



PROVINCE OF NEWFOUNDLAND

THIRTY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
NEWFOUNDLAND

Volume 1

1st Session

Number 38

VERBATIM REPORT

Thursday, June 22, 1972

SPEAKER: THE HONOURABLE JAMES M. RUSSELL

June 22, 1972

Tape No. 922

NC - 1

The House met at 3:00 P.M.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

PRESENTING PETITIONS:

MR. AYLWARD: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a petition signed by the residents of Long Harbour in support of a petition by the people and the residents of Mount Arlington Heights, with respect to the request of the residents of the area to have the road paved from Long Harbour to Mount Arlington Heights.

Mr. Speaker, I note from the list of projects tabled, indicating the improvements and reconstruction which the Minister of Highways tabled, that the road from the Trans-Canada to Long Harbour, for a distance of 7.5 miles, is being paved this year. The residents of Mount Arlington Heights and Long Harbour note the presence of this equipment and construction work in the area and are also aware that the paving is about to end at Long Harbour.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the distance of the road, from where the pavement apparently is to end to Mount Arlington Heights, is a distance of approximately one mile and a-half to two miles. This entire stretch of road passes through the community of Mount Arlington Heights and there are dwellings situated on each side of the road and it is in fact, Mr. Speaker, the only road through the community.

This is a very, very important piece of road because the children, from the area of Mount Arlington Heights, travel to Long Harbour to school. Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the members and the minister of the department where this relates, the St. Jerome's Elementary School in Long Harbour as well as the pupils in St. Bartholomew's Elementary School as well as the residents have signed the petition in support of the prayer that this road be paved.

It is pointed out in the prayer, Mr. Speaker, that throughout the year the children from Mount Arlington Heights are obliged to travel

MR. AYLWARD: over this road and it is in a terrible condition.

Anyone who is familiar with the area at all must realize that there is a very, very steep incline going down into Mount Arlington Heights and that in the winter, and I pointed this out to the House before, during the spring of this year it was just impossible to get a truck or car from Mount Arlington Heights to Long Harbour.

Considering the fact that the children are obliged to travel this portion of the road all year round, particularly at winter, considering the dangerous condition in winter and also the terrible inconvenience and nuisance that the residents of the area are obliged to tolerate as a result of the dust, I strongly support the prayer of this petition and ask that it be referred to the department to which it relates and that that matter be given prompt attention because the construction company and the equipment is presently in the area and I respectfully submit that it would cost much less to pave it now than later on.

MR. THOMS: Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the members on this side of the House, I rise and sincerely and whole-heartedly support the prayer of this petition for the upgrading and paving of the road from Long Harbour to Mount Arlington Heights.

I trust, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Highways, in consultation with the Minister of Finance, will see fit to provide the necessary funds for this worthy cause. While they are considering it, Mr. Speaker, I hope they would consider also to provide money for the other districts of our province which I note have been deleted from the highway programme of reconstruction, new construction and bridges for the coming year.

There are many areas of this province which need good.
MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I think the hon. member should stick to supporting the petition rather than wandering on to another.

June 21, 1972

Tape No. 922

NC - 3

MR. THOMS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I close by saying that we all here support this petition and I certainly hope and trust that the prayer of this petition will be carried out in 1972.

MR. ROWE (F.B.): I would like to address a question to the hon. Minister of Education. Has he met with a Miss Judy Norman, concerning her certification in the teaching profession yet?

MR. CARTER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have.

MR. ROWE (F.B.): Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell this honourable House what is the government's stand or policy concerning the certification of individuals who feel their religious belief is a private and personal affair?

MR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, our relations with teachers and teachers who are to be certified is governed by law. The law very carefully spells out what the relationships should be. Contrary to popular opinion, a person may be certified as a teacher who holds any religious views that are possible to be held. They can be christian or non-christian and they can be of any sex and any christian or non-christian belief. They can also be - a person can be certified who does not hold any belief. Now I will read the relevant passage if I may. It is section 5 (c) of "An Act To Amend And Consolidate The Law Relating To The Training And Classification Of Teachers, May 23, 1968." It states: "Every board shall be responsible for examining all applications for initial teaching certificates or licences, not including examining into academic or professional qualifications of applicants, from persons who are adherents of the recognized denomination or of any of the group of recognized denominations it represents and from persons who are not such adherents but who wish to teach in the schools of that recognized denomination or group of recognized denominations, and recommending to the registrar for certification or licencing those persons it considers to be suitable therefore."

Now the operative words in my opinion are "with those persons it considers to be suitable." The Denominational Educational Committee has considered the case of Miss Judy Norman and has found her not to be suitable

Mr. Carter

for licencing. I might add that this is their power, enshrined in law. Whether or not one agrees or disagrees with it, is another matter. It is the law of the land and as elected representatives of the province, we are pledged to uphold the law. I might add for those who say that this power should not be held by committee, this power is also held (the honourable gentleman knows this very well) by school boards. The school board may or may not employ a teacher and does not necessarily have to -

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. CARTER: No, it has do with employment. One has to do with certification and the other has to do with employment.

MR. ROWE (F.B.): A supplementary question: Can the minister explain why the D.E.C found Miss Norman not to be suitable?

MR. CARTER: I think the answer there, Mr. Speaker, would be that while the Denominational Educational Committees are not looking for hot gospelers, nevertheless they would like to have a fairly straight and non-hostile answer to a question that is on the form or on the application form. It is my understanding that the person in question was not particularly co-operative in answer that particular question. Her answers and type of reply and her attitude generally left the clear impression that she would not be suitable.

MR. ROWE(F.B.): Mr. Speaker, am I to understand then that Miss Norman's certification has been refused because she herself refused to reveal her religious affiliation.

MR. CARTER: The refusal of certification for Miss Norman rests with the Denominational Education Committee and the right to that refusal rests in the legislation which I have just read out. But it is my understanding that she has been found by that committee to be unsuitable.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, if the minister would permit a further supplementary, arising out of one of the answers he has given. He said and I think I am quoting him accurately but maybe not precisely word for word, that the DEC involvement, who has the statutory right to recommend, that they are not looking for, I think the minister's phrase was "hot gospelers" but they do expect less than non-hostile answers. I think that was the way the minister put it. Now that leads inevitably to ask what answer Miss Norman gave to the question, because the information which I have, which is only the public information, is that she gave no answer to the question. The minister is inferring and I ask him if he could go further, that she may have gone further than said no answer and made an answer which was offensive or hostile, to use his reason.

Could the minister tell us then what answer Miss Norman did make to the relevant question?

MR. CARTER: As the honourable Leader of the Opposition quite well knows, I certainly was not in on any interview with Miss Norman and the Denominational Education Committee but it is my understanding that her answers were of such a nature as to led to the conclusion that she would not be a suitable teacher and this is all I know.

MR. ROBERTS: Is the honourable minister's conclusion in the opinion of the D.F.C.?

MR. CARTER: Yes.

MR. ROBERTS: Then a further question, has Miss Norman any recourse at all now or is she condemned either to come up with answers suitable to the D.E.C. or to abandon her quest for a teaching certificate?

MR. CARTER: Mr. Speaker, I think that her logical recourse would be to the Denominational. This is a personal opinion, Her recourse would be to the Denominational Education Committee to point out to them that while she does not belong to a recognized or does not feel that she belongs to a recognized religious affiliation nevertheless she is not openly hostile towards religion, and the D.E.C.'s might be prepared to take another look at it. But unless she gives some concrete evidence of no hostility towards religion in general, then I do not see how her application can be reconsidered by that body, and the honourable Leader of the Opposition knows full well that that body has the right to certify or not to certify teachers in this province.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I am in a broad way familiar with the legislation and so forth, but is the minister then saying the real reason, as he understands it and I realize his knowledge is second hand, the real reason why Miss Norman's application was not recommended by the D.E.C. concerned is that she was hostile to religion? Now that is obviously a different thing, Mr. Speaker, than having no religion. It is one thing to say simply I am an atheist. I do not know if that is having - it is having a religious view but it is hardly a religion but it is a religious belief. But what I am getting at, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate Your Honour's - because I think this is of interest to all members, it is one thing to say I do not hold any of the recognized religious beliefs and it is another thing to say that I am a deist or I am an atheist or I am a pantheist or an agnostic or a buddhist or what have you, all of them accepted views

June 22, 1972

Tape 924

JM - 3

towards religion, maybe not our views, but it is another thing .But
if the young lady was hostile to religion or hostile towards religious
views. Could the minister make it clear because, listening to his
answer, I am getting the impression that her

MR. ROBERTS: problem is not that she held a view other than these recognized denominations or even held no view but apparently that she was hostile, which can only mean that in an interview, I gather it was an interview and not a written questionnaire, she went beyond saying, "I have no religion," and used other words.

MR. CARTER: It is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that there had been many interviews and the conclusion reached by the certifying authorities are that she is not suitable to be certified as a teacher, more than that I really cannot say. But it is refreshing to note and contrary to popular belief that there is no legislative bar towards and a teacher may hold any view that he wishes, he or she wishes, but still also the power to certify teachers rest with the denominational education committee. I would submit to honourable members that the power to certify a teacher has to rest with somebody whether it be the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council, but it must ultimately rest with somebody.

MR. ROWE, W.N. Mr. Chairman, again I appreciate Your Honour's latitude on this question, but I think it is a matter of extreme importance. Are we in the House or Miss Norman, Mrs. or Miss Norman, I guess, Miss Norman, or any other teacher? Do we have to accept a statement which the minister has obviously gotten from somebody or other regarding Miss Norman's suitability for certification or her unsuitability for certification? Do we have to accept that or is there some other process by which the thing can be investigated or is there some process by which it can be appealed? Because it is of utmost importance to her, she is not permitted to practice her profession. Could the minister answer that.

MR. CARTER: I am sorry, would the honourable gentleman repeat the latter.

MR. ROWE, W.N. Mr. Chairman, if there is some further process available, not only to Miss Norman, I mean she is one of several

MR. ROWE: W.N. thousand teachers or several hundred persons who may be affected by this type of thing. I am wondering if there is some further process open to her or anybody else or us for that matter whereby we do not have to merely accept the statement made by the minister, which is second hand to him, do not have to merely accept that statement as to her suitability or unsuitability to teach but whereby she can either appeal or anybody can appeal or whereby the matter can be investigated to make sure that she is not being denied certification as a teacher, which is her chosen profession, on some other untenable or unjust grounds. I mean is there some process now to look behind these statements?

MR. CARTER: I would have to say, Mr. Speaker, I have tremendous confidence in the ability and the qualification of the Denominational Educational Committee, as regarding their ability to certify or not to certify a teacher or an applicant for a teachers certificate. As for asking for another hearing, I am sure that they would be more than happy to hear it. There is no doubt in my mind that they are prepared to justify their action.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, there is no question about the ability that he preceived, but to rephrase the question again; Has Miss Norman, has she any other courses of action open to her? The minister earlier said, in reply to a supplementary question, that she could go back to the DECs, but at some point he also said that there had been a number of interviews. But presumably the DECs have decided, they have gone as far as they are going to go. They have heard what they wish to hear and they have given Miss Norman an opportunity to say what she wished to say. Is the matter closed? Does the young lady now have the option of giving up and going elsewhere or taking up seamstress work, anything other than teaching, or has she some other course of action open to her?

MR. CARTER: The reason why there were a number of interviews, Mr. Speaker, was that first of all she received her original teachers training grant which

MR. CARTER: was given to her under the auspices of the R.C. Board.

But then apparently the answer she gave to the question was that she was not a Roman Catholic. So she applied, I think it was to the Denominational Integrated Board, for certification and then, of course, when she refused to answer the question as to her religion affiliation, she was then referred back to the R.C. Certification Board. So she has been doing the rounds of the various denominational certification committees. In one case she would go to see Mr. Cliff Hatcher and in another case she would go to see Dr. Kevin Tracey. Because first of all this is a question that must be answered or is required to be answered and no satisfactory answer was given. She was given I feel, Mr. Speaker, every possible chance to make her views known to the certification committee. I think they had ample opportunity to examine her qualifications and I would say that she has been dealt with extremely fairly and extremely generously and I do not think there is any more she can do at the moment. But at the same time, if she feels, if she does have some points that were not raised, that were not made known, then she could very well go back to them. But I cannot see any other recourse for it at the moment.

MR. ROBERTS: In other words, Mr. Speaker,

MR. ROBERTS: and this will be my final, Your Honour ...

MR. SPEAKER: I would just like to point out to hon. member, that in Beauschne, page 147, section 171 "h", in connection with a question or order written it says: "... must not ask a solution of a legal proposition, such as interpretation of the Statutes or a minister's own powers..." and I think that it might be getting involved in this.

MR. ROBERTS: I thank Your Honour for the reference to the citation. It is similar to the other ones, We cannot ask what legal advice has been tendered the Crown, but it was the minister himself who purported to interpret the Statute and we of course did not ask him for any interpretation. Are we then to conclude that the minister feels that the matter has been dealt with satisfactorily? I guess that is the nub of it at this stage, Mr. Speaker.

MR. CARTER: No, I am not entirely satisfied but as the law exists now, we must uphold the law that we inherited when we came into office and as the law exists now we must uphold it.

We presume it could be changed, but I think this is beyond the scope of this particular question and I think, Mr. Speaker, I would submit that I have answered the question as fully as possible under the present circumstances.

MR. ROBERTS: May I then ask the Premier what action this administration intend to take with reference to this matter? Since obviously it is not to die here.

MR. MOORES: Mr. Speaker, this whole question of what has arisen in this young lady's case is one that brings up a much broader problem than just a specific application that she made. At the present time, as we have seen it, the application she has made through the avenues that she could make them, has reached a dead end in that she has been rejected for that position by the structure, as it presently stands

and according to the law which we as a government must uphold, as it is written. The fact that such a law is as restrictive as it is, may or may not mean that it is a good law. As a matter of fact, from a personal observation, it may not be a good law. We are talking about human rights and all that goes with society today.

There is a possibility that the law may have to be rewritten but it presently exists and I think, when we are talking about human rights in society, it is one that deserves the consideration of this government as quickly as we can get it.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Premier and it may well be that Miss Norman has found a flaw in the system that has never cropped up before. Then may I ask the Premier if the administration are considering taking further steps in this matter? I mean, to come back again, and I appreciate the Education Minister could not go further, does the young lady have to let it die? Has she gone as far as she can go or are there further steps that may be taken?

MR. MOORES: Well as a matter of principle rather than the young lady's particular complaint in this case, I would certainly hope that she would not let it die. I think we have an obligation as a government to make sure that it is studied and studied with all aspects of society taken into consideration as opposed to any one initial statement.

MR. ROBERTS: I thank the Premier again. I agree that hard cases make bad law. I mean, a principle can be raised by one person but it is not - We have no particular concern for Miss Norman, it is the principle in which she is involved. I can assure the Premier that we will on our side not let it die. I believe that he will not let it die either.

On motion that the House go into Committee of Supply, Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

MR. NEARY: With regard to 1101-01, Mr. Chairman, I hope that I can wind up my few introductory remarks, at least to the Department of

Social Services and Rehabilitation. I am hoping, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Premier will stay in his seat this afternoon, he may learn something. If the honourable Minister of Finance wants to run out of the House, he is quite welcome to do so.

Mr. Chairman, when the committee rose yesterday at six o'clock, I was talking about unemployment in the province and I was about to deal with the statistics, the unemployment figures that were released as of the end of May. I do not think, Mr. Chairman, that anyone in Newfoundland was surprised at the increase in the unemployment rate in our province as of the end of May

compared to May a year ago. I submit, Sir, that if it had not been for the federal government's local incentives projects I bet that the increase in unemployment would have been three times as great as it was at the end of May, compared to May a year ago.

Ottawa's Liberal Government Sir, has bailed out our own inexperienced P.C. Government who have not, since January 18th, come up with a single new industry to provide work for our people who are on welfare or on unemployment insurance. But instead Mr. Chairman, with their half-witted partisan approach to the linerboard mill and Come By Chance projects they have done everything in their power, Sir, to discourage outside businessmen from coming into Newfoundland and Labrador. The get-tough approach of the minister of Finance, Sir, to world industrialists can only do harm for Newfoundland.

Sir, his policy of getting our own Newfoundland millionaires, our native millionaires, to start up labour-intensive projects and risk their capital, I am afraid it is going to be a failure. Unless the minister has a guarantee that our own native millionaires are going to do this. There is no sign of this so far, Mr. Chairman. I do not know if the minister is going to be able to con his fellow millionaires into such economic patriotism. I hope he can, Sir. If not I am afraid that unemployment is going to skyrocket in this province over the fall and winter months.

Planning, Sir, planning, this is what they talk about, long-range planning, Mr. Chairman. Welfare recipients cannot put that in their oven for Sunday dinner. Long-range planning, my foot! Yesterday the fish were down in the back of a truck, no market. The minister of Fisheries said we have it included in our long-range planning. The fall of the year will roll around, Mr. Chairman, fall session of the House. A fall session of the House, let us discuss long-range

planning. Unemployment rampant in the province. People going on welfare. What is the answer? The minister of Finance says "oh, do not worry about it long-range planning will take care of this." What utter nonsense, Mr. Chairman. Nonsense! Hogwash! No wonder the minister of Finance is on the pill. No wonder, Sir!

Now, Mr. Chairman, when the minister of Social Services stands in his place to answer some of the points that I have raised, as I am sure he will, I would like for the minister to inform the House, if he has an executive assistant, what the name of that person is and what the salary of his executive assistant is? I would like to have that little piece of information.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I think basically, after listening to the honourable minister's general remarks yesterday, thinking about it last night that really there was nothing new in

what the honourable minister said, He is just merely following out policies that were laid down by the previous administration. As I indicated yesterday, Sir, as good as these policies were, as good as they were, they are now outdated. I think the welfare system, Sir, as we know it today, is obsolete. It should be replaced with a more realistic system. That is why I suggested to the minister yesterday that he proceed with the plans that we had, to experiment with the guaranteed annual income in the province and to take advantage of Ottawa's generosity in carrying out make-work projects in the province.

I think the department has to take a completely new direction, Sir, take a new course, chart a new course. The honourable minister should not be scared of making mistakes. When I was in that department, Mr. Chairman, I made a few mistakes, but I think I did more good than I did harm. Sir, one thing I can say is that I had the interest of the poor people in this province at heart. I do not think anybody on the opposite side can deny me that.

The honourable member for Harbour Grace shakes his head, says "No". That is right. We even increased the funeral allowance for indigent people, when I was minister of that department. I think the honourable member applauded me for that. He is a member of the Funeral Directors' Association. I do not know if I will get a cut-rate, Sir. I do not know if I will get a cut-rate. Maybe I will. Every time the hon. gentleman looks at me, I think he is taking my measure, Mr. Chairman.

However, Sir, we did make tremendous progress in that department, but, Sir, the system is obsolete. I am afraid that I have to keep repeating that, Mr. Chairman. I think the minister would do well to try and build on the foundation that we left behind. Chart a new course for the Department of Social Services and Rehabilitation. Chart a new course, Sir, I think this is very necessary.

Let me give the House a few examples of some of the improvements that were made in about the last year and a-half, Sir, that I was minister of that department. We increased social assistance rates for

people on short-term assistance to parity with those of the unemployed invalids. That is those who are certified to be medically unfit for work. As I said yesterday, Sir, we provided as a matter of entitlement instead of on the existing hit-and-miss basis, social assistance allowances to single able-bodied males. We permitted the retention of earnings on a scale that I presume is being set up now by departmental regulations. The regulations had not gone out (or they might have gone out) up to the time, Mr. Chairman, that I left the department.

We increased the fuel allowance, Sir. We gave grants to the spouse of old age pensioners who were not themselves of the age to be eligible for old age pensions. We provided visiting services to the elderly, who preferred to remain in their own homes, Sir, to institutional residences. Following research into the extent, need for establishment of local residences for the aged throughout the province, Sir, we began this programme that I outlined yesterday of residential type homes. We made commitments to Lewisporte, to St. Anthony and we were taking a look at the South Coast.

While I am on that subject, Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister, when he stands to answer some of these questions, would tell us what is happening in Stephenville Crossing? I understand the committee out there has a substantial amount of money. They have been trying to get a senior citizens' home started in Stephenville Crossing for the last few years. I do not know if there are any new developments on that. I am sure that the honourable member for St. George's would be interested in finding out if they are going to get their home.

Talking about senior citizens' homes, Mr. Chairman, let me make it abundantly clear. I do not know what is causing it, but today it seems that every community in Newfoundland wants a senior citizens' home. The reason they want a senior citizens' home, Sir, is that they think it creates employment. They think it is a big industry. "Senior citizens' homes, let us have one, put people to work." Sir, that is not

June 22, 1972, Tape 928, Page 3 -- apb

the purpose for having senior citizens' homes. They forget about the care of the people who are going to live in these homes. So, I would say, Mr. Chairman, that we had adopted the right policy. We were going to strategically locate residential type homes in various parts of the province, and then in the major centres, as I indicated yesterday, we would have nursing-care homes. The Minister of Community and Social Development went out to Central Newfoundland over the weekend, ranting and raving, "No bedridden

Mr. Neary.

patients he said in the new senior citizens home in Grand Falls." The honourable minister must have been quoted incorrectly. He must have been quoted incorrectly. There is provision. I inform the minister right now that there is provision for bed-ridden patients in that home. I am quoting the honourable minister from the radio station in Grand Falls, CJCJN said it. If the minister was quoted incorrectly, why does he not rectify it? I will give the minister an opportunity to rectify that right now.

MR. SENIOR: I think that can be answered very simply, Mr. Chairman. I was not in Grand Falls on the weekend.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, there is such a thing as a telephone. It could have been a telephone interview. The honourable minister said that he was going to correct it. Well let us hear him correct it.

MR. SENIOR: I have not had any conversations with CJCJN in Grand Falls concerning -

MR. NEARY: Well there was a report, Mr. Chairman, that the honourable minister let it be know in the Central Newfoundland area that there would be no bed-ridden patients in that new senior citizens home in Grand Falls.

MR. SENIOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order: I have already said that I did not make any such statements. The honourable member persists in saying that I made a statement. I did not make a statement I would appreciate it if you would accept that as the truth and not keep harping on something which is not true. I have sat across on this side of the House (I am not going to make a speech now because my turn is coming in a day or so and I have some time at my disposal then to deal with the things which I want to deal with) and I am sick and tired of sitting on this side of the House and hear the honourable members on the other side making accusations about things which happened in the Grand Falls District which are just not true.

MR. NEARY: Is that a point of order, Mr. Chairman? What is the point of order, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The usage and custom which has developed state that the statement of a member of this honourable House cannot be contradicted by an individual or statements of individuals outside of this honourable House. I think that that is what the honourable minister may have been afraid of happening. However, I am sure that the hon. member for Bell Island did not intend it this way, did not intend for it to be taken this way.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, the statement was attributed to the honourable minister

MR. SENIOR: It was not made.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, the honourable minister has denied it and I am glad he denied it. It was attributed to the honourable minister. There was a strong rumour in Grand Falls last week, Sir, or within the last ten days -

MR. SENIOR: You made the statement. You did not say it was a rumour.

MR. NEARY: Hold on now! Hold on, Mr. Chairman! Hold it! There was a strong rumour in Grand Falls within the last ten days that the senior citizens home had been scrapped, that it was not going to go ahead, Sir.

MR. SENIOR: Why are you changing the subject?

MR. NEARY: Wait, I am coming to it. The minister, the member for Grand Falls, was asked to comment and during his comment one of the things that he said apparently, as it has been reported to me, attributed to the honourable member, was that there would no bed-ridden patients in the senior citizens' home. Now the honourable member denied it.

MR. SENIOR: Mr. Chairman, I object.

MR. NEARY: I accept that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The statement of an honourable member has to be accepted in this House.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I accept the honourable member's denial.

MR. SENIOR: I am sick and tired of accusations which are not true and

Mr. Senior.

being reported in the press by people from the outside.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I accept the honourable member's denial that he made such a statement.

MR. SENIOR: Well shut up, if you accept it.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, why are they getting so cranky? Why are they so jumpy. I realize it is a fine day, Sir. I would like to be out myself. We have to carry on the business. But, Sir, we have to carry on the business of this province. I want to ask the Minister of Social Services and Rehabilitation and I am sure the hon. member for Grand Falls will want to know this to: Is that home going ahead this year? The honourable member says that it is definitely going ahead. Well we will find out when the hon. Minister of Social Services and Rehabilitation gets to his feet.

MR. CROSBIE: (Inaudible).

MR. NEARY: Ah, there is the boss back again. He did not stay long. He did not take to the open road at all.

AN HON. MEMBER: They are very touchy now.

MR. NEARY: They are getting jumpy, Mr. Chairman. They are getting cranky. They are really cranky now. They cannot take it. They can dish it out by they cannot take it, Sir. I sat over there for eleven years and I saw that Minister of Finance wear a groove in the House. He wore a groove in the House going back and forth. I learned a lot from him. I guarantee you that the Minister of Finance -

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I believe that the honourable member is being diverted from the discussion which is on the management of the heading Social Services and Rehabilitation.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, you are absolutely right. Sir, I do not know why I opened up the Newfoundland Liquor Commission.

