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The House met at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker (Lush): Order, please!

I want to inform hon. Members that as of today Duty Constable John Tizzard will be retiring from the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, and therefore today will be his last day of service to this House of Assembly.

Constable Tizzard has worked here in this Assembly for four and a half years and he has performed his duties in an exemplary fashion. On behalf of hon. Members I want to thank him for his diligence, dedication and commitment in the performance of his duties and wish him, in his retirement, good health and success.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Rideout: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly would like to take the opportunity in a formal way to express the congratulations and best wishes of this side of the House and to join with Your Honour in wishing Constable Tizzard a very long and happy retirement.

Most of us who have served in this House have known Constable Tizzard since he came here with us four and a half years ago. We are pleased to be able to say that he can leave without having had to perform any serious duties as constable on duty here in the House. Although there was a moment last night when I was not sure if his perfect record might have been marred just before he left.

But, Mr. Speaker, on a serious note Constable Tizzard has given over twenty-four years of his life to the public service of this Province. And we in this House have been very, very grateful that four and a half years of that time have been spent here with us.

So, all of us, I know, wish him well. We hope that his retirement is a long and happy one, and we do hope that we can see him from time to time at the annual Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Christmas Ball where he performs with distinction in the police band, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Dicks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of Government Members I would like to join in as well and offer to Constable Tizzard the congratulations of us all and endorse the sentiments expressed by Your Honour. Of course, I have particular pleasure as Attorney General since the police force in the Province do report through the department and through myself to Cabinet.

Policing is a difficult task at the best of times, and I am pleased to say that Constable Tizzard has performed his duties over the years in an exemplary manner. And, of course, we in the House of Assembly have particular reason to be grateful, I am pleased that none of us has been lost yet, and whoever your replacement may be, Constable Tizzard, I hope performs his or her duties in an equally adept fashion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Also on behalf of hon. Members today we would like to extend a warm and cordial welcome to three MLA's from the Nova Scotia Legislature presently sitting in the Speaker's Gallery. They are MLA Ross Bragg, MLA Bernie Boudreau and MLA Sandy Jolly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

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

Dr. Warren: I have just been advised that the student assistant strike is over -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Dr. Warren: - Mr. Speaker, and that the student assistants and special needs students will be back in the classroom tomorrow morning, I am very pleased to make this announcement. I want to thank all concerned for their concentrated efforts over the last few days. It has been very tedious and difficult but many people have contributed to this resolution and a special word of thanks to the conciliators in the Department of Employment and Labour Relations for their outstanding work.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hearn: Mr. Speaker, Jim Reeves once recorded a song

called, 'Is it Really Over' and this is the third time I think I have heard the Minister say that, and this time we certainly hope it is for the sake of the students and the teacher assistants who have been completely frustrated by the leadership shown by the Minister and the Government, so we hope that due to the hard work of their representatives and the civil servants that they finally have a settlement which will be permanent, and we are glad to hear the news.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Dr. Gibbons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, November 1st marks the 14th Annual Review of Activities of the Department of Mines and Energy. This event will take place in conjunction with the 37th Annual Meeting of the Newfoundland Branch of the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum and also the 7th Meeting of District 1 CIM comprising the Atlantic Provinces.

On the occasion of the Department's annual review of activities, we invite the industry and the general public to review with our professional staff, the results and progress of projects conducted in the past year. This forum provides for the rapid dissemination of new data from our geoscientific surveys as well as an update of new legislation, policy and programs initiated during the past twelve months.

Mr. Speaker, one of the major highlights of the past year is the signing of a new \$17.5 million

Mineral Development Agreement with the Federal Government. This new agreement will provide for additional funding for geoscience, minerals technology, economic development and public information in the mineral sector.

The many projects to be conducted under the new agreement over the next few years will greatly enhance the scientific data base necessary for effective mineral exploration and will provide further stimulus and opportunities for new mineral developments in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues in the House and all members of the general public who are interested in learning more about the activities of the Department and about the Province's mineral industries, to attend the Department's presentations and project displays.

The activities start at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning at the Radisson Hotel in St. John's and the CIM meeting starts tomorrow night and continues through Saturday.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. A. Snow: First of all, I want to thank the hon. Minister for living up to the time honoured tradition of providing us with the advanced copy of his ministerial statement and I congratulate him on using new technology by using the fax machine and getting it to our office on time.

Also, I want to congratulate him on standing up and making a ministerial statement and not announcing any cuts. That is a new modus operandi I guess of this particular regime. Hopefully, a new trend coming.

I also want to congratulate him on making the announcement of the continuation of something which was implemented by previous Administrations -

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. A. Snow: - in conjunction, this Tory initiative was done thirteen times previously or twelve times previously and I am pleased to see that this particular regime is continuing with some of these good measures brought in by the Tories. I also would like to welcome and wish all the people attending this conference, the CIM conference and the show that the Department of Mines and Resources will be putting on, welcome them to this area of the Province and those from outside the Province, I welcome those, especially those here from Nova Scotia or the other Atlantic Provinces.

Mining of course plays a very important role in the economy of this Province and indeed in my particular area which I represent, it is the major employer producing about three quarters of the mineral wealth of this Province and I am pleased to see that this regime has decided to recognize the importance of the economic factor that this generates to this Province.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Efford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Hughes Commission of Inquiry highlighted for everyone, the seriousness of child abuse in our Province. I, as Minister responsible for child care and protection, could not believe that there was no prevention or public awareness program offered by my department in the area of child abuse. I strongly believe that my department has the mandate and the responsibility to inform the public about child abuse and the duty to report suspected incidents of abuse. In exploring ways to carry out a public awareness strategy, I was approached by the St. John Ambulance officials who had developed and tested a one-day child abuse workshop for adults working with children. The program "Put The Child First" had already been offered to some four hundred (400) adults in the Province and additional modules were being designed to address abuse prevention. The timing could not have been better. My department had identified a major need and St. John Ambulance was able to offer a tested and proven program. Mr. Speaker, over the summer, details were worked out and a firm partnership established. The Department of Social Services is delighted that such a Province-wide and well respected organization as St. John Ambulance will be the deliverer of the "Put The Child First" prevention initiative. Together, Mr. Speaker, with the support of the V.O.C.M. Cares Foundation, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the "Put The Child First" initiative should be a major success in the prevention of child abuse.

I am more than pleased, Mr. Speaker, to be able to announce the launching of The Child Abuse Prevention Program. While the initial phase will involve adults working with children, further phases are to be targeted for age appropriate groups of children and youth. Representatives from the St. John Ambulance will outline in more detail the "Put The Child First" Program and the delivery strategy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Port au Port.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hodder: Mr. Speaker, all I can say is, good, the Minister does some things right. The real praise, Mr. Speaker, should go to the St. John Ambulance who by the Minister's admission approached the Minister. As well praise should go to the V.O.C.M. Cares Foundation, the Newfoundland Constabulary and the RCMP.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hodder: Mr. Speaker, with the help of all those organizations the Minister can't help but be right.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hodder: Mr. Speaker, just one little thing though, the Minister had a press conference at 11:30, and I can understand the need for a press conference on something of this importance, but, Mr. Speaker, it shows an abuse of the House because the House of Assembly is open and I would suggest to the Minister that he should have

brought it to this House of Assembly first and had the press conference afterwards, because it is highly irregular that the Minister would have a press conference and ignore the House, because this was on the 1:00 p.m. news, Mr. Speaker, and we heard about it long before we came into the House. So that is not protocol.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister also referred to the Hughes Commission, and I cannot help but point out that the Hughes Commission cost \$2.5 million, the lawyers fees were \$1.3 million, and the victims got zero. I just point that out, Mr. Speaker, because the Minister did refer to the Hughes Commission.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: A good point.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

Dr. Gibbons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of visiting Newfoundland Hardwoods Limited in Clarendville to officially open an electricity and steam cogeneration plant, the first public demonstration of this promising cogeneration technology in this Province. Cogeneration technology is used for the generation of both electricity and heat from the same fuel source. Using cogeneration Newfoundland Hardwoods will now be able to supply most of their own electricity without increasing their fuel consumption. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, they will at times be putting electricity back into the Provincial Grid.

Mr. Speaker, it is worthy to note that the fuel used in this example of cogeneration is sawmill waste, a material that is otherwise a disposal problem for both the sawmill operators and the environmental officials. Using the waste for this purpose also provides the sawmillers with a source of additional income and reduces total energy costs at Newfoundland Hardwoods.

The development of these types of energy projects is often overshadowed by large energy initiatives such as the offshore and major hydro developments. Nevertheless, such smaller projects, which are highly efficient, rating at about 80 per cent efficiency compared to a 30 per cent diesel plant, has a very important role to play in strengthening and stabilizing our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the management of Newfoundland Hardwoods for their continued support of my Department's promotion of usage of alternative fuels throughout the Province. The wood burning unit at Hardwoods displaces about 1.2 million liters of oil annually. In addition, the new cogeneration plant, which was opened yesterday, will produce about 450,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year, yielding an additional \$30,000 saving per year in electricity to Hardwoods.

The management at the plant also propose to use the steam exhausted from this unit to heat their storage facilities and a proposed new kiln. Newfoundland Hardwoods is extracting every ounce of value from their energy dollar, and we can take a lesson from them.

Mr. Speaker, there are many

opportunities for cogeneration in this Province. Facilities such as hospitals and other institutions are of particular interest. My Department is eager to assist any such institution which is interested in energy conservation technologies, such as cogeneration, as a method to diminish their dependence upon foreign oil.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hewlett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the Minister for a copy of his statement in advance, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, I received a copy yesterday by way of a press release, so I have gotten two copies so far.

I am pleased, obviously, for Newfoundland Hardwoods - anything that will lead to its increased energy efficiency and overall viability. The Minister mentioned that there is other potential for such projects in the Province. He used the words, we are ready to assist. I would hope, as well, that would include some sort of financial package so that other large industries, or whatever, could get involved in this sort of thing.

I might mention as well, Mr. Speaker, that it is strictly not cogeneration, but I do have a plant in my own district of Green Bay which produces wood products, hardwood floors, panelling, logs for log cabins, etc., and they do heat their kiln with sawdust and waste wood from that particular operation.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I should feel good for Clarendville today because, given the layoffs that have come from this Government over the last few days, this has to be good news. Generally speaking here today, this must be good news Wednesday, Mr. Speaker. Heaven help us tomorrow, Thursday.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

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

Mr. Rideout: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance continues to be very reluctant to give this House what he considers to be a firm, up-to-date budgetary deficit position for this Province for the current fiscal year. Now, Mr. Speaker, in this modern day and age of computer technology, I would expect that the Minister would have a computer print-out on his desk every morning showing the current fiscal position of the Province. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister, can he tell the House whether there has been any recent change in the projected deficit for this fiscal year? What is the state-of-the-moment message the Minister can deliver to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador today on the budgetary deficit of this Province, Mr. Speaker?

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

Dr. Kitchen: Mr. Speaker, I wish I could say that the fiscal position of the Province has improved. Nothing would give me greater pleasure. But the figure

that we released of \$120 million is our best estimate at the moment. Hopefully this will get better, but there are other signs on the horizon that it may get even worse. So I think our best prediction at the moment is that the - well, let me put it in a different way. We were predicting a deficit of \$248 million and that has since increased by about \$130 million, which is about \$378 million if things go as planned. That is combining the current and the capital amounts, which is the way it should be, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Simms: You did not say it in your Budget Speech.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, I suppose there is no need for me to remind the Minister that in his Budget Speech he talked about a current account surplus.

Mr. Simms: Right on.

Mr. Rideout: Not a combination of current and capital account.

Mr. Simms: You can not have it both ways.

Mr. Rideout: You can not have it both ways, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that two Government Departments have already reported to this House cutbacks this year totaling in excess of \$1 million, and in view of the fact that other Departments of Government and agencies have now made similar decisions, though we and the people of this Province do not know about them, but the Minister and his colleagues know about them, Mr. Speaker, is the Minister telling the House that despite those massive Departmental

cutbacks, some of which have been announced and some of which have not, that there has been no change whatsoever in the projected \$120 million deficit for this year? Is that what the Minister is telling us? Or does he really know? What is the truth, Mr. Speaker?

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

Dr. Kitchen: Mr. Speaker, first I would like to correct the hon. Member when he persists in quoting a very small part of the Budget. I mentioned to him last evening that when he quoted one sentence from the Budget he omitted to go down the next several lines and indicate that the overall budgetary deficit this year would be \$248.5 million.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Dr. Kitchen: Yes, we did divide the two, but we combined them. In this House, Mr. Speaker, I have always spoken in terms of the overall deficit. The reason we do that is because we are thinking about the total amount of money we must borrow or go in the hole each year. The total amount of money we must go in the hole each year is an astounding, this year, \$370 million or \$380 million. It is something that every Newfoundlander and every person should be concerned about, and this is the reason why we have been attempting to reduce the burden of Government.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Simms: That is some answer!

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Simms: A brilliant answer.

Mr. Rideout: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister's competence is shining through again today. I wonder would he go and ask the Minister of Health if he still has that solar-powered calculator he had when he was over here in Opposition, so the Minister can do his numbers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Government, through the President of Treasury Board, have confirmed that the Province will now pick up the cost of pay equity for the health care sector in this Province, which amounts to about 1 per cent or \$6 million, therefore the Hospital Association projection of a \$60 million cutback for next year is in fact now back to \$54 million, will the Minister of Finance confirm for the House today that health care institutions in this Province will have \$54 million less to spend on health care services next year than they had this year? Is the Minister prepared to confirm that?

