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Speaker: Honourable P.J. McNicholas

Tuesday

19 April 1988

The House met at 3:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

Statements by Ministers

MR. WINDSOR:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Finance.

MR. WINDSOR:
Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform hon. members that a contract valued at nearly \$2 million has been awarded for the construction of a new service building for Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro at Bishop's Falls. Hon. members will know that Bishop's Falls is the principal maintenance and supply depot for Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro's operations on the Island.

The contract awarded to Seabord Construction Limited of St. John's is valued at \$1.9 million. Seabord submitted the lowest of 12 quotations in a recent call for tenders. The new service building will be 1,125 square meters and will replace the existing facility which was constructed as a munitions storage depot many years ago. The building will house the transmission, terminal, civil works department and maintenance garage.

Work on the new service building is scheduled to get underway immediately and is expected to peak at a total work force of thirty persons. The facility will be completed and ready for occupancy in the second quarter of 1989.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:
We are pleased that the contracts are getting out, we are pleased that there are thirty jobs being created, and we are particularly pleased that these jobs are being created outside St. John's. Hydro's decision to put the maintenance and supply depot in Bishop's Falls is laudable. Hydro recently made a decision to move a lot of management positions and to put a brand new building in St. John's when it seemed to be totally unnecessary to do so. I would suggest that the Minister look at asking Hydro to go back, review the decision, and perhaps consolidate the management with the maintenance and supply depots in Bishop's Falls.

DR. COLLINS:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:
Mr. Speaker, as hon. members are aware, the hon. the the Minister of Finance (Mr. Windsor) announced a significant change in the MCP optometric program during the budget speech. I want now to outline the implications of the change, having discussed the matter of its administration in detail with MCP. The Newfoundland Optometric Association has been informed of these administrative details, which will also be contained in a newsletter to be sent to all optometrists by MCP

shortly.

Mr. Speaker, previously an oculo-vision examination for purposes of detecting and treating refractive errors by Optometrists was an insured service at a minimum interval of twelve months. In recent years, MCP auditing arrangements had detected a decided trend towards annual examinations becoming a general norm, whereas previously, longer intervals between examinations were the generally accepted norm; examinations at two-year intervals or longer were accepted as good ophthalmologic practice for uncomplicated vision refractive errors. Last October, MCP discussed this matter with the Newfoundland Optometric Association, expressing concern about over-use of the programme.

The change announced in the budget sets the frequency of insured refractive error examinations generally at a minimum of twenty-four month intervals, the usually accepted norm. The purpose is to avoid unnecessary expenditures of health dollars which are better utilized for needed services elsewhere in the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, it is recognized that, in the distinct minority of instances, refractive error examinations may be required at intervals shorter than twenty-four months, for example, in some children. MCP has always had a mechanism in place to handle such requirements in regard to its total programme area. The mechanism involves submission of an independent consideration request, made out on a special form for attachment to the regular claim form, by the health care giver. Accordingly, where

professional optometric opinion indicates that a refractive error examination at shorter intervals than twenty-four months is required, this independent consideration mechanism may be used by Optometrists when submitting claims to MCP in such cases. It should be noted that, since the inception of the insured optometric programme through MCP in 1981, refractive error examinations at less than twelve-month intervals have never been covered by MCP, so that the independent consideration mechanism will cover professionally necessary examinations in the twelve to twenty-four month interval period.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to deal with a second important administrative issue.

Through its computer arrangements, MCP is aware of the identity of those individual patients who received insured optometric examinations over the twelve-month period prior to the date of the budget announcement. There will be no retro-active effect of the announced MCP changes. Individuals may still have an insured examination at or after the twelve-month interval subsequent to their last recorded examination, and the twenty-four month interval requirement will only apply for subsequent services.

For example, an insured examination carried out more than a year ago, may be repeated at any time; similarly, a person having had a refractive error examination, say in June of 1987, may have another in June of 1988, that is after twelve months, as an insured service. In each instance, subsequent examinations

must be at twenty-four month intervals. In other words, there is no retroactive effect of the twenty-four month interval situation. As I say, even the twenty-four month interval is accepted for those cases eligible for independent consideration as I have already outlined.