However, Sir, before I take my seat, I want to have a word

Mr. Neary.

about housing, Sir, housing for needy people. Mr. Chairman, I suppose one of the most time-consuming things that welfare officers have to do is finding adequate accommodations for needy families. It is virtually impossible, Sir, to find apartments or flats or houses for people in the low income bracket and in the no-income bracket. I was glad yesterday, Sir, when the Minister of Finance, in a major policy statement in this House, announced that the Minister of Social Services and Rehabilitation had been appointed to the St. John's Housing Corporation. Now, Mr. Chairman, he has it all in his own hands. The honourable minister knows the desperate needs for housing for the low income families and for the no-income families. The honourable minister knows the need. It is desperate, Sir. It is absolutely desperate. It is desperate beyond words. Why, Sir, the officials of my department, when I was minister, became so frustrated with this problem that honourable members will remember the criticism, the controversy over the fact that recipients of welfare had to be put in luxurious, expensive homes down on Canada Drive, in expensive hotels. Sir, it started - this is not only happening in Newfoundland, Sir, but -

AN HON. MEMBER: Who started it in Newfoundland?

MR. NEARY: This minister did not start it, I can tell the honourable member that. When the honourable member was out managing a finance company in Grand Falls, - does the honourable member remember about finance companies, how he fleeced the welfare recipients of this province? Let us have it? We will have a debate on that. We will have it. I will guarantee the honourable member will blush, crawl out of this House on his hands and knees.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member is entitled to be heard in silence and the honourable member should remain relevant to the subject matter which is heading XI, Social Services and Rehabilitation.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, down in New York, down in that great metropolis

Mr. Neary.

of New York, welfare recipients had to be put up in the Waldorf Astoria. That is a fact, Mr. Chairman. I can tell this honourable House now that since I left that department the honourable minister who is now heading up that department has had to put families in hotels in St. John's. It will not stop, Mr. Chairman. It will not stop because the honourable minister is there. When the honourable minister leaves his successor will have the same problem. His successor will have the same problem unless, Mr. Chairman, the honourable minister, since he has now been put on the St. John's Housing Corporation, can start to build some houses in this City. You better check that with the hon. Minister of Finance. So, Sir, this is a desperate problem.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. Mr. Balfour, loosened up the National Housing Act so that old houses could be rehabilitated, Sir.

MR. MURPHY: (Inaudible).

MR. NEARY: Oh, here is the minister of swimming pools. He is back with us again.

So, Mr. Chairman, we are expecting big things from the honourable minister. He has a dual portfolio now. He is Minister of Social Services. He knows the desperate need for housing. He is also

a member of the St. John's Housing Authority, so we are hoping, Sir, for big things. We are hoping that all the housing problems for low income and no-income families will be solved in the months ahead. Sir, I will tell you this, I will tell the House this, that if I had my way, Sir, I would have filled Elizabeth Towers up with welfare recipients instead of filling it up with politicians, Sir, I would fill it up with welfare recipients. Mr. Chairman, I do not care what anybody thinks of what I am saying, whether we are out of the House or in the House now, it does not make any difference to me, Sir. I am a forthright fellow, frank and honest and sincere and I try to tell the truth and face reality, Sir, and I do not care whose corns I walk on.

But, Sir, here we had a situation in this city that I did not agree with when we had no place to put families that were being evicted, put out in the street, on the sidewalks, with their children and their furniture and Elizabeth Towers over there, Sir, thirty per-cent occupied. I would have done what Fidel Castro did, Sir, if I had my way, I would fill it up with welfare recipients. Why not? The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every family is entitled to a decent living, decent accommodation, decent shelter and why not, Sir? Why should the well-to-do politicians have the privilege of going down, living in a luxurious apartment building, Elizabeth Towers? Why not the welfare recipients? Why not the people of the low income group?

Mr. Chairman, while I am on that subject, and here is a little tip for the honourable minister, why not, Mr. Chairman, why not flick out of Churchill Park and Pleasantville all the occupants that are in these apartments earning over \$10,000 a year? Why not flick them out, Sir?

MR. HICKEY: Why did the honourable gentleman not do it?

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, this is not the first time the honourable gentleman raised this question, not the first time. I was not all powerful, Mr. Chairman. I was not all powerful but, Sir, you have living in these apartments well-to-do people, Sir, that can well afford to own their own homes and they should not be living there. The honourable minister should see to it that they are kicked out and people in the middle income and the low income bracket put in these apartments.

MR. MURPHY: Even at \$160.00 a month?

MR. NEARY: Even if they have to subsidize them, Sir. \$160.00 a month at Elizabeth Towers?

MR. MURPHY: In Churchill Square.

MR. NEARY: In Churchill Square. There are people, Sir, in the \$8,000 and \$10,000 bracket that can afford to pay \$150.00 to \$160.00 a month rent.

MR. MURPHY: That is what they are charging.

MR. NEARY: That is what they are charging.

MR. MURPHY: They are not subsidized, no.

MR. NEARY: They are subsidized, Mr. Chairman. When we sat on the opposite side of the House my honourable friends over on this side told us that Elizabeth Towers was subsidized and now it is changed, now it is not subsidized. Mr. Chairman, welfare recipients do not want luxury. All they want is a modest little home to live in. They do not want white wall to wall broadloom, Sir. They want a modest little home and I think they are entitled to it. Sir, I tell you I would make no apologies to anybody in this House for putting welfare recipients or people in low income bracket in luxurious houses. If I had my way, Sir, they would be down in Elizabeth Towers, neighbours for the honourable minister, the honourable Premier and the honourable Minister of Highways. They would be next door neighbours, Sir, the

people who put them in power, that elected them. Why not, Mr. Chairman? Why not? They are entitled to it and they should have it.

It is scandalous, Sir, the housing conditions in this province, scandalous. I could not begin to describe them and yet the honourable minister is going to reduce the cost of building material for repairing houses.

MR. HICKEY: No, I am not going to reduce the cost.

MR. NEARY: The honourable minister said yesterday that he was going to cut down on spending in that category.

MR. HICKEY: I said I was going to reduce what went on in terms of materials.

MR. NEARY: Well, Mr. Chairman, let me say to the honourable minister if that is what he wants to do is get personal. Sir, there was nothing the honourable --

MR. HICKEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, did I get personal or did the honourable gentleman --

MR. NEARY: The honourable minister is getting paranoid.

MR. HICKEY: Is he admitting something? I did not say anything. I said I was going to eliminate what went on in terms of building materials.

Is he accepting --

MR. NEARY: Is that a point of order, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Bell Island has the floor.

MR. NEARY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I was starting to say there that I make no apology for money that was spent on materials to repair houses in this province whether it was on the Blackhead Road, whether it was over on Bell Island, whether it was down in Torbay or Pouch Cove or in the head of the Bay or out in Stephenville or out in Grand Falls or Winsor. It did not make any difference to me, Sir. I make no apologies for it. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, I would have loved to be able to spend one thousand times as much as I spent on repairing houses

in this province because it is needed, Sir, absolutely necessary.

There are houses in this province, Mr. Chairman, and I have been in them, where you can look up through the ceiling and see the stars at night in the sky and in the winter time the snow is drifting along under the children's noses. Your Honour knows that. Members of this House know it, Sir, and then they are criticizing. Bell Island was no exception, Sir. Bell Island was no exception. Since 1959 when the people over there were economically marooned, no repairs on their houses. At least they own their houses, Sir, they were not subsidized by the government. They might not have been luxurious homes but they own them and they are beginning to fall down around their ears plus the fact that we had ninety houses passed over to mostly welfare recipients that were purchased under the special housing programme.

Mr. Chairman, what a joke. So, Sir, we have to do this. It has to be done. I hope the honourable minister is sincere when he says that he is not going to cut that vote. Increase it, Sir. The honourable minister should never make apologies for money that he spends on poor people.

MR. HICKEY: I do not.

MR. NEARY: Never make apologies for it.

MR. HICKEY: I do not.

MR. NEARY: The honourable Minister of Finance, when he wants to balance the budget, he may go to the minister and say, "Look take the food off the table of the welfare recipients."

MR. CARTER: A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. NEARY: What is the point of order?

MR. CARTER: A point of order. Mr. Chairman, the honourable member is shouting unnecessarily loud. The recording equipment in this House and the amplification system is -

MR. NEARY: Is that a point of order, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CARTER: Yes, it certainly is I think, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think it is a point of order, especially when not only do we get uncomplimentary epithets from the honourable member but also they are shouted. I do not think it is necessary for the honourable member to shout like that, like a bull, and I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that he be asked to keep his voice reasonably moderate.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I will speak at my own leisure and I will speak as loud or as soft as I wish and if the honourable member does not like it he can go up and sit in his savoury patch for the afternoon. No wonder, Sir, no wonder the honourable members are embarrassed because they have such a - never mind. It would be unparliamentary if I said it, Mr. Chairman, so I will not say it. I will not even say it to withdraw it.

MR. HICKEY: We will let the honourable gentleman say it and then take it back. Go ahead. It would be typical of the honourable gentleman.

MR. NEARY: What is wrong, Mr. Chairman, what is wrong with the honourable members they are so jumpy and cranky? What is wrong with them?

MR. HICKEY: That is a sick way of chopping someone to say something that is unparliamentary and then withdraw it. It has the same effect. The honourable gentleman made the same remark yesterday, "Oh I should not say it. It is unparliamentary and now I withdraw it."

MR. NEARY: Sir, I realize the weather is good so everybody is anxious to get out of here. I realize that. They do not have to get irritable and jumpy and cranky. Take a tranquilizer and sit back, relax and enjoy it, as that is what we were sent here for to debate, the issues. I am trying to debate the issues and I am taking the high ground, Mr. Chairman. I am keeping it above personalities and debating the issues, Sir. I hope the honourable member paid the extra ten cents

June 22, 1972

Tape 930

JM - 3

a back. But anyway, Sir, these are some of the questions that I would like to have answered now that I have this off my chest, Sir, and

MR. NEARY: I could talk, this is a subject that is very dear to my heart, I could talk about social assistance, the Department of Social Services and Rehabilitation, the adoptions programme, the boys and girls training homes, the care of senior citizens and what have you. Why, Mr. Chairman, I could talk about it for days, but I do not intend to. Your Honour can relax. Now that I have got it out of my system, let us go on and do the estimates item by item and maybe we will be out of here by Labour Day, who knows.

MR. WOODWARD: Mr. Chairman, seeing that the Department of Social Services and Rehabilitation is administering the division of Northern Labrador Affairs and Services, I feel that it is fitting at this time to make a few brief comments concerning that department.

Over the years, and going back to about sixteen years ago, when we first started the Northern Labrador Services Division, we have seen some great improvements in the Indian and Eskimo communities of Northern Labrador. This has been chiefly brought about by the Division of Labrador Affairs and the officials of that department and I speak very highly of the officials of that department, Mr. Chairman. I will reserve my comments on the minister's actions and participations, even only new to the Department of Social Services and Rehabilitation. But I stress the importance of carrying out this programme which we consider to be a very vital programme, vital in many ways and vital to the survival and the existence of our Indian and Eskimo population.

I would like to think in terms of having very broad views and possibly extending that particular service into other areas of Labrador, mainly the Black Tickle Area. Possibly when he makes his remarks here, he can expound on this particular aspect of it. I know and I can understand the ramifications of skipping over communities and going into other communities, that there may be some controversy develop. While I am speaking, I am glad to see that the Minister of Labrador Affairs is in his seat after being absent for

MR. WOODWARD: a few days, We did miss him. Possibly he can pay attention to what is going on, as far as Northern Labrador Services, which I feel is one of the vital things to the Department of Labrador Affairs. No doubt the responsibility of both ministers and Social Services and Rehabilitation will be overlapping in this particular area and if we do not have co-ordination and good communications between the two departments maybe some of the residents will suffer because of this.

But we have had a tremendous programme and I would like at this time to mention the Director of Labrador Services, Mr. Ross King, who have not only given his expertise and ability to Labrador but possibly put a lot of feeling and his personal concern into the development of that area. He has done an excellent job, Sir. He spent a number of years living in the northern communities knowing, possibly by first name, most of the residents in the five communities north of Goose Bay. Mr. King has given a real good service, I understand the problem fully and I hope that when he makes his recommendations to the department that the minister in his wisdom will see fit that those recommendations are implemented. He does have a vast knowledge of what is going on, Sir, possibly more than any other individual in the Department of Social Services and Rehabilitation.

There are a number of items that I would like to elaborate on and one of them possibly is the participation of local people in the NSLD programme. Over the years we have been bringing down people from the island, setting them into key positions in the communities, such as store managers, clerks, power plant operators, we have been bringing in fishermen, carpenter foremen for the housing projects and the school. I would like to think in terms of maybe upgrading some of the residents of the community, through some programme, whereby they can fit in to do the jobs that are now taken by the outsiders or by people from the island. This may not come about over a short period of time, Mr. Chairman. I am sure that the minister will agree that

MR. WOODWARD: maybe in the next few years, if we take a very serious look at this problem, then, in conjunction with the community councils that we have now in the communities, the citizens of those communities will look after their own affairs and possibly develop on the same level as normal, common, ordinary communities on the island portion of the province.

I am sure that the Minister of Labrador Affairs will agree with me in this respect that there have been some dissension about people coming in from the outside and taking over the jobs that the natives feel that they should rightfully be entitled to. In this respect I hope that we will take a very serious look at this. The communities now are becoming viable communities because of NSLD participation and while I am on that subject, Sir, there is a great assistance from the federal government. I understand that ninety percent of what is spent on the Indian communities, like Northwest River and Davis Inlet, ninety percent of the participation is through the federal plan. I stand to be corrected on that, if the minister wants to correct me. And sixty-six percent of the expenditure for housing, fish plants and things of that nature do come from the Federal Department of Northern Indian Affairs, for the Eskimo population.

There are changing times in Labrador, both in the north and in the south. We have coming up relatively young, brilliant people, coming through our upgrading systems, particular in the school at Northwest River. A number of our Indian population are attending the upgrading school and a number of our people, we have one particular person in the House today that came up to be a teacher and teaching in that particular school, possibly one of the first of the Indian population in Northwest River.

So I would like, Sir, for the honourable minister, in his wisdom, to take into consideration having a plan or some sort of an upgrading programme so that those people can be upgraded to govern their own

MR. WOODWARD: affairs, to take over the development of their own community and to carry on the work of those communities without interference from people coming in from the outside. Not necessarily, Sir, I do not mean that you will take the administration of government away from them. They would equally like to be under Municipal Affairs or under the Department of Social Services and Rehabilitation. But with the community councils now we feel and I am sure the population of those communities feel that we should have some system whereby they can gradually move in to take over the running of the affairs of the community, as well as help in the development of the industry that is taken place around them, for instance, the sawmill at Northwest River. We hire a number of loggers and sawers, if you want to call them that, from the Island portion of the province. We like to feel that those jobs will eventually go to the native population and in turn they will themselves run this particular operation.

We have met with nothing but great success at the fish plant in Nain last year.

which was so ably conducted by one of the people who was sent in from the Department of Northern Labrador Affairs. The thing got off to a very good start. We did hire for the very first time an almost complete Eskimo population to run the affairs of that fish plant. Last winter the community for the first time had some economic stability along with the LIP programme that we had going. We saw a considerable amount of money into the community.

I like to think in terms now, and I feel that it is in the estimates, (and maybe the hon. minister while he is having his smoke on the outside will hear what I am saying) we had planned to put a similar fish plant in the Community of Makkovik. I see in the estimates that there are some seventy thousand dollars there for fish plants and equipment. I hope this is for the Community of Makkovik. This, Sir, will tie in a complete link, (as my colleague mentioned yesterday, the honourable member for Bell Island) this will give the whole coast, from the northern portion of it to the southern portion, from Nain to Cape Harrison, the opportunity to take advantage of the two fish plants.

Similar type processing goes on with the arctic char and the salmon. If this thing is taking place this year, I am sure that it will be welcome news for the people of Makkovik as well as the people of Postville.

Going on to think in terms of the extension and having the services of NLSD extended to Black Tickle, it has been a priority, Sir, I am sure that the hon. minister does have correspondence from the medical director, Doctor Paddon, as well as other people on the federal level. There is no doubt the honourable members of this House saw, last year, some clippings from a national magazine stating that the poverty that exists in the Community of Black Tickle in Labrador was unlike anything else that exists in Canada today.

Hopefully, the minister in his wisdom will see fit to talk to our counterparts in Ottawa and get sufficient funds to develop that community, with his experts, his officials, along the same lines as

we have developed the Communities of Hopedale, Nain, Davis Inlet and Postville.

I would like to go a little further, Sir. When I think in terms of a senior citizens' home, there have been recommendations made that a senior citizens home would go in Northwest River. This Community of Northwest River is gradually becoming an institution town because of the fact that most of the services spreading out to the coast of Labrador, both north and south, is spearheaded from the Community of Northwest River. We feel that for the elderly citizens living on the Labrador Coast as well as a number of elderly citizens in the Communities of Goose Bay and Happy Valley, moving down to the island to go into a home, isolates them from all the contacts they have had in their lifetime, the culture gap is too great. The morale of the people suffers greatly because of the great change caused by taking them from a small community like Postville and putting them in the Hoyles Home here in St. John's or in some other institution. We feel that for that particular reason, there should be a home established in Northwest River.

No doubt the honourable minister does have correspondence from concerned citizens of Labrador concerning the home at Northwest River. We would like to see this thing accomplished. I know it cannot be done in a short period of time, but no doubt there can be some planning for it.

There have been a number of things, and maybe one of the most critical subjects that is brought up on the Labrador Coast is the base supply purchasing by the Department of Supply and Services. (Seeing that the honourable Minister of Supply and Services is in his seat today) This has developed into a very critical area. Supply and services are done through the government procedures, and it has been carried out for a long time. I feel that it is a very rigid system and it does not fit the type of purchasing that is needed in the retail stores that are run by the government in the Northern Communities.

June 22, 1972, Tape 932, Page 3 -- apb

We do not have the variety of things that the public demand. Seeing that the economic means of the communities do not lend themselves to commercial enterprise, then the Department of Supply and Services should see fit to stock the items, not only the necessary items like food items that are needed in those particular retail stores but they themselves should stock what is needed or demanded by the public.

The system that we have, whereby you go out to our tendering system at numerous times, people have been left for as high as three to four weeks with items not being on the shelf, These are subsistence items that are necessary to their diet. This practice has been taking place. I tried, I met with the Minister of Supply and Services. I am glad that the honourable Minister of Labrador Affairs is here, I think it is a serious item. I do not know if he agrees with me that it is a serious item. It is very unfortunate that neither one of the three ministers concerned with this particular function have had the opportunities or have visited those particular communities.

I trust that during the summer they will see fit to get out to the Labrador Coast and see for themselves what really is taking place. and see, before navigation closes next year, if there is some way or means whereby we can change that system of purchasing. I understand through the officials of the Department of Social Services and Rehabilitation, that they have an expediter in the department now who is looking after this particular item.

The stock is not sufficient. There must be some expertise whereby people who are familiar with the retail trade - there has to be some latitude of purchasing - It does not have to be on that rigid, straight-line path that we have been following - because of the fact that people are depending on this. I would also urge the honourable minister to see fit to offer incentives so that some enterprising young people living in those communities would go into the commercial business, to establish that and bring it up to a certain level. It is unlike, Mr. Chairman, any other community and I am sure that very few people

on the Island of Newfoundland are familiar with or have to depend on government retail stores for their supplies. This becomes a very rigid thing. Not that the managers of those particular depots are not competent, they are, they are great people, but our system has to have some flexibility in it whereby it lends itself to the people and not necessarily to the laws that are governing or dictating to our honourable Minister of Supply and Services.

There have been some hardships suffered because of this and we do have some, I suppose, some disgruntled citizens living in those communities. I feel that the only way we can give them or meet them half way is by changing this particular system.

A big concern of mine has been whether we can develop the communities so that they can have a viable economic base to support private enterprise, or else we have to extend or expand the particular system that we already have.

AN HON. MEMBER: Are there any private individuals doing business in Nain and other places?

MR. WOODWARD: We have one particular person in Nain who is dealing primarily in a small way...

AN HON. MEMBER: A confectionary store?

MR. WOODWARD: A confectionary store, but it does not lend itself to the type of industry that exists there.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why does it not?

MR. WOODWARD: Because of the fact that this person is an elderly person now, he is about ready to retire. No doubt some of his relatives will feel free to develop the business to the extent

whereby they can get that. Again, Sir, as you may recall, we have not yet had a ship into Nain. The demands on a commercial businessman whereby he has to bring in, in the northern communities, an inventory of stock that would last him for eight months of a year, this is a tremendous strain on any businessman, today with the terms of credit normally thirty days. So there has to be a great display of money or an output of money in order to conduct business in those communities and consequently people are not that far advanced economically and they do not have the means. Maybe the hon. minister can take this into his stride and whereas they do have to supply it to a certain degree, maybe this will lend itself to helping some of the people who have the community at heart and have some business ability to help to develop this type of commercial industry.

There is no doubt, in the Community of Nain, last year there was a lot of money spent. If a person wanted to go ahead in private business for himself, he could have done very well. But this area is an area where we would like to see it develop to the extent whereby the people in the communities can govern their own affairs. We would like to see the fish plant at Makkovik go ahead, we would also like to see some redirection of the saw mill at Northwest River and possibly a look at some sort of a holding depot in the Community of Hopedale. Those funds are largely federal funds, they come from the federal government.

I understand, and maybe the hon. minister can expound on this, the provincial government do the interim financing for short periods of time, until they are reimbursed by the Government of Canada. So those are the questions that I would like to ask. In my remarks I would like to see both ministers, the Minister of Supply, who is going to get heavily involved in this particular operation, I see that we are going to spend this year, in the estimates, \$800,000. on

services and goods for the retail stores, the honourable Minister of Labrador Affairs and no doubt the Minister of Social Services, and Rehabilitation, who is directly involved with the thing, the thing comes directly under his guidance, and I would like to see both ministers, the three ministers, take a very active part in that. We have a lot of disgruntled people. We have people that it has been difficult for us to communicate with over the years. They deserve the same services that we are getting here on this Island of Newfoundland and until they get those particular services they are not going to be any happier than they are now and in some instances they are not very happy.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I will first of all deal with a couple of things raised by my hon. friend from Labrador North and when we come to the vote, Northern Labrador Services, I am sure we can provide much more information.

May I say to him first of all that my department has some plans for that area in which we service to the Northern Labrador Services. The policies that we are trying to devise are in their infancy. I am afraid that I cannot really give too much information on them at this stage. I will say, however, that it is our belief that we have been in the business in Northern Labrador long enough, along the lines that we are in it right now. I do not think it is any place for government to be. I think it should go back and be placed in the hands of the private sector, under the Free Enterprise System. I would hope that we could work towards that direction, always providing of course that we can be assured that not even the same level of service but in fact improved service will be provided. We are very conscious of the area, very conscious indeed of the problems that have become so pronounced especially during the time of the year when navigation is closed.

MR. HICKEY: I can say to him too, very quickly, that the concern of the people of Makkovik in relation to a fish plant, I think we can have some good news for them on that. I think the area of Labrador, which he is concerned about particularly, needs a thorough going-over, I hope, in conjunction with my colleague, the Minister of Labrador Affairs, indeed my colleague, the Minister of Supply and Services, we will be getting together in an effort to improve where we can, for the immediate future, and to alleviate hopefully some of the problems that we have encountered during the past few months.

As I said, when we come to the heading, we can get into some detailed information on it.

Mr. Chairman, I should like to deal with some of the matters, I am not sure I even got all of them as raised by my friend the hon. member for Bell Island, the former minister of the department for which I am now responsible.

I should say first of all that it is a pleasure to get a bit of fresh air from my hon. friend, the member for Northern Labrador. The hon. member for Bell Island yesterday afternoon, in starting off his remarks, talked about a works programme. He says that before he left his department, he was working on this particular item and would have gotten involved in it. What I am surprised at is that in fact his department did not get involved in it while he was in office. He was there for three years. What I was even more amazed at, a matter which I investigated, was the fact that the hon. John Monroe, Minister of National Health and Welfare, made a release some couple of months ago; that Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland were the only two provinces, in the Atlantic region at least, who did not take advantage of works programmes.

Now, Mr. Chairman, down through the years, certainly it is not fair for me to label the hon. member for Bell Island as being responsible totally, for he was only there three years. The former

MR. HICKEY: administration had been in office twenty-three years and in the twenty-three years, Mr. Chairman, of various administrations, but that same party that was in power did absolutely nothing to rehabilitate the people of this province who, through no fault of their own, find themselves as recipients of my department. Their every move was to give but not to help, dish out the money but no allied services to bolster the effort or indeed to improve or help. Nothing, not a single penny was ever contained in an estimate under the heading of rehabilitation.

Some years back, I am not sure just how many but during the former minister's tenure of office, he brought a bill into this House, Mr. Chairman, changing the name of the Department of Public Welfare to the Department of Social Services and Rehabilitation. I had the honour at that time to sit on the other side of the House, as a member of the opposition, I recall, Mr. Chairman, very vividly being one of the first to get to my feet and hail this as a worthwhile move indeed, with one reservation, Mr. Chairman, with one reservation; that being that that would not be in name only, that in effect at last something would be done along the lines of rehabilitation, along the lines of providing some services to those unfortunate people who, as I said, through no fault of their own, have so many problems apart from the lack of finances to provide for their families.