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

Dr. Kitchen: No, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Power: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask a question of the Minister of Public Works. I cannot remember what used to happen in this House or in this Province before the Public Tendering Act came into place, I guess prior to 1972 or 1973. Prior to the Public Tendering Act, stories of cost-plus, favoritism and abuse were rampant, and some of the stories would almost make

your hair stand on end. Mr. Speaker, I can remember what happened in this House in 1978 and early 1979, when the Public Tendering process seemed to have gone off the rails, when there was a lot of abuse, and a lot of criminal charges were laid as a result of it. I would like to ask the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation, who is responsible for the Public Tendering Act, to just very briefly explain to this House, what is the purpose of the Public Tendering Act?

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

Mr. Gilbert: The Public Tendering Act was put in place to ensure that Government was protected in its purchases, and I would submit that it is time it was overhauled. It has been there for seventeen years, there are some inequities in it, and I do not know if it is working well now. As a matter of fact, my Department is now in the process of looking at a revision of the whole Public Tendering Act.

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

Mr. Power: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Minister says it is to protect the Government. Is not the Public Tendering Act also meant to protect the participants who are involved in the public tendering process?

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

Mr. Gilbert: I suppose it is there to protect the taxpayer, and by protecting the Government it

protects the taxpayer.

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

Mr. Power: Mr. Speaker, I will just ask another supplementary to the Minister responsible for this Public Tendering Act. Can the Public Tendering Act work to protect both the public and the participants in the duly legal process I presume, the Public Tendering Act? Can that process work if there is not secrecy relating to all documents relating to any particular public bid?

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

Mr. Gilbert: I would ask the member to repeat his question again.

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

Mr. Power: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A very simple supplementary. Can the public tendering process work if there is not secrecy? Is it fair to the bidders, the Government, and to the taxpayer if any one party to a public tendering bid has access to the information of another bidder?

Mr. Speaker: The Minister for Works, Services and Transportation.

Mr. Gilbert: Once the public tenders are open it is public information and everybody has access to it, so I would say yes.

Some Hon. Members: Before. Before.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

Mr. Power: Mr. Speaker, with the agreement of my colleagues, I think it is important that we establish this point first. I asked a simple question. Can the public tendering process work if, prior to the opening of the public tender call, documents relating to a public tender had been made known to one of the opposing bidders in a public tender. Now, is that fair? And can The Public Tendering Act work under that system?

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

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Speaker, no, is the answer. If the member has information that it did happen, he should table it in the House so an investigation could be undertaken.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. the Member for Ferryland.

Mr. Power: I thank the minister for his answer. It is obviously an answer which is obvious to all the public, that the Public Tendering Act cannot work unless there is secrecy.

One final supplementary to this Minister, Mr. Speaker. Would it be illegal for a public servant or a politician to release secret documents - illegal to release secret documents - relating to a tender call prior to the tender call being opened? Is it illegal?

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

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Speaker, I will have to take that question under

advisement and get the opinion of the Department of Justice.

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

Mr. Power: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a new question to the Minister of Mines and Energy, and it relates to the Minister's recent announcement relating to the ship handling simulator at the Marine Institute. On several counts, Mr. Speaker, I believe and our caucus on this side believes, this contract should never have been awarded. Just very briefly, Mr. Speaker, in a preamble to this new question, the original tender several years ago was won by a company called Krupp Atlas out of West Germany. The words of the Minister in his public announcement said it was re-tendered because Krupp Atlas was not able to carry through in a manner acceptable to the Province with its stated commitment concerning Newfoundland industrial benefits.

In the second tender call, the Newfoundland industrial benefits was still a major criteria in the specifications to the bidders. The lowest bidder, Norcontrol, was found to be unsatisfactory in this regard. The Minister and this Government decided that the best bid was, in fact, the second lowest bidder, a company called Can-Am Simulation, owned 55 per cent by NORDCO Limited of Newfoundland. Will the minister table a copy of the letter he sent to the Federal Minister, Mr. Epp, outlining his concerns about Norcontrol's bid, and his reasons for preferring Can-Am Simulation?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

Dr. Gibbons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct an error or a misunderstanding first. There was never any time that we in our assessment said that the Norcontrol bid was unsatisfactory in any way. Never at any time at all. But in the bidding process, as has been made clear in our previous comments, Norcontrol was the low bidder. Norcontrol's Newfoundland and Canada industrial benefits package was of a lower value, yes, than the second lowest bidder, NORDCO, and I think the difference was about \$2 million. And it was on that basis that we asked the Federal Minister to consider the possibility of disregarding the public tender process and going with number two - I suppose in a sense disregarding the public tender process, but to go with the number two bidder because of its Canada - Newfoundland industrial benefits content.

Also, though, in relation to that there was more than just the benefits question, there was a question of the technology. The Norcontrol bid clearly had a significantly better technical content than the other one, from the perspective of the analyst, so it was not a simple matter of just the industrial benefits. But we did, I agree, ask the Federal Minister to consider going to number two, to NORDCO.

Mr. Simms: Will you table the letter?

Dr. Gibbons: Oh, the tabling of the letter. I would have to give some consideration to discussing that with Mr. Epp, who is the person who would receive that letter, before I would say yes I could table it.

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

Mr. Power: Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the same Minister. As it relates to the technical content of Norcontrol's bid, is it not true, Mr. Minister, that Norcontrol has never built a full-fledged simulator anywhere in this world, and Can-Am Simulation, including the company NORDCO in Newfoundland, has been involved in simulation building around this world for many years and, in fact, has brought a fairly decent industrial benefits package to Newfoundland from work done in Korea and in other parts of the world? Has Norcontrol ever built a full-fledged simulator?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

Dr. Gibbons: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure of the answer to that in terms of the type of simulator we are asking for here, because this is a rather unique facility. It was more than just a ship simulator, it was a combination of both a ship simulator and a ballast control operation simulator. I doubt if anyone had constructed anything exactly like this.

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

Mr. Power: Mr. Speaker, on another supplementary. Norcontrol has never built a full-fledged simulator, and this simulator being built in Newfoundland is not entirely unique, there are many up-to-date -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member is on a supplementary.

Mr. Power: On a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister again, if this Government was willing to go to bat for the second lowest bidder, write the Federal Minister and say that because of local content, industrial benefits package for Newfoundland, Norcontrol should not get this job and it should go to Can-Am Simulation, why did the Minister and the Government give up so quickly on over \$2 million worth of difference of industrial benefits to this Province for a company called NORDCO, which is really the only high-tech company we have in this field in this province? Why did we choose a company that has 21 per cent local content, which is not as high as Krupp was disqualified for from the first bid?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

Dr. Gibbons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we did not give up very easily on this particular bid. The process continued for a year and a half, from the time that we started it. We tried to let our first tender in June, I believe it was, of 1989, and now we are in October of 1990. And we did assess the options available to us over the last few weeks, after receiving the reply from the Federal Minister, and noting that the deadline for the bids was October 19, the day after I made the announcement, we had the choice, I guess, of considering a possibility of a re-tender.

The bid we had was already \$1.6 million cheaper than the first bid, so there was already a considerable savings there to the two Governments involved. And, also, from my perspective as the

Energy Minister, I did not want to see this project threatened. I think it is very important for this Province to get on with the construction of this simulator, to have it in place to train our people in safety and other related matters for when Hibernia gets moving.

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

Mr. Power: Mr. Speaker, I, and as my colleagues have just indicated, fully concur with the Minister's statement that this marine simulator began by this administration has a high priority for this marine Province; it was a high priority and we tried to get it done as quickly as we could. We also agree with the industrial -

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

The hon. Member is on a supplementary. Please get to the supplementary.

Mr. Power: No, Mr. Speaker, I am on a new question.

Mr. Speaker: Well, the hon. Member did not say he was on a new question.

Mr. Power: I thought I did, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry.

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry.

Mr. Power: A new question for the Minister. With regard to the industrial benefits package of over \$2 million, it was always our priority and the priority of the offshore development fund to diversify this economy. This Government seems to have the same objective and I -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

I want to remind the hon. Member that we cannot give a new question to the same Minister, otherwise Question Period would be entirely abused. The Chair is prepared to accept a new question to a different Minister, but when a series of questions are directed to one Minister, then we are obviously into a supplementary situation. So I ask the hon. Member to get to his question.

Mr. Power: But, Mr. Speaker, there is nobody else standing to ask a question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

It does not matter. The same rules apply. It does not matter that no one else is standing, the hon. Member is onto supplementaries.

Mr. Power: Mr. Speaker, I am about to ask a supplementary or question to the Minister on a slightly different topic. If this contract could not be disqualified or re-tenders not called based on the subject of local content, then let me go onto another topic which has caused tremendous concern for the bidders in this process and for many persons who look at the public tendering process in this Province.

The Minister has said, and I quote, 'A lot of things happened in this case that should never have happened. Anything that seemed to be done in terms of interim recommendation, interim meaning internal to the Government, became too readily known too quickly, and I found it troubling from day one that none of this could be done in confidence. Norcontrol received information they should never have received...', according to the

Minister.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister is this. How could you award a contract to a company who, in writing, acknowledged that they had secret, confidential information which could only have come from some branch of Government about the other companies bid? How could you award and reward a company that was willing to be involved in that kind of an activity?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

Dr. Gibbons: Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Member I would say that if Norcontrol had such information it, to the best of my knowledge, did not come from our Government before the public tender closed. If such information was obtained from a different source after we went through our assessment, it was after our assessment was done, after the public tender was done. And I believe that the public tender process was done and assessed fairly.

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

Mr. Power: Mr. Speaker, I will ask a new question to the Minister of Justice and it relates to what the Minister of Energy has just said about fairness and a process that should work properly.

It can be proved with any kind of a superficial investigation, getting a copy of a letter sent from Norcontrol to the Federal Minister in which they compared Norcontrol's own bid with the secret information of Can-Am's bid. That can only be found from some branch of Government, either the Marine Institute, Public

Works, Mines and Energy or Career Development, or some agency of Government had to release the secret information of Can-Am's bid to Norcontrol so that they could send up a letter comparing both bids to the Federal Minister.

Now, I ask the Minister of Justice - at least two or three times in this session of the House we have seen cases where if not the spirit of the Public Tendering Act then maybe the letter of the Public Tendering Act has been broken. We saw the Tourism contract, maybe a little bit of patronage, we accept it, we understand it. We never really expected it from this lily-white, pure administration.

This is a new question, Mr. Speaker. We saw the case of the bridge contract in Labrador, which was based on incompetence. That we did expect and were not surprised by. Mr. Speaker, now I am asking the Minister of Justice in his official duties as a chief police officer of this Province, the Attorney General, to immediately begin an investigation, have his police officials begin an investigation into this very, very sorry affair.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Dicks: Thank you, Your Honour.

There is no difficulty with commencing a police investigation. All that the hon. Member needs to do is to have the person who has any information that there was misuse of Government Tender Bids, that incidentally could have come not only from Provincial Agencies but also the Federal Government, and

if a person that the hon. Member knows is in possession of that information, I would suggest that they should go to the RCMP or RNC depending on where the information came from or where the offence allegedly occurred, make that allegation and the police will in fact investigate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Power: Mr. Speaker, a very brief supplementary. At least three cases, from myself as the Member for Ferryland, the Minister of Mines and Energy, who said there was a tremendous amount of irregularities, the Minister of Public Works, who said the Public Tendering Act cannot work unless there is secrecy.

For all those three individuals who are making a complaint about a process, I ask the Minister of Justice to immediately begin the investigation and that this Government, if he would not bring to the rest of his Cabinet colleagues the request, that no further negotiations take place with regard to this contract and that if there is proof of illegality or criminality or whatever is the right word, and even though the correct individual may not be found, that the right and proper thing be done in this Province and that is that the marine simulator contract be retendered.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Dicks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure what the

question was. It is not within the ambit of the Department of Justice, first of all, to order a retendering of the process, we advise Government Departments as to whether or not these occur.

If he is asking for a judicial inquiry into a circumstance such as he alleges, I should advise him that there was recently a case in the Supreme Court of Canada, entitled The Starr Decision, which precludes judicial inquiries from being in the nature of either preliminary inquiries or criminal investigations. So I come back to my original answer and that is, if there is any evidence of criminality involved, that the person who is in possession of that knowledge should report it to the police.

The mere fact that someone rises in the House and makes allegations, is not in itself substantial grounds in which we would order an investigation, but if the hon. Member knows and could provide specifics and if they are of that order and if he can provide us with that information, we would order a police investigation.

But, Mr. Speaker, the test of criminality is that a person making such an allegation has to have reasonable and probable grounds to believe that it is true, because any person making that of course would be subject to a charge of laying a false complaint, so we do not order the police to go off on matters unless there is some substantial information that would justify an investigation. But I certainly say the possibility is open and if he has that information, present it to the police and an investigation will in fact take

place.

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

Mr. Power: One very final brief supplementary. I have asked the Minister of Justice to begin an investigation, if he wants me to make the comments someplace else I would gladly do it, that there is evidence, I believe, in writing that -

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member is on a supplementary and I ask him to get to the supplementary.

Mr. Power: Mr. Speaker, the supplementary is simply this. I asked the Minister of Justice if he would bring to his Cabinet colleagues the fact that there should be no further negotiations or work done on this contract until this investigation is completed. That is what I asked the Minister of Justice.

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

Mr. Dicks: Two points in the answer, Mr. Speaker.

The first is that Cabinet has no involvement with the Criminal Justice System and I do not take directions from my colleagues on that, and as Minister of Justice that is my responsibility and I will discharge it as I see fit, so, in that process I do not see that the Cabinet should probably have any involvement with criminal investigations.

On the second point; what I am prepared to do is have the hon. Member meet with the chief of either of the police forces

involved, because he would know where the information came from and I will arrange that meeting. I am sure the police will take his information, take that down, investigate it and take whatever action is warranted on the basis of the allegations that he can make and substantiate.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Trinity North.

