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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 calling for Statements by Ministers I would like to welcome to the Speaker's Gallery Mr. Alain Ceie, French Consul General in Atlantic Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

Statements by Ministers

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Public Works.

MR. YOUNG:
Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that a contract for the operation of a cafeteria in the new extension of Confederation Building has been awarded to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

A total of five firms submitted proposals to the Department of Public Works and Services in response to our public tender call.

The contract covers the large modern cafeteria with a seating capacity for 750 people, plus an executive dining room, coffee/dry stand, vending machines and coffee snack wagons, to be operated in both buildings.

Mr. Speaker, the CNIB has a long association with Confederation Building, having operated the existing cafeteria since the building was first opened in 1960. Of course, the Caterplan Division has had many years experience in cafeteria operations here in Newfoundland and

throughout Canada.

The contract is for three years duration and is renewable for a further three years provided that both parties are in mutual agreement.

It is anticipated that the contract will come into effect early in June, when it is expected that the new cafeteria will be ready for occupancy.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Naskaupi.

MR. KELLAND:
Thank you for recognizing me, Mr. Speaker. According to recent media reports in my area, I thought I might be considered just another pretty face. I am glad to see I am not.

Thank you to the minister for providing the statement. I realize that yesterday there was a little bit of a tangle in the wording, but I do appreciate it. Generally speaking, it seems to me that when an Opposition member rise to respond to a statement by a minister there is a delivery of a slap-in-the-face, sort of a thing, and I certainly have no intention of doing anything like that with this sort of good news for two reasons: One, if one was to offer a slap in the face to the minister, he may be in a bit of quandary as to which way to turn and, secondly, and much more importantly, I think, is the fact that he has in this statement - and I appreciate what he has done here - followed the lead and the direction and the suggestion given by my hon. colleague from Port de Grave (Mr. Efford) some months ago, in that he suggested this very thing. I am pleased to see that the minister and the

government were able to take that sort of suggestion as a positive suggestion and follow it and carry it out.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

This was done by tender.

MR. KELLAND:

I am totally aware, as the Premier announces, that this was done by tender, and that, also, was announced weeks ago in the House by the minister, and that he had not yet made a decision as to how it would go. I think what you have done here on the positive side, Mr. Minister, is that in having it go to the C.N.I.B. - there are no figures as to what the dollar ranges were of all the bids - because of the very, very tight dollar situation when it comes to raising funds for charity, you have taken the strain off the other charitable organizations in our Province by providing the C.N.I.B. with a means of raising funds they can put to good use. So I do congratulate him on that.

I would like to know a little bit more, just from a personal point of view, as to what dollar range the bids were in. Generally speaking, if all else is equal, the highest bidder would get the tender. But if that was not the case, I believe you used some compassion and some good sense and, of course, as I have said, taken the suggestion of my hon. colleague from Port de Grave. I know that the people with vision impairment in this Province will thank you for this statement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Public

Works and Services.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, I will gladly provide all the information to the hon. member. Probably I will table it, because it was all public tender, nothing was closed. I might add, for the information of the hon. member, that we decided some years ago that the cafeteria, the travel agency, the bank and everything pertaining to the new building would go to public proposals.

MR. FLIGHT:

Because of pressure from the Opposition.

MR. SPEAKER:

I think we have heard that Ministerial Statement.

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise the House of Assembly that Chief Superintendent Dale Henry, Commanding Officer of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for Newfoundland and Labrador, will be transferred to Winnipeg this July. He will assume command of the RCMP in Manitoba and will be promoted to the rank of Assistant Commissioner.

Chief Superintendent Henry has been Commanding Officer in Newfoundland and Labrador since May of 1983. He has discharged his duties in an exemplary fashion and has led major steps to upgrade police facilities in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MS VERGE:

The new Commanding Officer for Newfoundland and Labrador will be Superintendent Robert Currie, who

is now serving as Officer Commanding of Prince Rupert Sub-division in British Columbia. He is a graduate of the Executive Development Course at the Canadian Police College and a graduate of the National Defence College.

Superintendent Currie has extensive Northern policing experience, as well as having a considerable administrative background. He also has expertise in electronic data processing, particularly in the use of computers in law enforcement.

Superintendent Currie will be promoted to the rank of Chief Superintendent when he assumes command in Newfoundland and Labrador.

During the command of Chief Superintendent Henry in the Province, the RCMP have carried out a \$14 million construction programme.

New detachments have been constructed at Ferryland, Stephenville, Channel - Port aux Basques, Carmanville, Marystown, Grand Falls, Harbour Breton, and Flowers Cove.

A new sub-division headquarters have just been completed at Gander and is now ready for occupancy. Extensive renovations have been done to the Grand Bank and Lewisporte detachments.

New married quarters have been constructed for RCMP personnel and plans have been approved for further construction.

The RCMP capital programme for the new budget year is estimated to be over \$6 million and will include the construction of new detachments at Fogo, Wesleyville,

and Bonavista.

Tenders have been called for the construction of a new hangar in Goose Bay to house a newly acquired Twin Otter aircraft. This aircraft has allowed the RCMP to upgrade and improve policing services on Coastal Labrador.

RCMP patrol cabins will be added this year in Ramea and Rigolet to enhance police presence in those communities. These facilities will provide working and living accommodations for police officers and will also provide holding areas for prisoners.

Chief Superintendent Henry has led the introduction of a new policing concept to provide a greater police presence in rural communities. Plans are underway to develop what are known as satellite offices in the communities of Old Perlican, Pasadena and St. Mary's. These offices will provide a work area for officers on patrol and will provide ready access by the public to police services.

Plans are now underway, Mr. Speaker, to construct a new RCMP Provincial Headquarters building in St. John's, and it is anticipated that construction will commence sometime in 1988.

Mr. Speaker, while the federal government provides initial funding for RCMP capital projects, the Province pays rent for RCMP facilities under the terms of the provincial policing contract.

Mr. Speaker, the ambitious construction programme which I have outlined is but one of the results of Chief Superintendent Henry's leadership of the RCMP in this Province. He has overseen

consistently high standards of policing on the part of the 540 members of the RCMP throughout the Province. In discharging his important duties, Chief Superintendent Henry has worked closely with our Department of Justice and has developed an excellent relationship with the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government and, I trust, all members of this House, I wish to extend to Chief Superintendent Henry - soon to be Assistant Commissioner Henry - congratulations for a job very well done in Newfoundland and Labrador and best wishes for the challenges that lie ahead for him in Manitoba.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker, I, first of all, would like to thank the minister for giving me a copy of the statement a few minutes beforehand.

I would like to join with the minister in expressing our best wishes to Chief Superintendent Henry - now Assistant Commissioner Henry - for the excellent work that he has done while he has been in the Province. I would also like to welcome Superintendent Robert Currie, who will now become Chief Superintendent Currie, and we look forward to the same excellent performance from Chief Superintendent Currie as we have seen from previous officers

commanding the RCMP in this Province.

I am also pleased to receive from the minister this information with respect to what the RCMP has been doing to improve policing in the Province. There are other areas, particularly along the Coast of Labrador, where there are still questions, Port Hope Simpson, for example, Black Tickle, where, because of the remoteness and so forth there could be better facilities for the RCMP. But this is a start.

We notice that they are enhancing the presence in Ramea and Rigolet, and we hope that in the areas of the Province where they are still responsible for policing, we will see continued expenditures to improve the ability of the RCMP to police.

There is still concern, although I think this is becoming alleviated somewhat as new facilities are built, about the adequacy of police holding tanks. One of the things that I have gotten over the last couple of years is that overcrowding at the penitentiary often leads to individuals being kept in various RCMP detachment cells for a long period of time. These facilities are not designed to keep prisoners over a long period and conditions are inadequate. Maybe the minister might keep that in mind and take a look at whether, in fact, we do have people being held for longer periods of time than appropriate in inadequate holding facilities around the Province.

MR. SPEAKER:

Before calling Oral Questions I would like to welcome to the galleries councillor Stirling Thomas, from Grand Falls.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. BARRY:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BARRY:
Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Premier. In light of the serious international incident we now see occurring where the United States has bombed Libya, recognizing that it is not a matter directly within provincial jurisdiction, but also recognizing that there is at least one Newfoundlander and perhaps others working in Libya, I wonder if the Premier has ascertained in fact how many Newfoundlanders are working in that country, and whether the Premier has made any representation on their behalf to Mr. Clark, the Canadian Minister for External Affairs, with respect to how their safety should be protected?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
I have not been in touch with the External Affairs Department but I understand, however, that they are monitoring the situation. As far as I understand it, to this moment no Canadians have been affected by the recent activities overnight in or near Tripoli.

MR. BARRY:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:
Mr. Speaker, the approach of the External Affairs Department appears to be to state that because most of the Canadians are working in oil fields somewhat removed from military targets that, therefore, they are not endangered. I wonder if the Premier might take into consideration the possibility that Mr. Khadafy might decide to employ the same technique as was employed in Iran and, when the pressure comes on, start looking at potential hostages. There has already been an indication that he has been looking at that situation with respect to potential US hostages. Would the Premier communicate with the Department of External Affairs to enquire whether they have considered that possibility, and whether they have thoroughly expressed the potential risk to those workers who are still in that country in the event that Mr. Khadafy should decide that he would take the irregular action that he is rapidly becoming known for?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker, we have not opened an embassy in Tripoli yet. From the last figures I saw an hour or so ago, I think there are perhaps no more than ten or fifteen people from Canada in the area in question. I am quite confident that the External Affairs Department know what they are about in this matter and I do not presume to know more than they know. In the talks we have had with External Affairs over the last number of months, especially

the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ottenheimer), I am sure that if anybody from Newfoundland was in danger in the Tripoli area they would be on to us about it. We will keep a close watch on the situation over the next few days. If there seems to be some danger to people who normally reside in Newfoundland, well then we will express our concerns accordingly.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Premier as well. In view of the complete turnaround, the complete about-face by the federal Minister of Justice, the hon John Crosbie, with respect to the maintenance of the Newfoundland railway, can the Premier indicate whether his position, the traditional and long-standing position of the provincial government, and indeed of the Conservative Party of this Province, is still the maintaining and upkeeping of the Newfoundland railway as opposed to Mr. Crosbie's view, which is to scrap it?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
No, Mr. Speaker, it is not to retaining and upkeeping the railway. That is not acceptable to the Government of Newfoundland. The railway cannot be retained in any form which is competitive or worthwhile unless it is retained and major upgrading occurs. The federal government

would have to agree to major upgrading. It is not sufficient to see the railway continue in its present form where, as we have seen for the last twenty or thirty years, a railway -

MR. LUSH:
'Upgrading' I said.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
You said 'upkeeping.' Upkeeping is not the same as major upgrading in the way I interpret the English language.

So what has to be done, if the railway is to remain by anybody's standards as a competitive mode in this Province, then there has to be significant upgrading. Otherwise it will go the way it has gone so far, and that is it will stay and gradually grind itself into the ground until suddenly nobody is using it. There are hardly any passengers now, it is mostly freight. What our position has always been is that we do not want to see the railway continue as it has in the last ten or fifteen or twenty years. That is not acceptable. There has to be a major significant upgrading to it if it is going to be a competing mode with water transportation, air transportation and the road transportation. That is the position that we have put forward to the federal government.

So we do not take the position that the Liberal Party takes as just espoused by the hon. member for Bonavista North, that it stay and have some kind of upkeep to make sure there are no bridges falling down or the road bed is good enough so a train can go over it at five miles an hour. We say we want to see the railway stay, but it has to have significant and

major upgrading. That means hundreds of millions of dollars.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Premier would indicate what substance and what validity there is to a recent *Globe and Mail* story which quotes a provincial official, an official of the Premier's government, as saying that the federal government has offered Newfoundland up to \$1 billion, as well as other incentives, to persuade the Province to scrap its money-losing freight railway. It continues on, 'They are in effect trying to buy us out.' Can the Premier indicate what substance and what validity there are to these statements?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I have seen statements in the Mainland press from time to time, some of them directed against me personally, some of them directed against the administration, against the government, and I would say they all more or less fall in the same category; they are extremely scurrilous and usually quite untrue.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, further on in the article the official is quoted again as saying, 'The offer is putting us between a rock and a hard place.' Now, that would indicate that either negotiations are going on or that the debate is over. Could the Premier indicate what is the position here when an official of the provincial government is saying 'That the offer puts us between a rock and a hard place'? It would indicate that certainly negotiations are ongoing or even that the debate is over, that the offer is a fait accompli.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I do not know where the member for Bonavista North nor members of his party have been over the last number of months. They could not have been in this House or they could not have been reading the papers or listening to the news because I thought it was quite clear to everybody. We have indicated clearly what our position is on the railway. We have gone on to say that if the federal government has a proposal, or alternatives which they want to discuss with us, we are prepared to sit down and discuss them with them, to see what they have in mind, not only as it relates to the railway but to other transportation problems in the Province. We have never closed the door completely on talks with them but we have not, as of this day, received any proposal from them. We had a conversation and a discussion, a number of ministers and myself, with Mr. Crosbie yesterday when he was in St. John's, but we have yet to receive a proposal from them. They are apparently considering a number of

alternatives to present to the Government of Newfoundland. When we get those alternatives I am sure Cabinet will consider them and we will decide whether they have any merit or whether they do not. At this point in time we have indicated to Mr. Crosbie, to Mr. Mazankowski, to the Prime Minister and to members opposite over and over again what our position is, which I just reiterated again in the answer to a previous question. That is where the story stands. I do not know where the hon. member has been but he has not been in Newfoundland, for sure.

