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Speaker: Honourable Patrick McNicholas

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The House met at 3:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

Before moving to Oral Questions, I have great pleasure in welcoming to the Visitors Gallery twenty-five Grade 1X students from Porter Creek Junior Secondary School, Whitehorse-Yukon exchange students with Bishop Abraham School, with their two teachers, Mrs. Kitz and Mr. Dueling.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. BARRY:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:
Mr. Speaker, we hear from fairly reliable sources that there is presently an application for Treasury Board to seek approximately \$500 million in the way of money to utilize as a trade-off for the Newfoundland railway. I wonder if the Premier would indicate whether he has now agreed that this trade-off would take place?

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BARRY:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:
Will the Premier indicate whether there are ongoing negotiations with the Government of Canada with respect to any such trade-off? And will the Premier indicate if he is aware that there is this process underway within the Government of Canada to offer the Government of Newfoundland, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, a set amount of money in place of the Newfoundland railway?

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker, I have said on several occasions, in this House and outside of this House, that the federal government were developing a proposal. I suppose that is what the hon. the Leader of the Opposition is referring to, a proposal which we have not received yet.

MR. BARRY:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A supplementary, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:
Mr. Speaker, would the Premier indicate just what is his position with respect to the Government of Canada abandoning its Constitutional position to maintain a Newfoundland railway? Would the Premier indicate whether he is actively encouraging an offer from the Government of Canada?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) does not know the position of the Government of Newfoundland now on the railway, there is nothing I can do to help him out. I have made it public I do not know how many times, hundreds of times over the last number of years. If the Leader of the Opposition does not know I will have to get him a whole bunch of material. It is no good for me to say it again here in the House, obviously, because we have said it over and over again.

As far as the latter part of his question is concerned, I am not actively promoting anything. What I was actively promoting and the government has been actively promoting for some time now, when the Leader of the Opposition was over here and since he has been over there, is the primary interest of the Government of Newfoundland not to retain the railway but to retain the railway with major upgrading. That has been our position. We do understand, as the Leader of the Opposition does, and, I guess, everybody in this House and people outside this House, that the federal government are developing a proposal, they told us that months and months ago, and they have not yet presented anything to us. So that is where it stands.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Brett). I have a report here in my hand, which I have had about two to three weeks, concerning the very serious problems at Exon House. I never brought it before the House before because I figured I would give the minister time to do something about it, but in light of the resignation yesterday of the person who gave me this report, I would like to ask the Minister of Social Services has anything been done about the problems that he was made aware of at Exon House? Also, has he received a report concerning the high bacteria count, one very much higher than normal, throughout Exon House?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. BRETT:

Mr. Speaker, I assume that the hon. member is talking about an incident at Exon House which happened a number of weeks ago. He must have seen in the paper, heard on the radio, seen on television that this matter was adequately dealt with by the union, management and government, everybody that was involved. The person who was alleged - I do not know if abuse is the word or not - to have committed the act was suspended for a month - eighteen working days, which is approximately a month. So the matter has been taken care of to the satisfaction of all concerned as far as I know, Mr. Speaker. As for the person who reported the incident, he has decided to resign. Well there is not very much we can do about that. I have had no reports of any high bacteria count or anything of that nature down there.

MR. EFFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:
Mr. Speaker, is it possible that the Minister of Social Services is not aware of the problems at Exon House? Because in answering my question he only referred to one incident, and I have a report here in front of me where I have at least eight to ten incidents. And there has also been a report done which shows that there is a very high bacteria count at Exon House.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please! The hon. member is on a supplementary.

MR. EFFORD:
Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Social Services is it a fact that people are being hired off the street to look after those people at Exon House?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. BRETT:
No, Mr. Speaker, that is not true, not to the best of my knowledge. There is a full staff at Exon House. There are probably volunteers, there are probably people who come in and work on a volunteer basis, but I know absolutely nothing about people being hired off the street. If you are talking about new staff that come on, then I suppose any time that we take on new staff, whether it would be at Exon House or in the department itself, you would have to say that they come off the street. But people who are hired are trained to work in

the institution. The hon. member is absolutely and positively wrong. There have not been any reports of abuse from that institution for a number of years and I do not know where the hon. member is getting this information.

We heard the Executive Director, I believe it was, of the Nursing Association, we heard a representative of the Nurses' Union, we heard the Executive Director of the Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded, St. John's branch, we heard all three of these very professional people indicate -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please! I think the hon. minister is getting away from the answer.

MR. BRETT:
Well, Mr. Speaker, I was trying to point out to the hon. gentleman that I have had no reports of any such incidents at Exon House other than the one that everybody knows about.

MR. EFFORD:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A supplementary, the hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:
I want to ask the hon. the Minister of Social Services one question: Are you the Minister of Social Services? Because if you are you should know the reports are coming out because they are very clearly written.

The second part of the question, Mr. Speaker, is it a fact and why -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:
Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Social Services, is it a fact that they are pinching pennies in supplying linen, towels, face cloths and hygiene material for those people and those children at Exon House? Because it has been clearly stated by a number of people. And the other part of the question, I want to ask him did some member from his department go in there and -

MR. WARREN:
You are making a speech.

MR. EFFORD:
It is a question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. WARREN:
Sit down! One question is enough.

MR. SPEAKER:
Carry on.

MR. EFFORD:
Mr. Speaker, the third part of the question: Is it a fact that a member from his department went in and thanked those workers for not saying anything and keeping their mouths shut after this report was made public?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. BRETT:
Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the hon. member is implying over there. He said something about pinching pennies. Now, I believe that somebody did report that there was a shortage of linen over there, a shortage of towels. I have the figure for the hon. member. Last year we spent \$26,796 on personal clothing over

in that institution, and that works out to about \$470 a resident so I do not think that that suggests that anybody is penny pinching. In face cloths and towels, Mr. Speaker, we spent over \$2500. Now, can you imagine the amount of face cloths and towels that you can buy for that amount of money? That works out to \$44 for every resident in that institution. People who are saying that must have ulterior motives because obviously what they are saying is not true.

MR. EFFORD:
A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:
Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Social Services is he sure of what he is saying there? Is he telling me that those children under this special care are only getting \$24.00 a year for towels and face cloths? Those children need special attention. They are not the same as an average, normal human being.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member is not asking a question.

MR. EFFORD:
Would the minister tell us how many towels that \$24.00 a year would buy?

MR. BRETT:
It is \$44.00 a year.

MR. EFFORD:
Forty-four dollars a year is a very small amount for one child.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of Social Services.

MR. BRETT:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's lack of knowledge is pathetic, really. That is a stupid question. I do not know how many towels \$44.00 will buy, or how many face cloths it will buy.

MR. EFFORD:

You should know.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BRETT:

That is replacement, Mr. Speaker. That is money that is spent to replace these items, and I would suggest to the hon. member that it is sufficient and, if it were not sufficient, then we would put more dollars there.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Windsor-Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of the Environment and it concerns a topic that has been in the news a lot this past year or so and it has caused a great deal of concern for people, PCB's. Would the minister advise the House as to whether or not he can assure this House that he is aware of all the storage sites in Newfoundland that are recognized as storage sites for PCB's? Now, we know they are in Stephenvill, we know they are in Goose Bay, we know they are in Buchans, we know the utility companies store PCB's. Can the minister assure the House that he

is aware of all the sites in Newfoundland where PCB's are stored?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Environment.

MR. BUTT:

Mr. Speaker, I can assure the House that we are aware of where PCB's are stored in the Province. If, however, any responsible citizen becomes aware of a particular place where there may be a miniscule amount of PCB's or PCB contaminated material, I would think that they would be responsible enough to report it to my department so that appropriate action can be taken.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

Maybe the minister will tell us when he stands up what he means by miniscule amount of PCB's. I would like to know what a miniscule amount of PCB means. If you have an unsuspecting member of the general public coming in contact with a miniscule amount of PCB, would the minister be concerned?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

This is a supplementary.

MR. FLIGHT:

So, Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is: The sites that the minister have identified in this Province that are storage sites for PCB's, is he satisfied that there is adequate surveillance or security

in place that would guarantee the unsuspecting general public would not come into contact with those PCB's?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of the Environment.

MR. BUTT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, absolutely. We have certain sites identified around the Province where we have PCB's and PCB contaminated material stored. It has been done in accordance with regulations, some of the most stringent regulations, I might add, Mr. Speaker, of any province in Canada. If you look at the site that we have in Goose Bay as an example, it is in a bunker with a fifteen ton door up to it. It is being monitored and has a security system around it. It is being monitored on a regular basis by the Public Works people of the Minister of Public Works Department. We have some, as the member pointed out, in Buchans, Stephenville and some other locations that I have already identified to the hon. House, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware of the bunker in Goose Bay left by the Americans, and it was appropriate and good it was there. Is the minister just as satisfied with the kind of surveillance and the kind of environment that the PCB's in Stephenville, for instance, are receiving? There is storage in

Stephenville. Is the minister so satisfied with the Stephenville storage, the Buchans storage, the Grand Falls storage as he is with Goose Bay, and is he just as satisfied with the kind of protection that the general public got from those sites in Stephenville and all the rest of the PCB sites in Newfoundland as he is with Happy Valley - Goose Bay? Would he also tell the House if he has heard of any members of the general public coming quite recently in contact with PCB's that are in storage under the surveillance of his department?

MR. BUTT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Environment.

MR. BUTT:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is zeroing in on Stephenville. I can tell the hon. member that the people in Stephenville recently - I say recently, in recent months - applied to have the PCB material over there stored in an alternate site and that site was approved by the officials of my department.

MR. FLIGHT:

Why?

MR. BUTT:

Because it was a more secure site, obviously.

MR. FLIGHT:

Oh! Now it is coming out.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. BUTT:

As well, Abitibi-Price moved their PCB's from one storage area to another, they did it in

consultation and with the approval of my department, simply because they had found a more secure place to store that most undesirable material, and it will be stored there until such time as we are in a position with the Government of Canada to permanently dispose of it. I might add, for the information of hon. members, if I might, Mr. Speaker, that the Government of Quebec -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! I think we all want to have questions and answers as short as we can.

MR. BUTT:

Right. Mr. Speaker. Very briefly, the Government of Quebec has put forward a proposal to install a permanent PCB destruction site which in effect will take care of the very miniscule amount, on a national scale, that we have in Newfoundland and in Atlantic Canada.

MR. FLIGHT:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

That was a final supplementary.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

My question is to the Minister of Justice. On March 12, a privately owned fish off-loading system valued at \$130,00 was dumped into the harbour in Port aux Basques. Mr. Speaker, I might add this was dumped in a manner that can only be described as an act of terrorism or mob rule or vigilante

rule. Can the minister tell the House if an investigation has been ordered and, if so, what are the results? Have the people responsible been apprehended?

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, the RCMP themselves responded immediately to that incident. I am aware that a senior officer of the RCMP went personally to Port aux Basques to take part in the start of an investigation into that incident. I will have to take the question about the current status of the matter as notice and supply the information to the House tomorrow as to the status of the police investigation.

MR. W. CARTER:

A supplementary to the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

In light of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that otherwise law-abiding citizens were driven to take that extreme action, will the minister undertake to have an investigation carried out into all aspects of the Winter fishery on the Southwest Coast to ensure that does not happen again?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, if there has been an unlawful act take place in any part of the Province I would

assume that the appropriate law enforcement agencies throughout the Province would carry out the appropriate investigations and make recommendations.

MR. BARRY:

Just answer the question.

MR. RIDEOUT:

I do not need any prompting from the hon. gentleman, Mr. Speaker, in order to get to the question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. RIDEOUT:

As far as the investigation into the Winter fishery on the West Coast goes, Mr. Speaker, this year, for example, we were in very close consultation with the workers and the fishermen represented by the union, in very close consultation with the West Coast processors represented by the West Coast Producers' Association and, as a result of an agreement worked out between those two groups, we made every effort, as a department, under our regulations to try to bring some degree of sanity and quality to that very prolific fishery on the West Coast.

MR. W. CARTER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

The agreement worked out referred to by the minister, of course, that is correct. An agreement was worked out between the union and the various fish plant owners. But obviously in light of the fact, Mr. Speaker - this is the question - that this incident

occurred subsequent to the so-called arrangement being worked out would indicate that all is not well despite the minister's efforts. In light of that incident, will he now undertake to have an investigation carried out, as I say, into all aspects of the Winter fishery in that part of the Province? Because obviously there are still some very serious problems bothering the fishermen and the plant workers in the area.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is jumping to conclusions that there were fishermen or plant workers or some other part of the citizenry that was responsible for this particular act. I can tell the hon. gentleman that I think we made progress in terms of bringing some order to that particular fishery last year. It is a very difficult one, as he knows, and as other ministers who occupied this department know. We are always in consultation with the various groups, the unions, the processors and other groups in the area as we were last year, as we will be this year before we get into the Winter fishery again, to see if there is anything we can do together, all of us - I think we improved the situation last year - to make it better next year and the year after and for years and years to come, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Doyle). About a month or so ago he sent me a list of the water and sewerage projects which were approved in the last fiscal year and the communities in which they were approved. Looking over the list I have a question for him. I have looked at a number of PC districts and a number of Liberal districts and there seems there is a major discrepancy there. For example, in Baie Verte, eight projects were approved.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member if making a speech.