Mr. Hynes: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance announced in the House on Friday past that he was closing the Taxation Office of the Department of Finance in Clarenville, and he was going to save some \$50,000 this year and some \$250,000 in succeeding years. Mr. Speaker, given that the lease on the building where the Taxation Office is now occupied does not expire until February 29, 1992, and given that twelve of the sixteen employees there have already been offered positions in Grand Falls or St. John's, there is obviously no savings there or very little on salaries, and given that everybody is aware that the travel expenses and hotel accommodations and meal allowances and telephone bills and everything is going to go up as a result of inspectors and auditors having to travel from St. John's or Grand Falls to places like Bonavista, I want to ask the Minister of Finance if he would table in the House all the information that he has available to him which would indicate a saving of \$250,000 a year. Will you table that information, Sir?

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

Dr. Kitchen: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Simms: Arrogance! Arrogance!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Trinity North.

Mr. Hynes: What an arrogant Minister. What arrogance. He says publicly that it is going to save the taxpayers of this Province \$250,000, where is he going to save it at?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

The hon. Member is on a supplementary, and he is not supposed to debate.

Mr. Simms: Yes, where is he going to save that?

Mr. Hynes: Where is he going to save it?

Mr. Speaker: Is that the question? Has the hon. member asked the question? Will the hon. member take his place?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Trinity North.

Mr. Hynes: A new question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of the Department of Works, Services and Transportation. Yesterday in the House the Minister announced that he was going to close the Motor Registration Division Office in Clarendville. And I have really two questions for the Minister since he is responsible for the old Department of Public Works and the Department of Transportation. The first question is this: Why is the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation about to rent 3,800 square feet of office space in a new building being constructed, why is he about to rent 3,800 square feet of office

space for Enterprise Newfoundland, this new fandangled Crown corporation at a cost of \$15.70 a square foot when he can house that same agency in the building which will be vacated by the Department of Finance? There is a lease still on that building. There is 2,800 square feet there and the cost is \$9.95 cents a square foot. So why is he about to lease 3,800 square feet in a new building being constructed?

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

Mr. Gilbert: I would imagine there is possibly two reasons for it, Mr. Speaker. One, Crown Corporations do not go through my department, they follow The Public Tendering Act, but they go to public tender on their own. And I would possibly submit to this hon. House that the tender for any office space for NewCorp would have been called a long time ago.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Member for Trinity North.

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

Again the Minister indicated yesterday that in closing the Motor Registration Office he would save \$86,000 this year, and \$247,000 in succeeding years and so on. In view of the fact that severance pay is going to be well in excess of \$80,000 for the eight employees affected since they have not been offered positions anywhere else, will this particular Minister table in this House all of the information that he has available which will indicate a saving of \$86,000 this year, and \$247,000 in succeeding years?

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

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Speaker, I announced yesterday that there would be a saving this year of \$86,000 made up of salaries and operational costs, and \$247,000 for the year. That is all I have to table.

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

Mr. Matthews: Make no wonder you wanted to get your trucks hired on without a tender.

Mr. R. Aylward: Mr. Speaker, he will not give out the information to the hon. member. No wonder he wanted, when he was in business in Grand Falls, to hire out his trucks without calling public tenders.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

If the hon. Member is asking a question I ask him to do it, please.

Mr. R. Aylward: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation made a statement that the Department of Works, Services and Transportation will change its policy for compensating supervisory employees who work overtime. Would the Minister explain to me what the policy is now?

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

Mr. Gilbert: First of all the Member for Kilbride made some terrible accusations yesterday

when he responded to the statement.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

I ask the hon. Minister to please try and address the question that was asked.

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

Mr. Gilbert: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to address the question.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

I am sorry to advise hon. members that Question Period has expired.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Point of order, the hon. the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Simms: Mr. Speaker, earlier, during the Question Period, I did not want to rise during Question Period to raise the issue, but I think we would like to have some clarification on a ruling that Your Honour gave during Question Period with respect to questions being asked to Ministers. And I think Your Honour's words were, at least to the effect, that a Member may not ask a new question to the same Minister.

Could Your Honour explain then, for example in the case of the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation, if a Member had a question to that Minister relating to public works, and then had a new question to that Minister with respect to transportation, or the Public Tendering Act, which are certainly all new questions, how

then could that ruling apply? It does not seem to make much sense. I just wondered if the Speaker could clarify what he means.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair was making what appears to be the circumstances which would allow an hon. Member to abuse the House. Clearly it is the Speaker's decision as to how many supplementary questions will be asked. And hon. members would appreciate that there would be no way to control Question Period with respect to asking of questions if an hon. member in rising could always say that he or she has a new question. And quite obviously, it stands very logically, would be supported by any, I am sure, of authorities, that when a Member rises, that a Member is on supplementaries. And you cannot obviously abuse Question Period by saying he is on a new question. Because the Chair could very well go on to a new member.

It is up to the Chair as to the number of supplementaries that are allowed. There are other Members in the House and quite obviously it makes common sense that, as I said, the Chair has accepted, the Chair very willingly concurs, that when a -

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

The Chair will concur that when an hon. member addresses a question to a new minister, then the Chair will accept that to be a new question. But not when there are several questions addressed to the same minister. But the Chair will take that under advisement and do some further research.

Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees

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

Mr. Carter: Mr. Speaker, as required under Section 15 of The Fisheries Loan Board Act, I want to table herewith the annual report of the Fisheries Loan Board, fiscal year 1989/1990.

Petitions

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

Ms. Verge: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr. Baker: Point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. the Government House Leader on a point of order.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, it is customary that in the presentation of petitions there be certain time limits followed. The person presenting a petition has five minutes to speak, somebody speaking in support of the petition from the same side has another five minutes, and a third five minutes is allotted to response from this side.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, it is within two minutes of 3:00 p.m., and this process will simply not be allowed to be followed if we now get into petitions. So I wonder if the hon. member could hold the petition until tomorrow, if there is no particular

urgency? And if she could hold the petition until tomorrow when there is lots of time.

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

Ms Verge: Mr. Speaker, I will confine my remarks on the presentation of this petition to one minute, giving the Government equal time to respond. But I would like to point to Your Honour that on previous days when I have presented petitions -

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

The hon. the Government House Leader got up on a point of order and the Chair must rule.

Mr. Simms: But she is speaking to the point of order, Your Honour.

Mr. Speaker: Oh, I thought she was speaking to her petition, sorry.

Ms Verge: I am speaking to the point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Sorry, carry on.

Ms Verge: Mr. Speaker, just to conclude, on earlier days when I have presented petitions, more often than not nobody on the side opposite rose to speak to the petition.

Mr. Simms: You never speak to it anyway!

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

There is no point of order. On Wednesday's the only thing that stops us is that when three of the clock comes, the Chair has to intervene and call the... so, no point of order.

The hon. the Member for Humber East.

Ms Verge: Thirty-one days after this ultraconservative Government slashed social assistance for single mothers the Minister of Social Services sits in his place with a silly grin on his face.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Ms Verge: The prayer of the petition I am presenting -

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Mr. Simms: (Inaudible) trying to cut it off.

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

An Hon. Member: How arrogant.

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

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. Member who did not respond to the request that I made a moment ago, if the hon. Member would agree to present her petition tomorrow, if it is.... She has already presented -

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order please! Order please!

Mr. Baker: - a lot of petitions.

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

I have to stop the hon. the Government House Leader, that is the same point of order, and the Chair has ruled on it.

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Ms. Verge: -a petition of residents of several parts of the Province.

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

Ms. Verge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The prayer of the petition is: 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 -

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

It is now three o'clock and it being Wednesday, Private Member's Day we have to go to the private member's resolution, I believe it was one presented by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Simms: On a point of order.

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

Mr. Simms: Before you recognize - I am not the Government House Leader yet, Mr. Speaker, but I appreciate the acknowledgement.

Mr. Speaker: The Opposition House Leader, I am sorry.

An Hon. Member: Another two years.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Simms: Before the Leader of the Opposition is recognized, I would like to rise on a point of order which is flowing out of the actions of the Government House

Leader over the last three or four minutes.

Now, it is pretty obvious, Mr. Speaker, what has been transpiring and I do not blame Your Honour for sitting down the Government House Leader in the middle of that second spurious point of order which was so obvious to everybody, Mr. Speaker, and on the point of order I say to him, those tactics will not work. This particular Member has been so determined to keep this particular issue in the eyes of the public, that she will continue to present petitions day after day after day, and the hon. Government House Leader will have no choice-

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

Mr. Simms: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: May I again remind the hon. the Opposition House Leader that the Chair has ruled there is no point of order and the Chair will not entertain any other points of order related to the same thing.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, it is no trouble to see how sore the Government is after being subjected to a tremendous pounding in this House until ten after one this morning.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, they went out of here ten after one this morning after imposing the gag order, the guillotine, the closure rule and, Mr. Speaker,

they do not have a sound piece of political flesh left on their bodies.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Simms: Heads between your tails.

Mr. Rideout: But Mr. Speaker, I only have -

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

Order, please! Order, please!

I again want to remind hon. Members that when the Chair rises there is to be silence. Too often in the past members kept shouting across the floor and if that persists, the Chair is going to have to exercise its proper authority.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Rideout: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have on the Order Paper today for debate, a resolution dealing with the health care situation which this Province faces. Let me say from the beginning that the people of this Province were shocked in the latter part of September when the Premier and the Minister of Finance announced the Budgetary deficit for this fiscal year.

But they were more shocked when on October 15th, a letter went from the Minister of Health to every health care institution in this Province advising them that their Budgets for next year, 1991-1992, would be frozen at the final figure of 1990-1991.

They were shocked because it very quickly became evident to the

experts who are running those institutions that a freeze, despite what the Premier had to say, a freeze was in fact a cut back. That according to their best estimates, it meant 12 per cent less funding next year, Mr. Speaker.

That has since been revised somewhat because the Government have now admitted that they will be responsible for the pay equity proportion of cost increases for next year, that hospital boards and nursing home boards thought they would have to incur, so that has lessened the burden a little.

An Hon. Member: Is that in writing, I wonder.

Mr. Rideout: I do not know if it is in writing or not. The best estimates we have is that that will reduce the problem by about 1 per cent, in other words, it will reduce it by about \$6 million, so that instead of 12 per cent and \$60 million, as computed by the Hospital Board and Nursing Home Association, it will be in the vicinity of 11 per cent or \$54 million, but still, Mr. Speaker, very, very significant.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is with that backdrop that we decided to bring in this resolution today. Despite the fact that we have had numerous questions over the last couple of weeks, particularly in Question Period, despite the fact that the hospital and nursing home cut-back issue has been raised in debate on the Loan Bill in particular over the last couple of weeks, we thought it was an important enough issue to have a day's debate to try to get some understanding from the Government where they are going on this whole health care issue in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution, if it is looked at carefully, is a very, very passive resolution. This resolution, Mr. Speaker, is not in any way a provocative resolution. I do not think there is a word in this resolution that could be politically provocative in any way, and let me just briefly run through the resolution as it stands on the Order Paper.

It says: WHEREAS the present Government of this Province when in Opposition criticized the former Government for undue economic restraint in the Health care sector.

Now, certainly, Mr. Speaker, nobody who has ever come in contact with this House during the last sessions when we were Government can dispute that fact. There was constant criticism of restraint in the Health care sector by the then Opposition, the now Government. So, that is not a fabrication, that is not a figment of somebody's imagination, that is a fact.

AND WHEREAS the present Government has promised to provide high-quality Health care for all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador regardless of cost.

I will have an exhibit to prove that in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, taken from the Liberal policy manual in the 1989 election. So, that is a fact. The Government promised that, Mr. Speaker, so that is not politically provocative.

AND WHEREAS the present Government has announced it will hold provincial expenditures on Health care in 1991-92 to 1990-91 levels, which, because of the continually-increasing costs of

providing Health care, will in effect mean a cutback in expenditures on Health care next year.

Well again, Mr. Speaker, that is just, in this recital, a statement of fact. We are not fabricating. The Government has, in fact, announced a freeze at this year's final net figure for next year. So there is nothing new about that, and everybody who is involved knows that freeze will mean that the Health care system will have less money to spend because of inflation and salary costs and so on as a result of that freeze.

The final whereas, Mr. Speaker: AND WHEREAS a freeze in provincial expenditures on Health will mean a reduction in Health services available to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

There is not a person, there is not an expert manager, as the Premier and the Minister refers to them, anywhere in any institution in this Province who does not admit quickly an up front that a freeze will mean reduction, that a freeze is, in fact, a cut.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House urge - you notice the word, Mr. Speaker, the very soft word 'urge'. It does not say demand or condemn or purge, or some more politically provocative word. It is a very, very soft diplomatic approach - that the House urge the present Government to fulfill its commitment to provide high-quality Health care for all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, the provision of which shall preclude Health care staff shortages, hospital and nursing home bed closures and unreasonable delays

for hospital and nursing home admissions and for other medical services.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe you could have a more timely resolution for debate before this House, and I do not believe you could have a resolution that is any softer in its approach. The House is just urging the Government to look at the impact on the Health care system of this Province of its announced freeze, and to live up to the commitment this Government made to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador just eighteen months ago.

And what were those commitments, Mr. Speaker? Well, let me remind the House, in quoting from the Liberal policy document on Health care, of what that commitment was. The document said this: 'The health system in Newfoundland and Labrador is in turmoil. Hospital beds remain closed, while patients wait for months, sometimes in pain and anguish, to be admitted. Doctors and nurses and support staff are overworked', says their policy document, 'and in many cases underpaid.' Facilities and services are strained beyond their limits, yet the Tory Minister of Health has consistently refused to admit that there is a problem. It is not possible to correct the problem until you first admit that it exists.

We have not heard any admission of a problem over the last two and a half or three weeks in the House from the Liberal Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker. 'This critical situation must be alleviated immediately.' The Liberal policy document, Mr. Speaker. Listen to how dramatic this is. 'It is truly a matter of life and death' - the Liberal

policy document.