MR. LUSH:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for Bonavista North.

MR. LUSH:

Do I gather from what the Premier is saying, talking about the federal government, that he is waiting, they have not made a proposal, that they are open for a proposal? Do I gather from the Premier that the only proposal that the Province is willing to accept is one relating to the maintenance and major upgrading of the Newfoundland railway? Is that the only proposal the Province is open to?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

We have indicated to the federal government what our position is and we want them to accept our position. Whether they are going to come back and accept our position and put \$500 million to \$1 billion, or whatever is needed, into the railway and make it a

modern mode of transportation, I do not know, that is up to the federal government to decide. That is what we put forward to the federal government as our position from Newfoundland and Labrador. I cannot speak for the federal government. I am head of the Government in Newfoundland and Labrador, not of the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada will have to speak for themselves. They know clearly where we stand on the issue.

MR. BAKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

I have a question concerning the press conference yesterday where our presence in the federal Cabinet (Mr. Crosbie) and our Energy Minister (Mr. Marshall) were smiling at each other. The Minister of Energy indicated that he had some satisfaction with this federal response. I would like to ask the Premier of this Province if he expresses satisfaction with the fact that there is no increase in Search and Rescue recommended by the federal government? In fact, there is merely a reshuffling of Search and Rescue, that is all that has happened in this Province in the last couple of years, and in fact all they are doing is now shifting responsibility from one group of people to another group of people and the net effect is that there is no improvement in Search and Rescue in this Province. Is the Premier satisfied with that?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I like the hon. member's nerve. His party was the Government of Canada when they would not lift one finger to improve Search and Rescue in this Province and it is only since the PCs got in in Ottawa that we saw any significant improvements in Search and Rescue. How can he get up now and ask a question like that when he had his own brother on the government side of the House for years and they absolutely and completely refused to do anything? Now we have a federal government which, firstly, over the last two years, has improved significantly Search and Rescue in the Province, and, number two, has accepted the Ocean Ranger recommendations from the Royal Commission and are now going to set up a special agency, under the Department of Defense, and a task force to see that these recommendations are implemented. Mr. Speaker, I am happy with the progress that has been made in the last two years. I would like to see more, everybody would like to see more of everything, but they are moving in the right direction and they have responded in a very positive way to a very important royal commission in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

If the Premier makes a statement like that and says he is satisfied often enough, maybe people will start believing him ten years down the road.

Is the Premier also satisfied with the recommendation that the Canadian Safety regulations apply to the total offshore, to the rigs and so on, to the limit of the Continental Shelf? We have jurisdiction over various aspects of the offshore to the limits of the Continental Shelf, so what about the safety regulations, what about that particular recommendation? Has that been dealt with? Is the Premier satisfied that the safety regulations that were recommended have been dealt with?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Well, we are moving in the right direction, Mr. Speaker. We are getting there a lot faster now, since September, 1984, than we did for the previous ten years before, not only as it relates to safety and as it relates to Search and Rescue, but as it relates to the offshore in general. It is only since September, 1984 that we were able to get an Atlantic Accord, which his cohorts up on Ottawa wanted to refuse to make sure that we stayed on welfare for the next 200 or 300 years. The hon. member gets up in his haughty way and starts posing questions which his own party in Ottawa refused to even look at for decades and decades. Yes, we would like for it to go a lot faster. You know, you cannot get 100 per cent safety. There is not 100 per cent safety for druggers that sail from Marystown or Catalina every day. There is always a risk. But they are moving in the right direction and they are improving the safety regulations that apply to the offshore. Sure we would like to see everything move a lot faster, but we have at least started to

move in the right direction, and a lot faster and a lot quicker, and with a lot more determination and a lot more genuine concern for the offshore than the hon. gentleman's colleagues showed for decades in Ottawa.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker, moving in the right direction obviously means just shuffling a few little responsibilities and not having any affect on the situation that it is meant to correct. I would ask the Premier when, in his view, will that direction be reached? When will that direction be reached? If it he is starting to move in the right direction now, the government in Ottawa has had almost two years now, coming up to two years to start correcting some of these things with regard to the recommendations, so when will this be reached? For instance, the evacuation method on the rigs, which is something that I hear is still quite inadequate, when will he be satisfied that that is adequate? When will the money be put in to investigate those procedures rather than just doing models and so on?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker, we will never be satisfied because we will never get to a position where you can have 100 per cent surety offshore either in the fishing industry or in the offshore petroleum industry. The answer to the hon. member's question is we will never

be satisfied. But at least we do see now a government which has actually said, "We are going to set up a separate agency." This was one of the problems we have had offshore in Search and Rescue. Now they are going to set up an agency in the Department of Defence who are going to have the sole and only responsibility for directing search and rescue throughout all of Canada. That is a major breakthrough. This has never happened before. They are going to establish a task force in that agency as well to monitor the situation and come up with improved safety.

As it relates to evacuation, there are all kinds of experiments going on. There was one group of scientists, people who were researching, saying, "This evacuation system is the better one," and there is another one saying, "No, this evacuation system is the better one." We have to examine all these alternatives, all the newest technology that comes along, but to say that we will ever reach a given satisfaction at 100 per cent, we will never reach it because as technology changes so will the mode of safety to be used on those rugs. Technology would have to change too.

MR. FUREY:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for St. Barbe.

MR. FUREY:
Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Russell). Newfoundlanders continue to believe that they are being ripped off at the gas pumps, Mr. Speaker, and in terms of home heating oil. The world price of a

barrel of oil has been slashed by more than half in the last three and a half months. I asked the minister last week why this was not reflected at the gas pumps or at the home heating oil tank, and the minister said, and I quote, 'I will admit, Mr. Speaker, it is not low enough. It should go lower.' What exactly is the minister responsible for consumers in this Province doing to ensure that the price of gasoline is going lower, should go lower, and the price of home heating oil goes lower?

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, the hon. member refers to a question that he posed to me pertaining to the price of home heating fuel and gasoline, and the fact that it is not decreasing at a rate to his satisfaction and certainly to the satisfaction of consumers. I suppose that is a fair statement to make in that it is not increasing at a rate that any of us would like.

MR. FUREY:
Decreasing.

MR. RUSSELL:
Decreasing, rather. I am sorry.

However, in terms of furnace oil and home heating oil it is decreasing. I indicated a while ago that on January 30 my department carried out a kind of a mini-survey, if you will, and we did a similar thing on April 10. If I could just inform the hon. member and the hon. House of the variance or the difference in the

figures from that period of time -

MR. FLIGHT:
Answer! Answer!

MR. DINN:
Do you not want the answer?

MR. RUSSELL:
If the hon. member does not want the answer, Mr. Speaker, I will be prepared to sit down.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, I am trying to answer a question posed by the hon. member. You know, if his colleagues do not want me to give one him the answer, then that is up to them.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a significant decrease in the price per litre of home heating fuel. For example, I will just give you some figures from January 30 to April 10 and they are as follows: This is the price per litre, 41.9 cents to 35.9 cents; 42.1 to 36.1; 41.9 to 35.9; 43.1 to 37.1; and 43.1 to 35.9. So there has been a significant decrease per litre for the cost of home heating fuel over the past couple of months. While I do not have the specific figures for gasoline prices at the pumps, I do understand that the price per litre has gone down approximately eight to ten cents per litre, about 40 cents or 45 cents per gallon. So while perhaps it is not decreasing at a rate that we would like, it certainly has decreased and consumers are getting the benefit of the decrease in crude oil prices.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for St. Barbe.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his answer. It is amazing to see that when the price of a barrel of oil jumps how quickly it jumps at the gas pump and at the home heating oil pump. What I am saying to the minister is that in reverse we are seeing a molassas-slow decline. Now clearly the price of a barrel of oil has been slashed by more than half in Canada. I am saying that it should be reflected at the pumps by more than half. Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is instead of doing a survey of companies and asking them for their opinions, would the minister set up an independent enquiry to study the price of gasoline in Newfoundland and the price of home heating oil and get an independent adjudication as to why these prices are dropping so slowly, rather than just parroting or being a mouthpiece for the multinationals?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. RUSSELL:

I do not particularly see the need to see up an independent enquiry. The hon. members on the other side are very vocal in their criticism of this government on the way they spend taxpayers' dollars. Now the hon. member is advocating spending many more of the taxpayers' dollars to set up what could be an expensive enquiry into this matter and I do not think there is a need for it at the present time.

MR. FLIGHT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. FLIGHT:

In his role as protector of consumer affairs in this Province, will the minister undertake to explain to the House how it is that there is as high as one and a half cents per liter difference in gas between two communities twenty miles apart? Now the minister will have to remember that one and a half cents per liter is six to seven cents a gallon. So would the minister, in his role as Consumer Affairs Minister, indicate to the House why that is, why there is six or seven cents difference per gallon between Lewisporte and Grand Falls or St. John's and Bishop Falls?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, my department has had similar questions and enquiries posed to them on the very same matter that the hon. member for Windsor - Buchans has posed. We are, at the present time, attempting to find out the reason why that is so. It is so. There is a variance in the price.

MR. FLIGHT:

Six cents a gallon.

MR. RUSSELL:

Mr. Speaker, I just said there was a variance in the price. It does not matter whether it is half a cent or six or seven cents, there is a difference and I am trying to find out at the present time why there would be such a difference,

or any difference whatsoever. In the next few days I hope to have that kind of information and I will pass it on to the hon. member.

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 Premier. Last month was the seventh anniversary, I believe, of the Premier becoming the Premier of the Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

Since, Mr. Speaker, we have gone through, as they say in the Bible, seven years of famine, I am hoping that we are looking forward to seven years of feasting afterwards, but that is beside the point.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier is this: When the Premier was running for the leadership of the party he made nineteen promises, I believe that was the number, but one promise that, by his own admission, has not been fulfilled is the bringing in of a new elections act. Now I seem like a broken record in saying that seven years seems to be enough time to at least give some gestation to an elections act, and since we are also looking at it at being something like twenty-nine months since the Committee reported, my question for the

Premier is, since it was not mentioned in the Throne Speech, has he now abandoned the whole idea of bringing in electoral reforms?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. gentleman for bringing to the attention of the House a very important anniversary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

And really, Mr. Speaker, I do not expect the hon. member because we put him on a committee, to keep complimenting us every day. He really does not have to do it. I would say to the hon. member that in future when he asks a question and he has a preface to it, he does not need to continue to compliment the government or compliment me in order to make note of a given-

MR. TULK:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

A point of order, the hon. the member for Fogo.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

The hon. member for Fogo is up. He wants to make note of it, too. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fogo.

MR. TULK:

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Premier is enjoying the

compliment. I wonder if the member for Menihek (Mr. Fenwick) might indeed stand up and confirm for us when he is going to move over to that side of the House?

PREMIER PECKFORD:

To that point of order, jealousy will get you nowhere.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the other part of the hon. member's question, which is very important, is that he did acknowledge that of all the commitments or points of policy that I made known during that leadership campaign, there is only one that has not, to this date, been kept, and that happens to be the Elections Act. And I wish to reassure the hon. member that we have not forgotten about it because it was not in the Throne Speech.

MR. FENWICK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

My supplementary is this, Mr. Speaker. Since the select committee reported, I believe in December of 1983, the Cabinet has obviously been seized of that particular issue. Since it has taken almost two and a half years to get to a point where it has even dropped from the Throne Speech, is the Premier willing to

admit now that that committee report is essentially unworkable as a basis for a new elections act and we really have to draft it from scratch again?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

As I look across the way there, I forgot to acknowledge also that it is also an anniversary for other people in this House who ran against me, the member for Twillingate (Mr. W. Carter), and the member for Mount Scio (Mr. Barry).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I think they fought very, very aggressive campaigns in 1979 and unfortunately they were not successful. It is nice to see them now across from me in another position, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BARRY:

You remind me (inaudible).

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Yes, that is what you told me in 1979. I can tell you something else you told me in 1979 but I do not think I will right now. I will wait until later, when there might be a better opportunity to release that information.

I would agree with the hon. member that there were various elements of that act over which there has been an awful lot of debate internally here on this side of the House, especially in caucus and Cabinet. And we are going to have to look at some of those elements being changed before the act is one that I think is going to be acceptable to everybody. I

would tend to agree with the hon. member that there are various parts of that act that need fairly major revision before they are going to be acceptable, and that is one of the things that has led to its delay.

MR. FENWICK:

A final question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

My final question, Mr. Speaker, is when? Can you give us a date when we can see either a new draft piece of legislation or a start on redrafting it, perhaps going back to another committee phase?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I cannot give the hon. gentleman a specific date, but if he keeps getting up in the House and prefacing questions like he did today, it could be sooner than later.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

My question is to the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) and it concerns the withdrawal of government guarantees on fisheries improvement loans that were made to a number of Newfoundland fishermen during the period 1977 to 1980. Mr. Speaker, simply put, the federal government guaranteed loans under the federal Fisheries Improvement Loan Act. In some

cases the fishermen, through no fault of their own, defaulted, their gear has been repossessed, and in many cases now they being threatened with having their homes taken from them. Can the minister tell the House, Mr. Speaker, if he has contacted his federal counterpart concerning this matter and, if so, what results has he managed to get from him?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, if the information that the hon. gentleman is quoting today is as highly accurate as the information he quoted in the House yesterday, on which I will have more to say in the appropriate place on the Order Paper, then we perhaps should question the question itself. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that in the preamble the hon. gentleman said the federal government had withdrawn guarantees. That is not the case at all. The guarantees, as the hon. gentlemen know, like the guarantees of our Fisheries Loan Board programmes and so on, are done on an aggregate amount. There are certain times in the life of the programme when the aggregate amount guaranteed to the banks is reached and the federal government, as the provincial has to do from time to time, increases that aggregate. The federal government is now in that position and are working at that and looking at that. When somebody has a vessel or a net or a piece of fishing equipment repossessed, Mr. Speaker, that does not mean that the federal government has withdrawn the guarantee, nor does it mean that the provincial government has withdrawn the guarantee through our boat programme and so on. So the hon.

gentleman, Mr. Speaker, two days in a row now has been rather misleading in the preambles to his questions.