MR. FENWICK:
It will only take a few seconds.

The research done on it indicates that the amount of money committed to PC districts is something like four times the amount of money committed to districts that were Liberal all last year. Could the minister explain to me why there is this major discrepancy between these districts?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. DOYLE:
Mr. Speaker, there is no major discrepancy in that. Looking over the list I sent the hon. gentleman, we find that twenty-six different communities represented by members on the opposite side of the House were funded last year by the Department of Municipal Affairs. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Municipal Affairs does not discriminate against any community in the Province or any municipality. We make funding available wherever the need exists.

MR. FENWICK:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A supplementary, the hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:
Why did the district of St. Barbe receive something in the neighborhood of \$20,000 last year and the district of Green Bay receive fifteen different projects for a total of \$1,567,000? Could the minister explain to me the essential difference between a rural area such as St. Barbe, at that level, and a rural area such as Green Bay at 700 times as much funding?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. DOYLE:
Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is just picking out one district in the Province and zeroing in on that instead of taking all the districts in the Province that were funded. He should know from the list of communities that I did send him that there was anywhere between twenty-five and thirty communities in Liberal districts that received funding, and also funding went to the hon. gentleman's district of Menihek last year as well. In the Department of Municipal Affairs, Mr. Speaker, as I told the hon. gentleman before, we concentrate on the ongoing projects that we have before we start any new ones. I do not believe there is any discrepancy whatsoever, and if the hon. gentleman looks at the list closely enough he will know that there are not any discrepancies when you consider the fact that twenty-six different communities were funded by the

Department of Municipal Affairs last year from communities represented by hon. gentlemen opposite.

MR. FENWICK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

That would be a legitimate answer if it were accurate, but the fact of the matter is that \$640,000 on the average went into Tory districts and less than \$200,000 into Liberal districts. I am going to table today the material that I have done up and the research that I have done on it. I would like the minister to take it as notice. Would he please give me an answer as to why there is four times as much funding going into Tory districts as there is into Opposition districts? By the way, no money went into Menihek last year on water and sewerage.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker, I guess there is more funding going into PC districts than there is going into Liberal districts, as indicated to hon. gentlemen, because we have more Tory districts than you have Liberal districts. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated a few moments ago, we do not discriminate against any municipality in the Province, and I think there is proof positive when you look at the list that I sent to the hon. gentleman last year which listed all of the Liberal districts that were funded last year under the Department of

Municipal Affairs, and the hon. gentleman's district as well, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Russell) concerning the gasoline problem in Labrador. The communities of Port Hope Simpson, Charlottetown, Mary's Harbour, Lodge Bay, St. Lewis, Williams Harbour, Norman Bay and Pinsent Arm are now without gasoline. They are going up to Red Bay, getting gasoline and coming down and that will be okay for another couple of weeks. The residents are rather concerned because they have to have gasoline on hand to go out and fix up their Summer stages to get ready for the salmon fishery.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! The hon. member is making a speech.

MR. HISCOCK:

The question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. Residents in Eastern Labrador are asking the Minister of Consumer Affairs if he will help a private company in the Labrador Straits area to supply fuel and bring it down to Williams Harbour so that local residents in the area can come out and pick it up by ski-doo?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I understand the

problem which the hon. member has alluded to is a responsibility of a former Liberal member of this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL:

If he cannot perform his duties any better there than he did here, then he is not doing what he should be doing.

MR. DINN:

We will give it to somebody else next year.

MR. HISCOCK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Speaker, since I have been representing that area, as well as the former member for Torngat Mountains-

MR. SIMMS:

He is still the member.

MR. HISCOCK:

- each year there are shortages. There was a Food Prices Review Committee that went around -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! This is a supplementary.

MR. HISCOCK:

A supplementary question is, the Minister of Consumer Affairs should have some regard for the people of Labrador and not blame a former member of this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. HISCOCK:

The people down in that area do not have fuel. What does the Minister of Consumer Affairs going to do to make sure that there is fuel down there? And do not blame it on another person.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. DINN:

They are coming to take him away. Throw a net over him, 'Leo'.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, perhaps first I should ask is there a doctor in the House?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BARRY:

With due respect to Your Honour -

MR. RUSSELL:

I would suggest that the hon. member sort of watch his blood pressure a little bit.

However, if there is, and there appears to be a problem in Labrador with the provision of fuel, if the hon. member has some suggestions -

MR. HISCOCK:

If! If! If!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. DINN:
Pass him on to the contractor.
Pass him on to Mel Woodward.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, it is nice to know that the members opposite at least know some two letter words.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, I will do all I can, if there is a problem and I assume there is a problem, to provide fuel to parts of Labrador. If there is anything I can do to assist I will be glad to do it.

MR. HISCOCK:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A supplementary, the hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:
Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of Consumer Affairs for giving a rational answer instead of an answer like the one before. When it comes to the people of my district -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

That is not a supplementary question.

MR. HISCOCK:
The other question that I have to ask the Minister of Consumer

Affairs: There was a report of the Food Prices Review Committee and it made certain recommendations for Labrador. The Minister of Social Services (Mr. Brett) was the Chairman. Could the Minister of Consumer Affairs report to this House when these recommendations are going to be accepted and implemented? Then we would not have the problem that I am talking about now.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. PECKFORD:
We will have to have another Select Committee.

MR. FLIGHT:
Just listen to this. Listen to the answer!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, the member for Windsor - Buchans is doing an about-face now because of the going over he got in the media because of his allegations in the House yesterday. There were certain things he could not back up.

Mr. Speaker, the report of the Select Committee on Food Prices was done prior to my becoming responsible for this department. Shortly after becoming responsible for this portfolio, I can say that I did look at the report and I read it. I am not familiar, at the moment, with the recommendations that were there specifically but I shall undertake

MR. EFFORD:
Boy, oh, boy! I knew he was going

to say that.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. RUSSELL:
The member for Port de Grave, Mr. Speaker, is a mind reader as well. That is great. Perhaps he should sort out his hockey team and he would do all right.

Mr. Speaker, I will undertake to dig out that report of the Food Prices Review Committee and make myself again familiar with the recommendations and be pleased to report back to this House.

MR. HISCOCK:
A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary.

MR. HISCOCK:
Could the Minister of Consumer Affairs assure the people in Eastern Labrador of a specific date when his department is going to be helping with regard to the fuel? Or is this going to be passed on for another study only to find out two or three weeks from now that there is nothing done? Could the minister give a firm date when his department as well as the Rural Development Department -

MR. WARREN:
What is happening now?

MR. HISCOCK:
Well, it is an emergency now, Mr. Speaker, and I ask the minister to not only study it but to take immediate action. Could he tell this House what will be done and when it will be done?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Consumer

Affairs.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, I cannot give the hon. member a precise moment or hour when this will be done. I understand that Ultramar has already delivered some fuel in one area, Hopedale, and that the Woodwards are responsible for the Port Hope Simpson area and perhaps they have some responsibility in carrying out that. As I said just now I will undertake to have a look at it and if there is anything I can do, then I will be pleased to do it as soon as possible.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The time for Oral Questions has elapsed.

o o o

MR. MARSHALL:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
The hon. President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:
Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 119. (1), I move that the estimates of the following departments be referred to the Resource Standing Committee on the Estimates: The Department of Mines and Energy; Department of Fisheries; Department of Development; Rural, Agricultural and Northern Development; Forest Resources and Lands; and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing. I further move, pursuant to the same Standing Order, that the following departments be referred to the Government Services Committee: The

Department of Municipal Affairs; Public Works and Services; Labour; Finance; Transportation; Consumer Affairs and Communications; and I further move, Mr. Speaker, that pursuant to that same Standing Order, the following estimates of those departments be referred to the Social Services Committee: The Department of Justice; Health; Education; Environment; Social Services; Culture, Recreation and Youth; and Career Development and Advanced Studies.

MR. SPEAKER:

It is moved and seconded that these departments be referred to committees. All those in favour 'Aye', those against 'Nay'. Carried.

Petitions

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, I have a petition which is signed by 496 people in the town of Roddickton. The prayer of this petition is: "We, the residents of Roddickton, hereby petition the hon. Ron Dawe, Minister of the Department of Transportation for the Province," and the gist of the petition is that the hon. minister enter into an agreement with his counterpart in Ottawa so that the cross-country road which is route 432 will be completely upgraded and paved.

I am very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to be able to stand up today and support this petition. Again, I

want to compliment the people of Roddickton for the way in which they are approaching this problem. I want to say how patient the people of Roddickton have been through the years. I just came back from spending ten days in Roddickton, Mr. Speaker, on the Easter break and my command of the language is not great enough to describe the condition of the roads in the Roddickton area at this time.

I could assure this hon. House that there is very little similarity between Water Street in St. John's and Water Street in Roddickton today. On Water Street in St. John's, the average person would have some indication that he is actually walking on a street and he is not walking on the beach. When you talk about Water Street in Roddickton today, Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to distinguish the area which is called the street and the area which is called the water. Indeed, there is a lot more water than street, to put it exactly.

This section of road that the people of Roddickton are talking about is about thirty-five miles long and it goes from Plum Point to the Canada Bay Branch in the Roddickton area. The day before yesterday I presented the petition from the Bide Arm people who were also asking that this road be paved. Mr. Speaker, you can imagine my disappointment when, after giving that petition, not a single member from the other side of this House saw fit to even stand in his place and express some sympathy or some empathy for the people who live in Bide Arm and who have to travel on that terrible, dirty, muddy road.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I

presented a petition from the people of Englee and once again, Mr. Speaker, I was very disappointed to see that not a single true, blue Tory stood in his place to support that petition. Yes, we had the member for Bonavista South (Mr. Morgan), I am not sure of his status at the present time but, he did indeed stand up and I thank him publicly for supporting that petition. Today I am presenting a similar petition from a different group of people, from the people of Roddickton, who, in a very civilized fashion - I want to stress the civility of their fashion - are asking their government, their elected representations, for road improvements.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is not coming from me as an individual. All too often in this House I notice members opposite feel that when members on this side bring in petitions, we bring them in as individuals. I want to remind members that I represent about 10,000 people in the district of the Strait of Belle Isle. When I stand in this place, Mr. Speaker, I am not standing as Chris Decker or as a member. I am standing as these 10,000 people and when I am insulted and when I am booed and when I am spit at, it is 10,000 people who are insulted, who are spit on, who are booed at. It is the 10,000 people in the Strait of Belle Isle that symbolically members opposite speak to when they speak to me when I am in this Chamber. I am not here on my own or anything, I am here as their representative.

MR. J. CARTER:

Sleaze bag, you sleazed your way in.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

MR. DECKER:

Yes, I did sleaze my way in, by a 1,650 majority, a very good sleaze!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER:

You will never again.

MR. DECKER:

I am glad, Mr. Speaker, to support this petition and I am hoping that someone, a true Tory, will speak. I would like to see the hon. Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall) - the truest Tory in this Province, probably the only Tory in this Province - I would like to see him get up and support this petition. Failing that, I am calling on the Premier, who spent a couple of Summers of his life as a welfare officer up in Englee and in that area, who knows that road full well, to get up and support the people of Roddickton who are asking to have this road upgraded and paved.

Mr. Speaker, some years ago the hon. the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe), on the eve of an election, stood in a public meeting in Roddickton and promised, without any strings attached, that he was going to undertake to have some paving done in the Roddickton area within that coming Summer, which would have been last Summer. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, it was a trick and it was a ruse. He told the people something which he did not intend to carry out and indeed he did not carry out.

So now today, Mr. Speaker, 496 residents of Roddickton, which takes in the majority of the

people who are old enough to vote, offer this petition. There are no people here under age on this petition. They are all voters and they are a very law-abiding people. They are asking, Mr. Speaker, that this hon. House of Assembly would consider the conditions of Route 432 and that they would enter into an agreement with their counterparts in Ottawa so that the cross-country road could be paved. I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, to be able to support this petition today.

Thank you.

MR. J. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER:
I would like to correct a few misunderstandings right away. In the first place, members in this House do not represent their district, they represent the whole of the Province. The fact that we represent a district is only the device which gets us elected.

MR. BARRY:
A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. J. CARTER:
Oh, this is ridiculous.

MR. SPEAKER:
A point of order, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:
The member and former minister, never to be again, the now backbench member, must address or speak to the petition and not to this garbage that he is going on with right now.

MR. J. CARTER:
To that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:
To that point of order, the hon. the member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER:
That is just a virulent outburst by a disappointed, disaffected Tory. I think that it should be thought of in that light. I look forward to a favourable ruling.

MR. BARRY:
Like most of the rest of the population of the Province right now, by the way.

MR. SPEAKER:
To that point of order, there is no point of order. I think he was replying to a point raised by the hon. member about representation in a district.

The hon. the member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker, I certainly concur with the implication in the petition. I just wish that the wording were slightly different. I think if part of the wording had been for the member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Decker) to resign, then it would have been a much more appropriate petition.

Nevertheless, I would like to suggest that the chances for any upgrading in any part of this Province would be better served if the member were to adopt a reasonably conciliatory attitude instead of this hostile, browbeating, blackmailing type of approach that he is using. It is most inappropriate and it makes it very hard for the powers that be - they are only human - to even look favourably upon such requests.

There is a time for abuse and vituperation in this House and I think it quite properly belongs here when someone opposite is making a fool of himself. I think that this approach does not work.