Then it goes on to say, 'Liberal health care policy dictates that as long as the demand exists, hospital beds must be kept open.' Not may or anything of that nature, must. Definitive. 'Institutions must not be understaffed.' Again there is no qualifier. It is definitive. Institutions must not be understaffed. And compassion must always, not shall be always, or something like that, but compassion must always. Therefore, in every case, Mr. Speaker, where the need continues to exist, according to this policy manifesto of the Government, compassion must always take precedence over business administration. In other words, compassion ahead of the bottom line, compassion ahead of restraint, compassion ahead of deficit, 'compassion must always', it says, 'take precedence over business administration.'

So, Mr. Speaker, the Government when campaigning for office laid it squarely on the line that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador could expect that under their stewardship there would never come a situation, no matter how difficult the fiscal situation of the Province was, when compassion would find itself preceding the bottom line, when compassion would find itself preceding the deficit. They would never do that. They committed themselves never to do it. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, if they had a fiscal problem, the clear message to the people of this Province was that they would search every other area and every other avenue of Government and every Government agency, they would search every other

alternative, but compassion would always come before the bottom line as far as health care expenditure was concerned in this Province by this Administration.

Now what has become the reality, Mr. Speaker? The reality has been totally, totally different. As soon as the Government, because of the bungling and the incompetence of the Minister of Finance, found itself into a deficit situation, where did the Government look first? They said, oh, in a general way they would look everywhere, but where did they look first? Did compassion come ahead of bottom lines, Mr. Speaker?

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: No, it did not. They looked first at the big spenders, Mr. Speaker, health, education, and other areas in the Government.

The Government did that at the same time, Mr. Speaker, that they had gone through a bargaining process with health sector employees, a bargaining process that in all instances except one, as far as I know, and that was the nurses settlement, in all instances except one the Government were a willing partner to submitting the final decision on wages and benefits and salary increases to binding arbitration. The Government did that, Mr. Speaker, at a time when they knew - the public did not know it officially from the Government, they knew it from the Opposition, but the Government did that at a time when they internally knew that they were into a deficit position. Yet they allowed an independent arbitrator to make decisions on salary.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is fine to be popular, it is fine to try to maintain popularity and let somebody else make a decision for you, but there comes a time when he who plays the tune has to pay the piper. For this Government, Mr. Speaker, that has come home to roost. Because the deficit position the Minister of Finance has gotten the Province into has now forced the Government to back away from those lofty commitments made to the people of this Province only eighteen months ago: that health care was sacred, that education financing was sacred, that compassion and need would come before the bottom line, that compassion and need would ride at all times under the big heart of this administration, before deficits and before bottom lines. It was not reality when they said it and it certainly is not reality now. But it is another instance and another example where this Government has broken the commitment it made to the people when it sought office only eighteen months ago.

Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the Minister and the Government waved this shock throughout the Province only a couple of weeks ago, there is still an opportunity for the Government to redeem itself. It can look at the numbers everywhere in the system, inside and outside of Government, Government agencies and so on, and make the hard decision it needs to make to bring its deficit problem in line. And do that and say to the people of this Province at the same time, though these are difficult times, difficult economic times, difficult fiscal times, we are going to solve this problem somewhere else except in health care, except in education, except in social services, because

we made a solemn commitment to you, as a party seeking your support, that compassion would always come ahead of the bottom line. We made that solemn commitment, and we as a party of honour are bound and determined to make sure that we keep it. If we have to cut massively and cut programs elsewhere, we are prepared to take it on the chin and defend that. But we are not prepared to break our solemn commitment to you, the voter of this Province, by renegeing on, or going back on our commitment to put compassion ahead of the bottom line for health care institutions.

If the Government wishes to regain any of the lost ground that has happened over the last several days because of those announcements, that is what it should do. It should come clean with the people of this Province and say, it was a mistake. We should never have taken this approach first. We took the wrong approach. Somehow or other our policy manual got mislaid, somehow or another we forgot to check on Page 18 and remind ourselves internally of the promises we made to you on health care and the kind of health care system that we would deliver as part of our stewardship of this Province. We are sorry we forgot it. But we have been reminded about it now. We have been reminded about the fact that we committed solemnly to put compassion ahead of the bottom line and we are going to look everywhere else in the system to avoid having to break that solemn commitment that we made to you, Mr. Speaker.

One day this Government says that the freeze will be imposed by those who know the system best, because they are the experts.

Once the experts speak and tell us what the impact of that freeze will be and it becomes public, either through administrators talking to the press or the Opposition bringing it up here in this Legislature, the experts are no longer experts, they do not know what they are talking about. Well, it will not be much longer now and the chicken will start to come home to roost. Those institutions have to have their recommendations, their proposals, I suppose is a better word, they will have to have their proposals into the Minister of Health by, I believe, today, outlining how they intend to live with a frozen budget next year, based on their net expenditure this year. The Minister is expecting these experts to tell him what they will do to ensure that they will not exceed that level, that frozen level. We know what some of them are, Mr. Speaker. Some of them are massive layoffs, 1000 or 1200 if you take the 12 per cent figure, and with 11 per cent, I suppose it will be a bit less. If the figure comes down to 9 or 10 per cent it will be a bit less. But anyway you cut it, Mr. Speaker, those dramatic cutbacks as a result of the freeze will mean significant, several hundreds of layoffs in the health care system of this Province next year.

We also know, Mr. Speaker, that those same experts suggest there will be - not suggest, they say quite clearly that there will have to be several hundred beds closed in our health care institutions next year. We have examples already of senior citizens' homes saying, 'We are freezing admission.' Now, the Minister sloughs it off and says, 'Well, you know, they were mistaken.' But the fact of the matter is, it

happened.

There are people out there in the health care system today, Mr. Speaker, who are scared. They are intimidated. They don't know what to do. And, you know, some of those homes are freezing admissions. It has already happened. Some of them are not admitting older people to senior citizens' homes anymore. Some of them are saying, 'We are already understaffed in terms of nursing. What are we going to do next year, when we have to live under those freezes? What is the point of my filling a vacant bed now when, come March, if that bed is still filled I have to make sure it becomes vacant again?'

They are starting, Mr. Speaker - we are hearing from them on a daily basis - to talk about the misery already in the system because of the announcement, the shock waves that have gone through the system because of the announcement. Now, if the Minister is going to be able to find a way to lessen that burden, then I think it is incumbent on the Minister, Mr. Speaker, to very quickly report to the people of this Province and to the people running those institutions. They are out there now trying to do the best they can to come up with proposals which they know are going to be painful, which are going to hurt, but will satisfy the Government edict, the Government decree that they live with a frozen budget next year, at this year's rate. They are out there trying to do it.

If there is going to be some change in that position as the Minister and the Premier seem to hint from time to time, then I say, Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent

on the Minister of Health and the Government to get those decisions made quickly. I mean, don't leave those people in limbo. Don't leave them out there making cuts this year which they know they are going to have to make next year anyway. They are scaling down so, as of the 1st of April, it won't come as such a blow overnight, to their institution and the people they are serving. That is what's happening. We are hearing it from administrators from all over the Province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said, this Government -

Mr. Speaker (Snow): Order, please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, I will have an opportunity to speak again later. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Decker: Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with the hon. the Leader of the Opposition when he says that administrators and hospital board chairmen were shocked back in October. I have to agree they were, indeed, shocked. They were shocked when this Government decided we were going to consult with hospital administrators and were going talk to board chairpersons and the stakeholders in the system. That was a shock, Mr. Speaker, something they had not seen in seventeen years. They had not seen any discussion, any co-operation and, indeed, they were shocked.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me refer to this Private Member's motion. The

first whereas says: WHEREAS the present Government of this Province when in Opposition criticized the former Government for undue economic restraint in the Health care sector. I am pleased to be able to stand and say, Mr. Speaker, that that whereas is absolutely, positively correct. When this Government was in Opposition, we did, indeed, criticize the previous administration. But, the key word in that first whereas, Mr. Speaker, is the word undue - '...the former Government for undue economic restraint'.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we were attacking the previous administration for unnecessary - the word undue means unnecessary - economic restraint. I will put it in context. When hospital beds were closed in this province, when people could not get cardiac surgery, the previous administration was spending \$25 million on a cucumber plant in Mount Pearl. This is what was happening, Mr. Speaker. Let us put it in context.

When the previous administration was closing up nursing home beds in this Province and refusing to open nursing home beds, former Ministers and the former Premier were travelling all over the world in stretch limousines at \$2,000 a day, handing out tips like people from a banana republic, at \$200 a head. This is why it was unnecessary for them to be closing hospital beds, Mr. Speaker.

When the previous administration was putting the screws to the health care system, they had a Cabinet made up of twenty-three Cabinet Ministers, and every single government member at the time who criticized the Premier or

spoke behind the scenes to a Cabinet Minister, in order to shut him up, he was either invited into the Cabinet or he was made a Parliamentary Assistant.

Now that is why, when we criticized the previous administration for undue, unnecessary economic restraint in the health care sector, we did it because we were proud to do it, and we stand by that position today.

The second whereas refers to this present Government providing high-quality health care for all residents regardless of cost. Now, Mr. Speaker, have you ever heard anything so stupid and childish and simple and irresponsible since you came into the world? I do not know what has gotten into the previous administration since they became Opposition Members. They should have gone all the way and changed their names from Progressive Conservatives and called themselves NDP, Mr. Speaker. Because surely goodness we all like socialism, we are all believers in socialism, but the one key thing about socialism, Mr. Speaker, there must be capitalism, there must be free enterprise to pay for socialism. Surely Members who were once Members of Government must realize that at the end of the day someone has to pay the cost of socialism.

To substantiate the accusation, the Leader of the Opposition refers to our policy manual. Now, Mr. Speaker, I am going to introduce the Leader of the Opposition to two words, two words which he would have found to be important words had he had the privilege of studying theology, as I did. The words are eisegesis

and exegesis. The word exegesis, used in the theological sense, refers to taking a passage - be it of a Scripture or a philosopher or what - and you try to draw out of that passage or that paragraph what it is really actually saying. You try to interpret the passage.

But the other term, eisegesis, does not have a good connotation. Eisegesis is where you take a particular paragraph and you try to read into that paragraph, you try to make it say something that it had no intention of saying, Mr. Speaker, a quite common occurrence in preaching, a quite common occurrence in interpretation of various religious books, be it the Bible or be it the Koran or whatever. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has taken the policy manual of the Liberal Party in the previous election and he practiced eisegesis. He read into the document something which was not there, Mr. Speaker. At no time did we say we would provide health care no matter what the cost.

Ms Verge: (Inaudible) you did.

Mr. Decker: I said that would be absolutely silly and irresponsible, and we would not deserve to be a Government! And unless hon. Members smarten up, there is no chance in the world that they will even be considered as an alternative government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, he goes on. The present Government has announced it will hold provincial expenditures. We have announced no such thing. We have - and I will table the letters to show what we have done - talked to the various boards. On October 15, I wrote a letter to the board chairman: The 1991 Budget for

your organization will be approximately equal to the final revised Budget for the current fiscal year. Was that an announcement? That was an internal letter, that was an internal letter to hospital boards, that was one of the things which we had to do, that was our consultation, but, consultation, Mr. Speaker, has a price. Open Government has a price.

Somewhere among the one hundred and some odd people with whom I met in Corner Brook to consult with and seek advice from and ask directions of, some of them took this thing and ran to the Opposition, and said, here is a good political point. Here is something on which to make politics on, they do not give a darn about the situation in which the Province is, make political points out of it.

That is the price of consultation, however, the vast majority of hospital boards accept this as an internal thing where we are dealing internally with our problem.

In the last paragraph, and I am going to table this document: I request that you and your board ensure that all possible cost reductions are applied to initially non-patient care areas, which will have the least impact on direct services to patients. That was the directive, Mr. Speaker, and then a few days later, the Assistant Deputy Minister who is responsible for hospital services in the Province, wrote the administrators of the various boards and said schedule 1, which was attached, sets out our present estimate of the provincial revenue plan for your organization.

This Budget figure has been estimated at the level of your estimated revised Budget for the current fiscal year and then he goes on to say: you may identify other areas of cost escalation or service which will add to the requirements for cost reduction. If so, please identify these items and indicate the impact on your cost expected.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is an ongoing process; and here we asked them when they report to us they should indicate a description of the measures which they propose to take. The magnitude of the cost reduction possible, the effect on service of the measure, the effect on staffing of the measure, but the last paragraph, Mr. Speaker, is very telling: Measures which adversely affect services to patients, however, should not be implemented until Government has indicated its concurrence with your proposed plans. So if there is a hospital board or administrator saying that ten beds are going to be closed or fifty beds are going to be closed or that twenty-five layoffs are going to take place in January, he or she does not have the authority to do that, because we have given specific instructions that services to patients, measures which adversely affect services to patients, should not be implemented until Government has indicated its concurrence with your proposed plans.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition has taken the hard times we are in, the difficult times we are in and are trying to make political points on it, but they are not getting anywhere because the people of the Province realize that they now have a responsible Government in place and they have

a Liberal Government in place which is committed to the health care system of this Province.

In the resolution, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, says: BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Hon. House urge the present Government to fulfill its commitment to provide high quality health care for all residents.

Now this is a vicious attack on the present Government. The hon. Member tried to say it is a soft spoken document, this is a vicious attack, this is assuming that we are not committed to health care, which is pure utter tripe.

We are as committed to health care as any other Government in Canada is today, as any other Government in the history of this Province has been. We proved that in our first Budget that we brought down. We pumped millions of dollars into the health care system and we were pleased to do it and I went around opening hospital beds, I went around opening operating rooms, I went around funding mammography units, it was a good time going through the system.

Year 2, I did exactly the same thing when we put another \$75 to \$80 million into the health care system of this Province, opened beds which had never before been opened in the history of the world. These are the things that a Liberal Government will do and likes to be doing and we will continue to do, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Decker: However, there has been a temporary interruption in our program. I want the people of the Province to realize that. It

is simply and truly a temporary interruption.