MR. W. CARTER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries can try to squirm out from under, but he did make a statement in this House, as a matter of fact on June 26, 1985, where he promised right after Question Period to have officials in his department investigate. And at that time I believe he admitted that there is a problem and he was quite willing to do something about it. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of fishermen in this Province, and in my own district, who did in fact get loans from the Bank of Nova Scotia, back in that period between 1977 and 1980, on which government guarantees were suppose to be in place, and they were led to believe that they were in place. The loans were -

MR. RIDEOUT:

Were you not Minister of Fisheries then?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I have to explain, Sir. It is a very important matter. The fishermen involved defaulted on their loans.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Would the hon. member please pose his question?

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, can I ask the minister then, in view of the fact that a number of fishermen in the Province did default on their loans, as a result have now been threatened with legal action, and were in the first instance given to understand that government guarantees were in place, is the minister prepared to talk to his federal counterpart and to find out if they will in fact extend the guarantees so that these fishermen will not lose their homes?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how dense the hon. gentleman is. The fact of the matter is that I did say in this House in June that I would investigate the matter that was raised, I believe by the gentleman for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) at the time, and I did. The other fact of the matter is that the hon. gentleman put it perfectly, default. It is not a matter that there was no guarantee in place, Mr. Speaker. Some fishermen, for very good reasons or bad reasons or whatever, defaulted on loans on which there was a federal guarantee. Under the deficiency guarantee under those programmes, as under ours, the bank has to do everything that it would do on a normal commercial loan to collect the balance. It is not a matter of the loan guarantee not in place. The loan guarantee is in place, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. W. CARTER:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, it was made quite clear to these fishermen in the beginning that their responsibility in case of default would be to have their gear repossessed. There was certainly no suggestion that they would be personally liable for any shortfall. And, in fact, Mr. Speaker, and I ask the minister the question again, is he aware of the fact, Mr. Speaker -

MR. RIDEOUT:

Have patience, boy.

MR. SIMMS:

There is some difference between the Loan Board and a guarantee.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, this might not be important to these people but it is important to a lot of Newfoundlanders - that a number of fishermen were led to believe that when they received notification of legal action, even though they got judgement against them, the federal government would still come to the rescue under their guarantee and pick up the shortfall in their loans.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, it is terrible that a gentleman who is a former Minister of Fisheries would continue to try to mislead the House and fishermen

of this Province on a programme of that nature. The hon. gentleman knows, or ought to know how the programme works, just as he knows, or ought to know how the guarantee programme works for the provincial government. It is not a matter of the guarantee being withdrawn. I have gone through this in minute detail with the federal minister, Mr. Speaker, both the present minister and the former minister. When the fishermen went and negotiated those loans with the banks, part of the agreement was that the banks would have a federal guarantee in place and, if the fishermen defaulted, died or whatever, through no fault of their own, there is a government guarantee. But in the first instance the bank has to exercise all normal commercial practices to recoup their loss before they prove to the federal government, under deficiency, that they have done everything they can do and cannot collect the balance. Then the federal government pays just like we pay, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The time for Oral Questions has elapsed.

Answers to Questions
for which Notice has been Given

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, no doubt the House will recall that yesterday the hon. gentleman for Twillingate (Mr. W. Carter) raised questions

regarding lease fees being initiated and charged by the federal government on certain wharf facilities throughout the Province. He raised it in the way that implied they had just arrived on the scene, with no consultation with the Province or anything.

I would like to inform the House, Mr. Speaker, that those lease fees were put in place in 1983. I do not know if there was any consultation with the provincial government at that time but, I understand from my colleague that because there was another government in Ottawa at that time, there was absolutely no consultation. The lease fees were put in place by the hon. gentlemen's colleagues in 1983.

MR. BARRY:

It is the first time this year!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, if the arrogant and dissatisfied Tory could keep quiet.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is just as wrong as his colleague because the fees were charged on the West Coast of Newfoundland in 1983. They were implemented on parts of the North East Coast in 1984 and the rest was implemented in 1985. The hon gentleman is wrong again, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. W. CARTER:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Is this a point of

order?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. W. CARTER:

The minister is deliberately, well, not deliberately, but he is misleading the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

I do not know what the hon. member is getting up on. Is he getting up on a point of order?

MR. SIMMS:

The Speaker can not hear.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, maybe if you are prepared to listen, you will find out what I am getting up on.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

I beg your pardon. Order, please!

If the hon. member is getting up on a point of order, I will listen to it, otherwise, we are on Answers to Questions at the present time.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, it is on a point of order that I am rising.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

The point of order is that the fees referred to by the minister, granted they were going to be

imposed in 1983, but these fees were deferred, the collection of them were deferred and now they are going to start and collect them, so he is misleading the House.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, to that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

To the point of order, the hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

The hon. gentleman should find out the proper information before he brings it to this House, to the fisherman and to the processors of this Province. The fact of the matter is, backed up statistics in the federal Department of Fisheries, that the fees were implemented in Western Newfoundland in 1983, charged in Western Newfoundland in 1983, and collected in 1983, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. TULK:

So what are you doing about it?

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SIMMS:

That was not the question.

MR. MATTHEWS:

Lies, more lies, misleading the people.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order, please!

To that point of order, there is no point of order.

Petitions

MR. DAWE:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DAWE:

Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure and pride that I stand today and present a petition that I have been asked to present to this House on behalf of the Grade XI Democracy Class at Assumption Central High School in Stephenville Crossing. I think, Mr. Speaker, it is worth everybody's attention to see just how a group of students have captured the essence of a particular situation that was ongoing at the time of this petition and made their views known to the appropriate authorities.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read the prayer of the petition. The petition is addressed to two groups. It is addressed to the Government of Newfoundland and it is addressed to the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees. It says: "We, the students and teachers of Assumption Central High School, strongly urge you to take immediate action so the labour unrest that presently exists in our Province does not increase. Thousands of Newfoundlanders are greatly affected by this dispute. Some are being deprived of government

services and the opportunity to earn an income. Letting this situation continue will not accomplish anything. We urge you to do the following:"

The petition, Mr. Speaker, is addressed to both groups who were involved. You have to appreciate, Mr. Speaker, this was very early on and the students were able to capture three essential parts and outline them as they saw the situation. The three essential issues dealt with suspensions that they perceived as being a problem in the resolution of the dispute, they saw wage parity as an important element of the dispute which would help towards a resolution of that particular dispute, and they saw that Bill 59 or the legislation dealing with essential employees was also an essential element in that particular dispute.

They have zeroed in on the two groups involved in that, government and NAPE and they have listed them one, two, three. In the first instance, they are suggesting that government drop the thirty day suspension on workers who have walked out. I think, Mr. Speaker, that particular issue, as it relates to suspensions, has been addressed in the same spirit, I believe, as the students put forward in their petition.

Number two, they addressed the situation directly to the union and suggested the union agree on a date when equal pay for equal work can be reached. They saw that as more of an obligation on the union than on government, the first as an obligation on government.

Thirdly, they addressed their concern with Bill 59 and the

establishment of essential service personnel as a joint problem between government and union and addressed the third point accordingly.

It goes on to say, "Either drop Bill 59 or change it to allow an arbitration board to be set up to deal with the disputes over essential service workers." Now, Mr. Speaker, that is obviously what was in place and a modification of that is what both the union and the government have agreed to put in place.

I would like to go on record, Mr. Speaker, as complimenting the class and complimenting the teachers who have been involved in teaching that particular democracy course. I think, Mr. Speaker, it speaks well for the reorganized high school programme that in our school systems throughout the Province now we have an opportunity for civic debate in a formalized way, in classes around the Province so that students and teachers have an excellent opportunity to question firsthand the leaders who have been elected to put forward their views. Mr. Speaker, I know I have had the opportunity to go and speak to a number of democracy classes, as I know a number of other members of this Legislature have done from time to time.

I would just like again to reiterate my compliments to the students and to the staff of Assumption Central High School, and particularly to the democracy class that organized this petition, had it circulated and forwarded it and, I would suspect, Mr. Speaker, want to see whether or not their effort in presenting a petition leads to the fulfillment of this petition by it

being presented to the House of Assembly.

So I would ask that this petition be tabled and sent to the appropriate department.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

I wonder if I could see the petition please. It is a pleasure for me to rise in support of the petition presented by the students from Stephenville Crossing. I understand the principal there is Sister Marie Crotty. I think these students have shown themselves to be very informed and very interested in public issues which affect the Province today.

The interesting thing about this petition is that it sets out to a large extent the recommendations which were put forth by ourselves here in the Official Opposition within the first week of the strike. Regrettably, it took government some four or five weeks after that before they finally came around to recognize that, yes, they would in fact have to drop the thirty day suspension on workers who walked out. Although this is still cloudy, that basically is it. As the Premier said, they had to 'give away the shop' after boxing themselves in. They had to totally capitulate on all issues, and this was one of them. Government basically had public employee in this Province out on the streets for an additional five or six weeks

longer than they needed to if they had listened to the views put forth by the Opposition in the first week of the strike.

Also the second point in the petition, 'agree on a date when equal pay for equal work can be reached.' Again, this was the point of view set forth by the Opposition in the first week of the strike, go for parity. The lack of parity was the frustration and the grievance that was leading to the agitation of the public employees in this case. It took government another five or six weeks before they recognized that, in fact, yes, they had been a party, not the sole party, but a party to bringing about an unjust situation with respect to the compensation public employees were receiving.

Then the final point with respect to the dropping of Bill 59 or changing it, 'to allow an Arbitration Board to be set up to deal with the disputes of essential service employees.' In my speech to the Chamber of Commerce in Corner Brook in January of 1985, I put forth this recommendation. We put it forth again to the administration in the first week of the strike.

MR. DAWE:

It is in legislation already.

MR. BARRY:

No, it is not in legislation. The arbitration process with respect in the existing Bill 59 is in a very restricted fashion, as the minister knows. The conditions that are put before if the matter can go to arbitration means that, in effect, the arbitration process cannot work, as it is now set up. So Bill 59 has to be changed and the member for St. George's (Mr.

Dawe) should check with the President of Treasury Board (Mr. Windsor) and the Minister of Labour (Mr. Blanchard) because basically they have admitted that Bill 59 cannot work as it is now set up. They have incorporated their willingness to change Bill 59 in their agreement that saw the workers go back to work.

Now, the Opposition position went a bit further than the petition presented by the Assumption Central High School students in that we also recommended that there be a public enquiry into collective bargaining in the public sector and we still think that this is necessary. Whether or not it is done - as part of resolving the NAPE dispute, we think that the time has come to take another look at how we approach collective bargaining in the public sector and we ask government to keep this in mind before too long.

I want to compliment the students of Assumption Central High School and we will take the opportunity of sending them out the position of the Liberal party, of the Opposition, as presented to government. We will point out how the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe) and his colleagues could have had this strike settled five or six weeks ago if they had not been so arrogant -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. BARRY:

- if they had not been so interested in trying to save face. Of course, at the end of the day they realized there was no hope to saving face. They had to back water like squids because they had taken the wrong position

early in the strike. They had come on in a heavy-handed, high-handed and arrogant fashion. They had to back off from that when public opinion switched in favour of the members of the union who were being arrested at the instigation of government. So, we will point out to the students from Assumption Central High School the short-sightedness of the Minister of Transportation and his colleagues and the arrogance and heavy-handed attitude that they have had in dealing with employees of NAPE in this dispute.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure I rise in support of the petition presented by my colleague the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Dawe). Before I make a few remarks on it, I have to say that it is with displeasure that I listened to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) take a petition submitted by students, and I understand drawn up in the first week of the strike, before any of the major issues or perhaps suggested solutions really surfaced. They had the intelligence and the foresight to be able to recommend at that early stage solutions to the situation. To see the Opposition take a petition like this, submit it strictly without any political involvement at all and turn it into a partisan political issue causes displeasure. I notice in his concluding remarks he said that he would let them know how we

handled the issue heavy-handedly. I hope he does because I am sure that students will be glad to know the type of approach that the Opposition uses in relation to sincere, honest efforts on behalf of students and certainly that would only be to our gain.

As my colleague mentioned in his remarks, it shows the importance of the move that was made four or five years ago when the high school programme was reorganized. Now that we have courses in our curriculum such as Canadian law and the democracy course, our students get a chance to dig into the real issues that go on in the Province and in their own areas, issues that affect them, their parents, family and friends, and certainly as is seen here, they themselves can have tremendous input. Sometimes perhaps many people so directly involved and wrapped up in the issues do not see the forest for the trees. Sometimes it takes people who are sitting on the sidelines, young intelligent people, who can see from a very objective viewpoint solutions that perhaps we either fail to see or perhaps one side or the other would not adhere to. Here, certainly, the recommendations that they make are ones that we ourselves, long before the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) made any suggestions, made quite clear that these are the situations where we would have to come before any resolution can be found to the situation. Sometimes, when you are into heated debate in negotiations, it takes time for both sides to realize that the solution you come to in the end is perhaps the solution both sides suggested very early in the negotiation process.