We are in petitions, I think, and the rules are quite clear. When a petition is being presented, it should be confined to the matters mentioned in the prayer of the petition. I think it would help greatly if there is any serious intent for having this petition granted that the approach be conciliatory, reasonable and sensible.

I am well aware of the district. I know the district reasonably well and I am aware of the situation with the road and the climatic conditions there and all the rest of it. I think that the residents have a very difficult time in that part of the Province, particularly because of the climatic conditions and the long drive that is necessary to get there from other major centers.

So I would certainly hope that something can be done with the roads but, I more fervently hope that the member will come to his senses and adopt a sensible attitude.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

It is unfortunate that the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) saw fit to trivialize the seriousness and the genuineness of this petition so ably presented by the member on behalf of the people

of Roddickton to have this country road upgraded and paved. Like the member for St. John's North - we have to believe what he said, that he was familiar with the road - I, too, am familiar with that particular road and have driven over it. I must say I, too, can verify the indescribable and deplorable condition of that road.

I was certainly intrigued yesterday by the statistics presented by the member when he talked about the extra cost in maintenance and how, when people trade in their cars, they get ripped off and they do not get the same price as people using better roads. I think that is something that government members should recognize when they are allocating funds for the upgrading and paving of roads, to have some sympathy for people who have to consistently drive their vehicles over gravel roads, over bad roads, over roads that are terrible, tearing their vehicles to pieces and having more repairs all the time. Not only do they get a low trade-in, lower than anybody else when they go to trade their cars, but the constant expense for repairing their cars after having to drive over these terribly bad roads should also be considered.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support this petition. An interesting activity would be to make the same comparison with roads in the Province, as the member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick) made with the water and sewer projects.

MR. FENWICK:

You will not get the figures.

MR. LUSH:

Well, not to take away from the member, the water and sewer

projects are something I have been on to many, many years ago and that has been a pattern ever since I have been in this House, but roads would even be worse, I am sure, and that is why they will not release them.

I do not want the member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Decker) to wait with bated breath, but for nine years I presented petitions in this House on behalf of the people of Terra Nova for bad roads. Do you know what the results were after nine years? Not one inch, not one centimeter of paved road in the district of Terra Nova. So, Mr. Speaker, that should tell us something about the philosophy and about the policy of this government.

The member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) mentions the notion of being conciliatory and not being so hostile. Mr. Speaker, when you look at the record, when you look at what is done, how can one be anything but hostile and angry and aggravated at the policy of this government. Well, Mr. Speaker, we hope that they will change their policy. We hope that they see that they are spending the taxpayers' dollars of this Province more equally and certainly with more sensitivity, and we hope that the great district of the Strait of Belle Isle, so ably represented at this particular point in time by the present member, that they will get their fair share of money. When the monies are allocated for the upgrading and paving of roads, we hope that the district of the Strait of Belle Isle gets its fair and equal share. That is all we are asking. We are not asking for an unequal share, we are asking for a fair share and equal share, as all members are looking for.

Mr. Speaker, it sickens me to the stomach when I hear members opposite making their little snide remarks, "we get them because we are good members, we make good representatives." How inane! How stupid! How gullible do they think the people of Newfoundland are! That is not the way that a democracy works. We are asking the people - we are asking the Minister of Finance -

MR. J. CARTER:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

A point of order, the hon. the member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, although I was only listening with half an ear, and it would probably be necessary to get the tapes or Hansard to be sure of the insults that the member was presenting but, he was insulting this House. He was suggesting that unruly behaviour should be the norm, and this is the way to get things done. This is an insult to this House, and I think he should be made to withdraw it.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, I must rule there is no point of order.

The hon. member's time is up or was up at that time.

MR. MORGAN:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on the petition.

MR. SPEAKER:

That has already been done.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

By leave!

MR. MORGAN:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker, if he has leave, that is fine but, I would like to present a new petition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
By leave! By leave!

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member has leave?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
By leave!

MR. SPEAKER:
By leave.

The hon. the member for Bonavista South.

MR. MORGAN:
I think, first of all, Mr. Speaker, it is important for all of us to understand that one of the most important functions over the years, I have been here since 1972 in this House, and I take exception to the manner in which the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) commented on this petition. I take strong exception to it, because all the member from the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Decker) is doing is bringing forward the concerns of his constituents and, since 1972, it is very important to have the right respected of each individual member to bring forward the views and concerns and the needs of respective constituents.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. MORGAN:
That right should never be abused

in the House when a member tries to put forward the views of his constituents, no matter what party or what side of the House we stand on. It is so important to maintain that right and that privilege.

Now, on the petition itself, I am quite familiar with road. I travelled over it no longer than a month ago I guess, a month or a month and a half ago I travelled over that road in Roddickton. I have many, many friends in Roddickton, many of them Liberal party supporters indeed, very few NDP supporters down there, and many Conservative supporters. The people are being very realistic in their demands and they are going about it in a proper way. They are putting forward petitions, they have had meetings with the government and they are keeping their hopes up that something can be done, especially now when that town has been turned around from a dormant sleeping town, as it was at the closedown of the woods industry, to a town now that has some basic economic viability, some base there through the fishery with a crab plant operation that opened up a few years ago now employing hundreds of people. They now have a good base and has brought some economic viability to the town of Roddickton.

So I support the petition. I am sure that the government will recognize the need and whenever funds are available, give the petition every consideration.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:
Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a very familiar petition this time and I will read out the prayer again so that the Minister of Energy can listen to it again. It says "We, the undersigned, protest the high rates charged for diesel oil generated electricity when the people of the St. John's are charged the province-wide rate, even though they rely heavily on oil generated electricity for Holyrood."

This is signed by approximately 81 people. Not to rub it in but, a significant number of them are from Nain in Labrador, in the great district of Torngat Mountains and a number of others are from West St. Modest, the Capstan Islands and other areas on the Coast of Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to table a letter I have here along with the petition because this letter is from Jean Bernier, who I believe the Minister of Energy should know since he is the General Secretary of Hydro Quebec. The reason I am going to table it is because there are a couple of sections I want to quote out of it to show how other provinces are not nearly as cruel to people who have to rely on diesel-generated electricity as we are in our Province.

I wrote the General Secretary of Hydro Quebec to find out what their policy was with regard to people who have to depend on diesel-generated electricity. He wrote back to me in February and I want to read some sections of it. First of all, "It has been a fundamental objective for Hydro Quebec since the beginning to

offer the same price for electricity to all its customers of the same rate category all over Quebec."

MR. J. CARTER:
That is no problem because they have our power.

MR. FENWICK:
I want to mention this to you because this is an interesting principle that has been adopted by Hydro Quebec and, in effect, most of their systems have exactly the same rate, whether it is diesel-generated or whether it is hydro-generated. At the same time, Hydro Quebec has also realized that there is a major loss involved by doing this so they have adopted some programmes and I am going to read these programmes out. I want to table it so that the Minister of Energy can read it.

"These programmes are designed to reduce the energy needs of the customers and favour the use of oil for space and water heating to reduce consumption in these areas. The most important measures are, or have been through the years," now I want to read them, "additional thermo insulation of existing residences paid by Hydro Quebec." In other words, they have deliberately tried to reduce the amount of energy consumption in these areas by having an insulation programme.

"Secondly, monetary compensation so that the cost of oil heating for the residential customer is 30 per cent lower than that of electrical heating." They have given a subsidy on oil heating.

"Thirdly, lump sum payments of \$4,400 to the owners of new residences equipped with oil-fired

space and water heating systems rather than electrical ones." Now, do not forget these are in areas where there are diesel-generated systems.

"Fifth, conversion of electrical heating systems to oil where Hydro Quebec buys back the existing electrical heating system and pays the entire cost of the conversion." That is another programme.

"Sixthly, an annual compensation for electrical energy savings for the commercial and industrial customers. These programmes," as Mr. Bernier goes on to say, "are profitable for Hydro Quebec and have been successful in limiting the growth of electrical demand in these areas.

"Furthermore, Hydro Quebec is currently studying alternatives to the diesel-powered stations, small hydro electric plants, wind turbine and more specifically an underwater power cable for the Magdalen Islands. As discussed over the telephone, we would be pleased to meet you at your convenience to review this question and to complete the information contained herein."

Mr. Speaker, I would like to table this letter from Mr. Bernier, who is the General Secretary of Hydro Quebec, and I would like to refer it to the Minister of Energy (Mr. Marshall) and ask him to look at some of these programmes and see if we can eliminate this horrible discrimination we have against people in coastal parts of Labrador and other isolated points of the Island where they end up paying enormous extra rates for their hydro.

Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HISCOCK:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:
Mr. Speaker, I support the petition presented by the member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick). It is a matter that I have been bringing up over the past several years since I have been elected here. I am glad the member for Menihek is pushing this issue, even if he is circulating petitions in those areas. It does not really matter.

With regard to the matter, the Minister of Energy (Mr. Marshall) will get up and say "we are subsidizing at \$25 million," but the point remains that there are areas in our Province that have to pay more for electricity just because of their location. There are other areas in the Province that are paying for cheap electricity, Wabush, Lab City, Churchill Falls and Goose Bay. I am glad that the member for Menihek is supporting a petition and the people of these communities are willing to up their rates for electricity so we can have a uniform rate of electricity for the people in Southern Labrador, St. Anthony and also down on the Southern parts of the Island. I am pleased with the people of Lab City, Wabush and the member for Menihek because of a principle and the principle is one of equality or parity. Basically what it is saying is that if we are paying the same 12 per cent tax, if we are paying the same income tax, the same tax on cigarettes, on fuel, then the end result should be that we should have the same rate of electricity

in this Province.

I support the petition. It is something that needs to be brought in. The member for Menihek has pointed out what Hydro Quebec is doing. I am sure if we check with other provinces, they are doing the same thing. Then again, the Minister of Energy will get up and say, "Well, if we had some of the power from Churchill Falls, we would be able to do that, we would have some of the revenue. Also, Quebec can afford to do that because they are getting an enormous profit from the Upper Churchill and, as a result, they can afford to do that."

The principle that was pointed out in the letter and also by the member for Menihek is fairness, justice, equality for all the citizens, irregardless of where they live, irregardless of how they work or irregardless of creed, colour or religion, they are treated equally. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that this government would act instead of saying, "No, we are spending \$25 million and we cannot afford to do more until we have more money from the Upper Churchill." But if the people from Lab City and Wabush are willing to put up their rates so that the people on the coast can be subsidized, then I am sure the Minister of Energy will applaud that and look at the possibility of saying to all our people, "Let us have fairness with our electricity and have one rate for everything."

There is also a kitty being put away for a rainy day, as far as I am concerned, for Hydro, which the minister has talked about before. Why not use some of that money to subsidize the energy on the Labrador Coast? Small hydro

projects are another route they could go.

I would still like to point out the Minister of Energy that there is still one place on the Coast of Labrador, Norman Bay, that does not even have electricity. They do not even have diesel. They have to buy their own. They are now in the vicinity of having the required homes and I hope again that that community will get it.

So I support the petition and I support the principle of equality for all but it will mean that certain in our Province will have higher electricity bills as a result of having one rate. If the people in Lab City and Wabush are willing to do that, in their kindness, then I assume, Mr. Speaker, there are other areas that would as well. The former Minister of the Environment, Mr. Andrews, in Burgeo, brought up this matter before, Mr. Speaker. He asked hydro to study it.

So, in concluding and supporting the petition, I would ask the Minister of Energy if Hydro or his department has instructed, if they have not, would he instruct people, to do a study and find out in actual fact how much it would cost the consumer in the Province if the rate of electricity was one rate. This \$25 million subsidy could be done away with and there would be one rate of electricity for all. I think the minister would like it if he can save \$25 million and have one rate of electricity. If the people of the Province are willing to pay that, then I am sure that \$25 million could go towards schools, roads, water and sewerage and other areas. The study should be done at least, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that the Minister of Energy will

address that study.

Thank you.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

No, I will let the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) respond.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Torngat Mountains.

MR. WARREN:

Mr. Speaker, I just saw this petition that was so ably presented by the hon. the member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick) and I, as one member, do not seriously object to who presents a petition from any particular town in the Province. I understand last week some members opposite got upset because I presented a petition from a town in the Eagle River district. As far as I am concerned, any member should present any petition they like.

I think the prayer of the petition does show a genuine concern of the people on the Labrador Coast in saying that they are paying too much for electricity and subsequently the electricity rate charged should be lowered.

Mr. Speaker, as the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) said, the electricity charges in Labrador City - Wabush are the lowest in the Province. In fact, the last time I was in the

Labrador City - Wabush area, a lot of the individuals there are left me with the impression that the member for Menihek wants to see equalization of electricity rates in the Province. I, for one, have no reason to say that the rates in Labrador City could be higher and those on the Coast could be lower. However, Mr. Speaker, we have to realize that a lot of the cost that the people on the Labrador Coast are bearing today is because of the former Minister of Energy who spent, I forget the total number of millions of dollars, to blow two holes on both sides of the Strait and we, the taxpayers of the Province, especially those in the diesel areas, are still paying for those two big holes on both sides of the Strait. We would probably get this paid off first. We will have some time before we can see the electricity rates being lowered. I support the petition that the hon. member presented.