Mr. Parsons: How temporary?

Mr. Decker: It is not the end. We are not stopped - and for the hon. Member for St. John's East Extern who asked how temporary, I cannot say exactly whether it is going to be a year or a year and a half, but it is going to be as brief as we can possibly make it. But if he wants to know exactly how temporary, I would ask him to talk to his Tory friend in Ottawa, Mr. Wilson, who induced this recession upon us and maybe Mr. Wilson can tell him how long we are going to be put through this hardship, Mr. Speaker. That will be more important.

Now during this temporary interruption I would liken it to a person who is ill. The health care system, Mr. Speaker, can be very appropriately likened to a person who is sick, who has a minor illness. That minor illness has to be dealt with in the context of the minor illness which is affecting the whole Province, Transportation, Social Services, Environment and Lands, the whole Government is temporarily ill because we have found ourselves in this recession, this made-in-Canada recession, this Tory induced recession, Mr. Speaker, and we have to deal with it. And how do you deal with sickness? Sometimes, most times you take some medicine. And that is exactly where we find ourselves today. We as a Department of Health have to take some medicine. And taking medicine is not always a pleasant thing to have to do, but the benefit of taking that medicine far outweighs the sour taste, far outweighs the unpleasantness that is associated

with taking that medicine, Mr. Speaker.

So we are right now in a position where the health care system is trying to take this medicine and to deal with itself. So I say to the people of the Province, I say to the Leader of the Opposition that we are in a temporary slump. We would rather be opening beds. We would rather be hiring additional nurses. We discovered when we took over this Government that there were a hundred new nurses needed in the system. We have already put in sixty-six, and we have not been here a year and a half yet. We have funded sixty-six new positions, Mr. Speaker. We would like to fund more. That is what we want to do. And as soon as we get through this downturn in the economy, which was induced by the Tory friends and colleagues of those people, in Ottawa, which was induced by them, and all the provinces have to suffer, not just Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker, but the same thing is happening in Ontario today. In Ontario they are suffering because of this recession. In Manitoba, even British Columbia and Alberta, the great have provinces in this federation. We are all suffering from this recession which has been forced upon us by the Federal Government.

However, I believe that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are more fortunate than other Canadians across this great nation. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, the reason that Newfoundlanders are more fortunate than other people across this great nation is that Newfoundlanders have elected for the first time in seventeen years a caring, warm, concerned,

consulting Government. A Government which is not going to act like a bunch of dictators which we had for seventeen years. A Government which is not going to go out and force it's will on the people, as we saw for seventeen years. But a Government which is going to take responsible action, Mr. Speaker. We are not going to put this Province into bankruptcy. We are not going to take all the money this Province has and all the money that we can borrow, and all the money that our children and our grandchildren and generations yet unborn can earn, we are not going to take all of that. We are going to deal with this matter in a responsible manner. We are going to inflict as little pain as we possibly can. We are going to be concerned about every single employee that works with Government, and we are going to do our utmost to cushion the effects of this recession, Mr. Speaker.

However, at the end of the day I have to admit that we are now in a recession which we did not cause, but which we have to deal with. We are here. We are dealing with this, Mr. Speaker, in a responsible manner, in a responsible way, and I think that is one reason why the people of this Province feel relieved, in a way. They do not want to have to take this medicine, but they know if the medicine has to be administered, as it does, then they would rather for it to be by this Government, a caring Government, a small 'l' liberal Government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: A good point.

Mr. Decker: If this Private

Member's resolution had not been so political, not so conniving, and had it said that they would implore this Government to continue to provide for health care, as they have been doing before they were interrupted by federal fiscal policy. Had they told the truth in this particular document I would have been pleased to get up today and vote in favour of this particular resolution, but, Mr. Speaker, I cannot in all honesty get up and vote in favour of a resolution which was presented simply and solely for political purposes, without any responsibility, without having any caring about the impact that their statements might have on the people who are genuinely concerned about losing their jobs. I cannot get up and support this in honesty, Mr. Speaker, so regretfully, I suppose I could have got up and gone on with a whole lot of amendments to it and made it our motion, but that would not be fair, so rather than fool around with such a silly, stupid, political document, regrettably, Mr. Speaker, I am going to have to vote against this. If I were allowed to introduce a private member's bill myself I would come with one at some future date and I would suggest some things be done with the health care system, but I would do it positively and not negatively. I am sick and tired of negativism. Those people are against everything, whether it is good or bad. They do not even have to stop and ask. If the Liberals say it they are against it, if they say it, it is good, if the Tory people in Ottawa say it, it is good. I cannot condone that kind of foolishness, Mr. Speaker, and therefore regrettably I am going to have to vote against this particular resolution when it is called.

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

Ms Verge: Thank you, Mr. Speaker..

This Minister of Health is the most partisan member of the new real change Government. I recall when I asked him about the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases in the Province in a Budget Estimates Committee meeting a year or so ago, he actually correlated the decrease in the incidents of gonorrhoea with the change of Government. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health is saying that this motion is too political for him to support. What hypocrisy? I am disappointed the Minister is leaving because I am just getting into my speech. I know the Minister said that the Government has temporarily interrupted its health care program. The Government has presumably temporarily abandoned its principles. The Government has temporarily lost any recollection of the promises they made when they were campaigning for election. Temporarily they will put improving balance sheets above cutting costs. Temporarily they will emphasize business administration and neglect compassion. Are we to expect a resumption of their principles and lip service to their original promises during the next election campaign? Is it just between elections when the Liberals are in office that they temporarily interrupt their programs? That is what it seems like, Mr. Speaker. I say to the Minister of Health put your money where your mouth is, let us examine the record of the Minister of Health, the President of Treasury Board, and, of course, most of all the Premier who obviously is running the show. It is a one-man show. Let

us examine the Premier's record. The Government, obviously, failed to budget properly. Everyone has seen that now. The Government failed to predict accurately, with the information that was available to them last Winter, the revenues and expenses of the Provincial Government this year. They projected a current account surplus.

And then, days later when they got information that their forecast was way off, they failed to share that new information with the House and with the public. They failed to tell people about the worsening financial situation. As a result, Mr. Speaker, the Government lost control of collective bargaining, the Government lost control of bargaining with the nurses, with the lab and x-ray employees, and with the hospital and nursing home support workers. The Government lost control of the Provincial Government's finances.

A couple of months later, Mr. Speaker, the Government began to break their election campaign promises. The temporary interruption began. The Government has instead been blaming others, blaming the hospital and nursing homes administrators, blaming the Opposition, blaming the previous Provincial Government, but most of all blaming Ottawa.

Now, granted part of the problem is a Federal Government problem, but that is only a relatively small part of the problem. Most of the chaos this Government has created has been of their own making. As my colleague for Green Bay says, this is a made in Newfoundland and Labrador deficit. This is a made in

Newfoundland and Labrador mess.

A friend of mine who works in the Health care sector said to me last evening no matter who was in the Provincial Government now there would be problems, problems stemming from the national economic decline from the national economic recession. But if we were in the Government, if the PC's had formed the Government, there would not be the mess there is now.

Mr. Speaker, there is a mess out there in the health care sector. Hospital and nursing home administrators, nurses, nursing assistants, physicians, specialists and other health care workers are panic stricken right now. Many of the junior health care personnel are looking outside the Province for work. A great number of nurses enrolled in nursing education programs and are aiming for careers outside of Newfoundland and Labrador. Evidently they do not take seriously the Premier's promise to stimulate the economy so that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can stay home and work or so that people who have left the Province can return. People have lost hope. People have lost faith and trust in this Government and that is only after eighteen months.

Examining the record of the Government, their eighteen month record, we see a tale of mismanagement and avoidance of responsibility. The Minister of Health has acknowledged writing the administrators and chairs of hospitals and nursing homes. He has acknowledged having sent a letter to the board chairs on October 15th telling them that the Government would be freezing their budget for next year at this years

revised net figure. He has admitted to that. I have a copy of the letter here, actually, bearing his signature.

The Premier, when confronted with the reaction to that correspondence of the Provincial Association of Hospital and Nursing Homes, refused to acknowledge that a freeze is a cut. The President of Treasury Board at least had the grace to admit that a freeze is a reduction. However, he claims that the estimates of the extent of the reduction made by the Provincial Association of Hospital and Nursing Homes is wrong. He said that their claim the freeze would mean effectively a twelve per cent reduction or in dollars, a \$60 million cut, is overstated. The hospitals and nursing homes in their calculations factored in rising wages, as a result of the Government's settlements and arbitrated awards, Workers' Compensation premium increases totalling \$9 million this year, the payroll tax, pay equity and other inflationary factors. I am quoting from their news release of October 16.

The President of Treasury Board has said that two of those factors namely the payroll tax and pay equity will not cost the institutions because those costs will be absorbed by the Government. I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, whether the President of Treasury Board or the Minister of Health have now communicated that information to the institutions. Has the Government given any written assurance to the institutions that the payroll tax and the cost associated with implementing pay equity for employees of hospital and nursing homes will be borne by the

Provincial Government and will not be put off on the institutions?

I have been asking the President of Treasury Board for his projections of the extent of the loss to hospitals and nursing homes. He said 12 per cent is overstated. He said that \$60 million is exaggerated. What are his estimates? According to information I have, if pay equity implementation is indeed absorbed by the Provincial Government, instead of an effective 12 per cent reduction in the budgets of hospitals and nursing homes the actual cut will be more like 11 per cent. Would the President of Treasury Board let me know if that is correct?

While confusion is reigning, Mr. Speaker, the health care system of this Province is being eroded, hospital and nursing home administrators are instituting bed closures. They are bringing in freezes on admissions, and health care personnel are making career decisions involving leaving Newfoundland and Labrador. What is the Government going to do to restore calmness, to restore an atmosphere of trust? What is the Government going to do to comfort the sick, the elderly, the infirm, chronic care patients and their families?

An Hon. Member: What would you suggest?

Ms Verge: What I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, is first and foremost that this Government accept responsibility for health care. Stop blaming the institutions, stop blaming the administrators for necessary decisions that are politically unpalatable. Stop shifting the blame to the previous Provincial Government. Stop

blaming all the problems on Ottawa. Accept responsibility. Health care under the Constitution, as the Premier would know, is solely and exclusively within the legal competence and jurisdiction of the provinces. So number one, I say to the Member for Bonavista South, accept responsibility. Accept responsibility for the hospital in Clarenville, and the health care centre in Bonavista, for the nursing homes in that region. Accept responsibility.

Number two, Mr. Speaker, be honest. Tell the House, tell the hospital and nursing home administrators, tell the health care workers, tell the patients, tell the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador the truth. Tell us the truth about the Budget. Tell us the actual implications of a freeze in the Budgets of hospitals and nursing homes. Tell us if it means effectively a 12 per cent reduction or an 11 per cent reduction. Tell us if it means requiring the layoff of 1,200 workers or 1,100 workers or 1,000 workers. Or confess that this was the start of an orchestrated PR campaign leading to much lesser cuts so that when the bad news eventually breaks, it will not seem all that bad because it will pale in comparison to the devastation that would have resulted from the cuts the Minister of Health told the hospitals and nursing homes the Government would inflict starting April 1st, 1991. Tell the truth.

Mr. Speaker, Number 3: Have the Minister of Finance lay before the House of Assembly all the facts so that the Members here and our constituents can co-operate and contribute to a solution. And number 4: Mr. Speaker, keep your

promises, I say to the Government Members opposite, keep your promises, because when the Members opposite and their Liberal colleagues campaigned for election in the winter and spring of 1989, they talked about real change and they emphasized change in two directions, one was job creation and bringing home mothers' sons from the mainland and the other was upgrading health care and opening more hospital beds.

If you go around the Province and ask people what the Liberals promised that earned them 40 per cent of the total popular vote, people recall two promises and one of them was upgrading health care and opening more hospital beds.

What was in the Liberal campaign policy manual, the Leader of the Opposition already quoted it but I have to say it again. I have to say it again, because obviously the Members opposite who are hiding their heads in newspapers and magazines or who are avoiding looking me in the eye, are ashamed to admit to themselves and others that they have failed so miserably to keep their promises.

The Liberal 1989 campaign policy manual said: if we cannot adequately care for the sick, the disabled and the aged among us, we have failed as a society and we can take cold comfort in cutting costs and improving balance sheets. Cold comfort. Cold comfort for the Member for Placentia, cold comfort for the smiling Minister of Social Services, cold comfort for the Minister of Finance, who evidently did not master silent reading in Grade II, cold comfort indeed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has not even admitted that a freeze is

a cut. The President of Treasury Board says, yes, a freeze is a reduction, but no decisions have been made. He said the extent of the deficit for hospitals and nursing homes will not be as bad as \$50 million but he has not confessed what it will be really.

The President of Treasury Board and his colleagues over there appear to be hiding their heads in the sand while hospital and nursing homes are implementing changes, real changes to freeze admissions, to close beds and to lay off staff.

Out there in the institutions, Mr. Speaker, panic is reigning, chaos exists, yet the Minister of Health, the President of Treasury Board, the Minister of Finance and the Premier seem oblivious to it all. They are so wrapped up in the perks of office that they have lost touch with the voters who elected them to office.

But, Mr. Speaker, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador will remember. The voters will remember the temporary interruption of the Liberal program, the voters will remember that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I am going to take a different approach, as I normally do to this particular resolution. I am not going to belabour the fact that we have been living in, I suppose, a recessionary period in this Province. I would submit since 1949, one way or the other we have always had problems. But I want to address a few comments to the

resolution before I begin. The resolution as a whole, if you take it as it is with few exceptions, Mr. Speaker, there is not a lot wrong with it. And I do not think this Government will at any time shirk its responsibilities as it relates to health care, education, social services, or any other responsibility this Government has. But there are some points in the resolution I cannot agree with, and I just want to make those points.