Mr. Hickey.

I will not go so far as to say that the honourable minister assured me. I do not think in fact he did. I do not think he was probably in a position to do so. But certainly people on this side of the House, at that time certainly did give every assurance that this in effect was the whole basis for the change. In three years, Mr. Chairman, not a move was made. Mr. Chairman, the federal government made funds available for work projects for depressed areas. All the other provinces in the Atlantic region except the two that I mentioned; namely, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, took advantage. Now it is true, Sir, that the federal people did not and could not at that time provide funds for capital. They were prepared to share in the cost of labour. Mr. Chairman, in relation to my department and all of those thousands of abled-bodied men who have to come to us for aid, those are the people whom we want to help. The real emphasis, Mr. Chairman, is on jobs. Labour costs is really the word that we have to underline here and that is the cost of labour. What did the former administration do about it? They did nothing. I suggest, Mr. Chairman, the few dollars it would have taken for capital to involve this province and so many of our people who were in receipt of assistance in those work projects would have been but a drop in the bucket as compared with the amount that was wasted in so many ways.

Here again, Mr. Chairman, I make this statement and I make it without any reservation, having being a former field worker in this department, One thing that has become increasingly clear down through the years, both when I was in the field and when I sat on that side of the House, whether it was intentional or otherwise is not for me to say, I am not one to prejudge or condemn but it certainly appeared very much so that the former administration were not the least bit concerned about reducing the number of people who had to depend on welfare for a livelihood. In fact, Mr. Chairman, the more that were on could have well been considered to be a casted vote, people who were controlled, people who could

Mr. Hickey.

be depended upon not to let the government down when election time came.

Mr. Chairman, those people who think that today could not be more naive. If in fact, Mr. Chairman, this was the intent, all I can say, I do not have the words to describe it. I will just say that it is beneath contempt. For any government or any minister or any man who will chart the course of an individual or individuals to keep them in a state of dependency on the state, on a government, do not deserve, Mr. Chairman, to hold office and do not deserve to sit in this House. That is why, Mr. Chairman, that it is like a dream come true to me for how ever long I shall be minister, that at least I will make one little mark in the history of this department, that that policy will cease and in fact, it has ceased.

We will embark on a programme of rehabilitation this year, small and maybe insignificant though it be, but we will change that course, Mr. Chairman, that has robbed from many of our people their initiative, that has robbed and has take the very marrow from their bones. Some politicians do not have the courage to admit it nor to make that statement. I make no apology for making it because, Mr. Chairman, over the years I have had the unfortunate experience of rubbing shoulders. It is a pretty sad commentary after twenty three years to find in a province where the federal government have become so heavily involved in the way of financial aid, to find that the cost of welfare and the numbers, Mr. Chairman, of recipients in this department continue to soar. Yet we hear people laugh when this government talks of planning and priorities.

Mr. Chairman, let me say to this honourable House that I have been in consultation with some federal officials in Ottawa and I have met with them here in the province and in the not too distant future, hopefully, I will get to Ottawa to discuss in detail some plans for work projects in this province. I think I can say, Sir, that the door is opening, more quickly than possibly we realized, to where the federal people will get involved in capital costs. I believe we have been able to convince them. If there is any cure for the state of dependency that

Mr. Hickey.

exists in this province and other provinces, it has to be through federal/provincial participation in work projects. Be they created by government or industry, Who ever they are created by, there is one basic solution to the almost \$60 million that we expend each year or certainly this year and that is basic jobs. One cannot just wait for this government or this province to develop along economic lines through industry to provide jobs. If we do not have a programme of rehabilitation and if we do not have a works programme, Mr. Chairman, when the jobs come, when the jobs become available, we will have nurtured and fostered a generation which will not want to work. That may sound, Mr. Chairman, a kind of condemnation of my fellow Newfoundlander. Let me make sure that that statement is not misinterpreted. The number of people today who will not take a job, as compared with the number who are in receipt of assistance, are indeed a minority. Thank God for that! But, Mr. Chairman, we must start now and in fact in starting now we are late. If we do not start, the number will steadily increase. Our people are human beings. When we provide assistance which is so closely related to what one can earn in the labour markets, what do we expect our people to do? For them to give us welfare and go to work for less money? Give it up and go to work for the same money? Mr. Chairman, I am proud to say that I am a believer in the people of this province. I believe that we have a lot of good, strong, conscientious men left. Whatever it takes, Mr. Chairman, whether my remarks are misinterpreted or not, I would be less than honest if I did not express my concern about the increasing number of people who (1) will not take jobs; and (2) who do not make that extra effort to go look for them. I think it is fair, Mr. Chairman, for me to say, in reply to the hon. gentleman from Bell Island, who talks about his concern for the poor, he has to be born over again, Mr. Chairman, to be more concerned than I.

I worked in the field. Whatever he learned when he was minister for three years I submit, Sir, he did not learn as much as I did because he has

June 22, 1972

Tape no. 934

Page 4

Mr. Hickey.

not been in the number of homes where poverty is so evident and that
is the only way to learn. We all can stand

2908

here and get up tight about poverty. I have heard it, Mr. Chairman, in the five years I sat on the other side and I suppose nobody expounded any more than I did myself. But, Mr. Chairman, I am the first to say that this problem needs more than ventilation. It needs more than talk. It needs more than words. It needs action and thank God, after twenty-three years, this province has a government that is going to give some action to that problem.

So, Mr. Chairman, with regards to work programmes, in the very near future I hope to be able to announce some headway in this connection. We will determine the areas where we will get involved and where we will hire our people and get them to work and determine just what course we should follow or how far we should get involved in this kind of programme.

Mr. Chairman, another item my honourable friend mentioned was the guaranteed annual income and he said again, shortly before he left office that he was working on a plan. Mr. Chairman, as I said before, I do not prejudge and I do not condemn in a lot of instances even when I can. I do not come here to war with anybody but I have to say in fairness, Sir, that if he had a plan regarding the guaranteed annual income he must have taken it with him with everything else out of his office, in fact out of the department. Because, Mr. Chairman, I have found nothing and I can assure him again there was nobody more interested in the guaranteed annual income or an incentives programme than I.

I talk to my deputy minister, Mr. Chairman. We have such a relationship in fact that we are constantly in discussion on the guaranteed annual income, the incentives programme, the works programme and everything else. I heard something about it but where was it? The least the honourable minister could do, if he wanted me to carry on with something he started, was to leave it. I would be the first to

stand here and give him credit for whatever contribution he would make. If he sits long enough and waits long enough while my estimates are going through, I might have some words of credit and some words of praise for him in relation to certain headings, when we come to them.

Mr. Chairman, it does not take years or in fact months to determine what is needed insofar as the guaranteed annual income is concerned in this province. The guaranteed annual income in its present form that is outlined by the Federal people is not worth its salt without some built-in incentive. Here was the area, if the honourable gentleman was working on the guaranteed annual income, that he should have applied his efforts. The basis for it is already established by Ottawa. What we have to do as a province, if we are going to involve ourselves, is to determine some incentives so that we do not destroy even further the initiative of our people than we are doing at the moment.

So, Mr. Chairman, along those lines the honourable Minister of Education and some people from the university and myself had already done some homework on this particular matter. Within a matter of three weeks after taking office we had a plan devised which was presented to my officials, who took it and applied it to every conceivable case that one would run into in this province from the adult to the family of eighteen or seventeen, all worked out, Mr. Chairman. Raising the standards of our people, letting them work and rewarding them for working and letting them reach the stage, giving them some help as they went along until finally their standard of living reached a point where they just fell off the payroll as it were and were self-sufficient.

Here was a programme, Mr. Chairman, that could change the face of this province in terms of this department and the huge expenditure that we are being asked to vote here today. The Federal people turned

it down and as usual, for the reason that under the Canada Assistance Plan we would be treating people differently. But, Mr. Chairman, the argument that has to be put forward to the Federal people and it is being put forward and will continue to be put forward, is that we are different people. We are a different province and we have different problems than any province in this Dominion, such as the highest rate of welfare, the highest rate of unemployment, the lowest income, lowest per capita income, the lowest death rate, the highest birth rate and I suppose I could go on to some others. At least we developed our case and, Mr. Chairman, it is foolproof the case that can be made for this province in relation to some kind of a different programme.

I am pleased to announce to the House that this programme is going to be continued and whatever lobbying is necessary or whatever needling is necessary and however long it takes myself and my officials to go to Ottawa and meet with those people we will continue to pursue this programme hopefully and eventually to get it approved. So, Mr. Chairman, the guaranteed annual income need not, I repeat, need not bear the label of the former administration, because there was none. There might have been some ideas. We all have some ideas. Some of us might have some ideas of going to the moon but we might never get there. There is nothing on paper and there is no official record.

Mr. Chairman, another item the honourable gentleman mentioned was what he did for the single men of this province who could not receive assistance. He made such a case of it that it would almost make your heart bleed to listen while he expounded on what a job he had to convince his colleagues. Mr. Chairman, as long as I have sat in this honourable House I have been led to believe that the former administration was the most liberal, most generous, most conscientious government of the poor that one has ever heard tell of and yet he tells us that he almost had to do a song and dance to get approval for that.

June 22, 1972

Tape 935

JM - 4

Mr. Chairman, nobody in this government says to me, as minister, you will not assist single men. In fact, Mr. Chairman, in line with the incentive programmes that I just touched on, one of the improvements that we made, this government, very shortly after taking office and when we received, to our disappointment, the answer from the Federal Government that our incentives programme could not be put into effect, one of the first things we did, Mr. Chairman, was to make at least a token effort to rebuild initiative where it was on the wane and to protect it where it was still intact.

2972

MR. HICKEY: So we immediately implemented a programme which permitted one adult to earn thirty dollars a month and still draw his assistance, two adults or more to earn sixty dollars a month and still draw their assistance. With the hope, Mr. Chairman, that this would instill in some of our people the idea and the feeling that here was a department who wanted to help, that here was a department who did not want to save money at their expense but who really wanted to help to encourage those people to get out and go to work or look for work or try and find work that we started or implemented this programme.

I am sure, Mr. Chairman, as I stand here today, that given time, given a year, we will see some tangible results from this programme. A new direction the honourable gentleman talked about was required, a new direction which this government is bringing to this department and which my honourable friend tells me now is needed and I say to him, in all sincerity; what was he doing for three years that he did not give us some new direction and use some new approaches?

A lot of questions, Mr. Chairman, as to why the honourable gentleman did not do some of the things that he now talks about. As I sat and listened to him yesterday evening and in his own subtle way touching on personalities as he went along and announcing some of the things that should be done in his department, I thought to myself I was almost convinced that abortion had been legalized, made retroactive and the honourable gentleman had been born all over again. I could hardly believe it.

Then he touched on senior citizens' homes, he gets awfully upset about what is to happen in St. George's and he says that my colleague the member for St. George's would like to know. Let me assure the honourable gentleman that my colleague from St. George's and I are very close together all of the time whenever it is necessary with regards to what goes on in his district, as that would apply to every other minister of this government. He need not worry about providing

MR. HICKEY: information to the back benchers on this side, because they are given the information and nothing is done without consultation with them. This, Mr. Chairman, is the team approach that we talk about. This is not a one-man government, neither is it a one-man department.

As regards to the senior citizens home, again there will be a new policy announced very shortly, a new policy which will have some planning in it, Mr. Chairman. We are no longer going to fly by the seat of our pants and build institutions wherever someone wishes to have one, only to find that someone from Labrador ends up in St. John's, if he needs a bed. This government believes in the senior citizens of this province having the opportunity to end their twilight years in an area as close to the environment in which they grew up as possible. And along those lines, Mr. Chairman, we are pursuing a new policy.

This province will be charted in terms of institutions where they are needed and also, Mr. Chairman, it should be good news to the House when I inform them that there is also a new policy with regards to the so-called guarantee that the former administration used to give. The guarantee under the disguise, I might say, of a guarantee. This was a grant. Somebody talked about a guarantee, so and so in such a place was given a guarantee. What do we call a guarantee, Mr. Chairman? A guarantee to make so much money available and then a guarantee to pay the annual amount that was required on that loan. That is not a guarantee that is an outright grant, Under the disguise of a guarantee that was. That policy will cease to exist.

Mr. Chairman, the situation with regards to the senior citizens in this province - there is one which has a place high on the list of priorities with this government, and certainly of my department and a sane and sensible policy will be announced very shortly. As

MR. HICKEY: regards to the Lewisporte situation, may I inform him there is no commitment that I can find, unless it went with the rest of the files that nobody can find, to the people of Lewisporte. But let me assure the people of Lewisporte, as I have already officially, in writing, that their application has not been rejected, far from it. The people of Lewisporte, there are the people of Botwood, there are the people in other areas have been all informed that until such time as this government knows exactly where they are going and until we devise this plan, which has some sense to it, we will not make any further commitments. I assure the people of Lewisporte that they will not have to wait long before they get this information. A committee will be established to chart the course we follow in this connection. The same applies to the guarantee of ninety-eight percent occupancy.

One of the pitfalls, Mr. Chairman, in this policy is that if we do not chart a course and plot on the map where our institutions are going to go, we will end up very shortly with a situation where we have institutions which are not filled, for which this government or any other government will have to pay the bill. A ninety-eight percent occupancy guarantee, guarantees to pay for each bed whether that bed is occupied or not. That is another Liberal policy. So Liberal, Mr. Chairman, that it is liberal with the taxpayers money that is very scarce those days, and we are going to do something about that.

As regards to the people of Grand Falls who must be upset and if they are I do not blame them, listening to what has come from this House from the honourable member for Bell Island, in his attempt to prod from me what was going on. Let me say publicly, and they have been notified, the senior citizens home in Grand Falls is going ahead. Again, Mr. Chairman, the honourable member indicated the former administration made a commitment. The former administration made no such thing. The former administration in a very vague way outlined policies and needs with regards to that area. But the former

MR. HICKEY: administration told the committee to proceed with architectural plans, with the usual spade work that goes on, so that approximately eight thousand to ten thousand dollars was expended. If in fact this institution or project did not go ahead, somebody would be stuck with that bill. That is the kind of planning, Mr. Chairman, that the former administration was involved in and yet they laugh and jeer when we talk about planning on this side.

Another item he raised, Mr. Chairman, was the Citizens Rights Association. He says, if he were minister now

he would have to accede to their request for a grant. I at no time refused the citizens rights association. Neither at any time did I say I would give them something, because money is not that plentiful Mr. Chairman. I do not make promises that I cannot keep. That is why I sit on this side of the House.

Again, it is strange to see the change or to observe the change that has taken place in the honourable gentleman. It was only a few months before he left office, in a news release, that he labelled the Citizens' Rights Association as the bleeding heart, but now he says, if he were in office he would support them and give them a grant.

Mr. Chairman, I acknowledge fully, as do my officials and as do this government, the role of the Citizens' Rights Association. But the item that appeared in the paper wherein it was stated that my officials pass on cases to the Citizens' Rights Association for investigation is totally incorrect. The opposite, Mr. Chairman, is true. The whole purpose of the Citizens' Rights Association is to protect and to investigate or have investigated by the welfare officials any possible injustice or unfair treatment that is handed down.

Mr. Chairman, the removal of politics from my department, with the removal of interference of my officials, the Citizens' Rights Association of this province have a much easier task to perform today, because people in this province today, Mr. Chairman, they get what the law will prescribe, what the policy will prescribe no more no less. That is not to me that they do not have a place in society, that they do not have a place in this province. Anything that I can do, Mr. Chairman, to help them, my door is always open, and I certainly have helped them. In fact we have already assisted this group in a small way with some equipment.

Mr. Chairman, finally, there are a number of other items but I am not going to cover them until we come to the heading. The honourable gentleman mentioned staff. He says that in that department there is the most competent staff of any department of government. It may not be very often, Mr. Chairman, that we agree. But we sure agree on that. We have a most competent staff. My only complaint, Mr. Chairman, may I say before I go further, whatever I have said, whatever I say now or whatever I will say in the future, in relation to those estimates as related totally to the honourable gentleman while he was minister of this department and not to him personally. I am not about to involve myself in personality assassinations nor personality discussions.

My criticism is directed at his office as minister. I do not think, Mr. Chairman, when the honourable gentleman was minister he realized what a competent staff he had. I do not think he realized how professional they were, because I think, if he did he would not have interfered with them as much as he did. He would not have run roughshod over some of them as was the case. I am sure if the honourable gentleman probably had his time to go over he would have left his department with much more admiration from his staff than he had when he left.

There is one thing, Mr. Chairman, it is a cardinal rule in this department right now. That is the minister does not interfere with the staff in the performance of their duties, unless it is clearly indicated that some staff members are incapable or incompetent of performing their duty or unless there is an injustice or a case which needs to be reviewed. But the day is gone, Mr. Chairman, when a welfare officer will pick up his phone and hear the minister on the line telling him what to do.

There is a chain of command in my department and that chain of command is well picked, well suited and well qualified to do a most difficult and professional job and they are doing it and doing it well. As long as that situation prevails, Mr. Chairman, my policy is hands off, let them do it. I go to the chain of command when I want anything and that will be my policy as long as I remain minister. I think the honourable gentleman also raised a question about the assistant deputy minister.

One of my assistant deputy ministers, Mr. Roy Roberts, who retired, There was no better place, Mr. Chairman, to make the announcement than in this honourable House. I am pleased and proud to announce that that position has been filled and filled by a very competent and capable man in the person of Mr. Ross King, formerly of Northern Labrador Services. Mr. King brings to his post a wealth of knowledge and experience in one of the areas that he as assistant deputy minister will be very closely connected with and directly responsible for, at least over the person who will replace him as director of Northern Labrador Services.

Mr. Chairman, this applies to my colleagues and gentlemen on the other side as well. My colleagues are well versed in what the policy of this department is. My officials are well versed in the policies and regulations of this department. When they are let alone they will do a commendable job. I implore all of you to leave them alone, do not interfere, make representation by all means. We have a lady who is most professional, in the person of the director of enquiries. If you direct your enquiries to Mrs. Crawford, I assure you that you will get the necessary action. Whatever can be done will be done, but once we start dealing with welfare officers personally the system breaks down.

Mr. Chairman, the other items as raised by the honourable gentleman, I think I have covered most of them. The few that he raised today are under other headings I think we will be at least able to provide additional information and rather than just comment generally on them I would prefer to leave them and as we come to the heading will provide the information, so that we can proceed.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I was pleased to hear the minister say that Mr. Ross King was appointed recently assistant deputy minister of the department of Social Services & Rehabilitation because, Sir, that was the very same gentleman that I had recommended for the job before I left the department. It is part of the unfinished business that I was unable to deal with when the honourable Premier formed the new administration. Mr. King, Sir, is an able man, he is a competent man, capable in every way. He was the most likely choice for assistant deputy minister and I want to congratulate him. He will be, he was my choice. I had to wait because Mr. Roberts was not retiring until the end of April or May so therefore I could not announce the appointment. I discussed it with Mr. King before I left the department. I am glad Sir, the minister had sense enough to follow through on the selection that the former administration had made. I want to congratulate Mr. King and wish him well in his new job.

MR NEARY:

A peculiar thing happened this afternoon when the minister was expounding about the programmes that were going to be undertaken by the department, Sir. Let me first of all say that I would not dignify the minister's remarks about interfering with the staff of the department, Sir. I would not dignify to comment on them. The staff of that department at the present know the honourable minister as a lightweight. The staff know that the honourable minister is just a weight around the honourable Premier's neck, a walking paradox, Mr. Chairman. He is a lightweight and he is a heavyweight. He is a lightweight in the Cabinet and a heavy weight around the honourable Premier's neck.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the minister says, "Yes, we are going to undertake special works programmes," Yes, the minister tells us this and, Mr. Chairman, every member of this House and every citizen of this province knows that back in May when a resolution was put on the floor of this House and debated on private member's day, a motion calling for investigation of special works programmes, it was defeated by the government, defeated.

MR. MURPHY: It is in Hansard, I imagine.

MR. NEARY: It is not in Hansard. It is a well-known fact, Sir. It is a matter of public record, Mr. Chairman, a matter of public record that the motion was defeated, that the government did not believe in this principle of creating work. They were against it. The Minister of Fisheries says, "Leave it to private enterprise. You are interfering with private enterprise." The member for St. John's South said, "You are pushing socialism." Now the Minister of Social Services— is there disension in the ranks, Mr. Chairman. The Minister of Social Services stands in his place and says, "We are going to go ahead. We are going to implement special works programmes." I wonder if the honourable -

MR. HICKEY: Who is initiating them? This Province?

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I will deal with that because I did attend a number of -

MR. HICKEY: Initiated by the Federal Government.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I did attend a number of federal-provincial conferences for Ministers of Welfare, when I was minister of that department, Sir, I can inform the honourable minister and members of this honourable House that I pushed hard -

AN HON. MEMBER: I suppose you know your way around Ottawa.

MR. NEARY: Yes, that is what I do know my way around, Ottawa. I know my way around Ottawa almost as well as the honourable Premier does. You see, Mr. Chairman, I pushed hard to have funds of the Canada Assistance Plan made available for special works programmes because, Sir, the reason that we could not go ahead in this province was because, although the Government of Canada would pay fifty per-cent of the labour cost, they would not contribute one penny towards the capital cost and little, old, poor Newfoundland could not go ahead, Sir. Ontario could, B.C. could, the wealthy provinces could go ahead and carry out special works programmes under the Canada Assistance Plan funds that were available but Newfoundland could not.

Sir, I talked Ottawa into changing that. The honourable member for St. John's East looks at me. I did, the little fellow from Quigley's Line, not from Gambo, the little fellow from Quigley's Line, over on Bell Island, talked Ottawa into changing that policy, Sir, and now the funds are available both for capital and labour. Not only that, Sir, but the Government of Canada, through the opportunity for youth programme and through the local incentives programme, have created a great liberal principle Sir, a great liberal principle. The Tories do not believe in that, Sir. That is not their philosophy, not their philosophy, Mr. Chairman. They do not believe in it.

AN HON. MEMBER: You do not understand philosophy that is why you -

MR. NEARY: Oh, listen to prate-box down there in the corner, Mr. Chairman. Now, Mr. Chairman, we heard the minister spend about a half an hour or so mouthing nothingness, Sir, nothing. What programmes? What programmes is the honourable minister talking about? "No rehabilitation" he says "in the department," No rehabilitation? He said we are going to have rehabilitation. What is it they are going to do? The minister did not say what they were going to do.

MR. HICKEY: You would love to know, would you not?

MR. NEARY: I would like to know and so would the people of Newfoundland like to know. The greatest joke of all. Mr. Chairman, the greatest joke of all he says, "my door is always open." The door may be open. Sir, but there is never anybody there not according to the number of phone calls that come to the Opposition offices, Sir, the number of letters that I receive daily from welfare recipients across this province and the number of telephone calls I get, Sir. The minister did not tell us who his executive assistant was yet or what the salary is. He did not tell us his name.

MR. HICKEY: Do you want to know? Do you want me to tell you now?

MR. NEARY: Yes. I would like to know. Let us have it. When the honourable minister stands up.

MR. HICKEY: I said, Mr. Chairman, at the outset, I did not wish to get into personalities. I took a note of the question asked.

MR. NEARY: I yielded the floor to get the name of the minister's executive assistant and I am not finished yet.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I had a reason for not giving it and I am about to explain it, if the honourable gentleman will sit down I will give it.

MR. NEARY: All I want is the name, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HICKEY: Well, you are going to get more than the name.

MR. NEARY: No, Mr. Chairman, I am not yielding the floor.

MR. HICKEY: You are not yielding the floor, are you? All right then when I take my stand, when I get up again I will give it to you. I will give you more than that too.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to stand here and be threatened by a minister.

MR. HICKEY: I am not threatening. I was only going to give him some information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order!

MR. NEARY: Sir, I want to know the name of the executive assistant because, as I started to say, "my door is always open," he said, "always open." Well, Sir, if it is there is never anybody there because the welfare recipients cannot get to talk to the minister, Sir. Despite the minister's plea, "Write Mrs. Crawford," he says, "she is a very capable woman," and so she is, Mr. Chairman, a very competent woman, very capable, put there by my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, as director of inquiries, a good choice, a wonderful woman. I like her very much. But, Sir, he says, "Do not interfere." He pleads with members of the House not to interfere.

Mr. Chairman, would the honourable minister tell us why we are elected. Why are members elected to this House? So somebody will call up my colleague here from Bonavista North or my colleague from Labrador North or Twillingate or the member for St. John's South, if he can be reached, if they can get through to him, if they can reach him or the member for St. John's East if he can be reached or the member for St. John's Center if he is not stubbing his toe in the swimming pool, if they can reach them, Sir, if they can reach them, Mr. Chairman, -

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! The heading we are under is Heading XI - Social Services and Rehabilitation, the management of that department is under discussion.

MR. NEARY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I realize that. So, Mr. Chairman.

when a welfare recipient approaches a member of the House of Assembly they have done so as a right, that is their right. It is the duty and responsibility of that member to take up the complaint with whatever person he sees fit, in the interest of his constituent. I say, Sir, that statement the minister made is hogwash. The minister is an elected representative of the people and his door should be open, Sir, and he should be sitting in his office meeting the clients of that department.

