mr. Matthews: Let me tell you something. If you saw the Premier drive away in a chauffeur-driven car you still would not believe it. You would say, Oh, it cannot be Clyde doing this. That is why he thinks you are the jewel of the backbenches, boy, you believe everything about him.

And then there is a story going around these days, I do not know how true it is, about the Meech Lake racket, how he went to Ottawa and parked a plane on the tarmac for a week.

Some Hon. Members: What? ?What?

Mr. Matthews: Yes, that is on the go, too. I do not know if it is true. I have not been able to substantiate it. That is the only thing I am not sure about.

An Hon. Member: You should not be saying it. It is like the rest of the stuff you are saying.

Mr. Matthews: I know the rest of the stuff is correct. This one

I am not sure of. I cannot believe - no, Clyde would not do that. It would not be in the best interest of the taxpayers of Newfoundland and Labrador. It would not be responsible.

The President of Treasury Board, I am sure, would know. Did the plane go up and come back, or did it stay up there? The President of Treasury Board, did the plane go up and stay, or did the plane go up and come back?

Mr. R. Aylward: The Member for Pleasantville would know. He was up there with him.

Mr. Matthews: Pleasantville knows, he was up there. The Minister of Justice was up there. Did we keep the plane on the tarmac in Ottawa for a week while Clyde Wells was up to supper with Mulroney?

That is not waste! I will tell you something - the Minister of Social Services has left the House, Mr. Chairman, I would like for everybody to note. Is that the kind of waste, I wonder, that poor John says they cut out? Make no wonder he left the House. As I said earlier, Mr. Chairman, on the lips of every Newfoundlander and Labradorian, after a Government is in power so long, there are certain words that roll off.

An Hon. Member: Sprung.

Mr. Matthews: Sprung. The only ones today that Sprung rolls off regularly are members of the Government. Their only defence for their own mismanagement is to talk about Sprung. But I will guarantee you -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Matthews: Yes, we could talk about you for one, and your incompetence. I am going to tell you one thing, as I sat in the convention last weekend I said, My God! how right were the Conservatives years ago when they gave him the boot out of the party? How right were they?

But there are going to be other things roll off the tongues of Newfoundlanders - it is starting now. Every day, every hour, it is getting worse for this Government. Eighteen months into their term: Doug House, Economic Recovery, limousines -

Mr. Grimes: Limousines where?

Mr. Tobin: Here in front of the door.

Mr. Matthews: - airplanes, four-wheel drives.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Matthews: No tow hitches? That was wrong, too.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please! Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

Mr. Matthews: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will get back to it again.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Chris Decker: I have been sitting here in my place, Mr. Chairman, for the past day listening in this filibuster, which the opposition is trying to carry out, bored out of my senses, listening to fearmongering, listening to half truths, unsubstantiated accusations,

listening to Opposition members get up with no concrete under their feet whatsoever.

Mr. Chairman, when any Hon. Member gets up in this House to speak he has Legislative immunity, he or she can say things that he or she will not be held responsible for outside this Hon. House.

Opposition Members are using that immunity to say things which they would never dream of saying outside this Chamber. They spout off unsubstantiated statements. They use the truth as if it was something you could kick around in the gutter. They misrepresent facts as if they were truth. And, Mr. Chairman, the quote of the week, which sums up the attitude of that Opposition, which sums up the kind of game they have been involved in ever since they were booted out of office a few short months ago, the quote of the week was just made by the Hon. Member from Grand Bank when he said, I do not know if it is true. And he did not say it with many words, but it was obvious from his attitude, from his arrogance that he did not care whether it was true or not, Mr. Chairman. He did not know if it was true and he did not care if it was true.

Now that is what is happening over there. That is what is happening in this filibuster. That is the kind of thing the Opposition is doing in order to prolong debate on this particular Bill.

Mr. Matthews: A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

The Hon. the Member for Grand Bank, on a point of order.