So it is with pleasure that I see a bunch of young students take an interest in submitting such a petition, a petition that contains points which zero in on the heart of the matter. I congratulate them and certainly support the petition with them.

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
The hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by eighty-three residents of the Town of Englee and the prayer of the petition is that, "We, the residents of Englee, hereby petition the hon. Ron Dawe, Minister of the Department of Transportation for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the hon. Don Mazankowski, Minister of Transport Canada, to take immediate steps to have a federal/provincial roads agreement signed and funds made available for the completion of the upgrading and paving of the Cross Country Road, and that the roads that come under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation within our town so that we can enjoy the most basic of road conditions that have been experienced by the residents of all similar towns and communities in this Province for many years."

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to support this petition. This is the sixth day now that I have brought in a similar petition signed by different people asking that that particular route be paved. So there is indeed an awful lot of interest in the district of the Strait of Belle Isle in Route 432, which as I have

said before, is a major lifeline leading in and out of that area.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I sat in this House and I heard a member raise some points about how money is being spent in Newfoundland, how something like 94 per cent of the money which was spent in municipalities, the 60/40 thing, was spent in Tory districts, Mr. Speaker, I am not unaware that this is also the case with money in the Department of Transportation. For some unexplainable reason, people who happen to support a different political party seem to get an unfair proportion of the money which is used for 60/40 funding in municipalities and an unfair proportionate amount of money for roads in Liberal districts.

Mr. Speaker, both ministers, Municipal Affairs and Transportation, can get up and pontificate all they like, but the people of this Province are not stupid, the people of this Province are not blind as to what is happening. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that the taxpayers' money is taken and it is being spent on the basis of politics. This is what is happening in this Province. I have been presenting this petition day after day now, Mr. Speaker, and maybe I have not been taking the correct approach. I have learned - of course I was aware of it before but this came to my attention quite recently - that Route 432 might just indeed qualify for government expenditures even if we accept the policy of the Tory Administration to pave roads in Tory districts.

Last Spring, Mr. Speaker, just before the last election, in a desperate attempt at

gerrymandering by the PC Administration, where they saw there was a possibility that they might lose their present Minister of Fisheries if the towns of Roddickton, Englee and Bide Arm had remained in Baie Verte-White Bay district, in an attempt at gerrymandering they took Roddickton, Englee and Bide Arm out of the Baie Verte-White Bay district and put it into the Strait of Belle Isle. Now had these three communities stayed, there is no doubt that Baie Verte-White Bay would have had a Liberal member at this time.

I am not saying that with any malice. I am just stating the facts. Neither am I taking any credit for the wisdom of the people of the Strait of Belle Isle. I am not taking any credit for their wisdom. They voted me here because I was a Liberal. It is just as well to call the facts as they are, Mr. Speaker, but in this attempt at gerrymandering, what the Tories did inadvertently was leave Route 432 in the Baie Verte-White Bay district. It is right on the border. The border is on the North side of Route 432. Therefore, Route 432, which I am getting up day after day in this House and asking the government to pave, now I have found a way whereby they can do that without having to go back on their policy to only spend money in Tory districts.

I am today formally announcing, Mr. Speaker, to all the people of Newfoundland and to Tory members opposite that Route 432 which I have been asking and praying to have paved is not really in a Liberal district. It is actually in a Tory district.

MR. BARRY:

What district is it in?

MR. BAKER:

It is in the Baie Verte-White Bay district. I will warn hon. members that from time to time Liberal people do travel over Route 432. Now, this is the only thing I cannot help. However, maybe, Mr. Speaker, if after the government paved this road they were to put a notice up that Liberals were not allowed to travel over this route or if we could put an airport in Roddickton, Englee and Bide Arm so Liberals could fly in without using this road. These little technicalities can be worked out I am quite sure.

The fact of the matter is Route 432 is not in a Liberal district. Liberal members in the Strait of Belle Isle will benefit from it, there is no doubt that, and I do not see any way to get around it. If there were a way, I would present it to this hon. House. It is in a Tory district, Baie Verte-White Bay, inadvertently nevertheless, right on the border. The road is actually the boundary but the road itself is in a Tory district therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to support, for the 83 people of the town of Englee who are asking for this road to be paved, and this time, surely goodness, some member from the government side who now realizes that we are talking about a road in a Tory district, surely goodness some member from the other side, some real Tory, like the real Premier, should be able to get up and support this road.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I cannot help but get up and support my colleague. I first of all cannot help but be impressed by his sincerity and his determination. This is the sixth petition that he has presented from different areas of his riding concerning Route 432 and the need for Route 432 to be upgraded and paved. I would like to point out in supporting this petition, Mr. Speaker, that the Northern Peninsula of this Province, in terms of services to the people, has been largely ignored by this government. The Great Northern Peninsula, in terms of the Department of Municipal Affairs, has been almost totally ignored. They have a lot of municipalities along that great part of the Province.

In terms of the water and sewer guarantees, as has already been pointed out, all those communities up there received a grand total of \$20,000 out of about \$40 million, \$20,000 in the Great Northern Peninsula, all that tremendous land mass, with all the community councils and all the town councils, \$20,000 out of \$40 million. That is what they received for water and sewer. Can we conclude from that that their water and sewer facilities are adequate and they do not need water and sewer facilities? I think not. Can we conclude they do not want it? I think not.

In terms of roads, again the Department of Municipal Affairs is a good example and it has already been mentioned. In the whole of the Great Northern Peninsula, out of a budget of \$10 million in the 60/40 programme with municipalities, the total number

of dollars spent has been zero in the last year. That is as small as you can get, zero. I am sure that if we could we weasel information -

AN HON. MEMBER:

That is not true.

MR. BAKER:

It is absolutely true. I am sure if we could weasel information about other programmes in terms of infrastructure on the Great Northern Peninsula, we would find the same thing happening. It is largely a forgotten area. We can see from the hon. member's presentation that there are a lot of communities being serviced by that road. He has presented six petitions now and I understand that he might have another one or two or three or four or five or six. He might have enough to continue for another two or three weeks concerning this same road.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it means that it is of great concern to these people. In this day and age road transportation is important from the point of view of bringing in products and also from taking out products. There is a fish plant that needs to get fish out where trucks have to travel this road to carry the product out. Mr. Speaker, it is about time that the government looked at these things in a sensible, logical way.

The question is, does this road need to be paved. Does it provide a service? Does it need to be paved? I understand that the number of kilometers of unpaved road in this Province has not really changed much in the last number of years. In other words, there has not really been an effort, on the part of this government, to pave these roads

all throughout the Province. It could be - what? - 3400 kilometers in 1981, 3400 kilometers now. I think that is generally around the figure as I understand it. There has not been a great deal of paving. It is about time they started to look at it, especially to communities that really have no other way of getting in and out.

My colleague from the Strait of Belle Isle is not only sincere and determined but he is also brilliant. I think that he has finally found a way, after presenting five petitions and not really realizing what he was doing, finally in the sixth petition he decides that maybe what he has got to do is to tell the whole truth about that road. He started off by being a bit leary about even getting into this, about the road actually being in somebody else's district, a Tory district. But finally he has come to the realization that maybe the only way to get that road paved is to point out where it is. Now maybe members opposite will, at least in the estimates next year if they cannot do it this year and if they cannot get their agreement, indicate that this road is going to be paved in this Tory district.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

Mr. Speaker, I am sure hon. members on this side are very pleased to support the prayer of the petition put forward by the

hon. gentleman. It really does not make any difference what district the road is in, because government and hon. members on this side of the House support every worthwhile petition, whether it is in the area of transportation, like roads, or water and sewerage or other important services. Obviously, like every service, there have to be the funds there, and none of us can do everything we would like to do because we do not have all the money we would like to have. Certainly we support the petition, we support the principle of improved transportation by road and, indeed, by other means.

We were very glad to hear from the hon. gentleman's colleague, the member for Gander (Mr. Baker), that the hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Decker) was also brilliant. We had not realized it but now, having been informed, we are willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. For some here there is a great deal of doubt and I say to them, oh, ye of little faith! But we will give the hon. member the benefit of the doubt and we thank his colleague from Gander for having informed us of this attribute of which we were not fully aware.

Orders of the Day

MR. MARSHALL:
Committee of Supply.

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

Committee of Supply

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):
Order, please!

Subhead 2.1.02. Shall the total carry?

MR. BARRY:
Mr. Chairman, could we have a moment?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Consolidated Fund Services.

MR. BARRY:
Consolidated Fund Services. Where are we? 1.1.01, is it not?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
2.1.02.

MR. BARRY:
Why is it 2.1.02? All the rest is statutory, is it?

MR. CHAIRMAN:
2.1.02, Ex-Gratia Payments -
Non-Statutory.

MR. BARRY:
Okay, the rest is statutory. If we could have a brief review of the statutory items just to indicate the reason for any discrepancies, we can move on then to 1.2.02 and I think we can finish this fairly quickly. Demand Loans, Debt Expenses it was only \$150,000 last year and they budgeted \$200,000. I wonder if the minister could -

DR. COLLINS:
What section is this?

MR. BARRY:
1.1.01, the very first item there, it is down \$50,000 from what was budgeted.

DR. COLLINS:
This item refers to the interest costs on our Demand Loans. It has been our practice to cover our

cash shortfalls by demand loans. That is just part of our normal cash management procedures. The amount is fairly arbitrary for that very reason, because you never know exactly when your cash shortfalls might occur, how long they would be in place and so forth and so on.

MR. BARRY:

Can you give a brief indication.

DR. COLLINS:

Yes, it gives a little bit more flexibility this year, that is all.

MR. BARRY:

All right. Could the minister go down to 1.1.07? There seems to be a significant difference between what was budgeted in the actual last year and what is in there this year for Revenue - Provincial. Probably it is on Loans and Advances. Why the big difference?

DR. COLLINS:

1.1.07 - Recoveries. That is the interest we receive from our various loans and advances.

On fisheries loans for last year -

MR. BARRY:

What I want is why is it down so much this year?

DR. COLLINS:

Well, we would estimate we will get less return on our fisheries loans. The amount of interest which we charge on fisheries loans, and so on and so forth, we expect that to be less. Economic development loans, on the other hand, are up because we expect to be more involved in that area. The major difference is on fisheries loans and on what we have budgeted for municipal councils. The main one is from

the Fisheries Loan Board and that is because we have changed the method there. Previously they would roll over their portfolio. That was one way of handling it, but it was certainly not the only way; the other way would be to have the Loan Board funded each year and this is what we elected to do. So there was quite a large return to the treasury last year but there will not be that large a return this year.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

I wonder if the minister could just briefly explain why Debt Expenses for 1.2.05, Educational Facilities, is down quite a bit from last year?

DR. COLLINS:

Could you just give me a moment to find that here now? Could we let that one go temporarily, until I go through my notes a bit more thoroughly to see if I can pinpoint that?

MR. BARRY:

Yes, okay. We only have a limited amount of time, Mr. Chairman. It is unfortunate that the minister does not seem to be prepared to explain the estimates.

Would he explain, with respect to the Confederation Building extension, the cost of that was \$40 million, are we correct in, as we have been pointing out, that the interest on that debt is going to be between \$4 million and \$5 million a year, whereas the government is only saving in the area of \$2 million to \$3 million a

year in rent?

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman, it was never government's statement that there would be each year a direct offset, one against the other. What we looked at was the overall effect of not continuing to rent to the extent we have in the past. Of course, that has been building up over the years and replacing it, after you get to a certain point in time, by building a building which you would own, which you would amortize, that ultimately would be a better way to go than to continue renting. So there is some cost in the initial years but, as we all know, rents are going up all the time. We can lock into certain interest rates in terms of borrowing for capital funding of a new building so that ultimately there will be a crossover point and, if you take it on a ten year basis, there is a cost saving.

MR. BARRY:

So the minister has admitted that the money will be lost for a number of years because of the fact that the interest and repayment of principal is greater than the rentals that would be paid.

DR. COLLINS:

I would not like to use the word "lost", I would think it is a sensible way to go. But there is certainly a bit of front end loading when you go and build a building as opposed to continuing to rent.

MR. BARRY:

Would the minister explain why employee benefits, Ex-gratia Payments, are up considerably over the revised, not over the budget of last year, 2.1.02?

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman, that is one that is very difficult to determine. Ex gratia benefits are obviously inequities in the system that are not covered by regulations. Let me just give a quick example on that: For instance, if an employee has been with government for a long period of time but he started out, shall we say, on a contractual basis, perhaps for a year or two and then punched in twenty years, we feel it is only correct for him to be able to roll that first year of contractual employment into his total pension benefits and we can only do that on an ex gratia basis; we have to negate his contractual obligation in a sort of retrograde fashion and then on an ex gratia basis give him some accommodation for that in his ultimate pension benefits. And it is very variable, it depends on how many applications we have. If it is done, shall we say, in one area of the public service, often other people decide to do the same thing.

On motion, 22.1.02, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 2.1.03 carry?

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

What about these Railway Pensions?

DR. COLLINS:

These are statutory.

MR. BARRY:

They are down as non-statutory.

DR. COLLINS:

No, those are statutory. Only the ex gratia payments are non-statutory. The railways are, so we do not have to vote anything there.

MR. BARRY:

So all the rest is statutory. We can carry that, Mr. Chairman.

On motion, 2.1.03 through 2.1.05 carried.

On motion, Consolidated Fund Services, total carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Executive Council:

On motion, 1.1.01 and 1.1.02, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 2.1.01 carry?

MR. BARRY:

No. Office of the Premier: We would like to have an exact update with respect to the renovations. We understand that Treasury Board Minute 6-16, in 1985 I think, authorized \$786,000 for renovations. I wonder if that could be confirmed or denied. And the most recent \$150,000 that went into the Premier's personal office, was that included or is that additional to that \$786,000?