To begin, Mr. Speaker, 'WHEREAS the present Government of this Province when in Opposition criticized the former Government for undue economic restraint in the health care sector.' I could not care less. I am a newly elected member to the House of Assembly. I was not sitting in Opposition with my colleagues at the time, so I really do not think it makes a lot of difference whether they criticized the previous Government or not. I do not think a question of what happened a year or two ago, or ten years ago, in this House is relevant at this particular time in our history, or relevant today in the economic situation we find ourselves in. I really do not care about that particular section, and I do not want it there.

The second part refers to, 'regardless of cost'. Now I do not know if any of the hon. members opposite can actually come up with some comments, through Hansard, where somebody made that 'regardless of cost' comment. If they did and if they can, I am certainly sure the hon. member who made it in the House certainly did not mean it. Because anybody who sits in this House, and anyone who lives in Newfoundland today,

certainly cannot make the statement, 'regardless of cost', because we all know, and we are all aware of the fact that cost in Newfoundland is probably one of the major factors in determining what services Government provides. I cannot go along with this.

'WHEREAS the present Government has announced...' the word 'announced' is the other one that bothers me, because I have not heard that yet. I have asked the question of a number of the Ministers, and I have also checked Hansard on a number of occasions, to find out for sure if it has been announced that these cuts will take place. I think it was as late as yesterday that the question was asked again in this House, and I can honestly say that I have been asking the question, has it been announced that these cuts are going ahead, and the answer I am getting, and I can only assume that the hon. members who are answering me are telling me the truth, the answer to that is no, it has not been announced. So that is not a true statement.

'WHEREAS a freeze in the provincial expenditure on health would mean a reduction in health services...' Because that statement is false, Mr. Speaker, that it has been announced, we are assuming I suppose, and a lot of people are assuming. When I read the daily newspapers I see they are quoting it has been announced, and a lot of people are being told they are going to be laid off and so on. I am told and am led to believe that up until this point in time we are not sure, because we are waiting for reports to come back from committees, from groups and organizations around the Province, and the people the

different Ministers are consulting around the Province. Those reports have not been compiled yet, so I do not expect that we will get a concerted or a consolidated opinion on whether we should or not, or what we are going to do for some time yet. It may be as late as Christmas before we get the final report in, so I certainly cannot go along with that one.

'NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this hon. House urge the present Government to fill the commitment to provide high quality health care for all the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.' I do not have any problems with that. I know this Government and the Ministers in Health, Social Services, Education and all the other ones have made that commitment, and I think they are quite sincere. When I hear my hon. colleague for Port de Grave stand in his place quite often and make commitments on behalf of his Government, I know from knowing the gentleman for a number of years that these commitments have always been in his mind. He talked about them long before he became Minister of Social Services, and I am sure he will continue, regardless of where he sits.

'...the provision of which shall preclude health care staff shortages in hospitals, nursing homes', and so on. I do not think that at this particular point anybody, and it is irrelevant whether we do or not, we cannot make a commitment to anybody in the Province and say we are not going to do this or we are not going to do that, or anything else.

Mr. Speaker, on that opening comment I do feel that the heart

of the resolution is in the right place, but there are a number of discrepancies there, and if removed, I certainly would support it.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I want to take you through a few brief comments about what is happening and how I see it almost as an outsider. When I stand in the House and I have the hon. the Member for Humber East and I have the hon. the Minister of Fisheries and the different Ministers and the number of people on both sides of the House who have been used to speaking in the House and have experience in the House, I probably have a better opinion or a more open opinion because I am new to the game and I try to evaluate things and assess things on what I see myself and hear myself and what I have seen and heard over the years. And I want to state that I am not going to condemn anybody for the state we are in and I am not going to praise anyone for the state we are in, but I hope and pray that I can make some comments that are basically from the heart and that is basically it.

I want to talk very briefly, Mr. Speaker, about our current recession, the great 'R' word that our friends in Ottawa had so much trouble pronouncing for such a long time, the current recession. I think when you look back over the history of Newfoundland and Labrador and the history of Canada you will admit that in good times we in Newfoundland sometimes do not always enjoy the good things that come from prosperity. What I am talking about is when I think back to the late 1960s, 70s and early 80s, when you had the oil boom in Alberta and Alberta was the place to be, with no

unemployment and no taxes and so on. What a place to live at that particular point in time. But even during that period of time we in Newfoundland were still talking about unemployment, we were talking about health care cuts, and we were talking about cuts in Social Services and everything else. So we do not share the prosperity in the country. But when a recession hits, we certainly share, and take our share, and take the brunt of hard times, and I think that is what is happening today.

We all know that the recession will hit us in Newfoundland, and there is no doubt that there is a recession. It will hit us harder and it will hit us longer. It is common knowledge. And I can quote from the previous Premier of the Province, Mr. Peckford, because he is quoted as saying on a number of occasions that Newfoundland takes a lot longer to come out of a recession, be it a world or a Canadian recession or whatever, than any other province in Canada.

The Federal Finance Minister has been stressing to Canadians the need to control the growing deficit. We have all heard that. We have heard it numerous times, I suppose, since 1985, and we heard it prior to that. Everybody, every Finance Minister, I suppose, who has come to power or come to office in Canada in the past twenty to twenty-five years have somewhere or another mentioned the word recession or the need to curb the deficit. This particular Minister, Mr. Speaker, has been advocating in the last month or so constraint on expenditure. That frightens me and bothers me. Because when you stop to look at where he has cut in the past, say, five years, the only place I can

see where he is going to have to start cutting right now could be equalization payments, or payments to the Provinces. And if that be true, Mr. Speaker, we do not have it hard at all yet, we have not even come close to reaching the tip of the iceberg. And God help us if the Federal Government of Canada, be it this one or a new one in a year or two, decides to cut the deficit even further and we end up losing money in our equalization payments.

The Federal Government constraints have to have an impact on our Province and every Province in Canada. And we are not alone. I was just talking to a friend of mine from Nova Scotia, and he is friend because I met him through one of the Parliamentary Association meetings last year, and he was telling me basically the same thing is happening in Nova Scotia. They are afraid up there. They are hearing the rumblings up there, and they are talking about deficits. And I am sure that from this Province of Newfoundland right to British Columbia everyone is saying and predicting the same thing: watch out next year when the budget comes down.

Mr. Speaker, as Newfoundlanders we did not create the recession we are in. I do believe, however, that we played a part in it. A small part, of course, because we are only a small part of the great Dominion of Canada. We did not create it. The reluctance to use the 'R' word, or recession, and the tendency of the Federal Government in recent years to control the growth of transfer payments to help curb the deficit, has effectively put us in the situation we are in today as it relates to Social Services and

Works, Services and Transportation - my hon. colleague yesterday had to make the statement he made in the House, and I offer him my sympathy, because I am sure that was probably one of the worse things that gentleman ever had to do. I am sure he did not want to make that statement in the House - the situation as it relates to Social Services, Health, and Education and all the other departments we have to deal with, or we deal with on a daily basis.

This recession, Mr. Speaker, and the situation we find ourselves in today, looking at a possible deficit of \$120 million, the Minister is saying it could be more. He is also saying it could be less. But let us say \$120 million. It is not of our making. This is not a situation that has been made by us exclusively in the last eighteen months. It is not a situation that has developed all of a sudden because there is a new Government in Newfoundland, and I am going to prove that point to you now in a few seconds, if I am allowed to continue.

The Federal Minister is at present going through the same dilemma, and I say that every Finance Minister in every province of this country at this present time is going through the same dilemma. Where will the cuts come, I wonder, when the Federal Finance Minister brings down a new Budget come early next year? I wonder where he will decide to cut? He will not have to cut Social Services programs, because that is not even in his jurisdiction. He will not have to cut Health programs, because that is not in his jurisdiction. So where will he cut? He will indirectly cut Health and he will indirectly cut

Social Services, because he is going to cut equalization payments. But nobody will accuse him of that.

I just want to go back to a point, Mr. Speaker. I want to do this because, and I am not being derogatory, Mr. Speaker, I just want to make the point here that we have been faced with economic problems and woes for a long, long time. I didn't have the time today to go to the library and get all the material I wanted, but I got enough. I do not want to be taken as derogatory here, and I hope my hon. colleagues and my friends on the other side do not think that I am trying to place any blame on them because I began by saying that this is not the fault of one particular group of people, or that previous group of people who served as a Government, or even the one before that.

I started in 1982. Mr. Speaker, if you want me to table any of this, I will be glad to do it. This is an excerpt from The Toronto Sun. The Toronto Sun now, no one else, reporting on Newfoundland, 1982. The headline says 'Newfoundland Budget - Public Service Wage Freeze'. I just want to take one excerpt out of it, and you can have it if you want. Finance Minister John Collins, and this was a comment he made. This was 1982. 'The \$1.9 billion Budget forecast a 12.9 per cent increase in expenditures, but a 26 per cent rise in provincial borrowing meant taxes had to rise only enough to compensate for deduction to the reduction - this is 1982 - in federal funding of health and post-secondary education. 1982! 'The Budget was an enlightened document in these troubled times and represented an effort to address the present

financial realities of the Province.' Dr. Collins said that, who was minister at the time. He was in that situation in 1982. I pity him. I pity any Finance Minister, Dr. Collins or the present Finance Minister who is here today, I pity them being in a situation like that. I am certainly sure there is no one in this House who would want his job, as nobody wanted Dr. Collins' job back in 1982.

Let me continue. Here is one. 'Port au Port MHA blasts Government's Budget. The Opposition Finance critic, Jim Hodder, had no kind words for the fourth Budget of the Peckford Administration.' And the reason, it goes on to say, 'He criticized the Budget based on this: He attacked the plans to reduce children's dental care visits to one annually.' That is our hon. friend here. He remembers that stuff. He was the Liberal Opposition Finance critic criticizing the PC Government for the cuts in health care.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Reid: No, I am not being facetious, I am telling you the truth. I am trying to explain to this hon. House, and I am hoping someone is listening to me, because this is not a problem that was created in the last eighteen months.

Let me continue. This is 1982 as well, and it comes from The Evening Telegram, I believe. 'Newfoundland Slaps Controls On Public Service Salaries. Newfoundland has slapped a two-year ceiling on salary increases', and so on. "In the Provincial budget", the Premier said, "the program was forced upon

Newfoundland by Federal cutbacks and the depressed economy, which combined to create a shortfall in the Provincial budget."

Boy, that sounds awful familiar, does it not? 'Peckford told a news conference adjustments in Federal payments and expenditures reduced original revenues projected by \$25 million to \$30 million' - in 1982! What are they doing to us in Ottawa? They did it to Peckford, they are doing it to Wells, they did it to Moores, they did it to Smallwood, and I suppose whoever comes after, they will do it to him again.

Here is this one. 1982 headlines. 'Peckford faces \$66 Million Deficit. Newfoundland Government must make painful cuts. "The budget squeeze is on, Peckford said. Financing levels from the Federal Government for established programs such as health care" - he said that - "and secondary education has dropped by \$19 million, to \$136 million from a projected \$155 million, this year."

1983! 'Newfoundland plans to hold down health care salary hikes' -1983. 'Newfoundland to limit pay to health care workers, including interns and residents and other health care professionals. Laboratory and x-ray workers, nurses, hospital support staff will have to accept a new wage guideline in collective agreement this year.'

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Murphy: You shafted the nurses.

Mr. Reid: Listen to this one. 1983, The Evening Telegram. 'It Hardly Hurts', that is the

headline, 'except for students, drinkers, and hospitals.' We are talking about a budget in 1982.

An Hon. Member: Who wrote that?

Mr. Reid: Who wrote that? It does not say, but it is The Evening Telegram. It looks like it came from the front page.

'Newfoundland Budget one of the most Inept, says Professor.' That is 1983. 1984 -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Reid: I am not losing time that quick, am I?

Some Hon. Members: (Inaudible).

Mr. Reid: I am losing time that quick.

This one in particular, and I believe if I am not mistaken it was an address given by the hon. Brian Peckford to the media. I am assuming that it was a television address, and this is what he says, in 1983, to the public of Newfoundland: 'Here are some of the cuts in expenditure that we made. Reduction in hiring, reduction in operating expenses, closures of institutions, including cottage hospitals at North West River and Markland. Program reductions, elimination of student allowances, reduction in financial assistance to municipalities and school boards. Road and building maintenance cutbacks. Funding limitations to hospitals.'

Mr. Speaker, let me make a few -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) tough.

Mr. Reid: Yes, sure. Tough decisions have to be made by this

Government. They may have been tried by the previous government. I think you probably did make some tough decisions when you were in power for the seventeen years.

An Hon. Member: Lots of them.

Mr. Reid: I know you probably made tough decisions. And this Government has to make tough decisions. That is the reason why this Government is actively out there now seeking to talk to people about our current situation. Twenty-five per cent of the Budget of this Province is in health care alone, and when we are talking about overall cuts -

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

Some Hon. Members: By leave! By leave!

Mr. Reid: Two minutes, Mr. Speaker?

An Hon. Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Reid: No? Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Winsor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin to have a few remarks on the resolution, I am forced to react to the statements made by the Member for Carbonear, who has gone back I think from 1982-1983-1984, when perhaps this country and the western world experienced the greatest recession that has ever been experienced.

Mr. Reid: Are we in a recession

now?

Mr. Winsor: Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone interrupted the Member for Carbonear. The Member for Exploits spent all last night interrupting, he insists on doing it again today when the Premier is absent. Now we are going to have the Premier in his seat to silence the Member for Exploits. He will be interrupted Thursday night when he will get his comeuppance, when he is out talking to his teachers, otherwise he should be quiet.

The difference is, and I agree with what the Member for Carbonear read out, that there were some tough decisions which had to be made with respect to health care, with respect to education, with respect to reducing the deficit.