MR. HICKEY: I do not have that many constituents on welfare.

MR. NEARY: The honourable minister says he does not have that many people on welfare. The honourable minister represents all the people of this province, Sir, all the people of this province and they cannot get to see him. Not the kind of a policy that we ran, Sir, we ran an open-door policy.

MR. HICKEY: I did not refuse the Citizens' Rights Group aid.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, the minister says he did not refuse the Citizens' Rights Group aid. Well, Sir, in the telegram of May 4 and I quote and I can table this, Mr. Chairman, the Citizens' Rights Group says it has been given a flat refusal.

MR. HICKEY: (Inaudible).

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, the honourable minister has been away for two weeks and now he comes back, Sir, out of touch with reality and keeps interrupting. Mr. Chairman, can I proceed with my remarks without interruption from the chief's seat? Sir, it says here; given a flat refusal.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, they are starting to break. The bloom is gone off the rose, they are starting to break, Sir. But we will be here until Labour Day, you need not worry about that, if necessary we will be here for the rest of the winter. It does not bother me. I am quite satisfied to stay here, Sir. Maybe the Minister of Finance will pass around some pills so we can all relax, getting jumpy, irritable and cranky, Sir. The weather is fine and they want to get outdoors in the sunshine. Well Sir, I will stay here until doomsday myself.

To quote from this article, Mr. Chairman, "the Citizens' Rights Group says it has been given a flat refusal by the Provincial Government to a request for operating funds even though the organization is receiving referral of cases from officials of the Department of Social Services and Rehabilitation."

The minister says, " I was asked, in passing, during a conversation with two representatives of the Citizens' Rights Groups and I did not say anything one way or the other." Mr. Hickey said.

MR. HICKEY: That is the truth and the Citizens' Rights Group will tell you about it, that the information they gave the press was incorrect. They misinterpreted what I said. Is that all the hon. gentleman wants? Because if he wants some I have some more information here.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I refuse to stand here in this House and be threatened by an hon. minister. If the hon. minister has anything to put on the table of this House, Sir, let him put it on the table. Never mind his snide remarks, his innuendoes, put it on the table, Sir.

MR. HICKEY: Let us get on to the next vote.

MR. NEARY: If the hon. minister provokes me, I will put something on the table.

MR. HICKEY: Yes cod fish, like you did yesterday.

MR. NEARY: I will put something on the table, Mr. Chairman. If I were the hon. member I would not provoke me too far.

MR. HICKEY: No, I will...

MR. NEARY: Here is what Mr. Hickey said, according to this...

MR. HICKEY: Point of Order, what is it the hon. gentleman has?

I challenge him, whatever he has, lay it on the table now.

In due course, before those estimates are through, I will lay on the table of the House what I have.

MR. NEARY: Is that a Point of Order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Bell Island may continue with his debate.

MR. NEARY: Anyway, Mr. Chairman, here is what another quote from this article says. "Mr. Hickey supplied the group with a letter of recommendation to the Federal Canada Assistance," that is not the part I wanted to read, Sir. "Mr. Hickey said he would like to help but there were no funds available. Mr. Evans or Mrs. Evans or whoever was dealing with it, said he approved of our organization and would like to help but there are no funds available."

So I merely mentioned in passing last evening, Sir, that I have a very high regard for this group, this Citizens' Rights Group and I also have a high regard for the Tenants' Rights Association, Sir, and I forgot to mention in my remarks yesterday evening and this afternoon, when I was on the subject of housing, that I would like to see legislation brought into this House protecting tenants' rights. I think we should do it in this session.

There are some interesting items in today's "Evening Telegram" I do not have it here with me but I would recommend that hon. members read it and just see how the poor people in this province are being treated by some of the landlords, especially here in St. John's.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I do not think that there are any other points that I want to comment on at this time. I will wait until I get down to the subheads. I do want to know the name of the executive assistant and what his salary is. I will sit down in my own time, Mr. Chairman, The hon. member for St. John's East is anxious to get on with the estimates and

MR. NEARY: So am I, so let us go.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman,

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Social and Community Development.

HON. A. SENIOR: (MINISTER OF SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT):

Mr. Chairman, just for a brief minute, if I may, there are a couple of points that I would like to speak on. (1) The matter that was raised by the honourable member for Bell Island earlier this afternoon concerning the new citizens' home in Grand Falls and saying that I had made a certain statement which was carried by radio station CJON in Grand Falls. I checked with the radio station, they have carried no such statement and this is a complete misrepresentation of the fact. The honourable member for Bell Island is deliberately trying to mislead this House and also trying to mislead the public by saying that I have made statements in the press which I have not made and have no intention of making.

The other point that I would like to speak on briefly is a matter which is related to our department and which has been referred to briefly this afternoon and that is a special make-work programmes to benefit people who are out of work. This has been expounded as a great Liberal philosophy. I would like to tell the honourable gentleman for Bell Island a little story in connection with the latest special works programme that was carried out in Newfoundland, which is the Federal-Provincial Employment Loans Programme.

On November 30, 1971, the Federal Minister of Finance, Mr. Benson, wrote to the former Premier of this province advising him that \$7.5 million would be available to this province under the Federal-Provincial Loans Programme. He asked the former Premier if in fact the Province of Newfoundland would want to participate in this programme. It is very significant, Mr. Chairman, that it was not until January 12, 1972, that the Premier replied to Mr. Benson, informing

MR. SENIOR: him that the province would like to participate in his programme, almost a month and a-half later. The deadline for submitting applications was January 31, 1972. The Progressive Conservative Party took over the government of this province around January 18 or January 20, which left us approximately ten days to take advantage of this programme.

The point I am trying to make, Sir, is that if in fact the former Liberal Government were so anxious to put Newfoundlanders to work, they certainly have not demonstrated it by their handling of the Federal-Provincial Employment Loans Programme, because here we had \$7.5 million available to this province, to put our people to work, and they just sat on it for a month and a-half leaving us with ten days in order to submit application.

Mr. Chairman, to review the list of silly projects to include into this programme is absolutely ludicrous. They had the gall and the nerve during the election campaign to come out and make provincial issues out of some of the projects that were approved, when we had such a short time. Mr. Chairman, we were in office at least two or three days, at least that long, Sir, before we even found out about the programme. No, it took us that long just to find our offices and get our coats off and unpack our briefcases. These people are trying to tell us that they had the interest of the unemployed people of Newfoundland at heart, that they want to get our people off of welfare. Sir, I cannot believe that and it was not certainly demonstrated by their handling of this programme. They have done nothing but criticize our handling of this programme, when all they did, Sir, was sit on it and did absolutely nothing about it.

MR. HICKEY: Would the honourable member like to say something on this?

MR. NEARY: I could not let that statement go unchallenged, Sir, because it is not true. It is not true. The honourable -

MR. SENIOR: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, I can table in fact what I just gave in this honourable House.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, the minister can table all the facts he wants to but I can tell the honourable minister right now that the honourable Premier grabbed that \$7.5 million so fast that the honourable Mr. Benson did not know what struck him. Sir, when we left office we had been arranging programmes and projects to take advantage of this \$7.5 million. We had already taken advantage of one \$7.5 million the year before. The minister should know that,

June 22, 1972, Tape 941, Page 1 --- apb

So we were dealing with the matter, we had the situation well in hand, Sir. You know, Mr. Chairman, the first project that was announced: As soon as the minister got in office, he could not wait but rushed into the television stations, into the microphones and into the news offices and announced \$150,000 for a golf course in Grand Falls.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ah!

MR. NEARY: I would not mind too badly, Sir, I would not mind too badly, but it was privately owned. Not a putt, no welfare recipients in there, Sir, playing golf, I guarantee Your Honour that. No low income or middle income or welfare recipients in there playing golf.

MR. SENIOR: No, they are working on the golf course.

MR. NEARY: For that the honourable minister should get a membership card for life.

MR. SENIOR: I have one.

MR. NEARY: There you go, Mr. Chairman, there it is.

MR. SENIOR: Want me to see what I can do?

MR. NEARY: I just wanted to correct that statement for the record, Mr. Chairman, because it is not true.

MR. A. SENIOR: Better correct the first one you made too.

MR. NEARY: The first one I made? I said that the minister was alleged to have made certain statements

MR. SENIOR: That was not said.

MR. NEARY: In Central Newfoundland, at least they were attributed to him.

MR. SENIOR: That is not what was said.

MR. NEARY: That is what I said. I did not accuse the honourable minister and I am glad that the honourable minister straightened it out. I was glad to hear the Minister of Social Services announce to the people of Grand Falls that they are going to get their senior citizens' home.

MR. HICKEY: (Inaudible)

MR. NEARY: Well, Mr. Chairman, there was a rumour out there last week

that, they were not going to get it.

AN HON. MEMBER: A rumour?

MR. NEARY: There was a rumour that they were not going to get it. I reminded the hon. member in my remarks last evening that there was a commitment by the former administration and, Sir, the honourable minister said there was no commitment made to the inter-faith group in Grand Falls. No commitment? Mr. Chairman, maybe the honourable minister is not communicating with his deputy these days, because the deputy has a complete file on that senior citizens' home in Grand Falls. There was a cabinet directive, Sir, there was a commitment. Premier Smallwood when he was in office made a public statement in Grand Falls.

MR. HICKEY: I have it all.

MR. NEARY: He says; "No commitment."

MR. HICKEY: It is vague.

MR. NEARY: "Vague" he says. How vague can you get when the Premier of the province...

MR. SENIOR: He made a statement and it went to the cabinet a week later.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, how vague can you get when the Premier of the province goes out to Grand Falls... (When was the opening out there?)

MR. SENIOR: We will give you all the facts if you want them.

MR. NEARY: He made a public statement, Sir.

MR. SENIOR: He made a statement and went to the cabinet a week later.

MR. NEARY: It is vague all right. It is kind of vague. Sir, I went to Lewisporte, the honourable member for Lewisporte will be interested in hearing this. I went to Lewisporte and I sat down with the inter-faith group in that area, and I made a commitment, Sir. I made a commitment to that group...

MR. SENIOR: Why do you not finish on Grand Falls first?

MR. NEARY: Grand Falls is finished. As far as I am concerned, we made

a commitment to the people of Central Newfoundland that we would build a senior citizens' home in Grand Falls, and now the minister has confirmed that.

Sir, there was a commitment made to Lewisporte. I do not know whether the new administration is going to honour that commitment or not, but it was made, Sir. The minister made no comment on that.

MR. HICKEY: (Inaudible)

MR. NEARY: If he made a comment on it, he did not say whether they were going to honour that commitment or not. We also made a commitment, Sir, to St. Anthony. I went to St. Anthony with the member for White Bay North and made a commitment and that commitment was made in writing too, Sir. There are copies in the Department of Social Services and Rehabilitation. If the minister would only spend a little more time in his office, he might be able to find these things.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, let me deal with a couple of points. First of all, the situation on Lewisporte. There is nothing in my office to indicate any commitment by the former administration by way of minute in council or documentation of any description. If the hon. gentleman made a commitment he made it by word of mouth. We do not go on the word of mouth of some former minister. Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, the commitment to St. Anthony was by commitment again, of a guaranteed occupancy of ninety-eight percent. That is only part of the story. Usually, the people who are interested in institutions,

Mr. Chairman, once they have that guarantee then they comes along and they probably wants \$50,000 of their grant or \$100,000 of their grant or what have you. That is only just sucking in.

MR. NEARY: Well, so what?

MR. HICKEY: So what? So what? So nothing.

AN HON. MEMBER: So they are not going to get them.

MR. HICKEY: I never said that, Mr. Chairman. I said the people of Lewisporte have been notified of the situation and now that the gentleman is in his seat because when I made the statement he was outside probably having a smoke and he did not hear me so I will repeat it. I informed the people of Lewisporte that a complete, provincial-wide policy will be announced regarding senior citizens homes and until such time as that policy is announced no further commitments of any description, by way of occupancy, guarantee or otherwise will be made. Now that is not telling the people of Lewisporte they are not going to get their home.

Now, Mr. Chairman, let me deal with the executive assistant which I disregarded on purpose because as I said I have no desire to drag names or people into this debate, none. Believe me I have none and I have done my best since yesterday to let those estimates run through fairly smooth but I am having a job. I do not mind telling the House that I have an executive assistant. The name of that man is Mr. Dennis Boland, at the salary rate of \$10,000 a year. Prior to that there were two other gentlemen who assisted me on a temporary basis. That is all he wanted to know but he has made quite an issue on it, forgetting of course - Oh! I have heard all about those executive assistants, what you people have called them since this House opened. But you know, Mr. Chairman, if it is the honourable gentleman's privilege to drag this through the House about my executive assistant, maybe the House may be pleased to know that when the honourable gentleman -

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, a point of order. What am I dragging through the House? I merely ask the minister a question. What am I dragging through the House?

AN HON. MEMBER: Mr. Chairman, that is not a point of order.

MR. NEARY: But it is a charge, Mr. Chairman, and I refuse to accept it.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, may I explain. What I meant by dragging it through the House, I have heard various references and certainly some of them not too kind. I know of a gentleman who sat in the gallery one day and I heard the honourable gentleman or someone on that side of the House make reference to him. What are we coming to? All right, I never said it was you.

MR. NEARY: It was not I who referred to the honourable gentleman.

MR. HICKEY: I never said it was the honourable gentleman. I said either the honourable gentleman or someone else. Mr. Chairman, those people are free to sit in the gallery if they have a minute, are they not? Is it not a good idea that they be versed in what goes on? Maybe they might have better sense than to get into politics. Now, Mr. Chairman, at least I provided a job for someone. The honourable gentleman had an executive assistant and he talks as though he did not have one. He had one in the person of Mr. Green, Al. Green, paid at the rate of \$10,000, though for what, Mr. Chairman? What was the man's purpose? What was his job? Speech writing, coming up with new ideas, interfering with the field staff, phoning welfare officers and telling them what to do. That was his job.

Mr. Chairman, let me assure this honourable House -

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. HICKEY: There is a threat, Mr. Chairman, for you. There is a threat, Mr. Chairman. I should now run out of the House I suppose and run home

MR. CROSBIE: How many jobs does he have?

MR. HICKEY: Do not pay any mind, I have had five years of it.

AN HON. MEMBER: The honourable Minister of Finance asked you a question.

MR. CROSBIE: How many jobs does your assistant have?

MR. HICKEY: How many jobs?

MR. CROSBIE: Yes.

MR. HICKEY: My executive assistant, Mr. Chairman, has one job. The executive assistant of the former minister was I suppose a civil servant or next to it. He was an instructor at the Trades College and his post of executive assistant was in addition. Now granted he may not have been paid at the regular rate while he was an instructor, but that is beside the point.

AN HON. MEMBER: That is the point.

MR. HICKEY: That is the point? Not really, not really, Mr. Chairman. At least I provided a job, a full-time job for somebody for a number of years. At least my executive assistant does not write my speeches for me, That is not part of his job.

AN HON. MEMBER: Mr. McLean does that.

MR. HICKEY: Well I hope, Mr. Chairman, Mr. McLean can do a better job than scratch on paper like this, and this is my speech. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. One other thing I should deal with, Mr. Chairman, is about being in my office. I am in my office. The hon. gentleman may not think so, but I am there quite a number of hours of the day and into the night as well, as he used to be. He did not hear me criticize him though or tell him that he was not in his office, because I had better sense. I had better sense than to suggest that a Minister of Welfare, above any other portfolio, would not be in his office. He could not possibly even live in the department without being in his office, because it is such an arduous job, with half the province after him looking for this or looking for that. What nonsense!

Mr. Chairman, let me say why some people do not get in my office.

AN HON. MEMBER: Too busy cleaning up the mess.

MR. HICKEY: No, we have covered that. The honourable gentleman interfered in an internal matter in my district, which was none of his business and he got the answer that he deserved, Mr. Chairman, I will leave it at that. I will leave it at that. I have no desire to go any further on it. What I am going to say is a matter of policy. We have over three hundred people in the field, professionals most of them. Those who are not are experienced in terms of fifteen years, twenty years some of them. They are competent, some of the best people who are in the public service.

Mr. Chairman, the quickest way for a citizen of this province to get assistance is to go to the welfare officer. When anyone comes to my department to see me about a welfare matter, the first question I ask them is: "Did you see the welfare officer?" If they say; "No," I say; "Well I am sorry lady or I am sorry sir, go back and see the welfare officer, because he and only he or her" (whatever the case may be) "has the authority to assist you." I am not interfering in the affairs of my officials at the field level. If I did, Mr. Chairman, what do I need over three hundred people for, if I am going to have a continuous parade in my lobby down there, which the honourable gentleman had and which he asked for, which he condoned and which he perpetrated?

Mr. Chairman, let me say something else. One of the reasons for the cost getting out of hand during the past year or maybe for the past three years is because the honourable gentleman involved himself at the field level to such a degree that there was something to be said, some merit, some basis to go and see the honourable minister. There is no point in a citizen of this province coming to see me for welfare if in fact my official has given that person whatever the law or policy prescribes. I say now, and I am not ashamed to say so, there is no point in them coming to see me.

But, Mr. Chairman, there has not been a constituent of mine, nor there has not been a citizen of this province...

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible)

MR. HICKEY: Is that right? The honourable gentleman did not follow up on that did he? I will inform him in a minute about his cod's heads. I will tell him in a minute about his cod's heads.

AN HON. MEMBER: He has really done it.

MR. HICKEY: Sensationalism.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible)

MR. HICKEY: 'Neary cods House with petition.' He codded more than the House, Mr. Chairman, or he is trying. He is trying to cod my constituency. I hope he comes down there the next time.

Anyway, Mr. Chairman,

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible)

MR. HICKEY: I hope so. The barber will be only in the shave with the results that he got. Mr. Chairman, the reason that I do not see and do not spend too much time with, but no one comes to my office that I do not say a few words to or meet and say: "Look, this is a matter that one of my officials can deal with. They can give you whatever is necessary if you are entitled to it. You will even save time if you see my officials. In the meantime, if you want to see me about something else, by all means, come in." I have never refused, Mr. Chairman

MR. HICKEY: to see any citizen of this province, be he from my district or otherwise, who wanted to see me on any matter, if it was not about welfare, they were welcome and they came in and they were given all the time they wanted. If it was about welfare, I either discussed it with them in the corridor, to save time for them and myself, and directed them to Mrs. Crawford or the appropriate official.

Mr. Chairman, I am sorry that the hon. gentleman does not agree with the difference between my administration and his, but he should not be too quick to judge as to what the results will be. He does not find the press in my office too often, very, very seldom. No more than he finds my name in print very often, making releases, because I am not press conscious, I have got a job to do, Mr. Chairman, I have acknowledged it and I face it and I accept it and I am interested in getting it done. I have got too much to do in trying to change the policy that the hon. gentleman lived with for three years and did next to nothing with, to waste my time doing the job that we pay public officials to do throughout this province, from one end to the other.

MR. NEARY: I want to make a comment but I do not want to be provoked and I think I will just let the matter slide and just say that now it must be obvious to everybody now what a lightweight the minister really is.

On motion, total subhead 1101, carried.

On motion, total subhead 1102, carried.

On motion, total subhead 1112, carried.

On motion, total subhead 1114, carried.

MR. ROWE (WM.): (1131-01) Mr. Chairman, is this the subhead where welfare officers are paid, or is it the other one over here, Regional Welfare Services Salaries?

Salaries for welfare officers, I want to make a few remarks on welfare officers but I want to make them under the

MR. ROWE: right subhead. Salaries for welfare officers, does it come under 1131-01, or does it come under 1152-01 Regional Welfare Services?

MR. HICKEY: I think, Mr. Chairman, that would be under Field Services - 1152 that is.

MR. ROWE: Okay I will wait until then, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GILLETT: (1131-03-02) Did I understand correctly the minister to say that since the present administration came into power they have made it possible for people on long-term assistance to supplement their income, shall I say, by earning \$30 a month?

MR. HICKEY: I know Mr. Chairman, that the hon. gentleman heard correctly as to the amount but that was in connection with short-term recipients. In other words, that is the employable, that does not apply to long-term. I think he will agree that the amount is I believe \$90 they are allowed to earn a month, long-term people. But this incentives programme only applies to the short-term recipient, that is the person who gets welfare because of lack of employment.

MR. GILLETT: Mr. Chairman, then I do understand that a person on long-term assistance can earn up to \$90 per month. Is this recently?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, that has been in effect - just a moment I will get the notes here on it.

Mr. Hickey.

Mr. Chairman, that is correct. It is ninety dollars per month as long as they earn that money for employment which is noncompetitive. The long-term recipient is not permitted to earn ninety dollars a month, i.e., in an occupation wherein he or she would be taking employment from someone who is not in receipt of assistance. In other words it is noncompetitive employment. There are a number of things which come to mind, like picking berries, handicrafts, washing windows, painting houses, a number of things. There is one thing which they cannot do in terms of industry, they cannot fish. If they fish, this is considered competitive and, of course, if a person can go out and fish and earn ninety dollars, we feel surely they can go out and earn more than ninety dollars. This would disqualify them from long-term assistance and they would go back on short term. Am I making it clear?

MR. GILLET: Mr. Chairman, I thank the honourable minister for it but I wondered whether or not this was a just regulation really. After all, if somebody earns eighty cents picking a gallon of blueberries, he is competing because somebody else can take that. If a fisherman goes out and jigs a cod fish, there is no guarantee that some other fisherman is going to jig that fish, that same fish. I would say that the medical doctor when he places a person, and I presume he is the one who does place a person on long-term assistance, he does so because he says to this man; "well look, I am sorry you cannot go into the lumber woods any more. You have broken yourself up. This is it. You cannot earn a livelihood for your family from now on." The complete incentive, initiative and everything that the man had is taken away from him when he is unable to go and pull up a lobster pot or take his row boat or small speed boat and go out and catch a few fish when he feels himself that he can do it. I have one person in particular whom I know quite well. He brought this to my attention and this is why I have been waiting to bring it to the attention of the House. He told me that he had to walk in over the hills on fine days, while he was watching other men

Mr. Gillett

such as school teachers and postmasters and what not go out fishing. He could not go out and catch a few fish. He said, "all I wanted to do was just catch what I thought I was able to catch, split and salt and just take off. I cannot do a thing. I am not allowed. If I do, my long-term assistance will be cut." I would like to see, Mr. Chairman if these cases could be certified by the medical officer. I know that everything is taken advantage of. I can assure you in this particular case and other cases of which I know, the incentive is taken right out of these people. I do not think they would mention it to me if they did not feel that their lives are now null and void. They might just as well be dead. I would urge upon the minister, in his wisdom, to see if he could come up with some sort of a plan, whether it be through the co-operation and the assistance of the medical officer who

certifies this person or a team of doctors or whatever it should be, and see if he should not be allowed to earn a little bit, depending on the size of his family, of course.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I just have a couple of minutes to go. May I say that this is a matter which is certainly not new to me and my officials. We have been sort of wrestling with this one and we realize that there are some problems and there are some areas where it certainly can be said to be unfair. There is also the aspect of it where it could well be indicated that we are discouraging people from fishing or from going to work, which is the very thing we are trying to cope with and trying to eliminate. But involved in it is the problem that, first of all, we have two types of assistance, that of short term and long term.

I might say, Sir, that in my view, we should not have two types, it should be one. We are working towards sometime, whenever it might be, there are a number of problems involved, in bringing both allowances together. But there are quite a number of problems involved there.

Now with regards to the long term recipient, we are working on a policy to set up a medical review board, which certainly can do a better job than is being done at the moment. Because we do believe that in fact we know that there are some cases where certainly it would indicate that there is a need for a more thorough medical examination. Possibly when this is set up it may be possible that something can be done to improve on this. I cannot see it being changed or wiped out completely.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is now six o'clock. Shall 1131-03 carry?

MR. W.N. ROWE: Mr. Chairman, before you raise the committee, I would like for this one to stand, I have just a short word to say on it.

June 22, 1972

Tape 946 (afternoon)

PK - 2

On motion that the committee rise report having passed estimates of expenditure under the following heading; Heading XI - Social Services and Rehabilitation - Items 1101 to 1131-03-01 and ask leave to sit again, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

On motion report received and adopted.

On motion committee ordered to sit again presently.

MR. SPEAKER: It now being 6:00 P.M. I do leave the Chair until 8:00 P.M.

The House resumed at 8:00 P.M.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

On motion that the House go into Committee of the Whole on Supply, Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY:

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! Heading XI - 1131(03)(02):

MR. ROWE(W.N.): Mr. Chairman, this is the long term social assistance sub-head and just before we recessed the House I mentioned that I would like to say something very briefly on this. I would like to hear the members comments on the whole concept of short-term assistance and long-term social assistance for welfare recipients. I was very interested to hear that his department is thinking. I do not know if it has gone beyond the thinking stage yet but his department is thinking in terms of bringing these two things closer together with no doubt the view in mind or the rationale in mind that if a person is forced to go on social assistance, go on relief for whatever cause, whether it is because he is unable to find a job or whether it is because he is disabled physically or mentally, that they still have families to feed and that it is probably unjust and inequitable for two types of families, one on short-term social assistance and one on long-term social assistance to have such a disparity in family income. This is as undoubtedly the rationale underlying the minister's thinking about trying to bring these closer together if not make them identical.