However, it is very interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that when I receive a petition from Nain it is usually signed by 200 or 300 people. This petition from Nain that the hon. member orchestrated, as we see, there are a total of sixty-two signatures. So, Mr. Speaker, I should advise the hon. House that the people in my district are still not too excited about the NDP trying to get a foothold in the district of Torngat Mountains because they have a long, long way to go. Thank you.

Orders of the Day

MR. MARSHALL:

Motion 1, Interim Supply.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):

Order, please!

Shall the resolution carry?

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Chairman, this Supply Bill cannot carry yet. The first thing I want to do, Mr. Chairman, is advise the House of Assembly that required reading for the next few days, in Newfoundland, will be the latest edition of Macleans Required reading! The headline is Province In Despair and inside, "A known inside Tory" - an insider. I do not know if the insider is the member for Exploits (Dr. Twomey) or not, or the member for Baie Verte - White Bay - says, "We are gone!" An insider says, "It is all over, we are gone." Required reading for all of Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, I wish the member for St. John's East would stay around for a minute or two because, in the few minutes I have, I have to point to the hypocrisy that I have seen in this debate. The last example of that was the President of Treasury Board, the Deputy Premier, the House Leader -

DR. COLLINS:

A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

A point of order, the hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman, not only is the hon. member opposite being totally irrelevant in bringing up matters of no importance whatever in terms of the resolution before the Committee, but I just saved him from himself. He was about to launch on a scurrilous personal attack on me, I could read it in the way he pointed that little pamphlet at me. I saved him from himself, and I probably saved him from being named. As a point of order, please ask him to get back to the resolution and pass it quickly.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

I was looking for Macleans on the schedule, but I assume it is under Consolidated Fund Services. I declare there is no point of order. The hon. member has the floor, and I draw his attention to the appropriate heading.

The hon. member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

The appropriate heading, yes, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do not know how often you have been in the Chair, but a fair amount of leeway has been given to speakers in this debate and I would expect the same consideration.

What was laughable, Mr. Chairman, was the position of the hon. House Leader (Mr. Marshall) yesterday when he stood up and said there was nothing wrong with going for \$715 million Interim Supply, nothing wrong with that. We are maintaining it may be illegal. It is certainly amoral, it is certainly wrong, but he said there was nothing wrong with that. Mr. Chairman, that member, and members

on the other side will remember, the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins), the member for St. John's South, you, yourself, will remember that, seven or eight years ago, the minister responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro brought a bill into this House requesting permission of the House of Assembly for Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro to borrow \$230 million. The purpose of the money was for the building of the Upper Salmon and various other things. They indicated specifically, Mr. Chairman, what they wanted the money for, except for \$30 million. That member, Mr. Chairman, who was then a backbencher - the Premier was the hon. Mr. Frank Moores - refused to give permission for that bill. He stood on his rights and said that if Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro was not prepared to specify what the \$30 million was going to be spent for - they had included it as miscellaneous - he was not prepared to have this House guarantee that bill. Mr. Chairman, talk about a change in attitude.

The Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins), when he gets up, if he cares he will certainly remember, and he will probably want to confirm that that indeed did happen, that the present -

MR. J. CARTER:

That simply is not true.

MR. FLIGHT:

It simply is true. The record will show it is true. The member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) was present when it happened.

The hon. the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs says that the basic purpose of this

House of Assembly, and the basic purpose for doing anything, is for protecting the well-being of the citizenry. Well, I presume that every piece of legislation passed in this House is for that purpose. What other purpose is there for passing legislation, if it is not to protect the security and the well-being of the citizenry?

Mr. Chairman, when the Financial Administration Act was brought in, I presume it was brought in to protect the well-being and the security of the citizenry. So if one takes the attitude that it is all right to break that law, then we are breaking laws that were made for the protection and well-being of the citizenry. And if you take that to its justified argument, all the laws that are made are made to protect the well-being and the security of the citizenry. If a government wants to take the attitude that we can break any law based on that premise, we are looking at tyranny, Mr. Chairman, we will ignore all laws and simply say, we will break that law because, in our opinion, it is for the better interest and well-being of the citizenry. Hogwash! Total hogwash! But there is one point, and I doubt if I will take my -

MR. DINN:

Why do you not say outside the House what you said in the House yesterday?

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Chairman, during my asking of questions in the House of Assembly yesterday, I mentioned the worst example of patronage we have ever seen in this Province, and I will, in the House of Assembly, before this session is over -

MR. DINN:

You would not say it outside.

MR. FLIGHT:

I will say it outside. It is very obvious.

MR. DINN:

You would not say it yesterday.

MR. J. CARTER:

On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. FLIGHT:

Now, Mr. Chairman, this is not right. I only have ten minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please! A point of order, the hon. the member for St. John's North.

MR. J. CARTER:

For the sake of clarity in this Committee, would the hon. gentleman just repeat today what he is saying he said yesterday?

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for St. Barbe.

MR. FUREY:

To that point of order, the hon. the member for Bonavista South (Mr. Morgan) has just given the hon. the member for St. John's North a dressing down about spurious points of order, and I think he should heed the hon. the member for Bonavista South's comments.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I declare there is no point of order, it is a difference of opinion between two hon. members.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Chairman, there will be occasions, do not worry, and the

issuing of the leases on the Grand Banks is not a dead issue. The issuing of that lease to Shell Oil in partnership with North Atlantic Petroleum, I guarantee you, is not a dead issue. I recognize, Mr. Chairman, that certain press in this Province do not think it is important enough to give a line to. However, I guarantee you, Mr. Chairman, can the gentleman who is the chairman of the company that has just gone into a partnership on the Grand Banks with Shell Oil tell the Newfoundland people what expertise they have why Shell needed them? The same individual is the prime contractor, Mr. Chairman, will build the convention centre, the same individual got two months free rent in the Murray Premises. That is not patronage and that would not appear to be patronage? If it is not, Mr. Chairman, when I am finished with it, it will appear to be patronage.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I want to make a particular point and I want the Minister of Finance, if he would, when he rises, to address this particular aspect of the Interim Supply bill. Let us assume that I feel he had the right to go for Interim Supply. Let us assume it was right that he did so. He could not get the legislative authority, the House was about to close, the Opposition was denying legislative authority, he had to do it. Let us assume he was right. I am not saying he was, I am simply saying let us assume that he was. Then, here is where the issue becomes amoral, Mr. Chairman, here is where I do not believe there is a defence. The Minister of Finance knew that by the middle of May not only would he have Interim Supply through this House, because we are limited to seventy-five hours of debate on

the budget, he knew that the budget itself would be delivered by mid-May. Figure it out. How long does it take? Seventy-five hours, forty-five spent in Committee, thirty in the House. The most that that minister would have wanted, Mr. Chairman, was one month's supply, yet the minister went for \$715 million. That is a four month's supply, Mr. Chairman. Why, Mr. Chairman, would the Minister of Finance go for the grab? Why would he not go for the amount that was required? He needed one months Supply, and it is doubtful if he needed even one month, Mr. Chairman. He needed the money that would be required to pay the bills in this Province for one month. Social services, nurses, whatever money is spent by the Newfoundland Government in a month is all he needed. He did not need that much, but the minister knew that the Easter holidays would be over and he would have his budget approved, as he must under the regulations and the rules of this House, before the end of May. He needed one month's Supply, Mr. Chairman, but he went for four month's Supply. Why did he not go for the \$100 million, approximately, that he needed? Why did he feel that he had to go for the \$715 million? Why did he not go 'whole hog' for the \$2 billion, a year's Supply? He went for one-third, for four month's Supply? He needed one month's Supply and he went for four. Why? Now, that is something the minister may want to address himself to. Is he prepared to stand up in this House and defend his legal right to use Interim Supply under those circumstances? It is practically indefensible, but if he wants to do that, then he has to explain to this House of Assembly why he required four

month's Interim Supply.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please! The hon. gentleman's time is up.

MR. FLIGHT:

A couple of more minutes to wind up, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

By leave, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

By leave.

MR. FLIGHT:

I mean, that is a germane point, Mr. Chairman. The member for St. John's North is fooling nobody, because he knows and he associates himself with the very thing that I am saying. His whole record in this House of Assembly, Mr. Chairman, since day one, since he was elected, was taking a position to guarantee the public purse was protected when monies were spent. When government abused their power, abused their authority, he was the first to react. He knows, Mr. Chairman, that one cannot justify what has happened. I challenge the Minister of Finance to stand in this House and explain how he convinced Treasury Board that he requires four months' supply, why he requires \$715 million in Interim Supply.

MR. J. CARTER:

Now keep going. You are giving a good speech.

MR. DINN:

I challenge the hon. member to say outside what he said inside the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

MR. FLIGHT:

You know, Mr. Chairman, the government have time and time again, I have seen them do it since I have been involved in this House of Assembly, used the excuse that we have to wait for the budget to pay certain bills. Town councils grants were held up, road construction grants were held up, everything held up simply waiting for a budget. This minister does not have to wait for any budget. This minister has to wait for nothing. He overrules the Comptroller General, walks into the Lieutenant-Governor's office, and walks out with an Interim Supply Bill on a Special Warrant, walks out with \$715 million. What is the purpose of this House of Assembly? Why did we not adjourn the House and recall us when that \$715 million was spent, and he had to come back for more spending authority? Why did the minister bother to call the House of Assembly? He now has spending authority for April, May, June and July. This government does not need one cent of spending authority from now until the end of July. Why bother to call the House of Assembly prior to the last of July? I mean, the fact of the matter is that the minister convinced Treasury Board, overruled the Comptroller General and went in and made what may well be an illegal but certainly an immoral grab, bypassed this House of Assembly and went for spending authority equal to one-third of the year's budget.

MR. J. CARTER:

You know why. You were playing politics.

MR. FLIGHT:

The budget is well in excess of \$2 billion, and the minister went for one-third of it on a Special Warrant. Does the member for Port

au Port (Mr. Hodder) agree with that kind of approach from government?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please! Would the hon. member wind up his comments, please?

MR. FLIGHT:

I will wind up my comments, but I am looking forward to the Minister of Finance explaining why he felt it necessary to go for \$715 million under a Special Warrant as opposed to the amount that he needed to get him through until he indeed had his supply and his budget.

MR. J. CARTER:

Go on! Go on! More! By leave!

MR. FLIGHT:

No.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman, I am glad to see the hon. member for Windsor - Buchans on his feet. He has not taken part in this debate, I do not think, up to now, although members can speak more than once, as we all know, in Committee. I think the reason why he has not been on his feet up to now is he knows that the Opposition is on a very weak attack here, their case is extremely weak. They are floundering trying to find reasons to debate with government. They are reaching into almost every nook and cranny to come up with some argument. And, of course,

the reason why they are doing that, I give them this amount of approbation, is that the best form of defense is attack. Because, I am sure now the Opposition are feeling guilty about what they did. It has backfired on them. As have so many of the Opposition moves in the last year or so, their attacks have backfired on them. They should be called the boomerang Opposition. They were going to hold the people of this Province up to ransom in terms of the Interim Supply Bill, and that is readily apparent to anyone who has taken any interest in their arguments. I suspect there are not too many, but anyone who has will know that this has redounded to their detriment, and people are saying, 'What on earth are the Opposition up to?' Now, an Opposition is supposed to oppose, but they are supposed to oppose sensibly and rationally and with some sort of validity. In other words, they are to project themselves as the alternative government. That is what an Opposition is supposed to do. Now the people of this Province obviously will not look upon an Opposition as the alternative government if they perceive that the Opposition is being silly and is being rather ineffectual and things keep boomeranging and blowing up in their faces, and if they, in actual fact, are doing things really designed not only to embarrass government, which is fair game - I mean, that is what Oppositions will do - but also will tend to hurt the people of this Province.

Now, you know, no people will look upon an Opposition as an alternative government if that is the way they perceive the Opposition. The Opposition belatedly have come to understand

that. So they are saying, "Look, how do we get out of this bind we got ourselves into? Well, the best thing to do is attack, say that they were all wrong. We know that we were, in our hearts, wrong in holding up this poor little old miserable resolution and this poor little old miserable Interim Supply Bill. We were all wrong and it has really blown up in our faces. But, nevertheless, the only way we can get out of it is say that they were wrong in some way."

So now they are trying to say that the government was wrong and dastardly and cheap and wicked, and everything else, in their move to protect the interests of the people of this Province, in protecting the people who supply goods and services to government and deserve to get paid for it - they have cash flow needs - in protecting the people who work for government, the public servants and others who work for government, the consultants and so on and so forth, in protecting the pensioners who rely on government to come through in a timely way with their pension cheques, in protecting the welfare people in this Province who live really, unfortunately, on the knife-edge and even an hour's delay in getting their expected cheque, in some instances, can cause real serious damage to their family and to themselves. They live on such a knife-edge, the people on welfare who depend on the welfare cheques. Now, they have to somehow or other say that a government who protects such people has to be a rotten government. Now that is not an easy thing to do. Really it is an impossible thing to do if you really think about it. So that is why they are coming up with all sorts of foolish arguments and

they are rummaging around trying to find a rationale for their attack and, of course, they are not doing it.