Mr. Matthews: Mr. Chairman, the Minister is making some statements here. I asked questions of the President of Treasury Board which he could have answered and which he refused to answer, particularly about the aircraft, and I would say the silence was deafening.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

There is no point of order. The Hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying before I was interrupted on that frivolous point of order, I was trying to use an illustration to show the attitude of the Opposition. They have more research assistants than ever we had when we were in Opposition, and they have research assistants because of our policy of fairness and balance. I wonder what those research assistants are doing. When you hear the half truths, the insinuations, the fabrications that are coming from the other side of the House without being substantiated, I have to wonder if we are not wasting a lot of the taxpayers' money by paying those research assistants.

What are they doing over there? What they are doing over there is wasting the money. The leader of the Opposition, I believe, personified it best of all the other day when he got up and accused this Government of closing twenty-five beds in the Pentecostal Nursing Home in Clarke's Beach. That was the accusation he made.

I went back to the Department of Health - frankly, I did not know anything about those beds being closed. I was not aware of it happening - and I discovered the beds were closed in 1988, when the

previous administration was in power. So he is criticizing himself.

Now if I were over there and a researcher working for the Opposition had given me that kind of information, the researcher would no longer be there, the researcher would be dismissed and he would be replaced by a nincompoop who you could probably get for a considerably less amount of money than we are paying the researchers the Opposition have over there.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I have been sitting here, as I said, in this filibuster, when the Opposition is not really adding anything to the debate. They are not addressing this loan bill, all they are doing is wandering off all over the place going on with half-truths which they cannot substantiate. As the hon. Member who spoke before me pointed out, he did not know if it was true or not and he did not care whether it was true or not. If that is not a despicable thing to be happening to Her Majesty's loyal Opposition, than I do not know what is. Maybe loyal obstructionists might be a more appropriate term to put on those hon. members.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I am going to attempt to put into perspective some of the things that have been happening in this Province for the past 16, 17 or 18 months, however long it is that we have been in Government. We all know what happened on April 20, 1989; the people of this Province said we cannot take it any more. We have had enough of fat cigars and stretch limousines and cucumber patches and high highfalutin schemes and world travel; some of our ministers were better known in

Moscow than they were in St. John's; some of our members were better known in Rome than was the Pope, Mr. Chairman. They were world travelers, they travelled all over the world, and on April 20th. the people of this Province said we cannot take any more of that, so they used their democratic right and they turfed them out of office. Then, we all know, on May 5 the new Cabinet was sworn in, and what did we have? We had for the first time in seventeen years a Liberal Government.

Mr. Chairman, all know it is Liberal in the political sense, but quite apart from the political sense, what we saw sworn in on May 5th was a small 'l' Liberal party, a small 'l' progressive party. Many members of that political party, myself included, are slightly to the left of center: my colleague, the Member from Gander, President of the Treasury Board, Mr. Chairman, his previous involvement in politics shows that he is considerably far left of center; my colleague, the Minister of Social Services, far, far left of center; my colleague, the Minister of Transportation, not quite as far left as myself and the Minister of Social Services, nevertheless just slightly left of center; the hon. the Minister of Finance, again not quite as far left as the Minister of Social Services and myself, but slightly to the left of center. That is what was put in office sixteen months ago. The Premier, Mr. Chairman -

Ms. Verge: Way over on the right. Way over on the right.

Mr. Decker: One minute the Opposition says he is way off to the right - I forget the word they

use now - the next minute he is Attila the Hun, and the next minute he is a raving left wing maniac. So I do not know what is happening. But I would say in fairness that I would have to classify the Premier, in political terms, as pretty well dead center of the road, the typical liberal, the liberal tradition which goes right on back to the early days of England, when the Liberal Party evolved.

The Minister of Education is probably farther left than myself or the Minister of Social Services or the Minister of Finance, probably the farthest left Minister of Education that we have ever had. Now that is the kind of Government which, on May 5, 1989, took over the affairs of this Province.