While he is thinking about that, I would like to throw out one or two examples of additional injustice which I see in this system, which have come to my attention throughout my constituency and elsewhere.

I refer to the person who has been turned down, as they say, by a doctor, for everything, turned down for all work except light work. Sir, if a man is a lawyer or a doctor or an engineer or a draftsman or some kind of an office worker, it makes no difference as far as his income is concerned that he has been turned down for heavy work and that he is only

allowed by his physican to do light work, it makes no difference to him as he can still earn a living. But what I found in too many cases, Sir, in my own constituency, is that you will get a man who is a labourer, he has no training of any kind, no skill of any kind and he is put into this very unjust and inequitable category of being turned down except for light work. Of course, if a man has no trade, little education, no skill of any kind, that really means that he is finished as far as the labour market is concerned. The only thing that is open to him would be some kind of janitorial work, which of course that type of a job is not exactly, there is not an over supply of that type of job.

There is one man springs to mind, a man with a very large family and a wife to look after. He was working in Rambler Mine and he has been turned down for everything except light work and he has been offered a janitorial job but his condition is such that he cannot work in the mine there because of his bronchial condition and the dust and that around. So although the man is supposed to be fit for light work and would be fit for light work say in this building in his own environment, his own hometown, this man is effectively barred from the labour market. I am wondering, while the minister is trying to think out some total and comprehensive rationale for bringing together the long-term and short-term social assistance programme, if in the meantime some interim step can be made with respect to men or women, for that matter, who are barred from doing heavy work, cannot find the light work, if those people could be put on the long-term social assistance programme and would thereby be getting a very enhanced income compared to the short-term social assistance programme.

I am wondering if the minister would give me the benefit of his comments on that, so that we can see where we are heading in that direction.

Also, while I am on my feet, Sir, another point which has been brought to my attention on several occasions, is the case where a man is working and loses his job or is disabled from working and goes on social assistance of one kind or another. But in the meantime, while he was working, he has incurred some debts with lending agencies of various kinds. I have had a dozen instances in my district where these agencies, these lenders, they are not banks, of course, they are lending agencies outside the Bank Act, these lending agencies, these lenders continue to pester and drive almost to the point of insanity, usually the wife of such a family, trying to get their money back. Especially somebody who can do light work, who has not been put on long-term social assistance, he has been put on short-term social assistance, pestering them to death for money. Often calling up collect or call up by long distance telephone call and then adding on the cost of that call to the debt that they have in their office and keep building up the debt, when they know full well, Sir, that anybody on social assistance, unfortunately on social assistance, without any fault of their own whatsoever, in the vast majority of the cases, in spite of some of the remarks which have been passed back and forth in this House this afternoon, the vast majority would like to work, want to get a job of work but they are disabled. either because of lack of work or physical or mental infirmity. They are being pestered to death by these lending agencies. Most of them also have some moral compunction about it, they hate the fact that they are owing this money and they cannot pay it back.

I wonder what the position of the department is in that type of case. Is there a system whereby some insurance is available or is it

compulsory on the part of lenders, whereby if a person loses a job and is forced to go on social assistance or he is disabled and is not able to work, whether the debt can be then cancelled by the insurance scheme or something of that nature? Because I have seen so much human misery among large families in certain parts of my district and throughout this province, where they are torn between the desire to pay back monies lawfully incurred, for a car or something, or sometimes not for a car but for furniture, in most cases, and furniture being a necessity, Then they are torn between the real desire to pay back that money, but by doing so they would have to take the bread out of their children's mouths. That is what it amounts to because social assistance is not all that high.

I would like to hear the minister's remarks on those two points. The one about being turned down except for light work and the whole idea of collection agencies and lending agencies getting after people on welfare.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, first of all with regards to a point raised by my hon. friend, in connection with people who are condemned, I suppose, probably a good word, to the occupation of light work. It reminds me of a co-worker of mine, when I was in the field, who said he wanted light work defined and he said, in making that observation, I prefer to have someone find it and then we will define it.

MR. ROWE: It just does not exist.

MR. HICKEY: Exactly, it is a problem, it always has been a problem and certainly it is probably more acute today than ever before as more people become unemployed or as automation aggravates the situation. I am not sure what the answer is, it is certainly a matter which we have under consideration and review. We are attempting to find some remedy, not a cure but to do something to ease the situation.

I mentioned just before we adjourned that it is our proposal that we set up a medical review board to examine more thoroughly the medical patients

by various doctors throughout the province. This review board could have a twofold purpose, as I see it. There is a danger on the one hand, Mr. Chairman, that with the present policy some of our people might well look upon long-term assistance as something to which to graduate from short-term. The rates are different, they are better. There are various types of assistance that a person on long-term can qualify for that a short-term person cannot. There appears in fact to be an incentive for someone who is in receipt of short-term assistance for any length of time to in fact possibly want to get on long-term assistance. I think this is really the justification. I do not think we need a better justification than this to bring both together and have one programme.

In addition to that, I think we have to acknowledge, Mr. Chairman, that people in need, whatever the reason might be, be it through sickness, disability or unemployment, have a right to a certain standard of living. I do not think that one person has more of a right to a higher standard than the other. I think there has to be equality in both groups. Now there is an expenditure of funds involved, if in fact we were to, it is a simple matter to bring both together. We could do it tomorrow but certainly there is a matter of funds involved and at this point in time it is just impossible to make that move or to make that improvement. I am afraid what we have to do is possibly look to the Federal people again and point out some of the weaknesses of the system and the advantages of bringing it together and endeavour to get maybe a little greater slice of the cake, as it were, under the Canada Assistance Plan.

With regards to the person; whom a doctor will not certify as being incapacitated, I believe that there are a number of factors that are probably not being taken into account today. I am inclined to agree that we should take into account social factors as well as medical factors. I am inclined to agree that we should take into

June 22, 1972

Tape 949(Night)

JM - 2

account the scarcity of the type of job that this person could in fact take. When a doctor certifies someone as being fit only for light work, he is as much as condemning that person to a form of assistance which in a good many cases is inadequate. Certainly because of that, I think there is some injustice to that person.

The other situation is where I would think a goodly number of our people might well be on long-term assistance who could well qualify for work. In the present policy there are many loopholes. Certainly it is a dangerous situation to my mind because, as the numbers increase and as a person remains on long-term assistance for any given length of time, the chances of rehabilitating him, of getting him off becomes less and less.

MR. HICKEY: I believe we are moving in the right direction to set up a medical review board with some specialists, at various centres, who will take upon themselves this chore of meeting every so often to consider medicals and to give them a thorough going-over. I think we can do that, Mr. Chairman, and possibly whatever savings we might realize, direct them to those or the group (and I would suggest that this is a much smaller group) that my honourable friend refers to.

His other point, with regards to loan companies and what happens to a person when they, through no fault of their own, end up on assistance. I certainly have an appreciation for this particular problem because in too many instances and almost weekly it comes to our attention. The only ray of hope at the moment that I can offer him, I am not sure if this is the answer but at least we are prepared to explore or try or experiment with it and that is in the area of allied services, in addition to what we are providing at the moment, where our more professional people will work with our clients, our recipients. I think this certainly, in fact I can say that this would be high on the list of priorities in terms of areas where they will work; to attempt to work out an arrangement with those loan companies to get them off their backs, as it were, and to appreciate and realize that (1) the amount of assistance given by this department to people is only enough and in some instances not enough, not sufficient to care for their family. Surely a person who is in receipt of assistance and who genuinely deserves and who is on it through no fault of his own has sufficient emotional problems than to be further aggravated by loan companies who are trying to squeeze money out of them when in fact they do not have it to give.

This is certainly one area in which my staff will be directing some effort. There are many other areas as well, in terms of long

MR. HICKEY: term recipients, where I believe some improvement can be made and some headway made in terms of helping people take part-time jobs to further improve their standards or uplift their standards. Whereas now I think, Mr. Chairman, a lot of our people are under the misconception, I do not think they are really familiar with all the policies and all the provisions of our programme. For example, I am sure that quite a number of our widows, young women who are in receipt of assistance, who have families, who certainly have the skills to get out and go to work, who hesitate to do so and unfortunately, I think I have to say it, for fear that the allowance will be just like that, discontinued.

There is a job of work to be done there in the way of counselling and a full and detailed explanation of our programme. Mr. Chairman, we will take into account such expenses as money which is paid for babysitters, housekeeping and what not. For after all, why should a young woman who wishes to work on the one hand and who certainly has the skills, the experience to get out and work,

June 22, 1972, Tape 951, Page 1 -- aph

why should she be kept at home simply because she is afraid she is going to lose her allowance? This is an area to which we are going to direct some effort.

Mr. Chairman, the area of housing for long-term recipients, this is a very important one. It is certainly probably one of the greatest problems that we have in my department. I said yesterday, Sir, that my department should either be in the housing business or we should be out of it altogether. The amount of rents that we pay and the kind of rents that we pay is alarming. The rents that we pay for some of the accommodations that are provided leaves much to be desired. We have a plan presently being put into effect to look into this matter, certainly to assess the type of accommodations that are being provided and the type of accommodations that we are paying for. We are going to need the support of the municipal councils or the town councils across the province. We are certainly going to need the support of the Department of Health, The fire Commissioner and some other different agencies.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that if we are going to expend public funds to pay rent, then we as the government who foot the bill certainly have a right to demand a reasonable level of accommodation for the money spent. We are presently making some effort in this direction. I have allocated two people in St. John's at the moment who will confine themselves to housing. One to find suitable housing and apartments to ease the situation and hopefully in the future, to make way for a complete crack-down on the slums or the housing, which is inadequate and which is in very poor condition, that we are paying rent for.

So far as building materials are concerned, Mr. Chairman, my friend from Bell Island yesterday said that he was amazed to see that I was suggesting a reduction. Mr. Chairman, far be it from me to say that we should not spend money on housing. Certainly on the other hand, Sir, we had best get the best results for the dollars we spend.

June 22, 1972, Tape 951, Page 2 -- apb

In fact, we have to get the best results, and it is our duty to do so.

The former administration proposed, I believe, four inspectors, four carpenter inspectors to go about the province to inspect homes and to determine what repairs were to be made. Mr. Chairman, (I am not sure, is it four or six? Six it is.) we discontinued that policy. We did not follow through on it. One of the reasons we did not follow through was because we believe that we have people in the field, in fact we know we have people in the field who are qualified in the carpentry trade, who are serving as welfare officers, but as sidelines. or prior to coming into the service were involved in the carpentry trade, who know when a house is in need of repairs, who are familiar with the structure

Mr. Hickey.

of building homes and who are well qualified to determine whether assistance is needed or repairs are needed or whether they are not. In an effort, Mr. Chairman, to bring the ever rising costs of building materials to some reasonable level by way of getting better value for the dollar spent, I have allocated from twelve to fifteen people who are in this category, various supervisory areas of the province, to take upon themselves the sole responsibility of housing, providing building materials and so on. I think it is reasonable to say, Mr. Chairman, from now on, when assistance is granted or when repairs are made to a home, it will be only after that home is inspected along the lines of the carpentry trade and not inspected by a welfare officer, be it a male or female, who in fact knows very little about housing in terms of structure, building materials or what have you. The majority of our people, as competent as they are, could only say that building materials are required, if in fact they see a hole in the roof or a rotted window sill or something of that nature. Mr. Chairman, experience has taught us that by going the route we have been going in the past, we sometimes get into repairs to homes only to find that twelve months after, six months after we are into the same home again for possibly an even greater amount of money. The whole thing has to be brought into line and done in a more efficient manner. I can certainly say, without any reservation, that some action has been taken in this regard and we are now on our way to providing a better service to those people in need of building materials.

This, Mr. Chairman, is what we mean when we talk of a reduction in building materials, not necessarily to say that those people who are in desperate need of emergency repairs will not get it. Certainly this government are not interested in keeping anything from any one who genuinely deserve it. But, Mr. Chairman, in the past I am afraid that

MR. Hickey.

building materials got rather out of hand, possibly in various sections of the province, in some particular sections more so than others.

Mr. Chairman, with regard to housing generally, my friend the member for Bell Island suggested that I should use my offices as a member of the St. John's Housing Corporation, to get some of the people out of Churchill Square and those other apartments. May I say, Sir, categorically, right now, as long as I am minister of this department, there will be no welfare ghetto. When we take welfare families and huddle them together in an apartment complex, that is just what we are looking for, that is just what we are going to have and it is unavoidable. The former administration, Mr. Chairman, made some headway in removing some of the stigma that is attached to those unfortunate people who are in receipt of assistance from this department. Are we now to go back a few steps and place that stigma back again, for that is exactly what we will be doing. I fail

MR. HICKEY: to see a slightest bit of sense in suggesting or making a suggestion that we put welfare families in an apartment complex or building or even for that matter any one given area. All welfare families, Mr. Chairman, under this administration, will be dispersed, They will be mixed among other citizens because there is basically no difference in a citizen or a family who is in receipt of assistance and those who are employed. As the saying goes, "but for the grace of God, go I". It is one person's turn today and someone else's tomorrow, Illness can strike just as well as unemployment. And far be it for anyone to say, Mr. Chairman, or far be it for anyone to look down on those who are on the payroll of this department. Sure we have some chiselers and we have some people who beat the system. Let me just say at this point, we are very conscious of the fact that we do and we aim to do something about it, because wherever there is somebody who is beating the system, that somebody is keeping something from someone else who needs it and needs it genuinely.

But certainly, Mr. Chairman, the answer to the housing problem is not to house welfare people in apartment buildings. It is to disperse them and scatter them around in various places, the same as any other group of citizens.

Mr. Chairman, that is about all I have to say on this particular heading.

MR. H.W.C. GILLET: Mr. Chairman, I must say that I have been very impressed with the deliberations of the honourable the Minister of Social Services and Rehabilitation, both this afternoon and this evening. I agree one hundred percent with what he says. We do have people who will beat that system. There are few, mind you, and far between. On the other hand we do have the people who genuinely are honest and it was these, perhaps in minority, to whom I referred this afternoon.

MR. GILLET: But I think that you would find, if you went around the country and of course, the honourable minister knows this much better than I do, I am speaking of my own area in particular, that you would find a great number of recipients, nevertheless, who because of no fault of their own, unless working too hard is a fault of their own, that have been forced to go on welfare for the first time in their lives. but to the long-term assistance and if they are not allowed to earn any money at all, other than by cleaning windows or picking berries and a few special chores of that type, then in effect they are on a guaranteed income, a low one perhaps, but nevertheless they are guaranteed income no greater or no smaller.

So, as I said this afternoon, I would like to hear an announcement made by the honourable minister, even tonight, allowing recipients of long-term assistance to earn, even if it is only the \$90 per month that they are allowed to earn picking berries and washing windows, if you where to go out and jig a few fish. I am sure that it would be welcome news all around the province. It is not going to cost the government a cent, It will not take a cent out of the government's Treasury. But if the minister would make that announcement tonight I am sure that I would be very happy, because I know many of the people, I grew up with them. I know them. I worked with them really and, honest to God, I pity them. The ego that they had is gone, the ego that put them where they are, the incentive that put them where they are is gone.

I take my own case, Mr. Chairman, I have the main arteries of my legs blocked, I could not run the length of this building, but if I were not allowed, if I were forced to go on long-term assistance and I were not allowed to earn any money, I think I would just lay me down and die.

So is the minister prepared and will he make the statement even tonight?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I assure my honourable friend that there is nothing I would rather do than accede to his request and make that statement. Unfortunately, I cannot. The gentleman who sits beside me, my Assistant Deputy Minister, well knows that we have spent many hours discussing this very same matter. I have had many people come to me who want to do the very thing my honourable friend refers to, namely, go out and fish.

Let me say this to him, and certainly it is not much comfort to the problem that he poses but let me say to him that it is against my belief the policy that we have. I agree with him wholeheartedly that in fact, as it appears on the surface, we are preventing people from working, although that is probably not the right phrase. Certainly we are suggesting

MR. HICKEY: that you had better not go fishing or else your allowance will be cut. This is what has been of great concern to me. The thing is though, Mr. Chairman, we cannot scrap a policy until we have one to replace it with and we must find a replacement for that one before we scrap it. Because you see, maybe it is the guaranteed annual income, but you see, Mr. Chairman, when a person is certified as being incapacitated and cannot work, for medical reasons, if he goes fishing, which is not considered light work, even though I suggest that jigging a few cod is probably as easy as picking berries, nevertheless under our policy that is not considered light work and therefore he in fact invalidates his claim to the allowances that he gets because of his certificate of incapacity.

So where is the answer? I am not sure where it is. We are certainly pursuing the matter. We are not happy with it. I have to say to them, I have to be a little partisan and say to them that the former administration brought this in. That is not to say that it was easy for them to find a solution, I am sure it was not, but I think all will agree that or certainly, if not, I can inform you that one of the reasons the restraints were placed on this form of employment, in terms of competitive employment, is because of the talk we hear of moonlighting, people who are employed, let us say in the police force or in the fire department or in any other occupation and who then go out and earn additional income in competitive employment.

The suggestion is that that job has been taken from someone who is unemployed. Now, as I understand it and as my officials inform me, there was a fair degree of representation and criticism when in fact our recipients were permitted to do this, when they were permitted to fish and yet draw assistance from this department.

MR. HICKEY: So I am not sure where the answer is. All I can say to my honourable friend is that we are continuing to pursue the matter. As soon as we can find a solution, I assure him that I will be only too delighted to put it into effect and I am sure that he will be happy as well as I am.

MR. EARLE: I would like to say a few words on this. Based on the limited experience which I had in welfare, I was minister for only ten and one-half months, this is the one area of the administration which I would say is hardest to administer and most difficult to really come to logical conclusions. Most certainly, the long-term assistance field is not something for amateurs. As well-intentioned as anybody may be, and particularly any member of this House when he visits his constituents or gets letters from them or calls on them or sees them, and if he is a natural or normal human being, his heart is generally all in sympathy with the person who is appealing to him. But, believe me I have learned the hard way, over many years, of just how you can be fooled in this.

You can get two extremes in this sort of field. You get the people who really need help, who generally say the least. Generally you find, after diligent digging in your district, that the people who do not pester you or the department but are really in genuine need are the quiet souls who need attention, but very often the ones who keep writing you and pestering you are the ones who do not.

I have many examples, I always make it a point in going to the district, the people that write me on welfare, of going into their homes and seeing for myself what their conditions really are, as much as we can determine it. I remember on one occasion going to one certain village and the lady next door to this particular person who was always writing me said, "Mr. Earle, would you mind going next door and seeing these people, but do not tell them that I told you to come in." So I went in and saw them, There were about eight or ten children around

MR. EARLE: but that person's house had more equipment and more appliances than I have in my own house here in St. John's, and new ones.

The kitchen had been newly panelled, there were newly built-in cupboards, there was good linoleum all over the place and I looked at it in amazement because the whole condition of the house was something that you would never expect to see in a welfare case. I had another outstanding eight page letter, which I kept, from a lady who said to me, "Mr. Earle I am only getting \$286 a month. How can you expect me to pay for a new fridge, a new washer, a new electric range, new linoleum on the floor, newly built in cupboards, give something to the church, something to the Red Cross..." and this went on for eight pages. This is an appeal from somebody who was getting \$286 a month.

Well you run into that sort of thing but right in the contrary to that you will run into some poor, old soul who is possibly living by herself, under deplorable conditions, has never said anything to a welfare officer, has never written you a letter nor never appealed to you, and she is living under conditions which are not fit for an animal. I have run into some of these and these are the people who really need help.

So all I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that in this long-term assistance vote or short-term, for that matter, it is a very dangerous field indeed for an amateur to get into, because he does not really know the circumstances. The people in the department do and they study these things very well and I found that by relying on them, in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred, you will get good advice. They know what they are talking about.

I know I had one case where a fellow was writing me for repairs to his house so I went to visit him. The house looked perfectly good, it looked fine, so I said; "what is wrong with your house?"

MR. EARLE: He said; "it is all gone underneath." So I said, "open the house and let us have a lood underneath," He took out this trap door and he had to lift out ten full cases of beer before we could get under the house. Well naturally, I did not go to bat very much for that fellow. This is the sort of thing you are up against, if you júst take it at face value.

Now I am very pleased to hear the honourable minister say that he is getting twenty-five additional welfare officers or inspectors or whatever you would like to call them, because I think, and this is what I recommended when I was in the department but it was never carried through, these people are needed not only to get after the people who are receiving welfare under false pretences, fortunately these are quite a minor percentage but they also need to go throughout the villages and settlements and see many cases that are in genuine need, that escape the attention of the welfare officers because the people concerned are too proud to bring it to their attention.

Now it is on both sides, But I say, Mr. Chairman, that it is not an area where the average member of this House can make good judgement or can really judge a case, This is a job for a trained welfare officer and I think the more that members keep their noses out of it, the better things will work.

MR. GILLET: Mr. Chairman, there is one other short question that I would like to ask the honourable minister, and that is concerning the scnooi tax. I think that has been mentioned here before but I do have a letter from one constitutent in particular and as I have already mentioned here before also, the school tax authority in Lewisporte is taking legal action against these people. Now whether or not they can collect it is more than I can say, Are these long-term assistance recipients exempt from the school tax?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend, I do appreciate his problem and I know exactly what he is involved in and possibly many of his constituents have this problem.

The only thing that I can say with regard to school taxes is that (1) - there is no provision under The Social Assistance Act whereby school tax may be paid from an allowance. In fact there is no provision to pay any tax except that tax which is clearly defined in our policy and that is, under household maintenance, a recipient is permitted to pay a service fee to a town council or city council whatever the case may be. But there is no provision in our legislation nor

policy to pay any kind of tax and also it has to be borne in mind that the cheque of a recipient cannot be attached for payment. I know that this does not solve the problem and in fact it presents a problem for the school board who has to have revenue. I am not sure just what the answer is here, but certainly the amount of money that those people get, it is clearly defined what it is for and it is not to be used for anything else. My assistant deputy minister tells me possibly the solution may be to amend the School Tax Act.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, just before it carries there is just one matter, if I could ask the minister to comment upon. We all listened with I think a very great deal of interest to the minister's remarks. My jocularity at the end was not for anything the minister said or did not say, I was quite impressed but rather cowed by the steel like actions of his colleagues surrounding him and in front of him and in back of him and on either side of him, who flapped on the desk on cue. I wanted to say that, because I would not want the minister to think that I am making light of his remarks, which I thought were well taken.

I do have to go on to say that what we heard was a statement of intentions and that is probably all we could expect to hear at this stage. I mean, the minister has only been the minister for a number of months. He will be there I would imagine for a number of months or years yet to come. In the normal run of events he could look forward to two or three or four years. It will be next year or maybe even the year after before we have any opportunity in this committee to assess whether the intentions stated by the minister whether they have in fact been transformed into policy and into programmes. I think that is what a law school professor of mine would call a penetrating insight into the obvious. I think it should be said that the minister is starting out with the very best of intentions

and I think the honourable gentleman from Fortune Bay would agree that all Ministers of Welfare or whatever they are now called, Social Services and Rehabilitation, start out with good intentions and many of the good intentions, I submit, come to grief along the road, come to grief either at the hands of the Treasury Board, in the Department of Finance, or come to grief in the more practical realm of the day to day administration.

The housing question in particular, as far as I know every Minister of Welfare this province has had has tangled with this question and none of them or if you wish, Sir, none of us have solved this. It may well be that the present minister will solve it. I hope so. I devoutly hope so. I will not be surprised if he does not but my heart would not hold that against him. At least he is starting with good intentions. So as I said, next year the same time, the same place, the same actors, it will not be quite the same script. Next year it will not be a statement of intentions, it will be a statement of accomplishment or lack of accomplishment and next year we will probably have a little more to talk about. Really the only minister we have been able to get our teeth into is the education minister, because he is the only one who has tried to do anything and, of course, as is well known in the province by now, he has shown himself to be a first-class incompetent.

However, there is one matter I would like to ask the minister to expand upon a little. He touched upon the matter of medical reviews and although I was deeply engrossed in the "Monitor" a most estimable journal, which I am sure the minister reads every night, and so he should, I was particularly taken by the picture of the honourable Minister of Provincial Affairs, a very handsome picture indeed. It is in the "Monitor". Would the honourable gentleman like a few extra copies? It is a very handsome picture.

MR. MURPHY: They sent me 400 -

MR. ROBERTS: Then the honourable minister will have 396 left over, will he not? If there are 400 for his friends he is bound to have 396 to go to strays.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. ROBERTS: That is what I said too. However I listened to the Minister of Social Services with a great deal of interest when he spoke about the review boards. As I understand him, and perhaps he could expand upon this, his idea is to have a group of specialists. I think he used the term "medical, specialists" in the sense of medical specialists review the long-term assistance applications. Now I did not hear him say and I may have missed this in my enthusiasm for the pictures of the honourable Minister of Provincial Affairs, I may have been carried away and my seeing sense may have overcome my hearing sense -

MR. MURPHY: Do you think, being jealous -

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, I am not jealous of the Minister of Provincial Affairs. It is rather refreshing to know that every bonfire in the province, the minister is there representing us. I go to sleep easy at night, knowing that. But what I am saying is that the minister - Oh hold, the burp from Burgeo burped again.