Now, the hon. member for Windsor - Buchans, I will say this for him, he knew it was such an impossibility. He is an experienced parliamentarian, the member for Windsor - Buchans. He has been in here any number of years. He has been through any number of debates. He knows what is right and wrong in parliamentary terms. So he has not entered into debate. But finally, I suppose, his fellow Opposition members said to him, 'Now look, come on, member for Windsor - Buchans, play the game, help us out. We are on an impossible task. It is something that we should never have gotten ourselves into. I do not know how we got ourselves into it. But, at least, come on, do something.' So the member for Windsor - Buchans gets up and he finally is shamed into saying something in debate. So I guess I had better answer him.

Now he says, "Why three months?" There are a couple of simple responses to that. Firstly, if you look back at Interim Supply Bills over the years, what do you see? You find that they are usually for three months. That is one answer. The second comment one can make: The member says that you only need it for one month. I explained the other day you do not need the money for one month almost in any instance, and in some particular instances you certainly do not need it for one month, you need it for twelve months. In other words, government cannot enter into a contract to rent an establishment for someone's offices, which it has to do, if the money is not

there, if the money is not available to government, because the Financial Administration Act precludes us from entering into contracts for a year unless we can point to a year's availability of rent.

MR. FLIGHT:

A point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

A point of order, the hon. the member for Windsor-Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:

I would ask the minister a question if he would entertain one, but I am sure he would not so I will go on a point of order.

DR. J. COLLINS:

Absolutely. I will help you out all I can.

MR. FLIGHT:

The minister knew that he was going to have the budget, since we are allowed only seventy-five hours, by mid-May under any circumstances one wants to consider. If this House of Assembly stays open, and the government decides that, he would have the budget, he would have the whole \$2 billion so he could have entered any contracts he wanted to. That is a red herring. Why did you go for \$715 million?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please! There is no point of order. The hon. member by his own admission used the point of order to ask a question. Maybe the hon. minister would like to respond.

DR. J. COLLINS:

I will answer the question anyway, Mr. Chairman. I realize that you gave a ruling there that cannot be questioned in any way, so it is an

absolutely perfectly valid ruling that what the hon. member said opposite was totally out of order, it should never have been brought in. He probably should be named for bringing it up because it was not a point of order, but anyway you ruled in that fashion but nevertheless I will answer it.

As I was saying to the hon. member, we cannot go out and rent an office for a year unless we can point to the availability of a year's rent. Now it does not matter whether we are going to get it six weeks from now or two week from now or two days from now; until such time as we can point to that being available to us The Financial Administration Act precludes us from entering into a contract to rent an office for a year. So even if one agreed with the member, which I do not but he sort of agreed with me on a hypothetical basis so I am going to return the favour and agree with him on a hypothetical basis, even if he was right and said, "Look, you can have all the money you want for renting in the middle of May so why do you not wait for it?" my answer to him is simple: I cannot wait until the middle of May to rent the office, I need it right away. So this is why as of April 1 we had to have the availability of a year's rent if we were going to rent an office for a year. And landlords will not let you readily rent offices on a monthly basis not knowing if you are going to keep up the thing or not. You enter into a contract for a year or two years or whatever, but it would be most unlikely that the average landlord would let you enter into a contract whereby you keep it for a month and you decide at the end of the month, "We will keep it for another month," and so on and so

forth.

Now the other thing I already explained is that we needed more than a month's money if we were going to get into certain capital projects which we wanted to. We wanted to make sure that the construction industry started as early as possible on certain public works, and therefore we did not want to wait until May 1 or the end of May or the middle of June or whatever, we wanted to have the money available right away, as soon as the spring breakup occurs, or even before that because they will do the planning even before the weather improves, so we want to have that money right away and we needed quite a lot of money for those capital works.

Now the final comment I suppose one could make is that we have no idea how this Opposition is going to operate. In most cases you can predict how an Opposition will act in a given circumstance because there is a certain rationality to it. You can look at their behaviour and say, "They are going to behave as ordinary common or garden types human beings should behave." This Opposition you do not know how they are going to behave, they are all over the shop. So they might have filibustered until the middle of July and perhaps they still might so do.

The other reasons I have mentioned, if you let all those reasons go and say, 'We will only get an Interim Supply Bill for one month; we dare not do that not knowing how this irrational and irresponsible Opposition are going to act. They are very liable to leave us at the end of the month totally without funds because they

go filibustering on some nonsense. Just to go over the reasons again, the Interim Supply Bill is usually there for a three month period and that is all we have asked for. We have added onto that certain amounts we needed for long-term contracts which we could not have otherwise entered into. We added onto that certain amounts that we needed for capital works which is designed to help out the construction industry and the workers of this Province, and, finally, we had to have some flexibility ourselves and somehow guard ourselves against how the Opposition were likely to delay and obstruct and prevent this Interim Supply Bill, as the record showed they had already done before the House went on the Easter break. So that is an answer to the very weak arguments that the member for Windsor - Buchans (Mr. Flight) put up. I do sympathize with him for finally being shamed by his fellow members of the Opposition in getting up in the first place. I am sure he did not want to because he knew they had very weak arguments and all they are trying to do is to protect themselves by somehow or other ineffectually turning blame on government.

Thank you.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

After that tremendous discourse by the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) I hardly know how to begin. I would like to begin, first of all, by thanking him for

answering a question that I have asked a number of times in the past and, after being asked a number of times, I think it was seven times in all, he finally got around to answering it in a previous session and I would like to thank him for that.

The Minister of Finance started off his discourse this time by giving a lecture on the role of the Opposition. He is sometimes difficult to follow. The one good thing, though, Mr. Chairman, is that I am glad to see the minister is investigating the role of the Opposition, because, in a few years time, he will not need a break-in period, he will be able to step into the role quite nicely, without a great deal of turmoil in his life in the House.

I feel that we do not need a lecture on the role of the Opposition from the Minister of Finance. I could very easily turn around and give the Minister of Finance a lecture on the role of government. I could say that government should be able to foresee problems that are going to arise, that the Minister of Finance could have, I suppose, in January or early February, gone to his boss and said, 'Bill, I am going to run into a problem with money. I am going to bring a budget down, but it is going to be near the end of the year. We are going to need interim financing, so let us get an Interim Financing Bill through. Now, Bill, in case that nasty Opposition, that nasty Opposition that is going to talk and go on with nasty filibuster, go on and on for days, let us make sure we fool them, we trick them. We will put one over on that nasty Opposition which is controlling this House, we will make sure that we bring the Interim Supply Bill

in in lots of time.' Now, he could have said that. He could have put one over on us, according to his definition. He could have really fooled us, tricked us and brought in Interim Supply in adequate time. That could very well have been done.

The minister says he was afraid to do that. He was afraid that when he brought in the bill, and we started, because you never know what this nasty Opposition is going to do, they can do anything, they might filibuster until the end of July. So he gets agreement from the member for St. John's East (Mr. Marshall). Both these hon. gentlemen know and know full well that that would be totally impossible to do under the rules of the House. It would be totally impossible. The Minister talks about the nonsense that is going on. That statement is pure nonsense, and I will turn it right back to him. The Opposition could not keep a filibuster going until the end of July. We could keep a filibuster going for thirty hours at the most, less than thirty hours. We have forty-five hours coming out for the Estimates Committees, so that leaves thirty hours.

The minister spoke for awhile in the Budget debat, and that takes an hour or so out, so we could filibuster at a maximum of thirty hours, yet he has the gall to give as a reason for doing this very unusual thing, that apparently there were legal problems with, the fact that Opposition could talk all Summer, into July or whatever. Well, he knows full well, Mr. Chairman, and he has to be straightened out on this, that that is not true. Even if we were willing to totally give up the Budget debate, the longest we

could have filibustered is twenty-eight and a half hours. That is the most. We could not have filibustered any longer than that under the rules of this House. It amazes me that a gentleman so versed in parliamentary procedure - the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) has brought down six budgets or something - would stand up here and say that and expect people to believe it. I would suggest that he knew the difference, and he did not expect people to believe him, he was just looking for something to say, trying to defend the indefensible, trying to excuse the inexcusable.

Some of the questions we have asked have been answered. We have pointed out some irregularities in the process. We really wonder about the legality of warrants when the House is available, and we really wonder about threatening the Opposition, saying you have three days for Interim Supply and, if you do not pass it in three days, we are going to go to the people and we are going to say the Opposition is stopping your welfare cheques, the Opposition is stopping your payments, the Opposition is stopping your road paving and stopping everything else. If you do not pass Interim Supply in three days, that is what we are going to do, we are going to steamroll you, we are going to nail you. What a threat!

The Government House Leader and the Minister of Finance are quite good at that. They make their threat with a little smile, and that is the worst kind of threat, no shouting or anything, very quite, very calm. They make their threat with a smile: 'You pass Interim Supply in three days or we are going to close the House down

and blame the resulting chaos on you.' I am very proud that we do not buckle to that kind of blackmail. You see, we have problems not only with the procedure but I, personally, have a problem with the way that expenditures are being made. I think it was pointed out by the member for Menihek today, during Question Period, that there are some unusual things having to do with expenditures of public funds. His implication was that there seemed to be a great deal of pork barreling going on with regard to water and sewer money. He used as an example districts which, perhaps, have a fair amount in common, Green Bay, I believe, and either the Strait of Belle Isle or St. Barbe, and the fact that in one district \$1.5 million was spent and in the other there was \$10,000 spent - I believe he said \$20,000, but I think it was \$10,000. As a matter of fact, the total amount of money spent on the whole of the Great Northern Peninsula, on two provincial districts, St. Barbe plus the Strait of Belle Isle, barely amounted to \$20,000 - I believe it was \$20,900 - in terms of water and sewer guarantees, whereas in the district of Green Bay, as the member pointed out, there was \$1.5 million spent. What is the difference in these two districts? The answer is obvious. I would even carry that one step further, and I would ask members opposite to consider which were the top three districts in terms of water and sewer guarantees. Which were the top three districts?

MR. WARREN:
Torngat Mountains.

MR. BAKER:
No, Torngat Mountains was not even

near the top, was not even close to it.

AN HON. MEMBER:
It was not even there.

MR. BAKER:
Right. The top three districts, which were they? There was one with about \$1.5 million and two more with about \$1.3 million in guarantees.

MR. J. CARTER:
Gander was pretty high.

MR. BAKER:
No, Gander was very low, \$100,000. The top three districts, one with \$1.5 million, one with \$1.3 million and another one with \$1.3 million, which were they?

Which were the bottom three? It would be very interesting if members opposite were to examine the figures and find out. As a matter of fact, what they would find is that the top three are all represented by members of the right party, and the bottom three are all represented by members of the wrong party. Now, is that not an absolute coincidence? Districts, all rural districts, all having a lot of small communities, all having a great deal in common, a lot of municipalities scattered throughout the six districts, three of them Tory, three of them Liberal.

The three Tory districts, the three good ones, got on the average \$1.4 million each, and the three bottom ones, all the wrong districts -

MR. WARREN:
Which were they?

MR. BAKER:
The bottom ones?

MR. WARREN:
Yes.

MR. BAKER:
Now, I am not talking about the ones that got nothing, I am talking about the three bottom ones that received funding. There is a difference. There are specific reasons for districts that got nothing. I can go into it if you want me to, because I have investigated this thoroughly. The three bottom ones were the Strait of Belle Isle, right next door to the Minister of Fisheries' riding, and they have tremendous water and sewer problems. I am sure the minister knows how much money his district received. The Strait of Belle Isle, St. Barbe and Bellevue, these were the three bottom ones. I am not going to mention the three top ones, because I do not want to give undue publicity to the members concerned.

Now, the Minister of Finance wonders why we have gotten a little cantankerous in terms of money issues and so on. Well, one reason is that we did ask questions and the answers were a long time coming. Some of them did come, and I thank the minister of that. Another reason is that Interim Supply was brought in under threat. We did not like that, especially when there was ample opportunity to get Interim Supply before the bill was actually brought in. The third reason is that we are not entirely satisfied with the way that some of this money is being spent. Example, the 60/40 water and sewer guarantee. I see no movement on the part of government to eliminate these problems.

Now, government members might quite reasonably come back and say, well, obviously because members who sit on the other side over there are closer to us, and we meet in the Common Room and so on, there is more opportunity to put forward a case.

MR. WARREN:
The hon. member's time has elapsed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
By leave!

MR. CHAIRMAN (Woodford):
By leave?

MR. BAKER:
Thank you, Mr. Chairman. By leave?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
By leave.

MR. BAKER:
He gave me leave?

MR. MATTHEWS:
How long are you going to be?

MR. BAKER:
About two minutes.

MR. MATTHEWS:
Okay.

MR. BAKER:
They might reasonably say that because of close contact and so on, that would explain some of the disparities. I agree that happens. I suppose it would happen were we on the other side, although I hope not to the same degree.

MR. J. CARTER:
Oh, oh! I hope we never find out.

MR. BAKER:
We will find out shortly. I do not know if that hon. member will find out. He will probably be

outside the confines of the House at that time, we hope.

They could say, perhaps, that there were not as many requests from those districts and there were a lot of requests from Green Bay, for instance. Well, if that in fact is the case, then they could quite easily show this on paper and say we had one hundred requests from Green Bay, we only had ten requests or two requests from the Strait of Belle Isle, therefore we distributed the money according to the demand. I have tried to find out why this inequity exists. I have heard nothing, I have had no explanation. All I have heard is a minister say, oh, heavens, we would not do anything like that. We would not distribute money unfairly, and, Mr. Chairman, that is not good enough.