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman, I think I can respond to that as well as I can to say that I had understood that most of that particular subject had been responded to in Question Period by the Minister of Public

Works (Mr. Young).

MR. BARRY:

It is not consistent with the Treasury Board Minute.

MR. MARSHALL:

The Minister of Public Works is in the environs and, while the hon. gentlemen is getting up with other questions, I will ask him to come in and respond.

MR. BARRY:

The Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) is going to come back with the information he undertook to give us, as well.

MR. MARSHALL:

I say the Minister of Public Works will want to respond to this specific question.

MR. BARRY:

Okay, if he could give us an update on that. Is the Premier's executive assistant or any other people from the Premier's office getting a car allowance? Is that deferred, or what is the situation with respect to that now? Is there anything included in all of these estimates for car allowances?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could explain that if a member of the Public Service has to incur travel expenses, whether it is in renting a car or using his own car and claiming mileage, if he puts in a voucher, clearly he will be reimbursed.

Now, there is another arrangement whereby a lump sum can be given because it seems to be administratively equitable to do it, or it is administratively

easier to do it, any number of reasons, and then, of course, that car allowance takes the place of any vouchers that may be put in. So you will find that in each division - under Transportation and Communications I think it is - of each department there will be a certain amount of funding in there and that will be to service these vouchers that are put in.

MR. BARRY:

Is there anything in there for car allowances now?

DR. COLLINS:

No.

MR. BARRY:

This was done before the decision was made to defer.

DR. COLLINS:

No, there is not. That car allowance was deferred during the budgetary process.

MR. BARRY:

It was not announced during the budgetary process. Would the minister indicate how car allowances are applicable to those people who do not have driver's licenses or cars? Some of the executive assistants do not have driver's licenses, some of them do not have cars. The Premier indicated, 'Oh, well, they will rent.' Are they not entitled to do that now, and how do they get a car allowance plus the entitlement to rent? If they rent, does that come out of the car allowance? How does it work?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

In a hypothetical situation, if an individual who now does not have a car is eligible for a car

allowance, he has two choices open to him, one, he can refuse the car allowance because he says, 'I do not need it, I do not have a car,' or secondly, he can say, 'I will acquire a car because this is another way that I can do it rather than using taxis or renting a car,' or whatever, which is the way he presumably got around in the past. So it would just mean that an individual would have that choice open to him. I would imagine that most individuals in that hypothetical situation would say, 'Now I have a car allowance I will acquire a car, I will not depend on taxis, I will not depend on rental cars.'

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

Does this mean that if this deferred car allowance goes into place officials who rent cars must deduct that from the car allowance they get?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

No, I do not think they would deduct it, they just would not claim it. You either have a car allowance, and that is to take care of your travel, or you refuse a car allowance, or you are not eligible for one, and then you can put in on a per item basis. But you cannot have it both ways.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

I would suggest to the minister that he might take a look at how that is going to work. If a

Deputy Minister who ends up with a car allowance flies from here to Deer Lake instead of driving and then rents a car in Deer Lake to drive on to Corner Brook or Stephenville, I would suggest you are going to see claims being put in for car rentals. You are going to have to clarify whether or not the car allowance is in addition to this right which they have now to rent cars.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman, car allowances are not supposed to extend throughout the universe. I mean, if a public servant is receiving a car allowance and he goes out to Vancouver, and he has to get from Vancouver airport to the hotel, clearly he can put in for the travel expense of getting there. A car allowance is really related to the area in which the individual normally works. For instance, if an individual is eligible for car allowance and he works in the St. John's area, he cannot then hire cars and expect to claim expenses in the St. John's area. But if he has to move outside his area, where it is not just practical for him to use his own vehicle, well, then, it would be appropriate for him to put in a voucher claim.

MR. BARRY:

Could the minister indicate why it is that we see the Transportation and Communications budget considerably increased right throughout the Premier's Office, in every subhead block here? Why is it that Transportation and Communications is up so much? Is it the transportation part or is it the communication part? Is this part of an increase in the

propaganda exercise we are going to see now?

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman, I am sure I do not have to explain to members of the Committee that a budget is a budget, it is never designed to be a precise laying-out of expenses. In other words, you will expend up to this amount that is in the budget, you will not expend less than that you will not expend more. It is an educated guess and, in most instances, it is quite an educated guess. But in terms of travel, how can one now foretell the amount of travel that will be required of the Premier in the year ahead? It is impossible to do so. We might have a constitutional crisis that will require the Premier to travel to Ottawa a dozen times. We might have opportunities available to the Premier's Office whereby he might have to travel to the Far East four or five times. Who can predict that? So the amount put in for these are sort of ballpark figures, never meant to be precise in any way. In the last few years, because of the vigorous approach this government has taken to economic development, there has been more travel in certain departments, such as Development, such as the Premier's Office, such as Fisheries and so on, and the amounts that were in previous years voted there were quite ridiculous, inappropriate, so this year there was some correction of that and that is the reason for the somewhat larger amounts that are there. But these amounts really -

MR. BARRY:

What was the reason, Mr. Chairman?

DR. COLLINS:

The amounts are just updating what

is current practice. That is all it is.

MR. BARRY:

Maybe if we could move on and approve 2.1.01 first, the Office of the Premier.

On motion, 2.1.01, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 2.1.02 carry?

MR. BARRY:

2.1.02, Executive Support, Salaries, is up about \$49,000 above what was budgeted last year, and up \$16,000 over what was revised. Is this an additional position or what is it?

MR. MARSHALL:

Up over what it was budgeted last year?

MR. BARRY:

Yes.

MR. MARSHALL:

Last year we budgeted for \$148,7 -

MR. BARRY:

No, \$399,000. It is 2.1.02, Executive Support, Salaries.

MR. MARSHALL:

2.1.02, \$399,000. It was actually \$432,000 and now it is \$448,400, so there is really no increase.

MR. BARRY:

Last year it was \$432,700, so there is an increase of \$16,000.

MR. MARSHALL:

Yes, there is an increase.

MR. BARRY:

Is that just 4 per cent or 6 per cent in each salary?

MR. MARSHALL:

Yes. There are no new posts there

that I see.

MR. BARRY:

Okay.

On motion, 2.1.02 and 2.1.03, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 2.2.01 carry?

MR. BARRY:

2.2.01: Here, for example, we see the President of the Executive Council, budget \$30,000 - he did not travel very much, definitely not up to talk to his federal counterparts - Transportation \$2,000. but now it is budgeted at \$40,000, does the minister have plans to do a lot of travelling this year? Is he going to have one last splurge before he leaves?

MR. MARSHALL:

No, Mr. Chairman. I am glad the hon. gentleman drew it to the attention of the Committee. I intend to travel quite a bit this year. Last year I travelled a certain amount; I managed to go to Norway on that and back again and, I tell the hon. gentleman, I did not go by tanker, either.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

What did you do, go by raft?

MR. BARRY:

It must have been paid out of another department.

MR. MARSHALL:

It must have been paid out of another department. Actually, you are blowing the roast on me, because I was bragging to my learned and most travelled colleague here to my right as to how low my revised budget was compared to his.

MR. TULK:

Oh, he is terrible.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

But he went by raft.

MR. TULK:

You can never get him home. I know why they made him Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

On motion 2.2.01, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 2.2.02 carry?

MR. BARRY:

2.2.02: Again Transportation and Communications are up considerably, and not just by a minor amount, under each subhead. Now, do we have confirmation that this is not in the communications side of things, that this is all related to the travel budget, or is this a hidden propaganda slush fund, as we have seen in the case of the doubling in the number of employees in Newfoundland Information Services?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman, there is no slush fund in this budget. As a matter of fact, it reflects the increased costs, really, of travel that occurred. If the hon. gentleman compares Transportation and Communications from the budget of last year to the revised of last year, in pretty well all cases but one singular exception, it is higher in the revised than it is in the budget. So it just reflects the increased costs that pertain to these areas in Transportation.

On motion, 2.2.02, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 2.2.03 carry?

MR. BARRY:

2.2.03: Again Transportation and Communications is up and it is up considerably, almost doubled. There is something going on here, Mr. Chairman, that requires some fuller explanation, because it is up in every block and it is up by a considerable amount. Is there something happening that is going to require a 25 per cent to a 50 per cent increase in travel by everybody related to Executive Office?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

It is not so, Mr. Chairman, that it is up in every area. For instance, in the administrative area it is the same as was budgeted for the previous year.

MR. BARRY:

That is right, but everywhere else it is up.

MR. MARSHALL:

Executive Support happens to include the Clerk of the Executive Council, the Assistant Secretary of Cabinet, and two or three of the Assistant Secretaries. They attend, from time to time, on many occasions, matters that are going on in Ottawa. They are going back and forth to Ottawa, Toronto, or what have you, for meetings and conferences. There is no hidden plot there. The hon. gentleman should understand that there is no ulterior motive.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

It is out of kilter with every other subhead in terms of the increased amount over what was budgeted last year or over the revised last year. Now somebody is playing cute there. There is a slush fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

I do not know, but I think, as you look through, under that subhead the revised, in many instances, is more than the budgeted and the cost of travel has gone up.

MR. BARRY:

No, 'Gerry', look at it the other way around. Can we have the undertaking of the minister to get us some information with respect to this? We can work out the percentage increases ourselves. It is going to show, on a rough calculation, I would say, between a 25 and a 50 per cent increase in this subhead, which is way out of kilter with what is happening in the other subheads, in every block.

MR. MARSHALL:

In this particular one there is, Mr. Chairman, but there is not in every single case.

MR. BARRY:

No, not in every case but in the majority of them.

MR. MARSHALL:

No, no. In this one we are talking about now, 2.2.03, Transportation and Communications -

MR. BARRY:

Well, if you look at 2.2.01-01, it is up over the revised, if you look at 2.1.02 it is up there, 2.1.03 -

MR. MARSHALL:

It is more accurate, I think, to compare it to the budgeted last year rather than the revised last year. The revised was lower than expected. We would certainly hope that the transportation votes here would be lower than expected, because we keep a very close watch on the amount of travelling that occurs in this administration and we will certainly continue to do so. But the fact of the matter is, everything costs more. Last year it was \$31,000, it is now up to \$44,000. You are talking about very, very senior public servants who are going to be expected to have to travel quite a bit in that particular case.

MR. BARRY:

Okay, okay. We will come back to that.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 2.2.03 carry?

MR. BARRY:

Professional Services: In 2.2.03, why do we have professional services increased by some \$12,000? Who is getting that money, Cabot? Or is it Peter?

MR. MARSHALL:

I am told, Mr. Chairman, that that refers to Computer Services. I just want to verify that, if the hon. gentleman will bear with me. Yes, Computer Services it is supposed to pertain to, and the lease of a computer terminal is the main reason for it.

MR. BARRY:

Computer services? What is that, computerizing the Premier or his office?

MR. MARSHALL:

Well, it is a lease and maintenance agreement on AES word

processing equipment, specifically.

On motion, 2.2.03, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Shall 2.2.04 carry?

MR. BARRY:
Again we see Transportation and Communications up by almost 100 per cent over budget, and way over what was revised.

MR. MARSHALL:
Well, it is up in this particular case. For travel-related expenses, it is not all that big an amount.

On motion, 2.2.04, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Shall 2.2.05 carry?

MR. BARRY:
A large increase in salaries. Could we have a brief explanation?

MR. MARSHALL:
Well, this is the area that provides government with economic analysis capability with respect to provincial, national and world economics. The division is also responsible for construction of the econometric model of the provinces economy. I think, in that particular case, there is probably one more position there than was there last year.

On motion, 2.2.05 through to 2.2.09, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Shall 2.3.01 carry?

MR. BARRY:
One second! Salaries there are up considerably over the revised for last year. Is there anything significant there?

MR. MARSHALL:
It is just that all the positions were not filled last year. The estimate for this year is not significantly over the budget for last year, and it is hoped to be able to hire the full compliment of the staff.

On motion, 2.3.01 carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Shall 2.3.02 carry?

MR. BARRY:
Again Transportation and Communications up by over 100 per cent.

MR. MARSHALL:
Once again it is Executive Support. It is the senior staff in the Treasury Board, and we found it to be necessary.

On motion, 2.3.02 and 2.3.03, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Shall 2.3.04 carry?

MR. BARRY:
Professional Services up considerably for Budgeting.

MR. MARSHALL:
I will just look at my note on that, if you will bear with me. This is all the development and operation of the computerized budgeting system and the lease and maintenance an agreement on a mini-computer. Extra equipment is needed for the purpose of effective budgeting.

On motion, 2.3.04 and 2.3.05, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Shall 2.3.06 carry?

MR. BARRY:

Professional Services are up considerably in the last two, Collective Bargaining and Organization and Management.

MR. MARSHALL:

Again, lease and maintenance agreement on a mini-computer.

On motion, 2.3.06 through to 2.3.08, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 2.3.09 carry?

MR. BARRY:

Professional Services are in there for the first time. Why?

MR. MARSHALL:

Here again we are talking about computer time required to develop and implement a human resources study and an attendance practices study.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

What is that, whether you come to work or not?

MR. MARSHALL:

Yes.

On motion, 2.3.09, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 2.4.01 carry?

MR. BARRY:

Now, here is the real scandal.

MR. TULK:

Which one is that?

MR. BARRY:

Transportation up for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs by 33-1/3 per cent.

MR. TULK:

No!

MR. BARRY:

It must be a misprint, it has to be more than that.