MR. EVANS: (Inaudible).

MR. ROBERTS: The only trouble, Mr. Chairman, with the burp from Burgeo is that he comes out in Hansard only as inaudible instead of unbearable.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Social Services I think mentioned medical specialists. I wonder if he could tell the committee how he envisages it would work. As I recall it, there are about eighteen thousand long term cases in the province, it is of that order. It may be seventeen or nineteen but it is of the order of eighteen

thousand and it increases, again as I recall it, by the order of one to two thousand cases per year. That has been the recent historical pattern, a substantial case load. Now again, as I recall it, Sir, each year the file is reviewed because, as I understand it, unless one is a widow or thus permanently qualified the matter of medical qualification is reviewed every, I believe it is every year, and again I stand to be corrected. It has been three or four years since I was immersed in the minutiae of the administration of that department.

Now is it the minister's plan to have the specialists review the file? As I recall the certificate, it was really quite a simple one. It is about one page and there are spaces provided for the name of the client and his age and other data, his family circumstances and what have you and then at the bottom there is a space that may be two or three inches deep in which the medical officer writes his diagnosis and writes his prognosis. Then he takes what amounts to a statutory declaration that in fact the man has been looked at and that this is the condition the doctor has found. Now there is not a great deal of information there to go on. I wondering if the minister can tell whether the plan is just to review that or what. Is it the plan to review each case by seeing the individual concerned? Is it the plan to spot sample? I mean statistically it would be valid, as medicare do this all the time. They take one out of every so many hundred or so many dozens case and sample them or indeed they take them completely at random. Is it envisaged that the doctor who gives the medical certificate, because as I understood the minister and I may have misunderstood but it is an interesting move and it is one that every minister has had put up to him from time to time and as far as I know no minister has succeeded in pulling it off. Indeed when I was in welfare, at one stage we made a little informal study and you could

trace how long a doctor had been in a cottage hospital post. Most of them are there for two-year posting. In the last six months you could see the doctors resistance being worn down because there is a group of people in this province, they are a very small group but the doctors would tell me that they would go out in the waiting room every Friday, for clinic, and the same people were there. Finally, after a year and a-half with the man saying, "I have a bad back, Sir." The minister is smiling so he obviously has run into this. Finally the doctor says, "Well, if you say you have a bad back at least I will certify it, and it is somebody else's problem and that is the end of it.

But what the minister is suggesting, as I understand it, is a group of doctors sitting in professional judgement on another, not whether the fellow is competent or not but reviewing another's

professional diagnosis. I would like him, if he wishes, it may not be opportune now, to expand a little on how he envisages this will work. A specialist Also, what will it cost? Consultations? are of course under medicare. They can be fairly dear, or is there some special arrangement? Maybe I have said enough to give the minister an idea of the sort of thing I am interested in, Mr. Chairman. He looks as though he is ready to spring into action, so I will sit down and we will hear what he has to say on it.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, I have indicated that this is not already set up but it is in the process. . . I can certainly add some information to what I have already given.

It is our proposal to have a medical specialist in each of our regions. The province is now divided into five regions, the fifth being Labrador. At the moment, the local doctor, the doctor at the cottage hospital or what have you, completes the medical form on behalf of the recipient. I agree with my honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition, who says that each year there is a medical review done. Mr. Chairman, we believe that and very much in line with what the Leader of the Opposition says; we believe that there are too many cases where there is doubt, where probably the doctor has been worn down to the degree where a medical certificate is given. Those medical certificates at the moment are assessed by regional administrators who in fact are lay people and certainly, who are non-professional in the medical field. We believe that by instituting this kind of situation we can reduce the number of people or certainly make the administration of long-term assistance more efficient and hopefully save some money in this area and possibly channel it to maybe the area that the member for White Bay South speaks of, or some other areas where indeed we need money to enlarge upon or increase the services we are providing.

The rates are - the whole idea has not been finalized, it has

June 22, 1972, Tape 956, Page 2 -- apb

not been developed to the point where we have a cost figure. My Deputy Minister tells me that twenty-five dollars per case...

AN HON. MEMBER: Twenty-five?

MR. HICKEY: Twenty-five, something like this, but...

MR. ROBERTS: (Inaudible)

MR. HICKEY: Yes it is. The situation would in fact be, and I think the Leader of the Opposition is correct when he says that this specialist in each region would in fact sit in judgement on the other doctor or doctors who completed the medical certificates. What I find a little bit alarming, Mr. Chairman, and one of the reasons why I am very much in favour of this, at least to experiment with it and to determine or to see what merit it has and what it will produce, is the fact that we are depending on lay people to assess medical reports. Goodness knows, in a lot of instances it is difficult, very difficult to determine clearly just what is on those medical reports. Because doctors are busy and they are in the habit of writing quickly and they are not always very easy to read for one thing, apart from getting on to the complex terminology or phraseology which they use.

I feel that there is merit in it. I think it is worth while pursuing, and I feel that there can be a saving and an improvement if we implement it.

MR. ROBERTS: Let me say another word or two on it, because it is an interesting departure. Do I now understand the scheme to be that in each of the five regions into which the province has been divided, for department purposes - that of course is not new, that goes back five or six years I guess, that policy. It is only within the past year I guess that it has been brought in. Is there a regional administrator in Labrador now?

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible)

MR. ROBERTS: Yes. There is, Mr. Wiseman in Harbour Grace; Mr. Pike in Corner Brook; Mr. Budgell in Grand Falls and then Mr. Davis here in

town. Anyway, it is a good system, but that in each of the five regions there will be a doctor, when the honourable gentleman says a specialist, I do not know in what the man would be a specialist, but presumably in - well he would not be in pediatrics...

AN HON. MEMBER: Internal medicine.

MR. ROBERTS: Internal medicine. Well, that is fine if you have an ulcer or something that the internists deal with, but...

AN HON. MEMBER: Water trouble.

MR. ROBERTS: Well urology, as Doctor Al Mercer would say, is its own speciality. I am not sure if it would do much for a man who has - I have never seen a breakdown of the causes for medical certificates, but I suspect the bad back ...

AN HON. MEMBER: The welfare back, now.

MR. ROBERTS: The welfare back, well somebody once told me that this is the only place in the world where a man rushes up to you with joy and says: "I have been turned down, I'm not fit to live. Where's me cheque?" You know. But the bad back is obviously one of the chief factors and I am not sure what an internist would have to do with that. That is something that the minister's officials could talk to the officials in the Department of Health about, and the two of them could get together.

This specialist, this regional officer would, when the certificate came in, and on the bottom of the certificate there used to be (I have not seen one recently) a statement signed by the doctor in which he says; "I hereby certify that the man or woman (whatever the case may be) "is unfit for work for a period not less than," and the magical number is six, which must be filled in. If it is three months, it is not good enough. To hit the bingo you have to have six filled in or eight, ten, twelve or indefinitely, depending on the disability. This regional official or regional doctor will then take that certificate and will look at it, read it and then say to the appropriate

official of the minister's department: "Very well, I concur." Is that the way the scheme will work? If the regional fellow says; "I concur." then the regional administrator says; "Well it meets all the other requirements of the regulations," and the matter is approved?

MP. HICKEY: (First part inaudible) may well examine the person himself...

MR. ROBERTS: That is what I am getting at.

MP. HICKEY: If it is necessary; to call in or have consultations with maybe another doctor.

MP. ROBERTS: The minister on his own and with the advice of his officials is anticipating me, but this is precisely what I was going to bring up. Because, unless the medical gentleman concerned has access, well even to the other doctor it would be a bit of a second-class thing, because all the other doctor, the initial doctor can do is to elaborate on what he has already said. He has already come to his conclusion. He has given his advice, his decision, his opinion. It means that the regional medical officer must then examine the patient. That leads me on inevitably to ask, presumably the patients will come to the doctor? I mean, you will not have medical specialists - the Corner Brook Area includes all the Northern Peninsula and all of the west Coast I guess up maybe as far as Burgeo? That is the normal type of district. I mean, you would not have a doctor bustling down to Burgeo to look at a man with a bad back nor would you even wait until you had enough bad backs to justify a man going down, because that might mean weeks or months before a person would be given a yes or no on the matter. Will the person then be brought into Corner Brook, to continue my example? If so, what sort of costs and what sort of business are we getting into? Who determines whether the man goes in? I am not trying to create difficulties, but I am raising the sort of questions I would raise if I were minister and the officials and I were discussing it. There was a time when we did, but that was a long time ago. Now it is the minister's

turn. Maybe he can elaborate a little on that aspect of it.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition is perfectly right in his suggestions as to how we are supposed to go about this. People are brought in, if in fact the specialist deems it necessary. In terms of cost, as I said, this has not been determined yet, and of course this is certainly a pertinent factor. We were in consultation with the Department of Health officials who certainly recommend this system and who are keenly interested in it. I think maybe the underlying point would be that we believe that there would be sufficient cases which would be turned down, sufficient cases which are doubtful and would possibly result in a medical certificate of incapacity not being issued, to justify

Mr. Hickey.

whatever expenditure there might be incurred in putting this system into effect. But certainly, if there is some doubt in so far as the case is concerned, then the only thing the specialist could do would be to have the patient brought to him. I think it would be fair for me to say that in all probability my department will have to bear the cost for the transportation. There are a number of questions involved and I am the first to admit that it is not a policy which is in effect yet. It is one that we are actively pursuing and one we are very interested in and I think one that lends itself to the system that we have at the moment. Certainly, the one we have is certainly not adequate. I think every one agrees with that, every one in my department, that is.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I never heard of such a hair-brained cockeyed scheme in my life. I am sure the officials of that department did not recommend it because the officials know that it is impossible for it to work. However, we will wait a year and see what happens a year from now when the minister comes into this House. I have been sitting here all the evening, Sir, trying to restrain myself. I wanted to get the estimates through. The members on the other side are getting jumpy and irritable and they want to get out in the fresh air. But, Sir, if the minister wants to solve the problem of taking the pressure off the doctors, then I will tell him what he should do. I will give him a little piece of advice free of charge, Your Honour.

The big problem is, Mr. Chairman, this: The pressure is on the doctors, There is no question about that. The doctors in too many cases yield to the pressure. They do not have any choice. Life is miserable for them. I used to see a little "c" on a form and for a long time I did not know what it was. When the doctor filled out a form, I would see a little "c" on it. Finally I asked one of the doctors

Mr. Neary.

what it was. He said, "Confederation back, the kind of a back that came with Confederation, with social assistance." The answer to the problem, Mr. Chairman, is this: In this system now you are either fit for work or you are unfit for work. There is no in between. It is not like Workmen's Compensation where you can get a partial disability allowance. There is no grey area. In order to qualify for long-term assistance, you have to be incapacitated or unfit for work for six months or longer. The ultimate in life is to get on long-term assistance, get the doctor to certify you as unfit for work. Now if you are unfit for work, Sir, my hon. colleague there from Twillingate raised this point that you have to be unfit for work of any kind, you cannot even do light work. Under the existing regulations, you are supposed to be half dead, Sir. You are supposed to have one foot in the grave. That is about the size of it. There is no way you can work. You are not allowed to work under the regulations. The doctor said you cannot work. It is either black or white. You are abled-bodied, you can work or you are unfit for work. There is no in between. This is where I see the answer to the problem, Sir, the in-between's. There should be a partial disability for people and that would take the pressure off the doctors. If for instance you are more than thirty-three and one-third per cent disabled, then you get a disability allowance. You get a cheque for the extend of your disability. You can go out and work if you want to. If you have one arm, if you loose an arm in an industrial accident, Workmen's Compensation will, I think (there is a gentleman sitting the gallery, if he were here on the floor, would probably correct me if I am wrong) you get "x" amount of dollars for the rest of your life or you can make a lump-sum settlement if you want to or you could loose an eye. You would get a partial disability

Mr. Neary.

allowance. On long-term assistance, you do not. This is where the problem is, Mr. Chairman. There is no in between. I would suggest to the minister that the best way to clear up this situation, take the pressure off the doctors and off the officials of the department and off the welfare officers, is to have total disability, partial disability and short-term assistance. That is the only way I can see to solve the problem under the present system. The ultimate, of course, the ideal way to do it is to bring in the guaranteed annual income.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman -

MR. NEARY: He is hot under the collar tonight.

He comes into the House. He breaks the rules of the House, Sir. You are not allowed to have your necktie open in the House, Your Honour. You are not allowed to take your coat off.

MR. HICKEY: It is amazing, Mr. Chairman, what progress could be made in this House if my honourable friend would sit in the Opposition Office somewhere. I have not heard any one else call this a hair-brain scheme but my friend - no one! Now let me give him a few facts: This is not any hair-brain scheme by me. I am not interested in taking credit for what improvements were made in my department. Some of the things which have been done in my department are my idea - some.

MR. NEARY: I have not seen any yet.

MR. HICKEY: Have you not?

MR. CROSBIE: You should be on Treasury Board.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, the so-called hair-brained scheme that my honourable friend talks about is recommended by five regional administrators who forgot more about this department and the people that we work with than the honourable gentleman knows now or that he will ever know. It is also recommended by the Deputy Minister of Health and some professional people in Health. Low and behold! we have the hon. member for Bell Island who has the solution to all the problems of this province A hair-brain scheme! Is that not something? Yet he was there three years. I talk about

Mr. Hickey.

narrowing the gap and finally bridging the gap between the short-term and the long-term assistance which was accepted and which was recommended by a total number of people in my department, who agree with this system or this suggestion. What did my honourable friend come up with? Not bridge that gap. No! Have three allowances, not two. Bloody nonsense!

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that the last remark of the honourable gentleman was unparliamentary. I suggest also, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister of Finance tighten his tie .

MR. CROSBIE: I will tighten your -

MR. NEARY: Tighten it around his neck, Sir, because the noose is tightening around his neck. Seeing that we are going to have a knock-him-down, drag-him-out debate on long-term assistance, well let us have it. Let us have it, Sir. I would suggest another suggestion to the hon. Minister of Social Services and Rehabilitation that if he wants to spend money, that he not increase the incomes of doctors in this province. God only knows they are earning enough now. It created a great scandal : across Canada, the doctors' salaries in this province, when they were revealed recently. Sir, under long-term assistance a person is not entitled to eyeglasses. Unless it is a child going to school, no eyeglasses, no dentures.

MR. HICKEY: It was already covered yesterday in my remarks.

MR. NEARY: People come into the welfare offices across this province and they say, "I am starving too death." That is right. "I am a diabetic. I have to chew my food. I have no teeth. I am starving too death. The government will not give me a set of dentures." Why not, Mr. Chairman? Why not? It is criminal, Sir. Lash the money out to Spencer Lake down at Burgeo. Lash it out! Lash it out to the funeral directors! Lash it out to the landlords! There are some well-to-do lawyers on the opposite side of the House, collecting the rent down in their offices downtown, and the landlords, lash it out to them but no dentures, Mr. Chairman, no eyeglasses.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, It was in my mind to let the vote pass.

The honourable gentleman has provoked me.

MR. NEARY: Oh, he is provoked now.

MR. HICKEY: I think it is about time we took the wraps off. I have sat here all afternoon. I have attempted to tell the House some things we were going to try and do. I at no time said I had any magic wand. I at no time said that I had all the solutions to the problems of this department. I outlined some of the things that we had already done. I have had to sit here and continue to listen to the honourable gentleman who sets himself up as the great benefactor of the poor and needy of this province. He talks about saving money.

Mr. Chairman, if I had the money the honourable gentleman wasted in one year, the last fiscal year, in his own District of Bell Island, I would be able to provide some eyeglasses and dentures. I will provide them this year, Mr. Chairman. I will tell you why I will provide them. There will be no more skulduggery in building materials, such as went on in the last twelve months - no more! There will be no more interference with the field staff. When one of my field staff makes a decision on building materials, food or anything else, if it is made in accordance with regulations and policy, if the need is not in that home, there will be no interference and there will be no funds dispersed. The honourable gentleman cannot get up and say that though.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Finance very casually, in explaining the financial situation in this province, made reference to building materials during the last fiscal year. The figure for the previous year, Mr. Chairman, was something like \$480,000. The figure for the last fiscal year, just ended, March 31, was \$1,190,000. Now, Mr. Chairman, there is one significant point out of that \$1,190,00. In a district where the population is quickly and very quickly declining, \$264,000 worth of building materials was spent in one district.

MR. NEARY: A trifling amount! A trifling amount!

MR. HICKEY: Trifling aye? It would provide a lot of eyeglasses though, would it not. It would provide a lot of dentures.

MR. NEARY: (Inaudible).

MR. MURPHY: No wonder they had to get their gums filed to eat the meat.

MR. HICKEY: Now, Mr. Chairman, I find no fault with an expenditure of \$260,000 for the people of Bell Island, if that \$260,000 was spent for the benefit of the people of Bell Island, if that \$260,000 repaired the homes on Bell Island. But, Mr. Chairman, that \$260,000 did not repair the homes on Bell Island. It went into pockets, through corruption and under-the-table deals somewhere along the line.

AN HON. MEMBER: Send the undertaker!

MR. HICKEY: It is a most interesting set of figures that any one could ever lay their eyes on, I have right here. The month of April, the expenditure on Bell Island for building materials, \$495; the month of May, \$4,564; the month of June (when according to my information a certain party on Bell Island opened a lumber business) \$17,081. Mr. Chairman, that is when the campaign for re-election began, in the month of June. In the month of July, \$14,958; August \$33,667 -

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. HICKEY: Settle down, there is better to come. September, \$43,000; (the election is coming close at hand now) October, (that wonderful month when the people of this province came to their senses and when the people of Bell Island almost came to theirs too) \$67,832 for building materials, in one single spot in this province, Mr. Chairman. This honourable gentleman stands up and sets himself up as the great benefactor of the poor. I say to him tonight, without any reservation, that if he were interested in the poor of this province, he would not have allowed that to happen. He would not have had his fingers in it to the extent where it would have happened, because, Mr. Chairman, while that was happening there were widows in this province refused building materials, as there are being refused today.

MR HICKEY: What was gotten on Bell Island, cannot be gotten in any other spot in this province. We call that equality? Is that improving the quality of life for the people of this province? I guess not. That, Mr. Chairman, was election month and now the chickens have come home to roost, with an almost saved-off situation in the political scene in this province.

Did it stop there? No. We were going to milk her for what she was worth, while the going was good, and so it carried on. November, \$21,000, I will not bother with the few extra dollars, they are not worth talking about. December, somebody must have heart failure, \$6,900. But she came back again, Mr. Chairman, in fine style, in the new year when things got truly warm and time was running out, \$35,888

AN HON. MEMBER: What month was that?

MR. HICKEY: January. By the time I got my hands on that situation, Mr. Chairman, there had been \$35,000.00, spent. I had not even known the situation existed until the end of the month. February, and I say, Mr. Chairman, without fear of contradiction and I challenge the honourable gentleman or any other honourable gentleman in this House to show me a case on Bell Island, on Bell Island, where my officials, through my instructions, refused assistance and I will show them that there were good sound and solid reasons for it. February, \$10,000; March \$3,900 for a total of \$260,000, the highest figure, Mr. Chairman, excluding Bell Island, for any month of the year was in St. John's \$23,000.

\$23,000 in St. John's, now mind you, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame! Shame! Resign! Shame! Get out of the House!

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, when I say St. John's, I do not mean a welfare district, I do not mean an electoral district, I mean the greater St. Johns, made up of six districts. \$23,000. Can any one here deny the housing problem that exists in St. John's is much worse than that existing on Bell Island?

But, Mr. Chairman, that is not all.

AN HON. MEMBER: Were they card-carrying-Liberals?

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, as I said, the total for the financial year was \$1,191,479.00. There was a difference in one year of \$708,999.00 just one year. Have we cured the housing problem on Bell Island? No, Mr. Chairman, in fact I have taken note, I have had to withdraw the authority from my officials on Bell Island to approve building materials, for their own protection and their own good. I withdrew that authority and placed it in my own care so that every request came to me, because I felt duty bound to determine just what had gone on.

Mr. Chairman, it is a sad commentary. Let nobody think or say that I take pleasure in presenting this picture. For if that were all I was interested in, Mr. Chairman, I would have called a press conference long ago. If in fact I had not heard some of the things that I have heard in the House yesterday evening and tonight, I do not know but I would have recommended to my colleagues that we just investigate this matter in a quiet way and leave it at that. Determine if someone had broken the law and have them pay whatever penalty there was and move on to correct that situation. That Mr. Chairman would suffice.

But, when I have to sit here and listen to someone pretend to the people of this Province how interested they are in the poor, while in fact they were interested in one thing only, getting re-elected to this House. That is a little too much, Mr. Chairman, I am unable to take that and I make no apology for it.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to say and I would like to emphasize because, as I have said earlier, no man is guilty until he is proven, be it a member of this House or be it anyone outside the House, and I sit in judgement of no man. But I am duty bound to report to this House what has been passed on to me by my officials. Two of them sit with me tonight and they can verify what I say is the gospel, as it is passed on to me from my officials at the local level. I am advised that liquor, cash, ranges, chesterfield suites and other

items were substituted by a particular dealer on Bell Island for building materials. I can also testify, with facts on this particular aspect, that building materials which were originally approved for the repairs to the exterior of homes on Bell Island were used to repair the interior of those homes with the highest grade and the most expensive wall panelling.

The hon. gentleman sits over there and he tells me and he chides me because I say I am going to see to it that building material costs are going to be reduced. Would I have any interest in the taxpayers of this province if I did not do it? Would I have any interest, Mr. Chairman, in the recipients of my department who come to me every other day, in the widows of this province whom I cannot assist, would I have any interest in those people if I did not take some corrective steps?

I have already outlined some steps, Mr. Chairman, that have already been taken across this province from one end to the other. I assure this House, as sure as they sit here tonight, there will not be another Bell Island situation as long as this government is in office.

We hear hon. gentlemen very lightly condemn the Budget, condemn the Minister of Education because he cannot do this or that, condemn some other minister and, of course, I will be condemned because of things that I cannot do, while this kind of thing carried on under the eyes of a government and particularly under the eyes of a minister and nothing was done about it. A clear-cut case, Mr. Chairman, of one buying their way back to the Assembly.

But if the honourable gentleman wants to carry on and call my schemes hair-brained schemes. Well then the only thing that I can say to him; he well deserves the name of "The Wooden Member for Bell Island" after having that kind of an expenditure in one twelve months.

Now, Mr. Chairman, as an explanation to the high cost of building materials on Bell Island, the Leader of the Opposition indicated to the House and on TV and may I say, before I get into remarks in this

June 22, 1972, Tape 959, Page 4 -- apv

connection...

AN HON. MEMBER: You know what to say now --

MR. HICKEY: I have the greatest respect for the Leader of the Opposition. I do not think, Mr. Chairman, that he would mislead this House for a moment

Mr. Hickey:

I do not think, Mr. Chairman, that he would give this information if he had any doubt that it was not factual. The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Chairman, in explaining or in commenting on this kind of expenditure indicated that the reason for the high cost was because of the homes that were passed over from DOSCO to the people on Bell Island.

Mr. Chairman, I will go on record and say that that honourable gentleman was given that information when he was asked for an explanation and from whom I do not know. That is not for me to say. But I would go so far as to say that he inquired and this is the information he got and it was on that basis that he probably said it. But let me inform my honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Chairman, and again with regret, this is not the case, far from it.

Mr. Chairman, there were sixty-five houses passed over from DOSCO to the people of Bell Island and out of that sixty-five, Mr. Chairman, fifty-four were given to welfare recipients; people on long-term assistance, twenty-one; people on short-term assistance, twenty-five and one person on a DVA allowance. Mr. Chairman, before I go any further, let me just make a few comments on that. The twenty-five people on short-term assistance should not have got, without exception, unless there are some people among them who will not work again, should not have gotten those homes. If we subscribe, Mr. Chairman, to the people who are sick and the widows who make up the bulk of our long-term recipients, those people whom we are going to have on our payroll as such until their children grow up and be able to support their families, should not have those houses gone to the recipients of long-term rather than the short-term?

Short-term assistants, Mr. Chairman, remember are people who are employable, are people who may have been employed last month or are people who will be employed next month. I am afraid, Mr. Chairman,

the criterion was that they were voting.

Now, Mr. Chairman, let us take a look at what the expenditures on those homes meant to the overall figure of \$260,000. The total cost of repairs to those fifty-four homes for building materials was \$31,927.31 and the total cost of labour was \$5,298.46, for a total, Mr. Chairman, of \$37,225.00. Not \$40,000.00, not even near \$40,000.00, while the total expenditure was \$260,000. How can anyone then say that the reason for the high cost of building materials in the District of Bell Island was due to the homes that were passed over from Dosco? In fact, Mr. Chairman, that is not so. That was only a drop in the bucket in comparison to the total figure. Repairs to homes on Bell Island, Mr. Chairman, were done in a slipshod way, where we are now being asked by the same people for more money to repair those homes.

The requests, Mr. Chairman, are continuing to pour in as if no money at all had been spent in the last fiscal year. I suppose when I toughen up the policy with regards to Bell Island, I will be accused of this, that and the other thing. But, Mr. Chairman, let me lay the honourable gentleman at rest -

AN HON. MEMBER: I will do that.