Now, Mr. Chairman, what did we find? Did we ever find a mess. If we had not been people of strong stomachs we would have thrown up over the whole place. We found school houses falling into the playgrounds, where there were playgrounds. We saw hospital beds that had never been open, yet they were built and they were sitting there. We saw a health care system with not enough nurses to attend to emergencies, let alone attend to the normal sicknesses which occur. We saw roads in Liberal districts, districts that had been Liberal, where people were waddling around to their knees in mud. We saw a Government which had been governed by a Tory autocracy - is that the word? -

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Decker: - who was only concerned about the people who elected them, in their own

district. That is all they were concerned about. They were so tight, they were so careful in the way they administered this Province that they would look at a district like the Strait of Bell Isle District and they would go down through the polls and they would look at poll number one, a part of Roddickton - they voted liberal, forget them. They would go to poll number two, which might be another part of Roddickton, and maybe there were a few extra Tories there, and they would say, now this water and sewer money must be spent on that side of the harbour. That is how precise they were. That is what happened. That is the way this Province was governed and, Mr. Chairman, they talk about me. They talk about me talking about a one-term government. Now I will put these phrases in context.

When I go throughout the Province and I meet with various groups in the health care system, they are so used to the previous administration being so wrapped up in politics that they expect me to be the same. They expect all of us to be the same way. They were dominated by politics. There was only one thing which overran every decision they made - will I get re-elected if I do that? Not is it for the well-being of this Province, not is it what we can afford, but what will it do to my chances of being re-elected.

When that question comes to me, Mr. Chairman, I say, I am not the least bit concerned about getting re-elected. I am going to do what I believe is right as long as I am Minister of Health, and that is the attitude of all my colleagues in Cabinet. We are not swamped with concern as to whether or not we get re-elected. We could not

care less about getting re-elected. We are going to do what we believe is right. But, Mr. Chairman, the ironic thing about it is that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are saying we have a crowd in there now who are doing what is right. In the end, without even worrying about it, without even caring about it, we are guaranteeing that we are going to be re-elected. That is the ironic thing about it. It is not the foremost thing in our mind, Mr. Chairman, but because we have so little concern about it, the people out there are amazed and pleased and they are phoning every one of us; our phones are blocked day in and day out with people telling us that we are doing the right thing. We are not overwhelmed. Everything we do does not determine whether or not we are going to get re-elected, Mr. Chairman.

Now I want to walk the Members of this House through the last sixteen months. To borrow a phrase from a former great politician who used to stand in this House, I will walk the Hon. Members through. During these past sixteen months we began to put into effect some of the liberal policies we had talked about when we were in opposition, some of the Liberal policies that were discontinued seventeen years ago. Now the overriding philosophy which governed and affected and impacted upon everything we did was this, fairness and balance. And if hon. Members were to look at our budget, to look at the way we carried out these past sixteen months, there is nowhere that we can be criticized for padding the nest of Liberal districts, for giving Liberals preferential treatment on big-money-paying

boards. We have done everything with fairness and balance. That is the way we have carried out this Government for the last sixteen months.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, one of the first examples of that could be seen by what we did in Grand Bank and St. Lawrence. When the last budget came down, what was in it for Grand Bank and St. Lawrence? Now the Hon. Member talks so loud about the Grand Bank District. In St. Lawrence, as I pointed out, there was an old cottage hospital which the previous administration was keeping alive as a cottage hospital, simply and solely for political reasons - simply for political reasons. I went down and looked at it, and I made a decision based on health matters. It had nothing to do with politics whatsoever, Mr. Chairman, nothing to do with politics, and I said this is not good enough, we have to make changes here. So I came back to my colleagues and said look at what is happening down in St. Lawrence - a cottage hospital, six or seven people on a ward, and it is not fit, it is not a way to deliver health care. And my colleagues were excited. They said, let us do something about it immediately. Not one person even stopped for a minute to think that it was a Tory district. It did not come into anyone's mind.

Mr. Chairman, what we did this year was put in the budget \$400,000 so that we can do the engineering planning to build a nursing home onto the old U.S. Memorial Hospital in St. Lawrence. That is what we did. That is very good. In the old days, that would never have happened if the district was not on side. But in this day and age,

it would have been considered enough. But was it enough for us? No, Mr. Chairman. I went over to Grand Bank and I discovered that although we have now put \$400,000 dollars into the planning of St. Lawrence, the hospital in Grand Bank was not up to the kind of standard we want for a community health care center so I said to my colleagues, there is a problem in Grand Bank. They said let's fix it, and they put \$250,000 in the budget last Spring to do the planning for a new community health care center for Grand Bank. Not one of my colleagues dared to mention the fact or notice the fact that it was a Tory district. Now, Mr. Chairman, that is not too bad for one department to put into one district.