Now, I promised the minister I would only take two minutes and my time, I suspect, is up. I suppose I will have ample opportunity later on to finish what I want to say. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DINN:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. DINN:
Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on some of the observations made by hon. members opposite. The hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans spoke in the debate. I noticed he did not ask what the Department of Mines and Energy want with the money that has been allocated in the Interim Supply Bill, nor did

he ask what the housing allocation is for or what we are proposing to do with the money?

Mr. Chairman, because he did not ask, maybe it is time for some people on this side of the House to inform hon. members opposite as to basically what we are going to be doing with some of the money that has been provisioned in the Interim Supply Bill, and, because I think it is probably important, we could sit down and listen to the rhetoric. I do not think, for example, the questions asked in the House yesterday by the hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans raises the level of debate. I do not think that does anything. If the hon. member has a charge to make, I think he should make it in the House and make it outside the House, if he has something that he wants to say about it.

I think we should get into what we are doing with the money. What is Interim Supply for? What are we going to spend the money on between now and the end of June? Why do we need it right now? Why did we need to pass a Special Warrant in order to get it? The fact of the matter is, hon. members know that a lot of time was wasted in the House before Easter on Interim Supply, wasted! Nobody asked any questions as to what the money was going to be spent for. Mr. Chairman, basically the reason why the hon. members did not want to pass Interim Supply was, they said, "Unless the strike is over, we are not passing Interim Supply." Well, that could take a long time. I have been involved in labour negotiations for a long time and I know that some of these things are just unseizable at times.

The strike went on, but people came back to work, I believe, just after April 7. So the fact of the matter is there was a week when hospitals had to be operated, schools had to be operated, and the departments had to be operated.

You could not have a guy out claim-staking out around Gander Bay, looking for gold, putting in a claim stake and coming in to the recorder to record that and not have somebody there to record it. I mean, the fact of the matter is, it is a first come, first served item we are talking about here. It is the future of that guy, that prospector, that explorationist, if you want. So when he comes in, he has to have that registered, we have to have people here, we have to have salaries and we have to be prepared.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry), who was Minister of Mines and Energy for a time, knows that one of the most exciting things that is happening with respect to mining in Newfoundland, the people in the department are, with their geophysical and geochemical work, laying out or mapping the whole Province and informing companies as to where there are good prospects for mineral development. That is what some of the money is for here. In housing, we want to prepare, we want to get in quick with respect to providing chronic care, for example.

The hon. member for Twillingate (Mr. W. Carter) talked about chronic care. Well, there is a programme laid out and there is a priority list. I am not responsible for the list but the Minister of Health (Dr. Twomey) is

and, as I understand it, the chronic care priority is the Agnes Pratt in St. John's, the next one is Golden Heights Manor, and, well, for the information of the hon. member, I believe we have enough this year for 150 chronic care units. I am not exactly sure what the total allocation is but I believe there is something like 102 for Agnes Pratt and there is forty odd for Golden Heights and there may be some left over.

Well, I do not know what the next is. Perhaps the next one is Twillingate and, if it is, then we will certainly have a look at that. But that is some of the things that the money is being spent for. We have to prepare, we have to get ready for this kind of thing.

Some of the other things are with respect to social housing. For the first time I think, Mr. Chairman, in the history of Newfoundland, I think it is the first time that we ever in Newfoundland had a housing agreement with the federal government. We just simply could not get one signed. Now, we had houses built. I do not want hon. members to think that we did not get houses built and we did not have programmes but -

MR. FENWICK:

With the federal government.

MR. DINN:

Yes, with federal/provincial dollars, but this is the first time that we have ever had a housing agreement signed between the federal and provincial government which lays out what we are going to be doing, not only this year, but for the foreseeable future, the next two or three years.

MR. FENWICK:

Are we paying more for that agreement?

MR. DINN:

We signed a global agreement.

MR. FENWICK:

Are we paying more for it?

MR. DINN:

Are we paying more? Well, we pay more but we get more. Just to give the hon. member an example. Hon. members know what the RRAP agreement is, the urban RRAP and the rural RRAP. In the RRAP Programme last year, I think just about every member in the House of Assembly, I know the hon. member for Twillingate (Mr. W. Carter) during the estimates last year spoke about the fact that we had so little money for the RRAP Programme and that some areas of the Province were not covered. It was not a universal programme and one of the reasons we did not make it universal was because there was not enough money. Last year the allocation was something like \$5 million, a drop in the bucket really, when one talks about RRAP in Newfoundland, Residential Rehabilitation Assistance.

That programme this year is going to be somewhere in the vicinity - the reason why I say somewhere in the vicinity is because it is going to be a cost-shared programme this year. Last year it was 100 per cent funded by the federal government and this year it is a 75/25 deal. Now, last year the allocation was \$5 million but, as I indicated to hon. members during the estimates generally, throughout the year, when there was not take up in other provinces, we went in there like a dirty shirt and got as much as we could. I think the total

allocation afterwards last year was something around \$8 million, which was 100 per cent funded by the federal government.

So, in December of 1984, when I was just made Minister of Housing, I co-chaired a meeting in Ottawa and there was a new minister there, the hon. Bill McKnight. I said to him, "What we go through every year with respect to housing in this country is absolutely disgraceful. We do not know from one day to the next what we are going to get, what is going to happen, or what we are going to have next year." I said, "Is there going to be an increase in the funding?" He said, "I really cannot say about that but we will have approximately the same amount." I said, "Well, let us see if we can do something sensible with it. Take the total allocation, we will call it global funding, for the country and give the provinces a mandate to sit down amongst themselves and work out what percentage should go to each province." Now, I did that because I knew there were some provinces that did not take up some of the funding and I knew that there were some provinces that did not really need federal funding, Alberta, for example. During the process, this is what worked out.

During the process, they allocated to us something in the order of 2.56 per cent. The reason why we wanted 2.56 per cent was because our primary objective was to get some funding for chronic care and try to get it settled once and for all. Now, I tell the hon. member that we did not quite get it settled and what we eventually ended up with was the federal minister saying, "For this year, we will give you chronic care

but," he said, "I am not sure whether it is the responsibility of Health or it is the responsibility of CMHC. But," he said, "since we have done it before, we will take it for this year and we will do chronic care." That is basically what happened.

So out of the total global allocation of funding in Canada, we got our amount, our portion, and it amounts to about 430 units of what we call social housing for the Province for this year. That is going to cost about \$25 million. The hon. member for Twillingate (Mr. W. Carter) is very well aware of what it cost to put up houses nowadays, especially social housing, and that is going to be distributed, shared evenly throughout.

Along with that we got the 150 chronic care units that is going to cost \$6.6 million federally and provincially. The Rural Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Programme and the urban RRAP is going to amount to about \$15 million. Last year, we got some more throughout the year. It started out at about 5.5 and we ended up with about 8 and it was portioned out to us throughout the year. This year we will have about \$15 million for residential rehabilitation assistance. Now, that is why we want to get that programme going as quickly as we possibly can.

If we did not pass this Special Warrant and the funding was not approved, that programme really could not get underway. I tell hon. members it is very important, if they want to talk about what the interim financing is for, then what they should be talking about is what we are spending the money

for. What does the Department of Mines and Energy want its money for? What does the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation want this money for? If they want this money, are they spending it wisely, are they spending it well?

Well, every hon. member in this House who lives in the Province or who is aware of anything knows that one of the best programmes we have had is the RRAP programme and that programme has gone from \$8 or \$8.5 million to \$15 million in the Province. I want to thank my colleagues the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) and the President of Treasury Board (Mr. Windsor) for the support that I got from my colleagues to allow me to get 25 per cent of the funding for the RRAP programme. So, this year instead of \$8 million we will be spending \$15 million. It is about a 45 or 46 per cent increase for funding RRAP this year.

Not only that, Mr. Chairman, whereas over the past few years we more or less discriminated against certain areas of the Province, this year the RRAP programme is universal. That means that there is no area of the Province that cannot apply for assistance under the RRAP programme. In the urban areas, the programme will be operated this year and possibly part of next year by CMHC but eventually one of the other agreements -

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Order, please!

Would the minister take his seat for a moment while I announce what is on the Late Show.

MR. DINN:
Certainly. No problem, Mr.

Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

We have two items. One is a question asked by the member for Windsor - Buchans (Mr. Flight) of the hon. the Premier regarding offshore leases. The second item is from the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) who asked a question of the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications (Mr. Russell). The question is not here insofar as the issue is concerned but it is a question from the member for Eagle River to the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Communications.

The hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. DINN:

So, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the RRAP programme this year is cost shared 75/25. Last year the programme was about \$8 million and that is basically the way it ran over the past few years, \$7, \$8, \$9 million. Right now the programme -

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

I have to inform the hon. minister his time is up but we will allow him a minute or so.

MR. DINN:

Just to clue up on the RRAP funding.

Eventually, the programme will be administered by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. DINN:

No, because included in the global agreement that we signed will the

administration fees that would normally go towards the administration of the programme, if CMHC were to do it. So that is why we have taken it over, in a sense but we also got more money. Instead of \$8 million now we got 75 per cent of the \$15 million.

AN HON. MEMBER:

I wonder how many (inaudible).

MR. DINN:

That is just for the global agreement that we signed, that is the apportionment for this year. Whatever the total global housing allotment is in the country, we will get about 2.56 per cent of that, which is set down in the global agreement or in the programme. In the year before that it was done under what they call the HIFE formula, which I will get into a little later on, and we got about 1.76 per cent of the total national allocation for housing. Mr. Speaker, I will get onto to the other items when I get an opportunity.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Chairman, I just have a few questions for the minister. I know our leader wants to speak and I appreciate the fact that he has deferred to me for these few questions.

The minister talked about housing. He talked about the need for chronic care and a whole wide range of things but in the matter of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, I get the impression, Mr. Chairman - and

maybe the minister can confirm this now or deny it - that the corporation is phasing out to some extent. I notice there have been apartments offered for sale in Stephenville and I get the impression that in other areas of their activity maybe they are getting more conscious of the fact that the private sector probably can and would do a better job than what they are doing in housing. I have a lot of feeling for the St. John's Housing Corporation. I think initially they were well intentioned. I think their initial terms of reference were good but, I am afraid that they have lost sight of their mandate.

Of course, it has happened to Central Mortgage and Housing. At the time when that corporation was established, it was intended to do for the working man what he could not do for himself. I think that the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation was conceived along the same lines and I think that initially they did an excellent job. For example, the Churchill Park area is a product of the founders of the St. John's Housing Corporation, as it was called then.

I have come to the conclusion, Mr. Chairman, that the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation will have to take a hard look at itself and exactly what their intentions are. I am getting the impression that they have lost sight of some very important facts.

My question to the minister is: Is that so? Is the Housing Corporation starting, maybe, to wind down? For example, I am told that there is a lot of - in St. John's it is becoming an in word now - infill housing. In fact, I learned today that the

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation are buying up a number of old houses in the city, houses that, I suppose, could be called slums, and that the Corporation itself is involved in infill housing. They call tenders and they award contracts for the demolition of the existing house and then they rebuild it.

I believe that is something, Mr. Chairman, that the private sector could very well do. I see no reason at all why the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation would involve itself in that kind of business. I think there are a lot of contractors now who need that work and again can do, probably, an even better job than that being done by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

We have seen the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation develop land, for example, at Cowan Heights, phase one, two and three of that sub-division. I am not satisfied that that land is being sold at cheaply as it could be sold and should be sold, given the fact that most of it was acquired years ago, I am told, for as low as \$600 or \$700 an acre. Now that land is being developed and sold by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation for as high as \$40,000 a lot. Bearing in mind that there are about four and a half lots in an acre, then you do not need to be a genius to figure out what the recovery price is per acre on that land.

I have had it said to me, again in the matter of land development, that the private sector can do a better job. In fact, a lot of the private contractors will tell you that the Housing Corporation, rather than depressing and keeping

prices down, that by virtue of the prices they are charging and, I suppose, their massive overhead now, they are encouraging builders to charge more for their lots than probably they would normally charge.

I know that the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation has developed quite a large bureaucracy. I can remember when the Housing Corporation was at its height, when they were developing the Churchill Park area and Baird Sub-division and numerous other sub-divisions, I think their staff consisted of one engineer, an accountant, maybe a secretary or two and one or two or three inspectors, a few maintenance people but certainly I think their staff was not one-tenth of what it is today.

The question that I would like to have answered is are we allowing the corporation to become too bureaucratic and top heavy with ivory towers? We know what happens when we allow that to happen. You hire a director and he wants an assistant director and they both want secretaries and then there are file clerks and so on. I would like to think that the housing corporation would revert back to its initial reason for being here and that is to assist people in the middle and low income bracket.

A typical example of how a Crown agency can lose sight of its mandate is only a few hundred yards away from Confederation Building, the very posh and very elaborate Kent's Pond subdivision where the lots were developed there and sold to people in the very, very high income brackets. Certainly, in no way was that in any way, shape or form catering to

middle class people in this Province or in this city. So that is the sort of thing I would like to see the minister address.

On the RRAP thing he talked about the new 75/25 cost-sharing arrangement, when, again, the question that must be asked is that the price we are paying to get control of the RRAP Programme? Is a province now paying 25 per cent because we want to have control of it?