MR. HICKEY: Let me set his mind at rest. If he thinks for a moment that the people of Bell Island will be discriminated against because of what happened last year, let me go on record, Mr. Chairman, in this House and say that I have today and yesterday and the day before approved requests for building materials for the people of Bell Island; for those people, Mr. Chairman, are not to blame. They are not to blame, and two wrongs, Mr. Chairman, do not make a right. If a widow on Bell Island has a need for building materials and it was pushed in front of her where she could get a range or a chesterfield or money she is only a human being, is she not? Should she be penalized and condemned to live with the snow and the rain beating in because of that, because

of an incompetent administration that allowed it to go on, Mr. Chairman, I say no. So I say that the real genuine cases on Bell Island will be dealt with and dealt with in a humane fashion.

Mr. Chairman, what a sad commentary after twenty-three years. I will tell you what even makes it worse is when I try to improve, as minister of this department, and I do not have to confine it to myself, when any other of my honourable colleagues try to improve in their various or respective departments, what do I get? What do we get from some honourable gentlemen on the other side? Cynicism and sarcasm. When we say there is no money, what do we get? The same thing. Everytime there is a petition presented in the House, Mr. Chairman, what do we hear? The blame falls on the Minister of Finance. Well, is the Minister of Finance responsible for this? Was the Minister of Finance last year responsible for it? Mr. Chairman, the answer is obviously no. There is only one man responsible for this, the honourable gentleman opposite who headed that department. If the likes of this were to go on in the next year, I would be responsible for it and I would be man enough to come here and take my medicine or if it were this bad, I would not sit here, Mr. Chairman, because I would resign.

It is a long road, Mr. Chairman, that does not have a turn. It is not so long ago that I heard words of incompetency uttered in relation to my employment with this department. No more than it is so long ago that I heard such vile statements; that I had been asked to resign from this department. Let me say, for the record, Mr. Chairman, let the record show it for those who come after, the Premier of this province owed me nothing. The Premier of this province is too wise a man to appoint someone to a department where there was some record to indicate that he had to resign or some record of incompetency. Let the record stand now that I have been vindicated, without producing my personal file in this House, which I might say the honourable gentleman refused

June 22, 1972

Tape 960(Night)

JM - 4

to do. The very fact that I head up this department at the moment is vindication enough for me.

But, Mr. Chairman, I had to sit and take it and there are people in this province today, because of those vile words, probably still believe that my file in that department contains something. Let the record also show,

Mr. Chairman, that on my first day walking into this department to take over, the least thing I was interested in was my personal file, because I knew there was nothing in it, because I knew the job I had tried to do and the job I had done. I also knew why I left, through frustration.

Mr. Chairman, my own deputy minister (a man with whom I did not always see eye to eye, no more than we do today. It does not stop us from having a harmonious relationship though. We are men enough to disagree and work together. I would not trade him for what deputy ministers there are in this government) suggested to me that I have been done a great injustice. "I am going to get your files so that you can read it for yourself." Reluctantly, Mr. Chairman, I did. I just about got sick. How any man could attempt to destroy so much. All he had to do was to just look, it was as plain as the nose on his face. My record in the department, Mr. Chairman, was far from incompetent.

The only thing that could be said for me in this department, when I worked there, was that I believed in certain things and I had the courage of my conviction. If I am to be condemned for that, then let the records show it.

I have one other thing to say, Mr. Chairman, in relation to the Bell Island situation. I hope and pray with all the sincerity at my command that I can relieve some of the blame from the honourable gentleman. We have not been the closest friends, as a result of our debates across this floor. I hope in saying this, maybe I can take some of it from him, although he should have known or he should have watched it more closely. Almost ninety percent of this money spent on Bell Island, according to what I can determine, went to one supplier, one supplier who has liquor on his premises, furniture, appliances, hardware, among other things.

Mr. Chairman, I am also told the prices that were charged to people

of Bell Island were exorbitant. Mr. Chairman, I do not know of anything to say to someone who will take the poor of this province for a ride and fleece them. I do not know, there are no words at my command to describe a person who does that. I say we should bring back the cat-o'-nine tails and whip him. While he carries on in luxury, the poor of Bell Island continue to be poor. The request for building materials continue to come in. A sad state of affairs.

This is why, Mr. Chairman, as I have said, let no honourable gentleman on the other side say there has been no changes in my department. There have been many. Changes, Mr. Chairman, overnight, changes overnight that brought the staff of this department back to some kind of a level of harmony where they could work together once more.

There were many, many people, Mr. Chairman, in this department -
MR. CHAIRMAN: I could draw attention again to the rule of relevancy where we are dealing with long-term assistance, if the honourable minister could restrict comments to 1131-03-02.

MR. HICKEY: I will just close by saying, in relation to that, what went on in the supply of building materials, the staff of my department lost what morale they had, through the interference of the minister on too many occasions and too many cases.

Mr. Chairman, there is one thing that has to be done with regards to housing and has to be done quickly. This is what faces this government right at this moment. The line has to be drawn somewhere. As a result of the cost which escalated last year, that line, Mr. Chairman, is going to have be drawn across the people who need it the least, the able-bodied families. Because the widows and the sick of this province have more of a right to building materials and house repairs than an able-bodied man who is probably going to go to work next month or two months from now.

I regret, Sir, to say that my department cannot possibly continue

to go anywhere near the million dollar mark this year. I hope our dollars will be spent wisely. I hope, Mr. Chairman, I do not hear the people responsible getting up and doing all this shouting if materials are not supplied to the able-bodied families who daily are making requests for such a service.

MR.W.ROWE: Mr. Chairman, I rise not to defend or otherwise comment on the honourable member for Bell Island. I rise, Sir, as a member of the House, because I think that certain things which have transpired here tonight affect the privileges or the position of a member of this House. I am relating it to, Sir, the Long Term Assistance Head.

The honourable minister of Social Service & Rehabilitation has risen in his place and has made certain statements about money going to Bell Island for building materials or otherwise. In the course of his remarks, which were, Sir, the opposite of clear, with regard to his accusations, the direction in which his accusation was going both were rather cloudy and nebulous. The minister has made certain accusations and certain allegations. He has used the word corruption, without specifying

MR. ROWE: who he is referring to when he used that word of corruption. He has laid some grave charges on the floor of this House. He said that a lumber operation was set up at a certain time. He said that a certain merchant is apparently handing out furniture and utilities and liquor, this sort of thing, instead of supplying lumber, apparently to be used on the exterior of a house to make it wind proof or weather proof.

He has made some grave charges, Sir, without specifying who he is levelling his charges at. If he is referring to the honourable Member for Bell Island, and we could have risen on a Point of Order or a Point of Privilege on this point, Sir, but we chose not to because we wanted to hear the hon. minister out, if he is referring to the honourable Member for Bell Island and he has a charge to level of a personal character, then, according to the rules of the House, he can only do so by a substantive motion to that effect. The government or some member of the House has to bring in a motion to that effect. This is why I ask; is he levelling a charge at the honourable Member for Bell Island or is he not?

I have a couple of more questions I have to ask, Sir, and...

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. ROWE: No, this is referring to the money having been apparently lashed out to Bell Island for building materials. He has made certain grave allegations. He uses the word "corruption," he used certain other statements. I would like to ask the hon. minister if he is levelling a charge at the Member for Bell Island in respect of this money, or if he is saying he is in any way otherwise involved in the thing personally. I would also like to ask him whether the welfare officer, for example, on Bell Island is the same welfare office now as then or whether he has been

fired or whether he is still there or whether criminal charges have been brought against him or whether in fact any investigation by some judicial authority is being undertaken in respect of this, or whether the man is completely exculpated or can be completely exonerated in the whole thing.

It springs to my mind, a case which we had two or three years ago in Hampton, White Bay, where a welfare officer had entered into a similiar sort of deal with merchants and what not in the general area, and I am relating it to this, Sir, because it came under Social Assistance and house building and house repairs and this sort of thing. That welfare officer was investigated and subsequently charged and I think fined. He did not get a prison sentence. Is it the welfare officer who is involved? Is this who the hon. minister is levelling the charge at? The welfare officer is not involved. Well he can answer that question. Who is he talking about, Mr. Chairman, when he talks about corruption or involvement or saw mill operations being set up or the merchants giving one thing instead of another? Who is he talking about? Is he making just a blanket accusation or is he going to specify his charges? Has there been a judicial enquiry? Has there been some sort of a secret enquiry instituted by the Department of Social Services and Rehabilitation? What in fact is he talking about? I would like to hear him specify and clarify his remarks for my own benefit, not for the benefit of the Member for Bell Island. I am a member of this House and as a member of this House I have a certain privileged position, as do all other members, and that privileged position is that nobody can impune my character outside the House or inside the House without incurring some very severe penalties. So that is why I am talking about this.

What is the hon. minister referring to? Can he substantiate his charges of corruption? If so, do they effect any member of this House?

Do they affect the welfare officer concerned? Do they affect the merchant who he referred to? Were there other people in on this deal? Or was it simply maybe an over-exercise of discretion on the part of the minister in respect of Bell Island, for either right or wrong reasons? I mean, what is he talking about?

I may or may not have anything else further to say on this, Sir, but I would like to hear the minister's remarks on this. Could he clarify and specify?

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Chairman, I think that I, as all other members of the House, heard what the hon. minister had to say, and I did not hear the hon. minister say that the corruption he referred to was personal corruption of the minister in charge, what I understood him to be describing was a situation he found to exist on Bell Island last year, with respect to assistance for housing, the vast expenditure there, the extraordinary fact that

Mr. Crosbie:

this was over a fifth of all the expenditures on housing in Newfoundland last year, that there appeared to be irregularities that the honourable member has mentioned, such as that ninety per-cent of the building materials were all bought from one particular merchant or company.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. CROSBIE: I do not know. We will come to that but this is a situation that went on on Bell Island. How it arose or who gave the instructions for that, it has not been said and perhaps it is not known. That instead of building materials being given, as building materials only were supposed to be given, other items were given which are not permitted by the regulations. As I understood, the remarks of the honourable the minister are that he is pointing out that these are things that happened while the honourable member for Bell Island was minister of the department and, of course, also member for the District of Bell Island. These are facts that he recited in the House. These are not comments on the honourable member's conduct as an honourable member of this House but on the honourable member's conduct as a minister of the department, when he was minister, and on certain things that happened while he was the minister responsible. These are, as I take it, the substance of what the House has heard tonight on this matter

now if the honourable minister said that the honourable member was involved in the liquor or corruption zone, he would have said. He did not say that. He has described the situation that occurred on Bell Island last year and these are the facts as he has described them. Now if honourable gentlemen feel that this warrants further investigation or this warrants further study or there should be a judicial inquiry, there has not been but that there should be one, well certainly the government is quite prepared to consider it, and a public one, not a private one, or whatever the honourable gentleman wants to suggest. But there have been

no allegations by the minister as to any personal piccadilly of the nature the honourable gentleman was describing on the part of the member, but he was minister when these things went on and that is what the minister is describing. For my own part, I certainly think these are facts, that that is a situation where the facts should be ascertained and they should certainly be looked into. The government have made no decision to do that as yet. In fact I only heard a lot of this myself for the first time but if the honourable gentlemen opposite want an enquiry or the gentleman opposite wants an enquiry, we will be quite willing to consider it.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, my colleague will doubtless say a word or two in a moment. There are, I would submit, two separate matters being looked at here. The first is the question of whether there should be an enquiry into certain events which either did or did not take place with respect to Bell Island last year. My colleague, who was the minister of the department concerned at that time, will deal with that and then we will see. The second matter, Sir, is a matter which may or may not involve the very root of the privileges of this House. The rules of this House require that all matters of privilege be raised at the earliest possible moment. This is the first chance I have had to catch Your Honour's eye. I have not been able to find the references as yet, Sir. I may add I have spoken quickly with the clerk and the clerk has not been able to find references either, although, even before I had spoken to him, he had grasped the point and, I think it is fair to say, had begun researching to see what could be done.

Now, Sir, we may or may not bring in a motion. We will wait. We will wait until we get the Hansards. I would ask Your Honour to direct that all work stop on the other Hansards and that as quickly as possible we get the Hansard of what the honourable Minister of

Social Services and Rehabilitation said. It may take a day or so. Until we see exactly what he did say, we will not be in a position to know. The Minister of Finance says he is of the opinion that what the Minister of Social Services and Rehabilitation said is not an attack upon the individual member as a person, as an individual and as a minister. In other words, it did not go beyond the political attack.

I did not hear all of the debate, as I was not in the Chamber and even with the other means which we have of reproducing it, I did not hear all of it. So I am in no position to say one way or the other. I think even my colleagues who sat through the speech of the Minister of Social Services, is that a fair -

MR. ROWE (W.N.): The word "corruption" was used and then sort of general talk.

MR. ROBERTS: The word "corruption" was used, apparently. So what I am saying, Your Honour, I am now serving notice on the committee. I must raise privilege at the earliest possible moment. I do so now, whether or not a motion will follow will depend upon the Hansards. I think that is fair because until we know exactly what the honourable member did say. Meanwhile I will draw the attention of the committee to the old parliamentary tradition. It is very old and respected. When one member makes a charge, and I am not saying that the Minister of Social Services made a charge until I see the Hansard, which will be available to everybody, until I see that I will say - let me finish this and then of course the honourable gentleman may have the floor. But if the honourable gentleman did make a charge against the member personally, there is an old tradition; the minister must put that charge to the proof. If he does not sustain that charge, he must resign from this House. If the charge is sustained - the Minister of Finance and I are ad idem on this, we agree -

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. ROBERTS: Now let us not have anything from the pups down at that

end. This is a perfectly serious matter, Mr. Chairman. The Minister of Finance and I for once see eye to eye. If the charges are put to the proof and sustained, then the honourable gentleman from Bell Island must resign his seat. If the minister made a charge, I am not saying he did. Until I see the Hansard Your Honour, I will not know.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. ROBERTS: I agree, Mr. Chairman, and if the honourable gentleman wishes, if he did not make a charge and indeed even if he made one and he knows what he said and what he did not say, I will not know until I see the Hansards but I would ask Your Honour to direct the staff of the House to prepare the Hansards immediately. But if the words used by the honourable minister constituted a charge, then there will be a motion in this House the effect of which will require, as the Minister of Finance and I agree, an old tradition, that either the Minister of Social Services proves his charges or he resigns from this House. If he prove his charges, then my friend, the member from Bell Island, must resign.

So all I can say is to raise the notice of privilege now, Sir, and give the basis on which we will proceed. I will add that if the Minister of Social Services, in the heat of debate and, furthermore, I think it is fair to refer to the well-known animosity which unfortunately exists between him and the honourable gentleman, if, coloured by those feelings, he made some statements which were in the heat of debate, which he regrets, if he wishes to apologize and to make it clear he was not making any personal charges or indeed anything beyond the normal political charges such as the incompetence of which we have accused the honourable Minister of Education, that type of thing, the more or less normal political debate, then that will end the matter as far as I am concerned.

Now my friend from Bell Island may have a few words to say, but as the Leader of the Opposition and as a member of the House I had to bring a breach of

privilege or what I consider may be a breach of the privileges of the House to the attention of the Chair at the earliest possible moment. I would ask Your Honour to direct the Hansards be prepared immediately. The last one we have is Tuesday, June 13, in the evening. The Hansard staff, who are working very well, but are still eight or ten sessions behind. I submit, Sir, this cannot wait eight or ten days. If Your Honour would raise the matter with Mr. Speaker then Mr. Speaker could ask the Editor of Debates please to prepare the transcripts of the honourable gentleman's remarks as quickly as possible, so that sometime tomorrow or failing that on Tuesday, because I assume Monday is a holiday, we can raise the matter here.

That is really all I have to say now. But, let us repeat; If in fact charges were made there will be a motion, Sir, and it will be put to the test and just so we are clear, the test, the proof of it is quite clear, if the minister does not prove his charges he resigns. If the minister does prove his charges, then my friend from Bell Island must vacate his seat. That is an old tradition and parliamentary practice which goes back as long as there have been parliaments.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. ROBERTS: No, Mr. Chairman, it does not say libel. There is nothing saying libel. It is a matter of a personal charge. A matter of calling a man - That is why, Your Honour, we cannot call a man a liar.

AN HON. MEMBER: You called me a pup.

MR. ROBERTS: Look, to call the honourable gentleman a pup is a statement of truth. So I mean, let us not let him get into this. Let us not get into him. I do not understand, Mr. Chairman, it has to be a libel. I have not been able to research the point as yet and doubtless all of us who are interested in these matters will be at it the next few days.

AN HON. MEMBER: You have to prove that he is libeled.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

June 22, 1972

Tape 963(Night)

JM - 6

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, I would not dream of calling the honourable gentleman a pup, would not dream of it. If he thinks he is a pup then I will call him one but, Mr. Chairman, really I could do without that right now.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. ROBERTS: Of course, I said I can do without pups and if any honourable gentleman feels that I was referring to him, then it means he considers himself a pup. I pointed down in that direction, but I could have pointed in that direction or that direction or in that or in that.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, look -

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order!

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, if I may conclude without the interruptions of the gentlemen who sit for Bonavista South, Green Bay, Harbour Grace, The gentleman from Trinity South,

MR. ROBERTS: I do not think he has been part of this nor has the gentleman from Harbour Main, the Minister of Supply and Services.

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. ROBERTS: Do any of the hon. gentlemen wish to say anything?
Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, as I say, when we can research the point and when we know exactly what the Minister of Social Services and Rehabilitation did say, we will research the point further. My learned friend, the House Leader, and I were discussing whether or not it would have to be a libel in law. I do not think the conduct would have to amount to a libel in law or slander, I suppose we should say, because it is oral and not broadcast. That is a separate matter altogether but the point is that, would Your Honour please tell the Hansard people, if not I would ask that the committee rise so that Mr. Speaker can direct that the steps be taken and we give notice that we may raise a matter of privilege, if in fact the words were what we fear they may have been.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the honourable the Leader of the Opposition address himself to one point which is bothering the Chair and which the Chair would like to hear some argument on. That is, the Chair feels at this point that this step that the honourable Leader of the Opposition is asking may be warranted where an honourable member rises and points out that there has been a matter of privilege uttered.

Now, the honourable the Leader of the Opposition has stated that he was absent from the House at the time certain words were uttered. However, the honourable the Member for Bell Island, against who I assume the words are assumed to have been uttered, was present, other members on the honourable the Leader of the Opposition's

MR. CHAIRMAN: side of the House were present and the Chair is wondering whether this should not be a case of honourable members rising, pointing out the specific words -- I am looking for the reference now. I understand and I have seen that in Beauchesne there is a procedure set out whereby it is asked that the words be taken down, that the words that were said by the hon. member be repeated so that they might be taken down.

MR. ROBERTS: Taken down by whom?

MR. CHAIRMAN: By the Clerk of the House. This is what is concerning me at this point, mainly whether it is normal or advisable for the House to go on what I would term, for want of a better term, a fishing expedition, back into language that has been spoken by members of this honourable House when the objectionable language, if any, occurred and had not been objected to at the time and when even now there is not specific language being objected to. That is one point.

MR. ROWE (WM.): I was present and, as I stated in my few remarks a little earlier on, the honourable minister's speech was a diffused type of speech, I mean, he went on making certain statements, building up his case as he saw it. I heard the word "corruption" used and I did not know then, because the word was used in vacuo, I did not know then whether he was referring to the honourable Member for Bell Island or not, that maybe he was going to accuse somebody else of it.

In the course of his speech he mixed up the conduct of the honourable member for Bell Island and other people's conduct to such an extent that I cannot remember, and I doubt if any other member can remember here, whether in fact the word "corruption" or other words of that nature, interpretive, emotive words were used in respect of the member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member would permit me to interject at this point: This was leading on to the second point that occurred. If

MR. CHAIRMAN: it is a matter where there has been misunderstanding, as I understand it, and perhaps the Chair was remiss in not stepping in at the appropriate time, but the Chair confesses that the Chair missed any such breach of privilege, if such occurred. However, I would like to hear argument on whether the proper procedure would not be at this point to ask the honourable member to suggest that if the words, as I think the honourable Leader of the Opposition referred to, that if there were words used in the heat of debate, which could possibly be misunderstood as imputing something against an honourable member of the House, then the procedure, as I understand it, would be to ask the honourable member to understand.

At this point, the House is one step closer to determining whether or not these were words spoken in the heat of debate, inadvertently, or whether they were a charge being made against a member of the House.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, if I may, in my remarks I think I said essentially what Your Honour has said, that if the words were said in the heat of debate, and words are, I mean I have been guilty of that.

AN HON. MEMBER: First of all, if there were words.

MR. ROBERTS: Right. As my colleague, our own House Leader, has said; we do not know if the words, even those who were in the Chamber at the time, do not know if the words were, I use the term "defamatory" not as it would be in law but in this context and until we can look at the Hansard, I do not think we will know, That is why we want to look at the Hansard.

But if the hon. minister spoke in the heat of debate and as I said, it is well known that we all say things in the heat of debate. I think it is equally well known and regrettable that there is animosity between the two gentlemen. That is a fact of life. Like it or not, it is there. If the hon. gentleman merely would stand and apologize fully for

MR. ROBERTS: any offense he may have created, I for one...

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. ROBERTS: I am sorry, either I have the floor or I do not. If some other hon. gentleman wants to say something, fine. I heard some voices from down beyond, Sir. If not, then I merely wish to note the matter of privilege. I must raise it at the earliest opportunity, I am so advised by the Clerk. I do so and I cannot move the motion until it is time for notices of motion, which is tomorrow.

All I have said is that if the words were not in the heat of debate and if there were words, and I cannot determine the second part, none of us can, I submit, until we get the Hansards, and I have asked for action on that. Then there will be a motion, Sir, the effect of which will be to require the minister, if in fact he made those charges, to put them to the proof or whatever must follow.

MR. HICKEY: Mr. Chairman, may I make one suggestion? This thing can drag on. I think the honourable Member for Bell Island has been attempting to say something. I have something further to say so I suggest that we hear from the hon. member, then I will speak my peace.

MR. ROBERTS: On the privileges of the House, all hon. members may be heard but it goes far beyond any honourable member. This is a matter affecting the privileges of the House, Sir, not of members.

MR. CROSBIE: On this procedural point; I was a member of the House and heard everything that was said. There was no statement made that the Member for Bell Island was corrupt or guilty of corruption. The word "corruption" was used in connection with a situation on Bell Island specifically, where liquor, furniture and other things were given out rather than building supplies. That is what the word was used in relation to. But the whole tenor of the minister's remarks was describing a situation on Bell Island and a situation in which the Member for Bell Island was then Minister and for which he is responsible, particularly in view of the fact that he was minister of a department

June 22, 1972

Tape No. 964

NC - 5

MR. CROSBIE: and it was his district. Now the fact described
and the situation described indicates

3665

Mr. Crosbie.

would indicate misfeasance or negligence or you can call it whatever you like. That is what the situation indicates, Sir. There has been no charge made that the minister was personally corrupt or involved in this impersonal corruption. But certainly it is a description of misfeasance or nonfeasance or misconduct, in the broad general sense if you like. We are quite satisfied on this side to wait until Hansard. If you want Hansard produced before the rest of the Hansard, that is very fine with us.

MR. ROBERTS: I would be quite willing.

MR. CROSBIE: Leave it at that and read what was said and then you could make whatever motion you like.

MR. MURPHY: An honourable member came in the other day and said, "I believe I heard this" and he could not get Hansard.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

MR. CROSBIE: In any event, if the honourable gentleman wants an enquiry and in fact this sounds like a situation where there should be an enquiry, it is very easy to arrange.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! The Chair wishes to direct the attention of the honourable members to one relevant section in Beauchesne which is, paragraph 139, page 121, also paragraph 138 is relevant but in particular, in paragraph 139, it sets out the reference to which I was alluding earlier and could not find, dealing with the Speaker directing the Clerk (in committee I would assume that the same procedure should follow) to take down unparliamentary words to which objection has been taken. "If a member desires that the words be taken down, he must repeat them and state them to the House exactly as he conceives them to have been spoken. If the Speaker sees the objection to be a trivial one, he will prudently delay giving such direction. If, however, the call to record the words should be pretty general, the Clerk will certainly be ordered by the Speaker to take them down in the form and manner of expression as they are stated

MR. CHAIRMAN.

by the member who makes the objection to them." I stress the next sentence. "It will be too late to interrupt the member and ask that his words be taken down if he is allowed to continue his speech for some time after he has given utterance to the objectionable language. The objection must be raised immediately that the words are spoken. The member may then deny that those were the words that he spoke and if he does so, the House may proceed to consider his explanation and decide by a question whether he had or had not used the words. If he does not deny that he spoke those words or when the House has itself determined what the words were, then the member may either justify them or explain the sense in which he had used them with the view of removing the objection taken to them"

Now, this is why the Chair questions whether it is advisable or permissible to go on what the Chair and what I think would normally be termed a fishing expedition. The Chair believes and the Chair would take this procedure and the Chair's conduct then, of course, can be questioned by the honourable House. However, the Chair believes that it is proper for the Chair to ask the minister, if the minister would take his place in the House, - It has been brought to the attention of the Chair that there is a possibility of words being used by the honourable minister, these words being interpreted so as to reflect upon the character of a member of this honourable House. The Chair -

MR. CROSBIE: Point of order, may I interrupt for a minute. There have been no words pointed out by any one in the House that the honourable minister used reflecting on the conduct of any one. What we heard objected to was in a very, very general nature. The Chairman does not have the specific words that the honourable minister was supposed to have used. How can you follow this procedure?