But, Mr. Chairman, while I was on the Burin Peninsula, what else did I notice? I noticed that in the district of the hon. the Member from Burin Peninsula West there was a regional hospital with a full wing that had never been opened - beds never opened, Mr. Chairman. I came back to my colleagues and I said there is a hospital down there with the beds not open. They said let's open them. And that is exactly what we did. We took another \$100 million, or whatever it was, and whacked it into the Burin Peninsula Hospital, and not one single soul said it is a Tory district. Because the overriding factor, and it hurts the Opposition members, the overriding philosophy is based on fairness and balance. That is how we operate.

During these past sixteen months I have been doing all the things that a Liberal Government wanted to do. My hon. colleague, the

Minister of Forestry, talked about plaques. There are plaques throughout this Province that I have unveiled with my name on them that my grandchildren will wonder how in the name of goodness I could have been in so many places in such a short time as sixteen months. There are plaques all over the place. Right in Roddickton now - it happens to be a Liberal district, but that does not matter because we still practice fairness and balance - a community health care center, about \$6 or \$7 million dollars worth, which is now going up, and on the great big sign - I believe it is a red sign, or blue, it does not really matter, it might be a red - Roddickton Community Health Care Center, hon. C.R. Decker. We did not even realize or did not care that it was a Liberal district when we did it, because our overriding philosophy, Mr. Chairman, is fairness and balance.

An Hon. Member: They put a sign up for you on Bell Island, too.

Mr. Decker: My colleague reminded me of Bell Island. Again we went out, the Alcohol and Drug Dependency Commission. We went over to the hospital in Corner Brook and discovered there was a whole ward not being used. Not being used, Mr. Chairman. And then we discovered there was no center here for Alcoholics, to dry out Alcoholics. We heard about a great center which is up in Ontario, Bellwood Center, where people who are suffering from the disease of alcoholism are taken in and through counselling and through various educational programs, people are revived. I said to the people at the ADDC, let's put one in Newfoundland. And I said to my colleagues, let's come up with \$700,000 or \$800,000

dollars to put one of those centers in Newfoundland. Let's do it they said. Let's do it. Because they are Liberals. And right now in the Corner Brook, the Humberwood Center, which is second to none in this great Country of ours, put there by a Liberal Administration.

Ms Verge: We announced that. We started that up when the Government (inaudible).

Mr. Decker: Now I can go on down through the list, Mr. Chairman. The hon. the Member for Humber East cannot take the heat.

Ms Verge: A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Humber East, on a point of order.

Ms Verge: The Minister of Health is falsely taking credit for having established the Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center, called the Humberwood Center, in Corner Brook. As a matter of fact, it was the previous PC Government that established that center; it was announced by the hon. John Collins when he was Minister of Health, a couple of years ago.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please! There is no point of order. The hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Decker: As my colleague, the hon. the Minister of Forestry says, the plaque says hon. Chris Decker, Minister. Three hundred years from now that plaque will say the hon. Chris Decker, Minister.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please! The hon. the member for Humber East on

a point of order.

Ms Verge: I say, who cares?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

There is no point of order. The hon. the Minister of Health.

Mr. Decker: Now, Mr. Chairman I can go on. I have a list there, but time is getting short. We added sixty-six salary units for nurses in the hospitals. The air services in Labrador: I remember the minister responsible for Labrador getting up and saying we should not be paying a Grenfell aircraft to pick up sick people in Nain and Davis Inlet and Port Hope Simpson and Makkovik, we should not be using that because we are subsidizing Lab Air, therefore, Lab Air should be picking up these people not this Government.

I said to my left wing colleagues in Cabinet, there is a problem in Labrador and if we are going to deliver sick people all over that Coast, we need an airplane. They said let us buy one, let us charter one, or let us charter two or whatever we have to do, because that is Liberal philosophy.

Mr. Simms: Why didn't you take the one off the tarmac in Ottawa?