Of course the question of chronic care homes is a very thorny issue with me and I think the Minister of Health (Dr. Twomey) can understand why. We know that the Department of Health, or the Department of Welfare I guess at the time, did prioritize their future activity in terms of chronic care homes and we know that Agnes Pratt was number one on the list, and I think Bonavista was number two, and number three, of course, was the proposed home for Twillingate. I am hoping that the Minister of Health will be able to tell me in the next few days, when I get a chance to question him on it, that that list still pertains and that Twillingate is now number one. I have talked to people in the Twillingate district. They are quite prepared to wait if they can get an assurance that they are next on the list. They realize there is a shortage of money and they are quite willing to wait until the money comes around for them to start, providing, that is, that they are now in their rightful place on that list, that being place number one.

Mr. Chairman, there are some very important things to be done in housing and in land development. Like I said, I am not sure that

the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation is achieving that for which it was set out or established to achieve. I think we have to let the private sector maybe play a greater part in the case of land development and in the case of infill housing and certain other areas of activity now controlled, by and large, by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

Maybe, Mr. Chairman, the minister can respond to a few of these things before this debate ends. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Order, please!

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:
Mr. Chairman, it seems there is no attempt to answer the very reasonable -

MR. DINN:
I will if you want. I thought the hon. member just wanted to go. I just deferred on it. I will if you want to give me a few minutes.

MR. BARRY:
Sure. Can you just take a few minutes? I would like to make a few remarks before we close.

MR. DINN:
Yes, I will answer the questions, and whenever you want me to stop, I will stop, as a matter of fact. How about that?

MR. BARRY:
You are very reasonable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

The hon. Minister of Mines and Energy.

MR. DINN:
The fact of the matter is, I would just like to refer to some of the things with respect to Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. I think when the hon. member was talking about the St. John's Housing Corporation and the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, there was a bit of confusion there. At that time, by the way, there were four housing corporations in the Province, there was one that basically operated out of Stephenville, there was one in Corner Brook, the Corner Brook Housing Corporation, there was the St. John's Housing Corporation, there was the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, and, yes, the St. John's Housing Corporation basically had control of three areas at the time: They had Churchill Park, which was an area they built up themselves, there was the Pleasantville units which were passed to them - that was an area they looked after and it was basically administering the apartments - and there was Elizabeth Towers. That is basically all they had, and they did not have very many employees.

I think they had a staff of six in the office and their offices were on the first floor of Elizabeth Towers. Now, they had lots of maintenance staff. They had two or three working at Elizabeth Towers, and they had people who were doing maintenance for Churchill Square and the Base. I do not think the hon. member was counting them, but that is basically what it was. We took all those housing corporations and

we put them into one, and that cut down substantially on staff requirement.

Now, as to whether we are where we should be, I have asked myself that question over the past little while. We are into Stephenville, number one, and we have social housing out there that I believe is our responsibility as a government. So we handle social housing out there. That is a federal/provincial programme, and we administer that. We build rural and remote houses and we build rental apartments in the Stephenville area. We also have economic houses. These are houses that were passed over by the Base. We administer those, and we raised the rents to try to recover the cost of those units. We have not been able to do it; we have not been able to recover costs in Stephenville for the past five or six years, plus the fact that it is costing us a lot of money now because many of the buildings out there are heated and we are paying the heat. The rent is very low and we are paying the heat, so it is costing us money.

We have had enquiries from people out there. They are saying to us, look, how can we afford to build apartment buildings - it is a private sector activity, because it is economic housing we are talking about, people who can afford it - and compete with that? So several of them have now put in proposals to buy those buildings and operate them themselves and possibly get the private sector into that market area. I do not think we should have a monopoly on it.

So based on that we said, okay, we will do an assessment on the buildings and once we set the

market value, the price of the buildings, if we get proposals in that will pay that price, then we will sell the buildings. So that is what is happening in Stephenville.

What are we doing in Newfoundland and Labrador Housing now? We are not really getting into apartment buildings and we are not really getting into the Churchill Square type of thing. We have enough of a problem, I believe, in just the social areas.

This year we are doing rural and native housing. That is a programme we have had over the past few years. We are doing some non-profit, not very much, because we are taking that money now to put into chronic care. We are providing this year for an increase in the heating subsidy. You see, there is a discrepancy there as well. Some people in these apartment units get free heat, it is included in the rent. I will give the hon. member an example: Down on Kennas Hill, all those apartments get free heat, the heat is included in the rent. Other people do not get heat. One of the biggest problems we have in Newfoundland today is that we build apartments, we get people who are on low income, they have to pay 25 per cent of their income for the rent, they move into the apartments and they cannot afford the heat. Well, this year, and again I want to thank my colleagues, because it is difficult at this point in time to get money, we are providing an increase in the heating subsidy to those people; there is an apportionment in the budget this year. I think it is going to cost \$1.5 million for that programme alone. That is cost-shared, as well. We got the federal

government to cost-share that, and that will help out the people who cannot afford, really, to pay the rent. That is hard enough, it is 25 per cent of whatever their income is. Once they get in there, they cannot afford the heat, so we are trying to subsidize their heat this year. Again, we are increasing that subsidy by about \$1.5 million.

The modernization programme: We had to do that, and that will include Stephenville, to make them more energy-efficient. It will also include Goose Bay, Pleasantville and Churchill Square. We are spending some money on that this year. It will save us money in the long run, really, because it will cut down on the heating costs that we have right now. We are replacing the windows, for example, in Pleasantville, and I think if hon. members were to drive down and have a look at them, they really have done a pretty fair job, they are starting to look like apartment buildings.

Industrial land: We are spending some dollars this year on industrial land. The hon. member talked about the cost of lots. We sold over 100 lots in Cowan Heights last year. They were no sooner finished and, yes, we sold some of them for \$36,000 and \$38,000. They were bigger lots, of course. But we made those lots available last year and they were all sold before Christmas. So we have to put more lots in Cowan Heights. Some of the lots are big lots and they cost a lot of dollars. I do not know what the answer is, but I can tell the hon. member that they must be comparative with what the private sector is doing, because we cannot develop them fast enough,

especially in this area. As quick as we get them done they are sold.

MR. W. CARTER:

I would say private sector lots would be cheaper than yours to (inaudible).

MR. DINN:

They might be. I do not know. As a matter of fact, I had a meeting with the Board of Directors of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation the day before yesterday and we went through the cost of the lots that we put in Cowan Heights last year and our recovery on them. We do not do anything with them, really. We put a contract out to tender for people to put in 100 lots. The tender comes in, and the low bidder gets it. He develops the lots, we sell them and we virtually break even on them. I mean, I cannot see how there is any cost there that the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation can cut down on. It is simply putting out a proposal, the tender comes in and the low bidder gets it. He goes out and develops the lots, based on that bid, and when we get the lots, we sell them for a price so that we cost recover. That is basically what is happening. The hon. member made the point last year at the Estimates Committees, and since the hon. member talked to me, I went through every development that we did last year. We are losing money in some areas. In Stephenville we cannot sell a lot. It is the best paved ski-doo trail in the country. They have been there now for about ten years and we cannot sell them. They are very costly. We have subsidized those. I could get the costs that the hon. member is talking about. We would take the raw land -

MR. W. CARTER:

I know of a private company which paid \$60,000 an acre.

MR. BARRY:

May I say a few words now?

MR. DINN:

Yes, okay. I can finish whenever the hon. member is ready. No problem!

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to have a few words. I thank the minister for his courtesy. We have a situation now where we are on Interim Supply and there is only so much time that any of us can afford to spend in the House on this because there are many other issues. However, Mr. Chairman, we still have an unresolved issue here and it is an issue of illegality. I would like the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) to just listen for a moment to the words of the hon. John Crosbie, when he was Minister of Finance in 1972.

MR. J. CARTER:

Table it.

MR. BARRY:

I will table it, yes. I will table it when I finish reading it. And if the Chairman would keep the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) quiet, who has already been slapped down by one of his own colleagues today, I will get through this.

Now, there was a situation in 1972 where Special Warrants were sought because the House was not able to get back early enough after the election in order to pay public

employees. That was not the situation in this case. Here Special Warrants were sought, even though the House could have been carried on for several more days and the Minister of Finance could have attempted to persuade the House to issue the approval for the Interim Supply Bill. They decided not to do that.

Also, Mr. Chairman, the minister could have pointed out to us the reasons for the government's position on the labour dispute, and could have spent several days, as he should have, attempting to persuade the House as to the correctness of his point of view.

MR. J. CARTER:

Mr. Chairman, a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please! The hon. the member for St. John's North on a point of order.

MR. J. CARTER:

Mr. Chairman, you will agree, I am sure, that there is a precedent in this House of long-standing that if a member gives incorrect information to this House, any other member who has knowledge of anything different should get up to try and set the record straight.

MR. BARRY:

There is no point of order, Mr. Chairman. He is taking my time. Could you cut him down right away?

MR. J. CARTER:

This is a valid point of order, Mr. Chairman, and the point is that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) knows full-well that because of his contrivance he required this House to sit most of the night. There was no good reason for it; it could easily have been avoided. There was no

spirit of co-operation whatsoever and the reason that Special Warrants were required, and I agree with him it was quite different from the situation in 1972, which I remember as he does too, of course, it was quite different from then. Then, at that time, we had a dreadful Opposition of a party who shall be nameless, still there was no co-operation whatsoever last time. So I would just like to make that point.

Thank you.

MR. BARRY:

There is no point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

There is no point of order, there is a difference of opinion between two hon. members.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Chairman, we see again the rudeness of the member for St. John's North in just standing up to interrupt and to take up time.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Finance at that time referred to an earlier situation, under the Liberal Administration, back in the early 1960s, where Special Warrants had been applied for. He said, "Whether that was properly done or not constitutionally, legally, I have not seen any opinions on it given at that time. But presumably the Crown at that time advised it could be done. However, it is the opinion of the Comptroller and Deputy Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) that we could not properly spend money on this Special Warrant, and the Treasury Board overruled it."

Now, he goes on on the next page, "The point in any event, Mr.

Chairman, is that we are in a position where if we listened to a different view of law or to the Comptroller we would not have been able to pay the salary cheques and we would have had to wait another week or two for the House's approval. So we went ahead and did that.

As I say, we have precedent to do it, but it is not something we would do" - I repeat: 'But it is not something we would do' - "It is only in an emergency like this we would do it, because this House should authorize all spending that the government make. But in the exigencies of this emergency situation this was done, so we trust that the House will forgive us. We know that the members of the House will not have wanted government employees or those receiving the mothers' allowance not to have received the same in the last few days. We trust that the House will approve."

Now, this was the approach of a man of principle, a man who felt himself bound by the law, who felt it necessary to point out that there was some real question with respect to the legality of what was being done. The then Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Roberts, said: "The minister has outlined eloquently what some of us already knew, that the expenditures made when they paid the civil service and the other people who were paid on Friday past were illegal. I think the fact it was a precedent does not take away from the fact that they were illegal. The Minister of Justice, I am sure, would concur. They have been illegal also in 1960." And then he goes on to discuss about how, in certain cases, the minister has no choice in the public interest but to do that but, Mr. Chairman,

the approach has always been to come in and explain to the House and to ask for the approval of the House and ask for ratification of what was done illegally.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we want to avoid this very dangerous precedent which totally undermines the very foundation of the House of Assembly. It is the action of a dictatorship, that is to have moneys approved behind closed doors by a committee of the executive, by Treasury Board, by a junta, a secret meeting, a Star Chamber-like proceeding, away from the people's House, away from the elected representatives of the people, Mr. Chairman, where that could be debated, where questions could be put as to whether the money should be spent. We want to have the Minister of Finance's (Dr. Collins) acknowledgement and admission that this is not something that was done properly, that it is something that was done illegally and it is something for which the ratification of this House should now be obtained. And, Mr. Chairman, if we have that acknowledgement, we will be able to see this Interim Supply bill proceed quite expeditiously.

However, we have to take a stand. We do not want to take up the time of the House, but we have to take a stand when we see a government act in its arrogance in an illegal fashion, with contempt for the elected representatives of the people and for the House of Assembly. We have to take a stand when we see a government being prepared to take away from the House of Assembly the very essence of the reason for its being here, namely, to control expenditures, to approve expenditures. The Minister of Finance and his colleagues are making a farce and

a mockery of the entire democratic process when they take it upon themselves to say that they are entitled to go down to the Lieutenant-Governor, when the House could be sitting, and say to His Honour, 'Here is \$715 million that we need because there is an emergency. An emergency! - \$715 million needed to pay the salaries for one month, or two weeks, presumably. What tripe! What nonsense!

MR. MARSHALL:

You want the minister to apologize for paying those people on social welfare.

MR. BARRY:

We want him to apologize for breaking the law of this Province.

MR. MARSHALL:

How did he break the law of this Province?

MR. BARRY:

He broke the law by requesting Special Warrants when such request was not authorized by legislation. Now, if we are missing something, we would ask the Minister of Finance to stand up and explain to us the legal basis upon which he acted. He has not done that. I have read it. I have read it over and over closely, line by line, word for word, and I have yet to find one shred of legality upon which the Minister of Finance based his action. It is not there. Now, the minister, at the request of the Government House Leader (Mr. Marshall), has refused to reveal the so-called legal opinion he obtained. I challenge the minister, give us the substance of that legal opinion. If you will not release the opinion, give us the substance of the argument that was supposedly raised by somebody

knowledgeable in the law. You do not have it. The Minister of Finance does not have any legal basis. They acted with total contempt. In their arrogance, they felt they could ram this through and that all would be well because it could not be questioned. The Minister of Finance will find that this arrogance will come back to haunt him, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Order, please!