MR. MARSHALL:

No, no.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

No, \$30,000 budgeted, \$40,000 revised, and the same amount in this year.

MR. MARSHALL:

I mean, after all, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has to visit governments. That is who he interfaces with.

MR. BARRY:

The logic is irrevocable.

On motion, 2.4.01, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 2.4.02 carry?

MR. BARRY:

Transportation and Communications is up 100 per cent over what was budgeted last year.

MR. TULK:

Yes, more than that.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

Yes, the revised is considerably above what budgeted.

MR. TULK:

Who is that you are toting around?

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

That is all staff, that is not me.

On motion, 2.4.02, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 2.4.03 carry?

MR. BARRY:

Professional Services is way above what was spent but less than what was budgeted.

On motion, 2.4.03, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Shall 2.4.04 carry?

MR. BARRY:
Intergovernmental Affairs,
Resource Programs, have we hired
new people there?

MR. OTTENHEIMER:
2.4.04-04, this is responsible for
assisting in negotiations and
ongoing review of various
agreements in the resource field,
forestry, fishery, etc.. Salaries
is most of it, \$142,000.

MR. BARRY:
Have we hired new people?

MR. OTTENHEIMER:
No, I do not think we have hired
any new people.

MR. BARRY:
It is almost double what was
revised last year.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:
The positions are Director of
Intergovernmental Economic and
Social Programmes,
Intergovernmental Affairs Analyst,
Native Land Claims Analyst
contractual, and there there is
provision for contractual hiring
which may or may not be done.
That would be a project which, I
would say, would be a six month
thing or a quarterly thing.

MR. BARRY:
Why are you planning on
contractual hiring this year when
it was not contemplated for last
year or the year before to that
extent?

We are being delayed considerably
by the lack of -

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Chairman, may I point out to
the Committee that normally the
time is expired, but if we are
going to go through it on this
basis, asking questions -

MR. BARRY:
We are going through on this basis
but, you know, there have been
long gaps in terms of the answers
being given.

MR. MARSHALL:
What is the problem?

MR. BARRY:
2.4.04.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:
Salary cost of four positions,
\$142,000, according to my notes.

MR. TULK:
How many did you have last year?

MR. BARRY:
There were two last year, I guess.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:
Right.

On motion, 2.4.04, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Shall 2.4.05 carry?

MR. OTTENHEIMER:
That is Professional Services,
Lease and Maintenance Agreement on
AES Word Processor.

MR. TULK:
'Gerry' is getting more expensive
to keep every year.

MR. BARRY:
Just a general question on 2.4.05,
Regional Development: Are we
getting anywhere with getting the
Government of Canada back to a
recognition of the need for
regional development programmes?

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

I would say there was a recognition of the need and, of course, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) will recall, about six months ago, a document which philosophically was very good, which was signed by the federal government. The ten provinces and, I believe, the two territories are going to be meeting with the minister responsible for Regional and Economic Development, Sinclair Stephens, some time in June, the 11th or 12th or something, and between now and then we will be endeavouring to work out the content of a Memorandum of Agreement with respect to regional development programmes.

The hon. member knows, of course, there was recently a forestry development programme signed and we shall be working then in areas of agriculture and fisheries. I suppose, the short answer is I think there is an agreement that regional development policies for provinces like Newfoundland are necessary where stimulation of the private sector is important. But it is not going to have the same effect as it does in other provinces, because we have a weaker and smaller private sector. What it comes to, obviously, is their finding the resources to do so.

MR. BARRY:

Just briefly while the minister is there, we will move on then, but while it might be appropriate, the Northern Fisheries Development Corporation, there is a clause in the agreement -

MR. TULK:

It is Clause 15.

MR. BARRY:

- the Fish Agreement, the Restructuring Agreement, which entitles us to that. Has the minister made any representation to his colleagues in Ottawa with respect to the fact that that appears to be a breach of that agreement, not to proceed with the Northern Fisheries Development Corporation?

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

That has been discussed with the federal government. I think their reply would be, 'No, it is not a breach of the agreement, it is just because the matter has not been negotiated to our, or their, or whoever's satisfaction.' That will be one of the matters which I would hope would be resolved in the Memorandum of Understanding Agreement in June. I would hope! Obviously, when anything involves more than one side, I cannot say what the outcome will be.

On motion, 2.4.05 and 2.4.06, carried.

On motion, Executive Council, total, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Legislative: Shall 1.1.01 carry?

MR. BARRY:

1.1.01, Administrative Support: Do we have some additional staff here?

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

I believe the Speaker's salary and the Opposition House Leader's salary are shown under Salaries this year, whereas it was shown under another head in previous years. It was just a readjustment. The Salary item now covers the Speaker's salary as well as the Opposition House Leaders' salary.

MR. BARRY:

In Administrative Support?

DR. COLLINS:

Apparently, yes.

On motion, 1.1.01 carried.

MR. BARRY:

My salary is included here?

DR. COLLINS:

Not your salary, no. It would be a huge vote, in that case.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 1.1.02 carry?

MR. BARRY:

If it is only the Opposition House Leader's, we do not have to carry that, and the Speaker's.

Just going back for a second to Property, Furnishings and Equipment, 1.1.01-07, why are you estimating a significantly reduced amount needed for that?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

Well, it is for the provision of filing cabinets, typewriters and office furniture in the Legislative office and there just is a lesser need this year. Last year there was some equipment bought which just does not have to be duplicated this year.

MR. TULK:

We could do with a few things down there.

MR. BARRY:

Why are we saving so much money on Allowances and Assistance this year, in House Operations?

DR. COLLINS:

Allowances and Assistance, 1.1.02-09: That is funding to pay the House of Assembly, that is sessional pay, travel and expense allowance, daily allowance, commuters' allowance, district travel and then, also, the Deputy Chairman of Committees, government and Opposition Whips, allowances for the Clerk, Assistant Law Clerk and so on and so forth.

MR. TULK:

Why the difference of \$600,000?

DR. COLLINS:

We had to include last year, because of the time of the election, some of the sessional pay that normally speaking would have been in the previous session. An extra amount of the sessional pay fell into last years fiscal year. That will not apply this year. It was just the timing of the election.

MR. BARRY:

People who were defeated in the election had been paid, and then you had to pay new Liberal members when they were sworn in after the election.

DR. COLLINS:

That is right. There is an extra amount there because of the election.

MR. BARRY:

Money well spent.

DR. COLLINS:

We did not have to pay too much to the Liberals, but we had to pay a fair bit.

MR. TULK:

Call an election again this year and you can double that amount.

MR. BARRY:

You will save twice that amount if you want to call an election now.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

On motion, 1.1.02, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 1.1.03 carry?

MR. BARRY:

Allowances and Assistance is up considerably there. Where is that going? Who is getting that money?

DR. COLLINS:

Funding is required to pay the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, members and Committee Clerks. These are to fund the Committees, and the increased amount is presumably due to increased anticipated Committee activity. Perhaps the Clerk would nod her head in that regard. Yes, presumably.

On motion, 1.1.03 carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 1.1.04 carry?

MR. BARRY:

The Hansard increases seem to be much less than other areas. Is there a freeze on Hansard as a group, on salaries and so forth?

DR. COLLINS:

They have gone up by about 6 or 7 per cent, or whatever, from \$210,000 up to \$230,000.

MR. BARRY:

Are we looking after the people working for the Legislature in terms of offices and so forth? We have, for example, the pages here: They do not seem to have any place to change into their uniforms; the security people do not have any place to have a cup of coffee or sit down and have a smoke if there is an all-night session. Is there any way we can look at this. It does not have to be anything extravagant, just the basic things that you would expect in private industry, or anywhere, that if you had a person working, they would be entitled to a little corner to hang their hat or to get a cup of tea or something like that. I do not see it as being a lot of expense.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman, if I may be just a little bit facetious for the moment, we are very hospitable in our caucus room in here in terms of if any of the Clerks or any of the students wish to come in for coffee, and so on and so forth, and I am sure the Opposition are too. But I guess, to answer it more accurately, there is very limited space on the ninth floor and the tenth floor, and we will have to await the new House of Assembly before we can make any appreciable increase in the facilities available to staff of the House of Assembly. But I am sure all hon. members extend as much hospitality as they possibly can to the people who work for us here, especially during long, after-hour sessions.

MR. BARRY:

We have a problem in our own common room, as the minister may

or may not know, in that there was just insufficient space for the numbers that were there and, from my recollection, the government common room took the same position, that when you are having the need for private consultations and so forth there is a limit - however hospitable you would like to be - to how many people you can have in and how often, and there is nothing other than wanting to get the job done.

At the same time, we want to recognize that the people who work for the Legislature are entitled to half decent working conditions, the same as anybody else in any other job in the Province. It seems to me that sometimes we overlook that. Go out to the washroom and you will see the pages changing their clothes in the washroom - at least I can speak for the male pages, I cannot speak for the female. It seems to me that there could be some minimal space provided on that basis, for example. How many Commissionaires do we have? Four or five people around with respect to security and so forth, and they do not really have a place to go in and sit down to have a private moment. A minimal office, it would seem, would make a difference there.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition understands that the Legislative estimates are only presented by the Minister of Finance traditionally, because the Speaker, himself, cannot partake in this activity. But the Speaker has, as everyone knows, a committee called the Internal Economy Commission which deals

with all matters pertaining to the House. We will be glad to bring that suggestion to the Speaker; I am sure he has already heard it on the electronic system.

MR. BARRY:

One of the problems with respect to the Hansard operation, I understand that staff have a considerable problem at times with respect to working hours and that comes about from the irregularity and times of our own meetings, when we are sitting in the evenings, or all evenings and so forth. Many of them are married with children. Is it possible to have some recognition of the unusual nature of their work place, and can we make sure that the staff are treated with compassion and with a degree of flexibility to recognize the fact that we do submit them to irregular hours?

MR. SIMMS:

If the hon. Leader of the Opposition will permit?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The hon. Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:

Speaking from my own experience, when I was Speaker, he is right when he says that the facilities are not exactly adequate to serve the needs of the staff, but the problem has been one of space, and the same thing applies to the office accommodations for Hansard as it does for any facility for the Pages or the Commissionaires to change. I do recall occasions when the staff, themselves, felt there was a problem or a need for some compassion for whatever reason. I think there was generally an honest effort made to try to accommodate those sorts of

requests and the needs they had. I know there were some changes to the office facility up there to enlarge it and give them a bit more breathing space and bit more room. Unfortunately, the entire problem is the result of a lack of space up in this area. I do not know if it would be possible to look for a room on some other floor for them.

I recall, and perhaps the Clerk could indicate by nodding or shaking her head, that on the main floor there is an office or a room which perhaps could be made available to the pages for changing purposes. Oh, the Deputy Clerk is using that office. In any event, maybe something along those lines might be able to be provided. We looked at it a few years ago, but I do not think there was much of an interest in it. The main interest is having a room near the Legislature, and the problem is, of course, that there just is not space. But I do think, and I am sure the same follows now, that compassion and interest was shown in resolving whatever problems they had to the best ability of the Speaker and the administration.

On motion, 1.1.04, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Shall 1.1.05 carry?

MR. BARRY:
Legislative Library: We have a situation developing in the Legislative Library where circumstances seem to be going completely out of control down there in terms of the quantity of material. There is no place to store a lot of it. It is becoming almost a firetrap. There is a need for improved facilities. We have a dedicated staff down there,

very helpful to both sides of the House when information is needed, but it is getting to the point where I am afraid that the research capability is going to be impaired if we do not take a look at improving the conditions down there. Has anybody looked at that?

Quebec, for example, has six library researchers for legislative business only, Ontario has twelve library researchers who provide legislative research only, Alberta has six library researchers, British Columbia has one directive researcher and six researchers. Even in the Yukon the Opposition has two full-time researchers and two part-time researchers. So if you look at what is going on in other parts of Canada, I think we should take a look at whether the Legislature is getting the degree of research back-up with respect to the Legislative Library that we should be getting.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN:
Order, please!

The hon. the Minister of Forest Resources and Lands.

MR. SIMMS:
With respect to that issue and that point, again the Leader of the Opposition is correct in that the space allotted for the Legislative Library staff as well as the space allotted for records and so on is terribly inadequate. I do not think there is any question of that. It, too, has been a problem that we have been trying to wrestle with for the last few years, I recall, trying to obtain space. I suspect that whenever the relocation takes

place, there will be better and more facilities required.

With respect to staffing, it is true that it is smaller than some of the jurisdictions the Leader of the Opposition described but, of course, some of those jurisdictions are much, much larger than this particular jurisdiction. I have no doubt, however, that they could certainly use additional staff, and maybe that is another point the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) could pass on to the Speaker, as Chairman of the Internal Economy Commission. Maybe they might want to have a look at additional staff for the Library, as he said he would do with a previous question that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) raised. It is accurate. Space is a problem down there. The staff do work under very difficult conditions, but do a very, very admirable job. I think everybody would agree with that.

MR. HISCOCK:

The media should go down and do some film footage and see actually how bad it is.

MR. SIMMS:

I think they done that before.

MR. HISCOCK:

It is unbelievable. I mean we should be ashamed as a Province to have that Library down there.

MR. SIMMS:

Well, I do not know if we should be ashamed of it, because as I said, they do do a good job under the circumstances.

MR. HISCOCK:

The staff.

MR. SIMMS:

No, it is not the staff at all. The space is just not available, and I do not know if you go outside, but I do not think everybody would want the -

MR. HISCOCK:

It takes you two weeks to find something.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Order, please!