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the honourable minister would permit, the Chair stated that it has been brought to the attention that words "may" have been used

Mr. Chairman,

by the honourable minister. The Chair feels that an explanation from the honourable minister at this stage, as to whether it was intended to reflect upon the character of a member of this House, would be sufficient to clear the matter up at this stage.

MR. CROSBIE: - "reflect on the character of the member." I mean what is being described in this House and the facts that have been given may or may not have to do with the character of the member, certainly his conduct as a minister and so on. They are not unparliamentary words or offensive words. I mean if the hon. member for St. John's East (Extern) had said that the honourable gentleman opposite was personally corrupt or some - these would be offensive words.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is what the Chair -

MR. CROSBIE: He never said it and nobody can say that he did say it. You cannot ask him to say he did say anything that reflected on the character of the hon. member for Bell Island, because some of the things -

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the honourable minister would permit the Chair to finish, the Chair submits and again this is subject to appeal, the Chair submits that if the honourable member were to explain that such were not the intent of any words used, that this would then conclude the matter at this stage.

MR. MARSHALL: If I may speak to that, Your Honour.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Again the Chair -

MR. MARSHALL: I have listened with some interest to these arguments that have been going on. Beauchesne, paragraph 139 says: (I do not want to insist on technicalities but I just want to point out) It also goes on to say Your Honour that the objection to the objectional language - (the item which the Leader of the Opposition brought up is a very serious matter and is to be taken seriously by this House, affecting the privileges). It says: "The matter must be raised immediately that the words are spoken. The member may then deny that these were the words he spoke and if he does

Mr. Marshall

the House may proceed to consider his explanation ...". There are two things with respect to the procurement of the Hansard. I am thinking of this from the point of view of establishing a precedent, Your Honour, that procuring the Hansard may well possibly leave the way open for (as I think one honourable member said here) a fishing expedition as such. In other words (this is the reason behind this rule I feel) if members are allowed at the end of every sitting to review Hansard and then get up, this is the reason why the objection must be taken immediately. Now with respect to Your Honour's position, which is taken right now, I would suggest that perhaps that also may not possibly be the procedure which may be wise to implement here. Your Honour is asking the honourable member to get up and state whether he said something that is now alleged; whereas the person who was aggrieved or any member of the House (because this is a matter of privilege of the House and it has been raised as a matter of privilege of the House) should have gotten up then. I think this is the reason for this rule. What are the words? If the words were that offensive, they should have been taken up right then? Now we are putting - I would submit that the honourable minister - I am not speaking to this specific situation. I mean this can arise again and again. We are now putting the honourable minister in the untenable position of having to, in effect, defend himself and explain whether he made a statement; which is now alleged to have been made, on the other side. Whereas, if it had been taken up in the first instance, then it would have been dealt with on the spot. That I would say is the reason and it is a wise rule in Beauchesne because it can have - Your Honour I would feel - I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition may agree in this situation that it can have rather disastrous effects in the future. This is not by reason of wanting to sweep anything under the table or anything, As the hon. Minister of Finance has said and all honourable members here, if an investigation is wanted, we would only be too happy to

June 22, 1972

Tape no.965

Page 5

MR. MARSHALL.

have an investigation. We are dealing now not with investigations but with the privileges of the House itself. If we raised this matter now, I would think and I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition would concur that it is now too late, which is not to be presumed to

3070

say that the honourable minister said what was alleged but I think it is now too late to raise it in accordance with the procedures.

With the greatest respect, Your Honour, I do not think that the honourable minister now should be required or asked to reiterate what has now been in effect alleged, but I know alleged in good faith, that he said.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, if I may, may I comment on that. We will come to the procedural point before we come to the substantive points. I agree with the honourable gentleman, the House Leader. I would not ask the Minister of Social Services & Rehabilitation to make an apology or withdrawal or a statement at this stage at all. I rose immediately Sir, and I said, as I recall it, I rose immediately the first opportunity I caught Your Honour's eye.

Mr. Chairman, I said there were two things, one was - the honourable Leader has just made this point, one was the question of investigation or not into certain events which may or may not have happened. That is one matter and my colleague will deal with that. That is a separate problem altogether. The second is a matter affecting the privileges of the House. All that I said was that certain words may have been said which may be a breach of privilege. That is all that I have said. I said I am required to give notice as a member, as early as possible. I gave notice then I said "Would Your Honour have the Hansards brought out because until we see them I cannot tell precisely." I agree with the honourable member for St. John's Centre about fishing expeditions. I am not on a fishing expedition, Sir, I am not on a fishing, I am sorry, the House Leader nor I are, I am not on a fishing expedition in this case.

MR. MURPHY: You want to find out what the member said.

MR. ROBERTS: May I carry on, Your Honour, without this interruption from the honourable gentleman who should know better. Mr. Chairman,

the Hansards will be produced eventually, The Hansards are coming out, I will make the motion then. All I am asking, I want to have the matter cleared up. If the House Leader or whoever is the appropriate authority on the government would order them, we would know tomorrow. If not, I will really have to wait, The motion will be in order then, At that stage, if the Speaker will accept it, it will be made. All I am asking -

MR. MARSHALL: I have no objection to the Hansard being, or we have no objection to the Hansard being ordered immediately so that the honourable member can see it. But this is with reservations, with reservations right now as to the fact that I believe Your Honour that it is too late now and this is not by any means to be imputed that I am saying this because I believe that the honourable minister has infringed the privilege of the House. I do not mind the Hansards, of course we will accommodate the Opposition in that and it is a valid request at any time. But I do not believe that, you know when we make this undertaking with the Opposition, it also has to be understood that the position, as I see it on first glimpse at Beauchesne, admittedly there may be other arguments that may be put against it, but as I see it, from Beauchesne, that this should not be imputed as being on our part any agreement to the effect that we object to the point of privilege being raised in the first place.

MR. ROBERTS: Very well, Your Honour. I thank the honourable gentleman. We agreed then that if upon seeing the Hansard text, we feel there is a motion at that point the substantive point would be argued whether or not we have slept on our rights. That is what the honourable gentleman-

MR. MARSHALL: The honourable Leader of the Opposition can bring in a motion, but he can with respect to - but we will debate the motion. We will not necessarily -

MR. ROBERTS: We can only concur that is eminently fair, Your Honour, That

MR. ROBERTS: if we feel a motion is in order to come in and then a member may object and say that the motion is not timely, that the rights have been slapped upon it, at which stage the matter will be debated. That will also give the members of the House and I would hope and I am sure that the Speaker's advisers, the Clerk and the Law Clerk and the Assistant Clerk would have an opportunity to research the precedents, I am afraid we may need them on this one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: With respect to both the honourable Leader of the Opposition and the honourable the House Leader, the Chair feels and again it is subject to the wishes of the committee, but the Chair feels that this could be an example of a mountain being made out of a molehill, if an initial step were not taken. Namely; to ask the honourable member whether there is anything arising out of the affairs that have been raised by the honourable the Leader of the Opposition and other members on this side of the House, as to whether there is anything that the honourable member wishes to say to clear the matter up or not, or whether the honourable member does not wish to say anything at this point.

The Chair feels that one of the purposes of the Standing Rules or one of the purposes of raising points of order is to prevent matters which are raised in the heat of debate being aggravated by being raised again and again.

MR. CROSBIE: There was no heat of debate, Mr. Chairman, The honourable member's words were in fact, as he said them. There is no allegation at all, there are no words that the honourable gentlemen opposite are quoting to the House as objectionable or offensive or unparliamentary. My colleague, the Minister of Social Services and Rehabilitation, has made his speech and he has no intention, as I understand by discussing with him, of changing his speech. He has made his speech. If anyone can cite unparliamentary words, offensive words, he can certainly

MR. CROSBIE: consider it then as to whether he meant that or not, but it has not been cited to him and he has nothing to change in his speech. It was not in any heat of debate, it was a speech that we all heard, measured and deliberate and giving certain facts and so on, as he heard them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Placentia East.

MR. AYLWARD: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I was going myself to object to Your Honour's submission to the honourable minister. I agree that, I mean, I think it is a very, very important point that the Leader of the Opposition brought up. But I do feel myself on this matter that as all of us present here in the House, it is a breach of privilege of the House, not of the member of the House. I mean included amongst this, of course were several members on the other side, and no one and in particular, of course, the honourable member from Bell Island, at whom, I suppose, one could conclude that the remarks, if they were directed at anyone, were directed, and no one took objection at that particular time.

Now the Leader of the Opposition was absent from the Chamber.

Then he came in, Mr. Chairman, and said that if the minister said what he thought he said or what he had been told he said, it could possibly be a breach of privilege. So I respectfully submit, Mr. Chairman, that I think more is required to raise this point than for someone who has been absent from the Chamber to just come in and say - I have -

MR. ROBERTS: I have not raised any point of privilege.

MR. AYLWARD: No, no, but you are asking -

MR. ROBERTS: Inaudible.

MR. AYLWARD: No! No! No! But you are suggesting that one may have been. Well now anyone could come in, I mean I could come in here next week or next month and say I would like a copy of this because possibly there has been a breach of privilege. Now my point is, Mr. Chairman, what the House Leader said, and that is the wisdom

MR. AYLWARD: of the rule, of course, that the words must be objected to at that particular time. Then after repeat them and when the Clerk takes them down and you have the words before you, to see if the words themselves constitute this breach.

Now, Mr. Chairman, since these words have not been quoted, no one has quoted any words. The honourable member for White Bay South had reason to believe that he did not know what the honourable minister was saying because he kept talking about corruption and it could possibly apply to anyone.

Now he, in his own

remarks and probably for good reason, could not specify any words other than the fact that the word corruption was used. Now all of us know that that word has been used on numerous occasions here, and since this session of the House, and probably will be again. So, the use of the word corruption in itself, I would respectfully submit, as you know, does not necessarily imply that there has been a breach of privilege.

Now, if no member of this House can point to or quote the exact words of the minister, then I respectfully submit, as the House Leader has said, that probably we have been all sleeping on our rights, you know, that the time has passed. I know it is an important matter and my point in raising it is not to object to getting at the real reason behind it, but I do not think we should just set a precedent of this nature, where anyone could, you know, come into the House and just say that he has reason to believe that someone said something and therefore cease everything and have Hansard printed until we all have a look at it.

AN HON. MEMBER: (First part inaudible) this thing for a week.

MR. AYLWARD: No, I do not mean, just a moment now. Mr. Chairman, on the second point, the suggestion by the Chairman that the hon. minister said really, in other words, said what he intended to say or did he really say what the Leader of the Opposition has reason to believe that he said or thinks he said. I do not think, Mr. Chairman, that the minister can be asked to do that and I personally feel that the suggestion of the House Leader is more than reasonable here. That is of course, to have Hansard printed immediately...

AN HON. MEMBER: Well agree to it that is all we ask.

MR. AYLWARD: Yes, but you have asked for a little more I think. You have asked that...

AN HON. MEMBER: Do not use "you."

MR. AYLWARD: You have asked...

AN HON. MEMBER: Do not use "you"

MR. AYLWARD: All right, the honourable Leader of the Opposition has asked that when the Hansard has been printed, if he is then satisfied that there was a breach of privilege, that he can raise the point.

MR. ROBERTS: I do not need to ask for that, I can move a motion at any time, if it is in order.

MR. AYLWARD: Well yes of course, it can be debated and everything else like this...

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible)

MR. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, point of order, there is no need for him to object like that. If he has a point of order, let him stand up, but this is intolerable. I think the hon. member needs a (inaudible) to revive his slugging subservience.

MR. AYLWARD: No, Mr. Chairman, my point just simply is this, you know, I personally feel that it should be brought up at the particular time for the reasons given. I think it is a matter of importance to all of us and secondly; I do feel that the suggestion, with respect, made by the Chairman, that the minister should tell us really what he said, is really not in order and he should not be so directed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member.

MR. HICKEY: I am sure, Mr. Chairman, we are not in a Kangaroo Court. I have to take something back, but nobody knows what I said. My answer to that is simply this, I have made my speech, I am standing by it. When you get Hansard and show me what I said, if someone does not like something in that, that I have said, then I will deal with it. I have nothing further to say.

MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I gather Your Honour's ruling has in effect been appealed. I presume that Your Honour will not put it to a vote, when two ministers speak against it Your Honour apparently will not push it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Which ruling? Would the honourable...

MR. ROBERTS: The honourable gentleman's ruling that the minister might

be given an opportunity, but, you know, I am not concerned with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The ruling was that the honourable minister be given an opportunity to add anything that he wished to add, which is what...

MR. ROBERTS: He has added what he wished to add. I certainly did not ask him to withdraw anything. I said; if he wished to I would be delighted and I would let the matter drop. But in respect to the member for Placentia East who made a very noble speech but it was founded on a completely false premise, I did not ask for the interruption nor anything, Your Honour, I merely said that I was raising the point. Now the House Leader has said that he will argue it, if it comes up. We will argue it then and we will have a ruling then, of course, and that will be that.

I merely said would the - we will get the Hansard in due course, maybe a week. It may be ten days, it may be overnight. I merely asked if we could be accommodated and the hon. gentlemen opposite said that they will accommodate us. I appreciate that and the House Leader and I have settled the matter quite amicably

MR. ROBERTS: and the matter is, as I understand, we will get the Hansard as quickly as that can be arranged by the staff. Then on this side we will arrange the motion, if we feel that it is necessary. Then the argument as to whether or not the time -

MR. AYLWARD: Inaudible.

MR. ROBERTS: No but the honourable gentleman from Placentia East dipped, and sometimes it is necessary to take two bites of the apple, you see.

To continue, Sir, the honourable Minister of Finance understood it. He and I perfectly ad idem twenty minutes ago on this point.

But then the argument as to timing will be raised - it may never come up, the motion may never come up - then we will deal with it. The minister says he will stand by it, Sir, that is fine. That is fine. That is okay. The Minister of Finance says the words were not in the heat of debate, they were deliberately and with precision. Again that is fine. The words may or may not, we will see.

Now maybe my friend from Bell Island wants to say a word, he has been a silent observer, on what amounts to his own conduct being questioned. He may or may not wish to say a word, but I am perfectly satisfied with the undertaking of the House Leader to have the Hansards prepared and then we will see what follows from there and Your Honour and Mr. Speaker will rule, as Your Honour, and Mr. Speaker see fit, from thereon.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It has been brought to the attention of the staff to have the Hansard prepared. The honourable the member for Bell Island:

MR. NEARY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I deliberately sat back to listen to the legal wrangle that was taking place because I realize, Sir, that there is a precedent being set here. I did not want to get into the debate until all of the angles had been explored and the matter had been straightened out to the satisfaction of the House.

MR. NEARY: I also sat back, Sir, in my seat and in silence, thinking that the honourable minister who was responsible for the statement would stand and take his place in this house and clarify the matter. I think that Your Honour took, in my opinion and in ordinary laymans opinion, took the right course of action, by giving the minister responsible an opportunity to either lay a charge, withdraw, apologize or what have you. But the honourable minister elected to stick by his original statements.

MR. NICKEY: Sir, tell me what I said wrong.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, the honourable minister knows what he said wrong. And the honourable the Minister of Finance, who is over there like a Cheshire Cat, knows what the minister said wrong.

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order! Until the words - since this is the course that has been decided upon - until the words spoken have been obtained from Hansard, the Chair feels that it is out of order to revert back to discussion on the matters of privilege which have been raised.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, what I was going to say, if Your Honour would just give me a chance to finish the paragraph that I started to say there, Mr. Chairman, is this - the Minister of Finance knows -

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak without interruption from the chief's seat, Sir, if you do not mind. This is too serious a matter, Sir, too serious a matter and it is going to be straightened out. Before I take my seat in this House, it will be straightened out.

Mr. Chairman, the minister made certain statements that have gone out on press and radio. Gone out on press and radio, Sir. And the Minister of Finance knows the consequences of that, he is the expert on character assassination in this House, Sir.

MR. CROSBIE: Inaudible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order!

MR. HICKEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, it has not been established that there has been any character assassination tonight number one, and number two, if we want any expert advice on character assassination, look on the other side. I had to live with it for five years. Well I do not impugn people's characters. My record is good in this House.

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I was referring to the Minister of Finance when I made that statement, not the honourable Minister of Social Services.

MR. CROSBIE: On a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order! The words here are out of order when referred to an honourable member of the House; the words "character assassination".

MR. CROSBIE: On a point of order. We all know what the honourable gentleman has been trying now, a diversionary tactic.

Answer, if you are a man

if you can not answer what was said by the Minister of Social Services and Rehabilitation, do not start one of your scandalous attacks on someone else.

MR NEARY: Point of Order, Mr. Chairman.

MR CROSBIE: Never mind the diversionary tactics, answer the facts that were presented. Your conduct was a disgrace as a minister of the Crown. That is what is being described here tonight, disgraceful conduct.

MR NEARY: I abide by Your Chairman's ruling Mr. Chairman, I will withdraw the statement. Your Honour made a ruling.

MR CROSBIE: Your conduct was a disgrace. I do not withdraw that.

MR NEARY: Mr. Chairman, do I have the right to be heard in this House in silence, without interference from the Boss of the House?

MR CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR NEARY: Anyhow Mr. Chairman, the minister that made these statements he said he is going to stick by them. So I am going to suggest to this House, Sir, when I am finished my few remarks, a course of action, because as I stated a few moments ago, Sir, this will be reported in newspapers tomorrow, reported on radio and television tonight. It will make me look like a crook, a criminal Sir. But before I am finished with the honourable minister that made these statements Sir, we will find out who will look like a crook or a criminal.

Mr. Chairman, the reason I mentioned a couple of times in my remarks, if Your Honour will recall, both yesterday afternoon and today I mentioned the fact that I was being threatened or there was an appearance of a threat from the minister. He was going to produce certain evidence.

Now, Sir, for several months past, I would say since January 18, there have been investigations going on on Bell Island. There have been telephone calls, through the minister's office to the welfare office on Bell Island, hot line between Confederation Building and Bell Island. I have heard certain rumours -

MR HICKEY: Point of Order, Mr. Chairman, that is incorrect and I will

ask the member to withdraw it now. I have not had any hot line to Bell Island. I have competent, capable officials, through the chain of command, here is my assistant deputy minister and those are the people with whom I deal. I made one visit to Bell Island, the honourable gentleman knows when it was too, during the election campaign.

MR CHAIRMAN: The honourable minister will have an opportunity to contradict matters raised by the honourable member from Bell Island.

MR NEARY: Well, Mr. Chairman, it was drawn to my attention that investigations were taking place. Rumours are flying around, Sir. Rumours: This one got a payoff, that one got a payoff, corruption here, booze here. So, Sir, I deliberately came into this House, waited for the estimates of that department to come up. I baited the minister, deliberately baited him (yesterday afternoon and today,) The member for St John's East Extern knows full well that I baited him because I wanted to get this out in the open, Sir. Get it out in the open. I have it out in the open. Now that I have it out in the open, Sir, I will stick with it until it is straightened out.

When I am finished either the Minister of Social Services and Rehabilitation will resign from this House or I will resign from this House, Sir.

MR NEARY: It is a deal Mr. Chairman. That is a deal.

MR HICKEY: Have it recorded Mr. Chairman. Have it recorded.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order.

MR NEARY: It will be recorded in the Hansard. The honourable minister does not have to remind the recorder.

June 22, 1972

Tape 971(Night)

JM -

Mr. Neary:

So, Mr. Chairman, let me trace the events that led up to this apparently large sum of money being spent on repairs to houses on Bell Island, and it was spent over a two year period, Sir, or I think it was probably longer than a two year period, \$260,000 or \$270,000 over a two year period.

MR. HICKEY: One year.

MR. NEARY: No, Mr. Chairman, two years.

MR. HICKEY: One year.

MR. MURPHY: There must have been another \$260,000.

MR. NEARY: Now, Mr. Chairman, -

MR. HICKEY: For the fiscal year 1971-1972, that is one year. That is my mathematics.

MR. NEARY: Well, my understanding was, Mr. Chairman, it was over a two year period, because I think there was some information tabled in the House earlier.

AN HON. MEMBER: He can take backwater if he wants -

MR. NEARY: I am not taking back any water. I have not seen them come big enough on the other side yet. They have tried it. They have threatened to wipe out the District of Bell Island, revenge for voting Liberal, Mr. Chairman, revenge.

MR. MURPHY: Who said this? Absolutely false.

MR. NEARY: That is not. The Minister of Finance took to the television, took to the air waves after the March election. "We will wipe out Bell Island," He announced it to the whole province, redistribution, Bell Island will be wiped off the map. They have tried to get me, Mr. Chairman, in all sorts of ways. The Minister of Finance would love to be able to get me, but he is not going to get me this time. Here he is, the boss is coming back in the House.

MR. CROSBIE: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, on a point of order:

The honourable gentleman's statement that I was on the air waves and said Bell Island would be wiped out is a falsehood, if he makes it knowingly. I never said any such thing on the air waves or anywhere else. Who would want to wipe out Bell Island? We would not be interested in wiping out Bell Island. We would like to help Bell Island and as far as the honourable gentleman is concerned, I would not want to wipe him out, I would not dirt my shoes on him.

MR. NEARY: Is that a point of order, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable minister has stated that a matter raised by the honourable member for Bell Island was incorrect. This, I believe, the honourable member is entitled to do.

MR. NEARY: No, Mr. Chairman, I was referring to the electoral District of Bell Island.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

AN HON. MEMBER: At least we have one, not two or three.

MR. NEARY: But anyway, Sir,

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. NEARY: If you take a line on the map, Mr. Chairman, if you take a point say my honourable colleague's district in St. Barbe North and you swing a line down to Bonavista South, Bonavista Bay, I have the only Liberal district East of that line.

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes, and how did you get it?

MR. NEARY: I have the only liberal district, Sir.

MR. CROSBIE: (Inaudible).

MR. ROBERTS: That is close to an -

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, I would challenge the honourable Minister of Finance to stand in his place and lay that charge now. Make the charge. He does not have the guts, Mr. Chairman. Make the charge!

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order!

MR. CROSBIE: Mr. Chairman, what I said was and I will repeat, that we

heard tonight how the honourable gentleman got the District of Bell Island.

MR. NEARY: So anyway, Mr. Chairman, it is getting kind of late and this will probably go on for two or three days because I intend to get this straightened out before the estimates of this department are approved.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. NEARY: That is right. I am coming to that. Do not worry I am coming to it and either the minister resigns or I resign, one or the other and I will shut the Minister of Finance up forever. He will crawl out of this House, hide away, bury himself or the member for Harbour Grace will bury him six feet under. Sir, they have my Irish up, they have my Irish up now, Sir, and I will tell you this that here is a man that is going to fight back. I am not going to have these millionaires, these well-to-do city lawyers, Sir, snow me under. No way, Mr. Chairman, there is no way.

So here it is, Mr. Chairman, Bell Island started mining in 1895 and after the mine started over there, Sir, people just flocked to Bell Island, just flocked in there. They came in in droves because you could make good money on Bell Island. They built tar paper shacks, they built sod houses, they did it all. There was never any planning put into Bell Island. DOSCO, Mr. Chairman, did not do any planning. They were not interested in the community. Whatever was done there the people had to do it themselves. So Bell Island had a history of ups and downs. You would work about two or three years steady and then the bottom would fall out of the iron ore market.

AN HON. MEMBER: (Inaudible).

MR. NEARY: Mr. Chairman, do I have the right to be heard in silence without interruption.

MR. MURPHY: (Inaudible).

MR. ROBERTS: Well, that is typical, that is just typical.

MR. ROBERTS: That is typical of you, Ank.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order!

MR. NEARY: So, Mr. Chairman, Bell Island did not really become prosperous until the war years. So during the year wars, Sir, when the sources of iron ore in other parts of the world was cut off, Bell Island became a little prosperous. But the people, Mr. Chairman, did not have a chance to get on their feet, no paved roads, no water and sewerage, houses falling down around their ears.

HON. MEMBERS: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: Then, Mr. Chairman, 1959 arrived, a mine closed, 650 men laid off that is more than was laid off in the two mines -

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: How many were laid off?

AN HON. MEMBER: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: Alright, I well remember.

HON. MEMBERS: Inaudible.

MR. NEARY: I remember at that time, Mr. Chairman, there were 2250 men on the payroll.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Would the honourable member continue on tomorrow, it now being 11:00 p.m.

On motion that the Committee of Supply rise report having passed certain estimates of expenditure and ask leave to sit again, Mr. Speaker returned to the Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Speaker the Committee of Supply have considered the matters to them referred and have made some progress and ask leave to sit again.

On motion report received and adopted.

On motion, committee ordered to sit again tomorrow.

MR. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House at its rising to adjourn until tomorrow, Friday at 3:00 P.M. and the House do now adjourn

On motion the House adjourned until tomorrow,
Friday at 3:00 P.M.