The Administration today did it up front, they did not campaign on a policy where they were going to open hospital beds, increase education, put money into the economy, that was not the premise under which they were elected and the Member for Exploits might know quite well some of the struggles in 1982 and 1985, when he was one of them I suspect, out with pickets, poking at the campaign pickets, out waving the pickets, teachers will remember and so on, but anyway, the Member could do that.

The Member for Carbonear could find editorials I am sure, many editorials that would suggest that the Administration was reducing the levels of expenditure in health care, but we had an Administration here who said that none of these things would happen. There was a firm commitment or so the policy manual of the Liberals said, and I have got to read it because the Member

for Carbonear made a statement that needs to be addressed. He said, that no one, no one in the Liberal Party had said that they would have indiscriminate spending on education and the balance sheet didn't matter, he said that was wrong, that was erroneous. He said that just did not happen.

Well, Liberal Health policy dictates that as long as the demand exists, hospital beds must be kept open, institutions must not be understaffed and compassion must always take precedence over business administration. And then they go on to say, if we cannot adequately care for the sick, the disabled and the aged among us, we have failed as a society and can take cold comfort in cutting costs and improving balance sheets. For Liberals, people come before projects.

The Member for Carbonear should be aware that that was a Liberal policy manual, that said that people and health came before balance sheets. We saw evidence yesterday when the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation reduced the service provided to the people of Fogo Island, without warning, swooped down on them and announced further cut backs into an already eroded service.

Yesterday the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation sent his officials out, came in the House one hour after - consultation? The Minister of Health, said no, we did not tell there were going to be cut backs, there was going to be no cut backs in health we are out consulting with the people, but at the same time he told them that consulting was to tell them.

Hold your Budgets to this year's

spending, you cannot have any extra funds for next year, that was the consultation. The consultation is coming after he confronted them and told them what they have to do, now he is out to them, saying, we want impact studies, delivered, I think, this might be the magic day for the Minister of Health, isn't it, October 31st. seems to be a magic day when the Minister is going to get his report back.

Now, if there are to be no cut backs, if there are to be no freezes, what a charade this Minister has been engaged in because he had his officials for months, for the last month in the health care spending all of their time working up Budgets to give back to the Minister, there is going to be no cut backs, so what a futile exercise, if there are not to be cut backs. A deceitful exercise, if there are not to be cut backs.

The Member for Exploits is interrupting again, the Member for Exploits is interrupting again. If he wants to take part in this debate, I will accede to his request, otherwise I will ask him to be silent and take it on the chin like he is going to have to do in a couple of days time; it would be more than the chin, I think he is going to take it.

The Member for Conception Bay South looks over to because she is shivering in her shoes when she takes it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in my particular district, I have three major institutions which are being impacted upon significantly by the Minister's announcement. Part of my district is served by the cottage hospital in Brookfield,

part, by a cottage hospital in Fogo, and the rest by a larger institution in Gander.

Mr. Grimes: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Now, stop interrupting, will you. Save your comments for teachers on Saturday afternoon.

Mr. Winsor: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the Member for Exploits that the only opportunity he is going to get to speak is to fire shots across the House, because he is going to be the one fired at on Thursday night when he talks to the teachers and he won't get a chance to say anything. He will remind me of a former Member who attended some kind of a meeting at the university when I was there in 1970. I cannot tell what happened because -

Mr. Simms: Is that right?

Mr. Winsor: Yes. The Member for St. John's South, actually, it was.

Mr. Simms: He should be out packing the Premier's suitcase and -

Mr. Winsor: Shining his shoes and that kind of thing, yes, because he interrupts. But, anyway, let us get back to the debate.

I have three institutions that will be adversely affected by any cutbacks. The hospital in Fogo is running on a shoestring. There is not one bit of fat in the system. There is nothing that can be cut out. They have four maintenance people, four needed to run the operation. They have one cook; you cannot have half a cook. We should not have a worry in the world, but I am very much afraid we do have a worry, because what

impacts on one institution when you are in a larger district is going to impact significantly on the others.

Mr. Efford: I will tell you what to do, let me (inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: No, you sit down. You are better off sitting.

The hospital in Brookfield for which a commitment was made, I think, in the last Budget to improve the level of service, I am very much afraid, could have significant cutbacks. It is a small cottage hospital in Brookfield, ninety miles from Gander.

Dr. Gibbons: (Inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: No change? The Minister of Energy said no. The Minister kind of takes care of the upper end of my district. I must say, he is quite good, because his home town of Lumsden and -

An Hon. Member: He gets full credit for it, too.

Mr. Winsor: What is that?

An Hon. Member: He gets full credit for it.

Mr. Winsor: Yes, and I get all the votes for it, so that is okay. That is no problem. He can take the credit and I will take the votes.

The hospital in Gander - my information, and I think it comes from fairly good sources, indicates that it will have some extra \$300,000 in Workers' Compensation that it will have to pay next year. Three hundred thousand dollars, that is a fair chunk of money; a total budget

reduction of about \$1.5 million, if this operation that the Government has set upon stays in effect. Now, a reduction of \$1.5 million is obviously going to result in significant reductions in staff, because there is no other place you can cut it. The costs in a hospital, I am told, are about 75 per cent for salary, 25 per cent fixed costs, and the fixed costs are not going to change. So the only place changes can be effected is at the staff level. The problem, of course, is that for the last number of years, getting nursing staff, particularly in hospitals in this Province, has been no easy task. Hospitals, for a long, long time, have been understaffed. Now I am told they have just reached a full complement, fully staffed. The strange thing is -

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible).

Mr. Winsor: The Minister of Social Services is so anxious to get on his feet, he has to keep babbling across the House, babbling back and forth, but I think I am here until 4:40, and I think the Leader of the Opposition, my colleague, I could get the Member for Ferryland in to have a shot at him.

Mr. Speaker, the young nurses recently recruited to fill the vacancies in the hospital realize they will be the first to go, because they were the last hired, so already, the exodus has started. And the Minister of Education knows, because his officials, his administrators have told him that many of the new staff have come looking for recommendations already to move on, because they are much afraid, they carry student loans. Many of them have made commitments for

cars and so on, they are carrying bills, and they do not want to be caught in the lurch, so in anticipation of being laid off - and the President of Treasury Board knows that some of it is going to occur. In fact I suggest that he probably told them to expect some, maybe not thousands, but some, so the word got out, because when you have a meeting of twenty-five, fifteen, or ten people, somebody is sure to talk and I know for a fact that a recruiting team was into Gander from Florida, I think, from Miami, this week, and I am sure there were a whole group of young nurses who went out and had interviews and I am sure they are going to leave the hospital, because they know their job is on the line. In fact they know their job is gone. What amazes me is that the Minister of Health got in his place and said he could not support this resolution. Now I have to go through it again.

An Hon. Member: He is not supporting anything.

Mr. Winsor: He could not support it, he said.

Mr. Simms: Forget the Whereases and just read the Resolve part.

Mr. Winsor: And the Member for Carbonear all but said he was going to support it. In fact he did not say what part he could not support: Whereas the present Government of this Province, when in Opposition, criticized the former Government for undue economic restraint in the health care sector. Now, if that did not occur then there is something wrong with what these members have been saying. There was no question that that occurred. And whereas the present Government has

promised to provide high quality health care for all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador regardless of costs. The Liberal Policy Manual clearly states, compassion must take precedent over business administration. It says we have failed society, and we can take cold comfort in cutting costs and improving balance sheets. So, there is no question that this Administration has pledged itself to the improvement in the delivery of medical services. There is no question. And Whereas the present Government has announced it will hold provincial expenditures on health in 1991-92 to 1990-91 levels. If that is not what occurred when the Minister of Health met, and imposed his decision upon the hospital boards in this Province, then the media and the hospital care workers are telling lies, and the Minister has because the Minister has told us in the House, yes, hold your budgets next year at this year's level. Now, that is there, and it meant \$60 million because he tells us his health care bill is roughly in the range of \$600 million for salaries. We are looking at roughly a 10 per cent increase due to wage settlements, about \$9 million on workers' compensation, it is probably even higher than 1.3 per cent, I think, that might even work out to. So, when it all comes out there is about \$60 million which, because of continually increasing costs of providing health care will in effect mean a cutback in expenditures on health care next year. There is no one out there who is not saying that. If you have committed a 10 per cent increase in wages then obviously someone has got to go if your budget is held at the same thing. And whereas a freeze in provincial

expenditures on health will mean a reduction in health services available to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is pretty obvious is it not? If a freeze in expenditures occur then health services have no choice but to go down. Therefore be it resolved that the hon. House urge the present Government to fulfill its commitment to provide high quality health care for all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, the provision of which shall preclude health care staff shortages, hospital and nursing home bed closures, and unreasonable delays for hospital and nursing home admissions and for other medical service. Now, what is in the resolution?

Mr. Decker: Will the hon. member give me five minutes?

Mr. Winsor: No, not five seconds. I will be worse than the Senate I will read a petition, names, addresses, birth dates, and everything else, and if I cannot do it then I will get the standing rules, and if I cannot get that I will read the Bible. No, not one second will the Minister get. So what is it that the Minister of Health and the Member for Carbonear cannot support in this resolution? All it does is reconfirm what you said in your policy guide. It reconfirms what you said in your Budget Speech of March 15, in which the Minister of Health, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Finance rather - I keep forgetting who he is - the Minister of Finance stood in his place and said the thrust of this Budget will focus on three areas. Do you know what they were? Education, Health and the economy. It has abandoned Education, it has abandoned Health, and it never even started

to look after the economy - no start at all. So the Budget committed this Administration to improve the delivery of health care for this Province. And what did we get? We get, perhaps, fearmongering out there. That is what is going on now out there. People in the health care sector, employees, administrators, and patients, are very, very scared and concerned about what is going on in health care. Very scared.

Mr. Hodder: Do you know something? They do not know if the Government is serious.

Mr. Winsor: That is right, because they are not sure if the Administration is serious. They are not sure if it is serious. And we are not sure now. Do you know why we are not sure? Because they deal a deck of cards I think, and one day they say cutbacks, the next day no cutbacks, and whatever comes up on that day, that is what it is going to be. Cutbacks are not freezes. Freezes are not cutbacks. So there is no indication, there is nothing out there to indicate to the people in the health care sector what is going to go on.

There is a dreadful lack of leadership coming from the Minister of Health, coming from the Premier, coming from the Minister of Finance as to what is going on. The only one who has been up-front and told the truth about the whole thing is the President of Treasury Board, and the reason I guess he is so concerned is because he pays the bills. The President of Treasury Board has indicated to the Gander and district Hospital Board yes, you will have cutbacks. The extent? We are not certain at this time. But there is no

question, you are going to be faced with cutbacks. They have done up impact statements. I suspect the next step the minister is going to take is he is going to go back to them and he is going to say, see if you can find cost-saving measures somewhere else, and then he is finally going to admit to them no, there is nothing else you can do. Get your pink slips out, pass them along to your employees, and lay them off.

Mr. Matthews: Boot them out the door.

Mr. Winsor: Because in reality what we have seen in the last few days, and what kind of amazes me, is when you cut yourself sometimes, you take a Band-Aid and stick it on. And when you take it and you pull it off slowly, it hurts like dickens to have it pulled off. So you go to someone who is good at it and they give it one yank and it is all gone, and the pain is gone just as quickly. What we see happening here is the dribbling out of layoffs, a few today, a few tomorrow, a few the next day. Now today, because of the beating up you got yesterday, was good news day, so there was a statement from the Minister of Social Services, two from the Minister of Mines and Energy - glossy statements, no great expenditures of Government money. In fact, no expenditures. And tomorrow, perhaps tomorrow evening after the House closes at 4:00 o'clock, something might slip out over NIS, or something like that, of another cutback, perhaps in the Department of Forestry, perhaps in the Department of Fisheries.

Mr. Simms: What about Municipal Affairs?

Mr. Winsor: Municipal Affairs.

The Premier has already given Municipal Affairs its due warning. Out in Corner Brook, I think, when he -

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: You should have (inaudible) earlier.

Mr. Efford: I didn't know (inaudible).

Mr. Simms: What do you mean you didn't know?

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Well, that is not our fault.

Mr. Winsor: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Social Services has cut into my time by constantly echoing across the House. I mean, somebody just called him Jekyll and Hyde. I think I am going to change that to Echo and Hyde.

Mr. Simms: Where has Gilbert gone, boys? Has he gone Trick or Treating?

Mr. Winsor: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, today we have a serious resolution before us, because it impacts significantly on us all: Members of the House of Assembly, our families, our children, and our children not yet born.

Mr. Speaker: Order please! Order please!

The hon. Member's time is up.

Mr. Winsor: No warning, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mr. Rideout: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Social Services will have a much easier job getting a breath of fresh air this evening than he will getting one second to speak in this House, I can tell you.

Mr. Efford: That is not very nice.

Mr. Rideout: That is just as nice as what the Minister said last night, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to thank the Members who participated in this debate this afternoon, particularly my colleague from Humber East and my colleague from Fogo. I must say that it was rather disappointing, with a resolution as serious as this one, to hear the political speeches coming from the other side. I would have thought that this non-political resolution, Mr. Speaker, would have fallen on more receptive ears than it fell on in this House this evening.

But be that as it may, Mr. Speaker, I think that says more than I or any individual can say about the compassion and the understanding of this Government for what they are about to perpetrate upon the health care system of this Province.

Now, Mr. Speaker -

Mr. Simms: They are really showing interest.

An Hon. Member: There is a conference going on over in the corner.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, can we have the conference call reconvened out in the Government Common Room? I can talk over one -

Mr. Speaker: Order please!