MR. SIMMS:

Well, I do not think that if you go to Miss Richards, the librarian, and you asked her to find something for you, I do not think it would take two weeks for her to find it. I do not think that that is an accurate statement, nor a fair one. But in any event, that is the response, Mr. Chairman, the only response you can make, space is a problem, but the staffing is something that perhaps the Minister of Finance would probably take back to the Internal Economy Commission and to the Speaker as Chairman and ask him to consider it. He made a note of it, he says.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 1.1.05 carry?

MR. BARRY:

Why is there the drop in salary there over what was budgeted last year?

DR. COLLINS:

The Legislative Library. The salary is required to cover the salaries of three permanent positions, Librarian 1V, Librarian Technician 1V and a Research Officer. Also, funding to pay the salary in overtime of one contractual employee who is on secondment to the federal government. This money is 100 per cent recoverable. I guess that

was it. I guess that related to a contractual person who is on secondment to the federal government.

The Clerk tells me there has been a resignation.

MR. BARRY:

There is resignation, but that should not be left unfilled when we do not, I mean, we cannot fall back from where we were before, which is what will be happening if we do not fill that position.

DR. COLLINS:

Well, it has not been filled at least up to the time that the revised estimates have come in. You note there was some increase over the revised but not much I will admit.

I wonder if the hon. Leader of the Opposition would like me to just revert or if the Committee would permit to revert to 1.2.05. The Leader of the Opposition asked why was there a drop from \$1.6 million, approximately, last year, under Debt Expenses for Educational Facilities, back to approximately \$400,000? I have been informed that that is related to the fact that some of the buildings at the University were originally purchased under a rental purchase arrangement. Last year was the last full year of that. Now, in this year there is just one month left.

MR. BARRY:

Could I make a suggestion for next year for the minister? Why not have your notes prepared showing how the difference comes about from last year and this year? It would save a lot of time in terms of trying to find it.

Well, go back to the Legislative

Library. Is the minister saying there has been a decision not to fill that position where there has been a retirement? It seems to me that that is not appropriate in light of the overworked staff we have there now.

DR. COLLINS:

Well, if there is a decision, it would have been the decision arrived at by the Internal Economy Commission, which is essentially an autonomous group.

MR. BARRY:

Could we have the minister check and see and report back to the House at a later date with respect to that?

DR. COLLINS:

Yes. We will certainly bring that comment to the attention of the Speaker.

On motion 1.1.05, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall the total House of Assembly carry?

MR. BARRY:

What about the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner, 2.1.01? What about that?

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 2.1.01 carry?

MR. BARRY:

No, wait a minute. I am not sure. These are voted separately are they?

DR. COLLINS:

Yes. Are you enquiring about the increase there, is that it?

MR. BARRY:

Yes. Could you tell us why the increase in salaries there?

DR. COLLINS:

Yes. There is a newly approved position for an investigator for the Parliamentary Commissioner's office.

MR. BARRY:

Okay. I will just make one comment on the Ombudsman before passing it. If you look at the Ombudsman's report last year, you will see that a very large percentage of the cases investigated relate to Workers' Compensation. Now, there is then a decision taken by government to bring in an independent appeal procedure which may help. But I would ask the Minister of Justice (Ms Verge), the Minister of Labour (Mr. Blanchard) and whoever else has an interest in this area to take a look at what is occurring in the Workers' Compensation field. There are a lot of people out there who feel aggrieved as a result of Workers' Compensation decisions. Many of them end up at the Ombudsman. Not too many of them apparently with successful results, unfortunately.

On motion 2.1.01, carried.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shall 3.1.01 carry?

MR. BARRY:

No, 3.1.01, the Auditor General, we would like to know where this administration stands with respect to looking at a new Auditor General's Act, giving the Auditor General the tools to do the job through new legislation, giving him the ability to do comprehensive auditing to determine value for money and to extend his authority into looking into Crown Corporations. To what extent is the administration proceeding in these matters?

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman, the comprehensive auditing situation arose because of a federal problem there a number of years ago. I think it was Auditor Dyer. I think that he brought forward this initiative. I think it was generally considered to be a very good initiative but it was a new initiative and a number of provinces have taken up that initiative and have changed their Auditor General's Act. But also, a number of provinces have found some difficulties with the profile of this new initiative and particularly when some changes were made that did allow Auditor Generals to get into the area of questioning policy.

Now, that was never intended. We had meetings with Mr. Dyer here a few years ago. He told us it was never his intention, when they brought this in - he wanted to expand the role of the Auditor General - it was never really his concept that this would be allowed to expand into the area of questioning governmental policy. He says that it leaned too far in that direction. There was too much interpretation in that direction.

Now we, fortunately, in a way, have not amended our Auditor General's Act or brought in a new Auditor General's Act. So we are having the benefit of seeing some mistakes that have been made in other jurisdictions when they brought in changes related to this new initiative earlier. I will not say necessarily precipitously but certainly earlier than we were thinking about doing it.

So the matter is under review and I think it is a serious matter. We do not want to, in any way,

inhibit the Auditor General. I think if anyone looks at the staff of the Auditor General in this Province, I do not think that anyone can question, for one minute - they could only question that we are being too liberal towards the Auditor General - a small 'l' that is - in terms of providing him with staff and facilities and so on. Granted, you could say that the act itself might need some amending but, I do not think it needs amending the way it was first contemplated whereby the Auditor General would get powers much beyond anyone's desire, into areas of reviewing and perhaps calling into question areas that are quite legitimately the full policy responsibility of government itself.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

On that point, just to keep the record straight, Mr. Chairman, we feel that any administration which is confident that its policies are correct ones would not feel threatened by an expression of disagreement by the Auditor General or any other individual. We feel that the risk of that happening can be dealt with in the wording of the Auditor General's Act.

We have seen an unfortunate situation develop this year where the Auditor General was chastised by the Minister of Finance (Dr. Collins) in a very unprecedented fashion and where there was certain implicit treats with respect to the operation of the Auditor General's Office, which we

think was unfortunate. The Public Accounts Committee will, I understand, be looking closely at what has transpired here but it just reinforces the fact that in this Province we have not been progressive, we have not been forward looking, we have not been very enlightened in the approach that we have taken to the Auditor General's Department. This administration will go down in history as an administration that tried to stifle examination of the accounts of the Province, particularly with respect to Crown corporations, which the minister did not deal with. A large proportion of the expenditures of government are done through Crown corporations. Newfoundland Hydro is a good example. Why would not the minister and the administration agree to having the authority of the Auditor General extend over into these corporations?

MR. CHAIRMAN (Hickey):

The hon. the Minister of Finance.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman, I think the time of the Committee has essentially expired but perhaps I could very briefly respond to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Barry) there. I think for anyone to say that this administration has been backward in this regard really is forgetting history. We were the ones who brought in the PAC. It was under this administration or perhaps the previous one.

MR. BARRY:

No. It was the previous one.

DR. COLLINS:

The predecessor but it was of the same stripe. We have supported this initiative and we have arranged our own affairs. We now

respond in a written form to the reports of the PAC. So I think that we have nothing to be ashamed of in that regard.

In regard to the particular controversy - I am not going to into it now - the particular controversy this year with the Auditor General, that will come up in the PAC. Anyone that I have spoken to have assured me that they feel that the Auditor General just did not have the right handle on this whole matter and I think this will come out in the PAC reports.

MR. BARRY:

You have obviously only spoken to a couple of relatives about it, close relatives.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Chairman, I think the time of the Committee is up.

MR. BARRY:

The minister is getting a little tense when we get to this issue.

On motion 3.1.01 through 3.1.03 carried.

On motion, Total Legislature carried.

MR. MARSHALL:

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

MR. BARRY:

A lot of progress, but very few answers.

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

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

Order, please!

The hon. member for St. John's East Extern.

MR. HICKEY:

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered matters to it referred and directs me to report having passed the estimates of Consolidated Funds and Services, Executive Council and the Legislature and ask leave to sit again.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole reports that it has considered the matters which were referred and has directed him to report having passed the estimates of the Consolidated Funds and Services, Executive Council and the Legislature.

All those in favour 'Aye', those against 'Nay,' carried.

Motion, second reading of a bill, "An Act To Amend The District Court Act, 1976," (Bill No. 9)

The hon. Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this Bill, "An Act To Amend The District Court Act, 1976." The Bill provides for the immediate appointment of one additional judge to the District Court of the Province. Presently, the District Court consists of a chief judge and nine other judges for a total of ten judges. These judges now serve in seven judicial centers in the Province, St. John's, Brigus, Grand Bank, Gander, Grand Falls, Corner Brook and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The provision for the appointment of one more judge will bring the compliment of District Court judges from ten to eleven.

Mr. Speaker, the bill also provides for, at the time the Judicator Act 1984 comes into force, the enlargement of the proposed merged Supreme Court Trial Division. The Judicator Act, 1984, which has been passed by this Legislature, provides for the elimination of the District Court and the merger of that court, as we now know it, with the Trial Division of the Supreme Court of the Province. The provision for an extra District Court judge now, who will be absorbed into the merged Trial Division of the Supreme Court, will mean that there will be a total of nineteen Trial Division Supreme Court judges serving our Province in the seven judicial centers.

Mr. Speaker, there is now a need for an additional superior court judge in St. John's. The St. John's District Court, which has three judges, the chief judge and two other judges, is seriously overworked. There has been a great increase in the work load of the St. John's District Court over the last couple of years. Mr. Speaker, as all hon. members, I am sure, are aware, appointments of superior court judges, that is appointments of District Court, Supreme Court, Trial Division and Court of Appeal judges in this country are made by the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our provincial government, quite some time ago, I communicated to the Justice Minister and Attorney General for Canada (Mr. Crosbie) the intention of this government to introduce the Bill before us in this Legislature and to seek the appointment of an additional superior court judge for this Province. The federal Justice

Minister reacted very positively and gave me an undertaking that, just as soon as this amendment is passed by the Legislature, he would act to have the federal government make the appointment. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, if the appointment is made before September 2, while the current District Court is still in existence then, of course, it will be an appointment to the District Court and it is our intention to have that appointment made for the District Court in St. John's. As of September 2, the St. John's District Court and the District Court, which is present in six other judicial centers in the Province, will become part of the new improved Trial Division of the Supreme Court.

Mr. Speaker, in providing for a merged Supreme Court Trial Division, this government aims to increase and improve the level of court services to people in every part of our Province. Merger will mean that in six centres besides St. John's, there will be a continuous year round presence of a Supreme Court with full time court services relating to divorces, wills and estates, prerogative writs and the opportunity for jury trials year round in all these judicial centres. People involved in civil court actions and criminal proceedings will benefit from a more speedy and efficient court services at less cost to them.

As well, Mr. Speaker, it is intended by merging the District Court with the Trial Division of the Supreme Court to make more efficient use of public resources which are dedicated for the courts. A more efficient administration will be possible by the absorption of the District

Court into the Trial Division of the Supreme Court. There will be a reduced need for the Supreme Court going on circuit. As matters stand now, the Supreme Court Trial Division have a permanent presence only in St. John's and spends much time, spending considerable public resources, conducting circuits to Corner Brook and other places in the Province.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will improve court services to the St. John's area and will be part of a major effort to upgrade court services for every part of the Province. With merger on September 2, Newfoundland and Labrador will be joining the majority of provinces of Canada which have streamlined their court services by carrying out merger or the equivalent of merger in those other jurisdictions and streamlining the number of courts to three. As of next September, we will have three levels of courts serving our population, the Provincial Court, which has a presence in over twenty communities in the Province, the Trial Division of the Supreme Court and third and at the highest level, the Court of Appeal.

Mr. Speaker, I trust that this measure calling for the provision for an additional superior court judge for our Province will receive speedy passage in the House.

Thank you.

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):

The hon. the member for Eagle River.

MR. HISCOCK:

Mr. Speaker, this side of the House supports the intent of the bill, the re-organization of the courts and our justice system so it can be available, as the minister said, to service all our people in every part of the Province, instead of having the circuit court go around and having to wait for trial by jury.

I want to bring up another matter, seeing that it is a District Court and seeing that the minister said the jury trials will be available all year round and that was the point that was brought up by two French-speaking people from New Brunswick charged here in St. John's on a criminal matter, a drug-related case, where they wanted to be tried by judge and jury in French. Mr. Justice Goodridge said no, they could not have the rights of French-speaking Canadians in this Province of Newfoundland because the Province has not enacted Section 462.1 of the Criminal Code or not yet proclaimed in this Province.

The federal government in 1978 said it was giving the Province time to make the necessary change so that the section could be enacted. There are four provinces in the country that still does not have this. One is Newfoundland and in the 1981 census there were 12,990 people in the Province speaking French, of that 4,535 reside in St. John's. A lot of them, of course, had come as a result of decentralization with the Department of Revenue in Ottawa and bringing it to St. John's. That was one of the reasons. There are other reasons, of course, with other people moving here.

My concern also is we have our own

aboriginal people and French-speaking people on the Port au Port Peninsula. Going on this, I now assume that if a person is French-speaking, has been in this Province since the Seventeenth Century, if they want to have a trial by a judge or a trial by judge and jury, that right is not given to them because this Province has not enacted Section 462.1 of the Criminal Code.