Mr. Decker: Speaking of the aircraft in Ottawa, if you will allow me to digress for just a minute, Mr. Chairman, about a month ago I got off the regular flight in Deer Lake, I was going home for the weekend. I was met by an employee of Atlantic Airways, or whatever the charter company was, and he said Chris, boy, we are really poisoned with you. I said, what did I do now?

Well, he said, not you personally, you in general, the Liberals. He said, before you took office, two or three times a week the charter plane would leave St. John's, she would stop down in Clarenville, a little airport there, nice little place, and drop off one of the boys, she would drop down in Springdale and drop off another one of the boys, she would drop down maybe in Gander before that, and when the full load was dropped, back to St. John's.

Mr. Simms: And dropped off some of you fellows, too.

Mr. Decker: That was the cover, that was the beard - back to St. John's to pick up another load of the boys, then back to Gander, back to Grand Falls. They even had to build a special runway in Grand Falls. But he said since you fellows have taken office, hardly any charters, hardly any business. We are upset with you. But, he said, I have to be honest about it. What you are doing makes a lot more sense.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, yes!

Mr. Decker: Now, Mr. Chairman, that digress is over. For sixteen months, as the hon. Member pointed out, I was a veritable Santa Claus, going around giving out good Liberal things, endorsing good Liberal philosophy. Now what happens?

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

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Burin - Placentia West, on a point of order.

Mr. Tobin: The Minister of Health

-- just made an accusation in this House, what someone at Provincial Airways said. Would the Minister care to name that person? Will he be honest, and come clean and tell us the name of the person who said it?

Mr. Chairman: Order, please!

There is no point of order.

Mr. Decker: Mr. Chairman, I was doing all the things that a Liberal Government should do. Now all of a sudden our progressive march, our small 'l' liberal march, slowed down for a short period of time. For a short period of time, the liberal march has been slowed down.

I will tell you what it is like. In the Strait of Belle Isle, where it has been Liberal for years, there is very, very little paved road - the previous administration made sure of that - and if you are driving along in your car in the spring of the year, it is quite possible that you will get the car bogged down in the mud. But you do not leave the car there. Everybody gets out and they push and they shovel a bit of mud, and in a very short time the car is back on the road and she goes on her way.

Now this is what happened to the Liberal administration. We were going along with a very small 'l', progressive, left wing Liberal philosophy, and because of actions over which we have no control, a Tory induced recession, a made in Canada recession, we are temporarily interrupted.

I want to tell the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that this interruption is only a temporary one. We do not want to

be taking these actions that we are taking. We do not want to do that. We are not doing them with a vengeance, we are doing them out of necessity. It is something we must do. And do you know what the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are saying? The people of Newfoundland and Labrador are saying thank goodness - thank goodness there is a good, solid, caring, compassionate Government in place in Newfoundland and Labrador today to take us through these few months which are inflicted upon us by your Tory colleagues in Ottawa. And that is the point which is extremely important for us to make known to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador tonight, that this situation we have found ourselves in we did not cause.

The Minister of Finance in Ottawa has finally admitted that we are in a recession, has finally admitted that it was his Government's policy which wanted to slow down the economies of central Canada. He admitted that that is who got us into it.

Now, I want to tell the people of Newfoundland and Labrador that during the next year or fifteen or sixteen months, whatever it takes to get us through this hard time, this Tory inflicted hard time, we are going to do all we can to consult with them, the people, talk back and forth. And we are going to try to ease this economy through this year or these eighteen months or whatever it takes. And I want to assure them, Mr. Chairman, that after this short period of pain we can guarantee them that we are going to rise like Phoenix out of the ashes. We are going to rise out of this, Mr. Chairman, and we are going to continue right on where

we were forced to leave off, and we are going to see hospital beds being opened, hospitals being built, schools being built, universities being built. A good Liberal progressive philosophy, Mr. Chairman, which we will be known for, and we will be sent back into office time after time after time.

Now, Mr. Chairman, having said all that, and hopefully having straightened out some of the Opposition as well as the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, I move that the Committee now rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

On motion, that the Committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Trinity - Bay de Verde.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, at 9:00 a.m.