Mr. Rideout: - most of the time, but not a half dozen. Now, Mr. Speaker, if there was ever a time in the history of this Province when the person responsible for health care system should not be an arrogant person, if there was ever a time in the history of this Province when the person responsible for the delivery of the health care system should not be an egomaniac, should not be a self-adoring person but should be a person of compassion and understanding and consultation and co-operation, it is today - it is today when we need that kind of understanding from the person responsible for the delivery of health care in this Province.

But, Mr. Speaker, no. What do we have? We have today a Minister who is the most politically partisan Minister I have ever seen in this House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Grimes: That is not true.

Mr. Simms: How do you know? You have only been here for a year.

Mr. Rideout: We have a person who loves to hear himself praise himself.

Mr. Grimes: That is not true.

Mr. Simms: That is not true. That is all Grimes says over there. 'That is not true. That is not true.'

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, we have a person who is not understanding and caring about the people of this Province. The Minister stood in this House today -

Mr. Grimes: That is not true, either.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, will you console as well as try to corral the Member for Exploits, please?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, we have a person here today-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

I just want to remind hon. Members that it is unparliamentary to interrupt any Member when he is speaking to the House.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, we have a Minister here today who began the debate by saying that unlike other Governments, we went to the managers of the health care system and went through a process of consultation. What a farce! There was no consultation with the managers of the health care system.

Mr. Doyle: None whatsoever.

Mr. Rideout: None whatsoever. The Minister delivered them a letter, and then delivered in person the brutal message, your budget will be frozen next year at this year's level. There was no consultation, Mr. Speaker. It was only after delivering the message, delivering the bad news that the Minister said, 'now that you have the news, now that you know what the lay of the land is, look at your situation and let me know how you can implement the freeze.'

Now, I say to the Minister, Mr. Speaker, that is not consultation, that is confrontation. So, this Minister is not a Minister of consultation. It is confrontation, Mr. Speaker, and that is what the people out in the health care system are saying today all over this Province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if ever there was a time when we needed in this Province a Minister who was interested in consultation, a Minister who was interested in conciliation, a Minister who was interested in co-operation, a Minister who was interested in compassion, Mr. Speaker, we need it at a point today when we are facing the worst health care crisis in the history of this Province.

Mr. Speaker, I tell you this Minister talks about the previous administration, but I say to this House today that in terms of consultation, co-operation, conciliation and compassion, this Minister is no substitute for a Hugh Twomey.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rideout: This Minister, Mr. Speaker, is no substitute for a Wally House, I tell you. These were Ministers of compassion. These were Ministers who understood the health care system in this Province. These were Ministers who went to bat for the health care system of this Province around the Cabinet Table.

But do we have that today, not in the least, Mr. Speaker, what we have today is a cold hearted callous approach by this Minister: I will save the money any way that I can save it and if I have to disrupt the health care system of this Province, then that is what I have to do.

Will they do it and take responsibility, Mr. Speaker, not likely, not likely. They have said that the responsibility for the imposition of this freeze in the health care system rests solely with the managers, the

experts who are in the system who have to implement the draconian measures imposed, unilaterally, not by consultation, imposed unilaterally on them by this Government and this Minister, and that after today is going to be seen, because as the proposals get presented, Mr. Speaker, you need not worry, the proposals will find the light of day.

The Minister even finds a way to politically make fun at that as if somehow or other, there is something wrong for an administrator or a hospital board member or several hospital board members to tell the public whom they represent or tell some people in the Opposition or an Open Line show or something or other that this is what we are going to have to do.

There is something wrong with that approach according to this Minister. This Minister wants a Communist system, where nobody is allowed to speak, where you cannot open your mouth and say what the Government is trying to enforce and cram down your throat; it is something like the Minister of Education trying to tell this House that even though he has lowered the level of substitute teacher money and days available to school boards, that there are no schools or no classes being sent home in this Province. Nobody is going to suffer, nobody is going to be sent home.

The Member for Carbonear said the same thing last night. How about the Minister picking up the Southern Gazette today and look at the headlines. Schools forced to cancel classes in teachers absence. Look at them, the R. C. School Board Superintendent quoted, the Integrated

Superintendent saying that last week, two schools, Mr. Speaker, in that district had to send classes home, and it is going to continue to happen say both superintendents, and the Minister of Education has the gall to get up in the House, Mr. Speaker, and say that it is not happening, or the Member for Carbonear has the gall to get up and say it is not happening and worst of all, worst of all -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: -happening for years, never happened at all for years -

Ms Cowan: It happened in my school.

Mr. Rideout: In your school, because you must have been too inept to fill out a substitute teacher form. That is the only way it could have happened.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the point of the whole thing is, this is happening in education, it is happening in health, and you have the Government Ministers who are responsible for this happening, refusing to admit responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, they will go down and search the Parliamentary Library for hours and days on end to try to find a newspaper quote or an editorial so that they can pin it on somebody in past history. That is their only answer. Blame it on Ottawa if you can. That is the first attack. If you cannot blame it on Ottawa, blame it on seventeen years of Tory Government in Newfoundland. If that does not work, Mr. Speaker, well blame it on somebody else out in the system. Blame it on the hospital administrators; on the experts in

the health care sector; on the school boards; on the superintendents. Blame it on everybody. But do not accept the responsibility for the decisions that you make as the Government.

An Hon. Member: Right on.

Mr. Rideout: Now, Mr. Speaker, that message is starting to come through loud and clear.

Mr. Simms: The heat is on.

Mr. Rideout: The heat is on, Mr. Speaker. This Government is not going to get away any longer with the populace of this Province by attempting to shift blame. The people of this Province want and demand answers from the Government that they elected, Mr. Speaker. And they are demanding that we put the heat and the pressure on to try to keep this Government accountable. But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, the public relations approach that they have to Government is something to see, that is for sure.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this Government, as I said in this resolution, came to office by making a solemn commitment to the people of this Province to put compassion and need in the health care system over the bottom line. Now Mr. Speaker, the couple of members who spoke on the other side today tried to distance themselves, after only eighteen months, from the policy manual that they tucked along in their back pockets only eighteen months ago as they went door to door in this Province.

Two Members spoke in this House, a minister and a backbencher spoke in this debate today, Mr. Speaker, and went to great pains, went to almost any length to try to

distance themselves from the health policy position -

An Hon. Member: That is not true.

Mr. Rideout: - that they articulated as a Party -

An Hon. Member: That is not true.

Mr. Rideout: - eighteen months ago.

Mr. Grimes: That is a misrepresentation.

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman will have a chance to talk about misrepresentation when he talks to his teachers, I believe, tomorrow night, is it?

An Hon. Member: Thursday night.

Mr. Rideout: Thursday night.

An Hon. Member: When he gets roasted.

An Hon. Member: You are going to get yours.

Mr. Rideout: I would say his colleague who is talking to him there now probably should go out and buy an extra pack of handkerchiefs for him because he used up a lot of handkerchiefs a few years ago we understand, Mr. Speaker, about 1983.

Mr. Simms: That was the pre-election hankie.

Mr. Rideout: So, he will need another box of handkerchiefs now because those handkerchiefs that he used in 1983, Mr. Speaker, will have shrunk a great deal since then because of the tears that the hon. Member shed, Mr. Speaker. So he better get a new box of hankies before he arrives out tomorrow

night.

But, Mr. Speaker, I was detracted there by the -

An Hon. Member: And tonight when he goes trick or treating.

Mr. Simms: And, of course, that is his objective to try and detract.

Mr. Rideout: And if the hon. gentleman should happen to turn up on any of our doorsteps, I say to my colleagues on this side of the House tonight, do not drop in a candy or an apple or something like that, drop in a hankie. Give him a hankie, Mr. Speaker. And just in case, my colleague for Grand Falls has all kinds of connections in Exploits, just in case would you do us a favor tomorrow?

Mr. Simms: Yes.

Mr. Rideout: Would you call a friendly druggist or someone like that out in the Central Newfoundland region and have a box of clean hankies delivered to wherever the meeting is going to take place because if that hon. gentleman -

Mr. Simms: Oh! Graham is going with him.

Oh my God.

You are safe enough now if Graham is going with you.

Mr. Rideout: Well, order two boxes of hankies.

If that hon. gentleman had to use hankies in 1983, Mr. Speaker, if he had to use hankies in 1983 I can tell you he is going to have to use them tomorrow night.

Mr. Simms: I am going out after you guys go.

An Hon. Member: You all have hoof in mouth disease.

Mr. Simms: I will straighten them out.

Mr. Rideout: I suppose, Mr. Speaker, that all Members on both sides of the House are going to be attending the banquet November 22nd for the 100th anniversary of the oldest professional organization in Canada, the Newfoundland Teachers Association. I certainly would be prepared to go along. In fact, I assume we all want to go. And they are all over the Province in all our districts and I think it would be a great gesture out of respect (inaudible).

Mr. Simms: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rideout: Yes, we will have to have a chat. I know we cannot do those deals publicly across the floor, but certainly you have my -

Mr. Simms: And I know they all want to go to the banquet.

Mr. Rideout: And I am sure every Member over there wants to attend those banquets. I would assume they would all be invited to speak and say a few words, bring greetings and so on. So, we are looking forward to it.

Mr. Simms: No, no. Everybody.

Mr. Rideout: But, Mr. Speaker -

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: Well, surely the other side will not reject a request to make time available for all Members to attend that very,

very special anniversary, when I have just been reminded that a former candidate of theirs, Mr. Goulding, is heading up the 100th anniversary committee. So, it has to go. I mean it has to fly. We certainly support it.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing debate on this particular resolution let me say that I am very, very disappointed that the Government of the day, led by a minister who could not care less, is prepared to send a signal to the people involved in the health care delivery system of this Province, is prepared to say to the sick and the elderly of this Province that we really did not mean it back eighteen months ago when we said compassion would come before the bottom line. We did not really mean it, we only wanted to hoodwink you and deceive you in an effort to get your vote. That is all we wanted to do. And now when push comes to shove, when the crunch really comes, Mr. Speaker, we are the people who are interested in the bottom line. That is the message, Mr. Speaker, that will go forth from this House this evening if the Government Members vote against this resolution, as I am led to believe they will.

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: Mr. Speaker, the only thing wrong with the Minister of Social Services - can you imagine the gall of him coming over and trying to cut a deal with the House Leader and myself?

Mr. Matthews: What did he want?

Mr. Rideout: To take ten minutes away from the time of our colleague from Fogo to allow him to speak. Now, Mr. Speaker, if

that is not -

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rideout: Do you know what? He has the face of a robber's horse.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Simms: And speaking of horses -

Mr. Rideout: Speaking of horses?

Mr. Simms: - the two of them are going out jannying.

Mr. Rideout: Yes?

Mr. Simms: Yes. He is going as the horse's face, and the other fellow is going as himself.

Mr. Rideout: Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, the gall of the Minister of Social Services to come over here to this Opposition and try to negotiate onto himself, not for his side of the House, but to try to negotiate for himself ten minutes from my colleague, the Member for Fogo. Ten minutes! I would not volunteer, Mr. Speaker, to give the Minister of Social Services ten seconds speaking time in this House.

An Hon. Member: (Inaudible) fresh air.

Mr. Simms: We have heard his speech ten times this session already.

Mr. Rideout: We heard his speech last night, which just about caused an uproar in the House.

Mr. Efford: (Inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: There he goes. Do you know what I am going to do? I

mean, Mr. Speaker, that document or any document like that is not allowed in the House. But if that is allowed, do you know what I am going to have over here next week, Mr. Speaker? Every time he shows his pickle book, I am going to have a pickle to flick across at him.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rideout: And, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. minister would only open his mouth, there is no way I could miss him.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rideout: I will try a pickle first, and if that doesn't work, I will try a length of stovepipe, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it must be the long night we had last night.

Mr. Tobin: Make sure they are dill pickles.

Mr. Rideout: I will get the most sour bottle of pickles I can find.

Mr. Efford: You don't like (inaudible).

Mr. Rideout: I have a feeling that is a penetrating insight into the obvious, I must say to the Minister, that I do not like him. Mr. Speaker, I really have a great deal of affection for the Minister of Social Services, as long as he stays on that side of the House and doesn't bother me on this side.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the resolution be adopted.

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

Mr. Simms: Question.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the resolution, please say 'aye'.

Some Hon. Members: aye.

Mr. Speaker: Those against 'nay'.

Some Hon. Members: 'nay'.

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

Some Hon. Members: Division.

Mr. Speaker: Call in the Members.

Are Members ready?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Division

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

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Hewlett, Mr. Hearn, Mr. Doyle, Mrs Verge, Mr. Simms, Mr. R. Aylward, Mr. Matthews, Mr. N. Windsor, Mr. Tobin, Mr. Woodford, Mr. Hodder, Mr. S. Winsor, Mr. Parsons, Mr. Hynes.

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

The hon. the Minister of Social Services, the hon. the Minister of Works, Services and Transportation, Mr. Hogan, Mr. Reid, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Crane, the hon. the President of the Council, the hon. the Minister of Health, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Noel, Mr. Gover, Mr. Penney, Mr. Barrett, Mr. L. Snow, the hon. the Minister of Forestry and Agriculture, the hon. the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, Mr. Grimes,

the hon. the Minister of Finance,
the hon. the Minister of
Education, the hon. the Minister
of Employment and Labour
Relations, the hon. the Minister
of Mines and Energy, Mr. Murphy,
Mr. Short, Mr. Langdon.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please!

Miss Duff: Mr. Speaker, 'ayes'
fifteen, 'nays' twenty four.

Some Hon. Members: Shame! Shame!

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion
lost.

The hon. the Government House
Leader.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, if we
could stop the clock for just a
moment, I want to point out to
hon. members that tomorrow the
item being called is Bill No. 38,
"An Act Respecting The Creation Of
Regional Service Boards Throughout
The Province." I would also like
to remind members that the House
will not sit on Friday.

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

Mr. Simms: The debate will begin
tomorrow, closure will begin
Monday.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order please! Order
please!

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