MR. BARRY:
I have another five seconds and I want every second.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
The hon. Leader of the Opposition might wish to adjourn the debate.

MR. BARRY:
I adjourn the debate.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
It being Thursday, it is time for the Late Show. The Committee will rise.

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

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for St. John's East Extern.

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

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

MR. SPEAKER:
On the Late Show there are two questions. The first is from the hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans who is not satisfied with the answer received from the Premier to the question on granting of offshore leases and wishes to debate same.

The hon. the member for Windsor - Buchans.

MR. FLIGHT:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in this House, we became aware that the Offshore Petroleum Board had granted leases, tracts of land, for the purpose of exploration to various companies who had tendered for those tracts of land. We found that one company that got a tract of land was Amoco, another was Chevron, and the other company, Mr. Speaker, was Shell Canada in a joint venture with North Atlantic Petroleum Ltd.

So, who is this North Atlantic Petroleum Ltd? It turns out, Mr. Speaker, that we look and we see that the shareholders of that particular company are one, Mr. Francis Ryan, he is the Chairman, and one, Basil Dobbin who is the present secretary. Now, where have those names come up before, Mr. Speaker? There seems to be a familiar ring to those names. Suddenly we realize, Mr. Speaker, that the Chairman of North Atlantic Petroleum was the chairman of the last P.C. election. Mr. Ryan was the chairman of the Tory campaign of the Tory campaign in the last provincial election. He was also involved in the last federal election with Mr. Crosbie.

Mr. Dobbin, Mr. Speaker, it turns out is the, in a term we use

loosely, Tory bagman in Newfoundland; he collects money to keep the Tories in power. They are both confidantes of the Premier, a sort of clique.

Mr. Speaker, people say, well, why do you question that? Anyone can go into the offshore in a joint venture. The Premier said today, on radio, that Lundrigans have gone into a joint venture in the building of platforms. Well, of course, Lundrigans is famous in Canada for concrete. They are expert in concrete. So the expertise they have brought to that joint venture is their ability to supply all the concrete and all the expertise and all the engineering necessary. So the question is, What does North Atlantic Petroleum bring to Shell? Does the great Shell Canada require North Atlantic Petroleum's money? I doubt that, Mr. Speaker. So it is a fair question for a Newfoundlander.

Remember we were not going to allow speculators in the offshore, we were going to run our offshore so that the companies which came in were not fly-by-night operators, coming in for a grab and whipping out again. So, in keeping with that, one has to wonder why Shell would have wanted to go into joint ventures with this North Atlantic Petroleum Limited? What expertise did they have? None could be found, Mr. Speaker, but the names in that company, we find, are associated - and I made the charge and I will live with it, that this smacks of political patronage. Was there some influence used there? Since these people are confidants of the Premier, did he bring any of his political influence to bear? He says, 'No, he did not.' Did any minister bring any political

influence to bear? 'No, they did not.' Is there anyone alive in Newfoundland who will believe that? No, there is not. No, nobody in Newfoundland will believe that. I ask the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) - it is easy to incorporate a company in this Province - does he think that if he and I spent the \$800 necessary to incorporate a company we could then phone up Mobil or Shell or Chevron and say, 'We would like to be a partner of yours, and when you bid on a tract of land out there that might contain a Hibernia, we would like to be your partner in a joint venture?' Do you think that company might come back and say, 'Well, what expertise do you have to offer?'

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is no implication in any comments that I made that the Premier or any of his ministers used their influence with the Petroleum Board, there is some question as to whether any influence was used with Shell Oil, though. That is where the question arises. Was influence used with Shell Oil? Was the suggestion made to Shell Oil, We would like to see this company in a joint venture? Mr. Speaker, the word on the street is, and I do not know Shell Oil -

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

MR. FLIGHT:
The word on the street is that Shell Oil is not happy.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please! Order, please!
Order, please!

The hon. the member's time has elapsed.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure you would want to know that the word on the street is that Shell Oil is not happy.

MR. SPEAKER:

Please, sit down!

MR. FLIGHT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, is this ever foolish. He comes in with innuendo - you are presumed guilty until proven innocent. It is part of the old Liberal line; Mr. Neary used it when he was here in the House when he was Leader of the Opposition. I remember one time Mr. Neary brought up the fact that my father made representation to a select committee out in Gander. Somehow, my father was not supposed to be allowed to make a representation. I remember he raised that in the House one day. I do not know what Mr. Ryan and Mr. Dobbin do. They are businessmen and if they wanted to invest in acreage offshore, more power to them, if they have the money to do it, if they want to put their money there. I say I would like to have more of them. I have talked to Mobil in the last two or three years, when we have had meetings here in this building, I do not think I have spoken to a person in Shell Oil, not one single soul in Shell, because Shell has not been involved here at all. I can almost say categorically that I have spoken to nobody in Shell for five or six years, five or six years, and then it might have been in Toronto or Calgary at some oil show or something. Before that, I

negotiated with them on the oil and gas regulations, back in the 1970s, when I was Minister of Mines and Energy. So I have not even spoken to Shell. I have had no correspondence from them, I have not spoken to them on the phone, in person or in any other way. As to the joint board, I met Mr. Baugh before he was appointed, and I have not spoken to him since nor to anybody else on the board, either by phone, by writing, by anything. I do not know what Mr. Dobbin and Mr. Ryan do with their money, they go out and form companies and get involved in this and get involved in that, and more power to them.

MR. FLIGHT:

Do they give anything to the Tories?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I do not know, perhaps they are not allowed because they are wise enough to support a very vibrant political party and that somehow cancels them out.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

If they want to be PCs and get involved in the PC Party, I suppose that is alright. I guess there are Liberals on the other side, friends of the Leader of the Opposition, who are in business that you could say the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) helped and some of them are bagmen or something. I do not know. Do you know something else, Mr. Speaker? I do not care.

If there is a piece of concrete evidence, something hard core, that somebody was using power, influencing and so on, fine and dandy, bring it against me. But,

you know something, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you. This really aggravates not only some members in the Opposition, not all, but some members opposite, and it drives the press, especially some people in CBC crazy, absolutely mad. Some of the members of the press and CBC have said it and I know they have said it, that some day we are going to get Peckford and we are going to find a skeleton in his closet. I say Methuselah lived to be several hundred years old and they are going to have to live to be that old. It might aggravate members of the Opposition but, there is no way.

Anybody who knows me at all knows that one thing I am, you can criticize me as long as you want, we shoot straight over here, Mr. Speaker, and there are no skeletons. The member for Windsor-Buchans (Mr. Flight) can try until he is an old, old man but, he shall never succeed, Mr. Speaker, he shall never succeed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. member for Eagle River was not satisfied with an answer from the Minister of Consumer Affairs but I do not have much detail on what it is all about.

The hon. member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Each year this matter has been brought up in the House and when the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren) was on this side, he brought up the same thing.

I was surprised when I brought it up today that the Minister of Consumer Affairs ended up going on a personal attack. As the Premier just said, here is a business man in the Province but, because he is Liberal, there is a personal attack on him.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

What, what?

MR. HISCOCK:

The thing is, Mr. Speaker, there is a fuel shortage down on the Labrador Coast each year. There is also the matter that as this time of the year comes by, a lot of the people who have money buy extra fuel so they are not short for the fishing season. So there is hoarding going on. There are other people on the coast who are going up to Red Bay. Over sixty-five people have gone up to Red Bay to get fuel and carry it down by ski-doo. In a couple of weeks time, they will not be able to do that. I asked a question of the Minister of Consumer Affairs about whether the minister would look at the possibility of helping a local businessman in the Labrador Straits area bring down a couple of hundred barrels of oil, if necessary - his department can do a survey - bring it down to William's Harbour and allow them to sell it there. Some of the transportation costs would be added onto that because the fuel down in Eastern Labrador is \$129 a barrel whereas in Red Bay it is \$109, so you would save some there and that could be passed on. An attack was made on a businessman down there that is supplying fuel from Nain to Lanse au Clair. In Cartwright there is no shortage, Black Tickle has no shortage and Paradise River has no shortage. That company put in an extra 5,000 gallons last year in St. Lewis and

put new tanks in there. That company put an extra 10,000 in Mary's Harbour, filled up the tanks in Port Hope Simpson, and placed 10,000 gallons in Paradise River. Each year there are more communities getting fuel but each year the consumption is going up. Whereas up North, in Hopedale, where they are flying it in, the company, Mr. Chapman of Ultramar, even admitted that the figures they were given last Fall were underestimated, were wrong, and as a result, it is the company's fault. In the Southern Labrador area, the problem is they put more in than the year before and more in the year before that, but consumption is still going up.

Mr. Speaker, in some of these smaller communities there would also be tanks but because the rules of the Department of Environment are so strict with diking and putting other requirements in, the end result is it is unfeasible for that company to put tanks in some of the smaller communities because of the heavy capital investment in the beginning. It is good to have the Department of the Environment on it and that but, that is another cost the company has to look at.

Now, the other question is the fuel shortage on the Coast. There are two things that can be done. We can ignore it and wait until the shipping season starts. The company assured us that they will be down there with it like last year when there was a shortage, or they could have an ice breaker come in and bring the tanker in. But if they bring in the ice breaker, the Conservative Government has said any private company who wants an ice breaker has to pay for the ice breaker, so the ice breaker cost will go back

to the consumer.

There a combined councils meeting, Mr. Speaker, in L'Anse-au-Clair, Labrador tomorrow. Two planes are going to be going in with government officials and other officials. I do not know what the cost is. It is chartered and here are the people down in Eastern Labrador saying, "Get a couple of longliners, get the fuel aboard these, bring them down to Williams Harbour and allow the people to come out on ski-doo to pick it up." What we are talking about are low income people and people who cannot afford to buy in bulk. For example, in Mary's Harbour over 268 barrels were sold in one week.

The report from the price review committee that went around the Province, costing \$80,000 in 1984, made recommendations. I will be up on my feet within the next three weeks talking about a food shortage again. Have any of the recommendations been implemented to cope with that problem? It is all well and good for the minister to get up and attack a businessman who is doing the job and putting in more fuel, almost 20,000 extra gallons have gone in over the last year, but now, for various reasons, I have been on the radio telling the people in Labrador to share. I do not have to tell them to share because they will share but the part is -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. HISCOCK:

In concluding, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Minister of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Russell), with the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. R. Aylward), will do that. We

waste so much money. Here is a way that he can actually help the consumer and I hope that he will give a positive answer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) has accused me of making an attack on a businessman and, thus inferred, that I should not do that. Perhaps he should have a word with his colleague next to him, who has made some kind of an innuendo and an attack on certain businessmen in this Province.

Mr. Speaker, I made no such attack on Mr. Woodward. I indicated that it was Mr. Woodward's responsibility to provide fuel to coastal Labrador and, for whatever reason, there does appear to be a shortage there. Maybe Mr. Woodward should do what Ultramar did. When the member for Torngat Mountains (Mr. Warren), Mr. Speaker, was very much in the know on what is going on in Labrador, was opposed by a certain businessman, who could not beat him, he picked up the telephone, called Ultramar and explained the situations to them. They immediately said, "yes, we agree. It is our fault. It is our mistake. We will rectify it and it will not be at any extra cost to the consumer." They flew fuel in there and thus, resolved the problem, which was their responsibility.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest

that private enterprise has a similar responsibility. I am not saying, in essence, that perhaps they should get the fuel in there free of cost. I am saying that he does have a responsibility to fulfil his mandate, to provide that kind of service to the people there and I would certainly suggest that he do that.

In fact, the businessman, Mr. Woodward, I understand, at least from today's paper, indicated that there is no fuel shortage in the area and that people are hoarding fuel. The hon. member for Eagle River has indicated that, for whatever reason, this might be so. So there is a conflict, at least between the hon. member for Eagle River and some others who have indicated and said, in contradiction to Mr. Woodward's statement, there is no hoarding going on. So there is obviously a conflict.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate thing perhaps in these kinds of instances and occasions is that it does appear that the consumer is the person who is kind of caught in the middle and who suffers, in one sense, because of that.

I am sure the member for Eagle River is aware that the provision of services to Labrador is not really the responsibility of my department. It is the responsibility of the Department of Rural, Agriculture and Northern Development, which is very much aware of the problems that exist there and, I am sure, have been trying and will continue to try to resolve them.

In any case, Mr. Speaker, I have asked my deputy minister to get in touch with the Department of

Rural, Agriculture and Northern Development in Goose Bay and with my new office in Goose Bay, take a look at the situation, and if there is anything that we can do, within reason, to help resolve the problem, I think we will certainly be only too happy to do it.

Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HISCOCK:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

The Minister of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Russell) used the word 'hoarding'. Hoarding probably is not the word. Those people down there who are the distributors of the fuel -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! That is no point of order.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

It is moved and seconded that the House do now adjourn, all those in favour 'Aye', those against 'Nay'. The House stands adjourned until 10:00 a.m. tomorrow.