Also the other part is, if we are a sister province of Quebec, which we are because of Labrador, of course, also with regard to co-operating and making sure that the Charter of Rights and the Constitution is upheld and that every person under the Charter and Constitution can go anywhere in Canada and, where numbers warrant, have these facilities. Now in Quebec, of course, the English have been given their rights. They had to fight for them and maintain them. The rights in other English provinces are the same thing. In New Brunswick, of course, it is officially bilingual. Out in Manitoba, a person had a parking ticket in English and he went to the Supreme Court and, of course, Manitoba was ordered and given a certain amount of time to change all their laws and legislation as a result. So Mr. Justice Goodridge points out that we do not have any bilingual judges, we do not have any clerks, we do not have the necessary support group to do that. My question to the minister, number one, is when is the section going to be enacted so as to provide the basis of fairness to all Canadians, and also our people on the Port au Port Peninsula, and the people who are in Labrador who are French speaking? When is that going to be enacted so that French Canadians living in Newfoundland

have the same rights as English-speaking Canadians going to Quebec? For example, in Long Pointe, Fermont when they go to the hospital they are treated and administered to at the medical facility in English. Quebec has enacted 462.1 of the Criminal Code. I would like to know when this is going to come in. It has been since 1978 that the federal government has given notice that this should be done. Now, with the Constitution, there are more rights, and of course with the Charter, there are also some rights on that.

We are going to enact that, or I assume we are because otherwise we are not treating our own French-speaking people on the Port au Port Peninsula fairly. We are saying no, we are being imperialist, we are saying to them you have to learn English, you can speak French in your home, you can have a little bit of it in your school, but you cannot have do process of the law or your rights. So the thing is, when is this going to be enacted?

The second thing, what programmes will the minister be enacting? The reorganization of the judicial system in the Province is taking place. We have seen great changes and great progress of having judges down in Labrador, having judges stationed in Corner Brook, and reorganizing the Appeals Court, and reorganizing the judicial system. I compliment the former minister in doing a lot of this and building jails and getting the morale of the Justice Department, the police morale was up for a while, but now with regards to salaries, it is down again. But the question I want to ask the minister is when is she going to enact or this government

going to enact that section? Number two, what training programmes is the minister going to enact for judges, lawyers, clerks and to other people who are in her department, in the judicial system? I am sure there is money there from the federal government that can be used, so it would not be any expense to us. When is the minister going to implement a training programme so that whatever judge clerk or lawyer wants to make use of this programme that should be set up so that in the future, when this section is proclaimed, than we do have people who are bilingual.

Maybe the Minister of Justice could recommend to the Minister of Justice of Canada that in appointing a future judge, that would be one of the criteria. Maybe she could even recommend that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ottenheimer) could become the first bilingual judge of the Province. After sitting over there for all these years, I am sure he would like to have a change in occupation.

So, in concluding, we support the reorganization of the District Court and the improvements that are being made. But still we are denying a basic right to our own Newfoundlanders growing up on the Port au Port Peninsula since the Seventeenth Century. We are denying them the right to have trial by judge in their own language or trial by jury. I hope that the minister will enact that in the spirit of what we are and, particularly, the President of the Council would agree, we are now in a new area of co-operation with the federal government. Mr. Mulroney has taken a very strong stand on the French rights and

English rights in this country, just as Mr. Trudeau did. I am sure that when the Minister of Justice and the President of the Council and the Premier asks for funds in order to enable us, as a poor province, to enact section 462.1, the result will be we will be able to have sufficient monies to set up an emersion training course for some of the judges who want it and the lawyers and the clerks and the necessary support system that goes with our court system, that this could be accommodated.

We have had since 1978 to do that and the minister has taken great pride in what she did as the Minister of Education to bring the rights of women to the forum in this Province, of transition houses, status of women, and advisory councils. We, at times, had to admit that this Province has made great strides in that and, of course, needs to make even more. But at least she has brought that matter up to the front.

As the Minister of Education she spoke about the French also in the Port au Port area. Now, as Minister of Justice she has the opportunity to blaze new trails and give our own Newfoundlanders the right to have their trials in French by judge and jury or just by a judge. I hope that the recommendations that I just made to enact section 462.1 of the Criminal Code be enacted as was advised since 1978 and, number two, a sufficient training programme set up on a voluntary basis to the judges, to the clerks, to the lawyers who would want to make use of that. In the future in appointing judges, maybe that is one of the criteria that we should look at. I am not sure

how many judges there are in the Province now but, basically, I do not think it is wrong or discriminatory in any way to think that here we are a Province and have legal things with Quebec all the time with the Upper Churchill and the Lower Churchill that I do not think there is anything wrong with the idea of possibly looking at the criteria of a bilingual judge sometime in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BARRY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. BARRY:

I think the member for Eagle River has made some good points there. We would ask the minister to take those into consideration. We support the concept of increasing the number of judges in the district court by one and conditionally increasing on merger the number of judges in the Supreme Court.

We have a problem in this Province right now with respect to the administration of justice, Mr. Speaker, that increasing the number of judges is not going to change. We have a problem having to do with respect for the judiciary, respect for the rule of law and respect for the equal application of the laws. We saw that problem arise during the current NAPE dispute when the minister and her officials and the administration generally did not assume the responsibility which they had and which, I understand - I do not know if this came out in the Estimates Committee after I left this morning - they had to commit or give an undertaking to

the court that they would enforce the injunction which they applied for. Am I correct in that, that there was an undertaking given in this situation?

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. BARRY:

Well, that is not the normal situation and whether or not an undertaking is given, it is understood in these matters that when a person applies, a private individual, an ordinary employer and maybe the reason it was not asked for from government is because nobody in the judiciary in their wildest moments would have assumed that government would not proceed to enforce the injunction which they sought and obtained from the courts. When we have a Court of Appeal of this Province finding it necessary to point out, as they did last week, that not only must there be respect for court injunctions by public employees and others but that there must also be respect on the part of those who are sworn to uphold the law, those who are responsible for the enforcement of the law, that has brought the administration of justice to a sorry state in this Province and the Minister of Justice has to take a lot of responsibility for this situation.

We understand that she, in her position, either as Minister or Attorney General may find herself in difficult pressure-filled situations around the Cabinet table from time to time when her colleagues are urging that she go the route of expediency, that she go the route of doing what is political. The minister suggested at the Estimates Committee this morning that she would be very

interested in looking at the division of responsibility between the Minister of Justice and an appointed Attorney General, having a separate person appointed rather than elected as Attorney General. Mr. Speaker, that is a simplistic solution. That is not going to be the way to solve this problem.

The present system has worked fine for hundreds of years under British Parliamentary practice. It has worked in this Province, it has worked in other Provinces of Canada and elsewhere in the world where you have the Attorney General being an elected member of Cabinet, responsible for enforcement of the law, at times - and I have been around a Cabinet table when this took place - at times having to say to his or her colleagues, "I am the Attorney General and this is a matter separate from my responsibility as Minister of Justice. This is a matter for which I am responsible as Attorney General and I am not prepared to go into the details of a particular case because it is privileged, confidential police information," for example, "nor am I prepared to back away from my responsibility to the courts of the land as Attorney General."

So what is required is strength. That is what makes the present system work when it does work, having a strong minister prepared to stand up for the principles which have proven to be so important over the years and stand up and say when her colleagues want to act in an expedient, political fashion, "No, hold on! There are important principles at stake here and however important it may be to our party, however important it may be to the political life of our administration I, as Attorney

General, am sworn to uphold the law. I am sworn to uphold respect for the courts. I am sworn to see that there is an equal application of the law, that the law is not applied to one person and not to another person doing exactly the same thing."

So, regrettably, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that while the appointment of additional judges may help in the work load, may help in terms of the mechanical aspects of seeing that justice prevails in the land, regrettably, until the minister develops more backbone than we have seen her show in the course of the recent NAPE dispute, the system of justice is going to continue to deteriorate. Respect for the law and respect for the courts is going to deteriorate. It does not matter if we double the number of judges, if we triple the number of judges, if we increase the number of courts, if we set up a completely new system of courts. Maybe there should be a political court. Maybe that would make things easier for the minister that we can -

MR. PATTERSON:

How about a kangaroo court?

MR. BARRY:

The member for Placentia (Mr. Patterson) suggests a kangaroo court and I know that that is the type that members of his mentality would like to see.

MR. DECKER:

You would make a good judge 'Bill'.

MR. BARRY:

Yes, and he would be our nominee for first appointment as judge of the kangaroo court. He would be eminently qualified to be judge of Newfoundland's first kangaroo

court. I hereby move, seconded by the member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Decker), that when the kangaroo court is set up, that the member for Placentia be named chief puisne judge until the age of sixty-five and after that supernumerary judge of the kangaroo court of this Province. Puisne is spelled, p-u-i-s-n-e by the way.

MR. PATTERSON:
(Inaudible).

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. BARRY:
Yes, that is one situation where he can be a chief and a puisne.

Mr. Speaker, I am being sidetracked by these rabbits in the backbenches but the concept of the member for Placentia being the first chief justice of the kangaroo court is one that grows on me every moment that I think about it. I think he would be an admirable appointment.

Mr. Speaker, maybe the minister, in the course of her closing remarks on the bill, and I think we can let this go through before six o'clock, in the course of her closing remarks, could she comment on the approach that is now taken with respect to appointments to the bench. That is a federal matter but normally there is consultation. There has been concern expressed by the Canadian Bar Association and by others with respect to appointments being made on a political basis. I wonder if the minister would talk about the extent to which the judicial council is now operative and with respect to, in the case of the provincial court, do we still have an active committee advising the

minister when it comes to appointments in the Provincial Court. I realize we are not dealing with the Provincial Court here now. We are dealing with the District Court but that was the reason that this Committee was set up, to advise the minister when it came to appointments for the Provincial Court, when it came to decisions with respect to QCs and so forth, and I wonder if the minister would comment whether that practice is still there, still operative.

I might say I think we have had some good appointments to the Provincial Court recently and we have a fine professional group of judges in the Provincial Court today. It is very good to see. But I would like to ask the minister would she also refer to the fact, is she receiving co-operation, being consulted with respect to appointments to the courts of this Province and would she anticipate full consultation with respect to the person who would be nominated in these positions?

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Is the hon. minister speaks now she will close debate.

The hon. the Minister of Justice.

MS VERGE:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In closing the debate I will address very quickly two issues: First, the issue raised by the member for Eagle River (Mr. Hiscock) relating to the provision of court services in Canada's two official languages in this Province. That is a matter currently being considered by this government and the officials of the Department of Justice, in consultation with the federal government. I look

forward to advice shortly from the Provincial Francophone Federation, with whom I had an excellent working relationship when I was Minister of Education.

Through a collaborative effort on the part of our education officials and the members of the Provincial Francophone Association, we managed to put in place many improvements in French education programmes in the Province. So I will be addressing the issue of providing court services in French as well as in English in this Province over the coming weeks and months.

There are practical difficulties with which we must grapple before proclaiming the Criminal Code provision which says that there will be court services in French. For a start, we do not now have a judge who can speak French and, to my knowledge, there are not any members of our bar eligible for appointment to the superior court, who have a requisite ten years at the bar, who can speak French. So there are some serious practical problems which we will have to surmount, but I am sure there are creative solutions to these problems. Some of these were discussed recently at a national conference of federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for criminal justice.

On the second issue, I am quite satisfied with the current practice of the federal government for appointing judges to the superior court. The current Minister of Justice and Attorney General for Canada (Mr. Crosbie) has reacted sympathetically to some of the recommendations of the Canadian Bar Association for selecting judges for the superior courts. I do expect to be

consulted by the federal Justice Minister before the federal government makes this appointment to the court.

As for appointments to the provincial bench, we have a full complement of provincial court judges now and I have not had any experience in my short time as minister in appointments to the provincial bench.

So I move, Mr. Speaker, that this bill receive second reading.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

On motion, a bill, "An Act To Amend The District Court Act, 1976," read a second time, ordered referred to a Committee of the Whole House on tomorrow. (Bill No. 9)

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, before moving the adjournment of the House and immediately before the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter) takes off for Halley's Comet tonight, at 7:30 the Resource Committee will meet this evening to review the estimates of the Department of Mines and Energy, not the Petroleum Directorate and not the Hydro, but the estimates for the hon. the Minister of Mines and Energy (Mr. Dinn), responsible for Housing, I guess.

Tomorrow evening at 7:30 in the House a committee will review the estimates of the Department of Forest Resources and Lands. I

will announce that tomorrow. But tonight, anyway, it is here in the House to review the estimates of the Minister of Mines and Energy.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to, as well, just very quickly give the hon. gentlemen an idea of the schedule for the week. Tomorrow, the hon. member for Fortune - Hermitage's (Mr. Simmons) name appears first on the Order Paper. I do not know whether he is going to be here. If he is not here, as far as we are concerned, if the Opposition wants to lead it in, fine, but we would like to know what will be on Private Member's Day tomorrow, whether it is the resolution with respect to - well, there is a lot of stuff in it - the price of oil and to reduce the cost of gasoline, home heating fuel and electricity, etc. Perhaps the member for St. Barbe (Mr. Fury) might want to lead it in. We would give leave for anyone in the Opposition to lead it in so that it would not drop.

MR. OTTENHEIMER:

Is not Baird's on tomorrow?

MR. MARSHALL:

No, no. Then the next thing I want to advise the -

MR. HISCOCK:

If the hon. President of the Council would permit a question? If we do take that and lead into it and the member for Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Simmons) is back from the trip, does he have the right to close it off?

MR. MARSHALL:

Yes, sure he does.

The other thing is, on Thursday, Mr. Speaker, I would like the hon. gentlemen to know, we will be considering the bill to revise and

reform the law respecting corporations. When that is through, on Thursday and Friday we will be doing legislation. If we get through the corporations legislation, we will be doing Order 9 and then Order 11, Order 12 and Order 13.

So having given that information to the House, Mr. Speaker, I move the House at its rising do adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 3:00 p.m. and that this House do now adjourn.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 3:00 p.m.