Discussions have been initiated with the Newfoundland Medical Association with respect to MCP billing arrangements applicable to physicians giving refractive error examination services as well as to Optometrists. It should be noted that Ophthalmologists, as distinct from General Practitioners, are not involved in refractive error examinations as an isolated service.

Mr. Speaker, these administrative MCP arrangements will protect against unjustifiable expenditures on refractive error services, whilst insuring that all professionally needed care is fully insured.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do not know, Mr. Speaker, if it is the hon. minister's Scottish background or his background as Minister of Finance, but to present a statement like that to the House of Assembly today and to try to dress it up to take away the effect it is going to have on the people of Newfoundland is

absolutely irresponsible for the Minister of Health. It is just by coincidence, Mr. Speaker, that prior to coming into the House of Assembly today I met an optometrist in the lobby of Confederation Building.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. EFFORD:

I see Mr. Cucumber is at it again.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, in a few minutes I will have one of the Pages deliver to the Minister of Health a document which clearly states dozens and dozens of examples of identified cases where senior citizens and school children actually need eye examinations much more than doctors are trying to tell everybody around this Province - examples of senior citizens and school children - documented by optometrists in this Province.

Now, here we have a Minister of Health and a Minister of Finance, who introduced this programme with absolutely no consultation with the optometrists in this Province, and that is a proven fact. The optometrists explained that very clearly when they met with myself, members of government, and other members of the Opposition. The question has to be asked: Why did you not deal with the people themselves, or investigate your own records on how often numbers of people, who, for different health reasons, require eye examinations more than once every two years?

There is no way you can save money

if a person has to go to a general practitioner. MCP will have to pay the general practitioner and then pay the ophthalmologists, and this will exceed a cost of \$55 where now a normal eye examination is \$28. So, what we are doing is doubling the cost.

What about people far out into the Province, in remote areas? If they have to come to see an ophthalmologist in St. John's or in an urban area, where most of them are located, there is going to be the added expense of travel.

Another important thing we should be looking at, apart from the strain that is going to be put on the people of this Province, is the strain on the ophthalmologists. We need to keep good people in this Province not discourage them. But this is exactly what is happening with the nurses situation, it is exactly what is happening with the overworked doctors in all our hospitals. Here is another prime example where the Minister of Health is showing total irresponsibility in administering his department. He is not trying to help the health situation, he is taking away from it.

We have already had one resignation from the Board, and what we are going to see now - the message is very clearly stated in this letter - is these people are going to leave the Province, they are going to pull out of MCP completely, and the minister, himself, has to take full responsibility for this mess which he is creating in this Province.

Let me give an example, Mr. Speaker, of how much money MCP -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. YOUNG:
Your time is up.

MR. HISCOCK:
Oh, what a shame!

MR. EFFORD:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the Ministerial Statement in a slightly different way, and that is to indicate to the minister that the argument that you only need an eye examination every two years is certainly not true in very large numbers of people, especially young people.

I remember when I was growing up that almost every year my prescription would change, and if it did not change, Mr. Speaker, I had a very difficult time seeing the blackboard, and I had hard time seeing where I was going.

AN HON. MEMBER:
We know that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. FENWICK:
The Minister of Health (Dr. Collins) and the government opposite is putting a tremendous burden on the young people of our Province who will have a difficult time adjusting during the time period when their eyes change very quickly.

Oral Questions

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, is clearly the same kind of problem exists for the elderly. The elderly in our society have their vision change quite rapidly over a period of years, and I would suggest that the minister look at his policy and change it. The way I would suggest he change it is he establish an age of perhaps eighteen or nineteen years of age below which they would still be allowed to get examinations once a year, and an age above which they would be allowed to get them once a year, perhaps age sixty-five. I think that kind of a policy would be much better.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the last comment I would like to make is that prior to this plan coming into effect, I had the choice, then, of deciding to use either an ophthalmologist - an eye doctor - or an optometrist. Clearly, in a situation when one service is paid for and the other one is not paid for, there is a tendency to use the one that is paid. That is an unfair use, I would suggest, of an ophthalmologist, yet there are ophthalmologists in this city, and in a number of other cities in this Province, who clearly are all competing with the same kind of service being offered by optometrists, and I know the Speaker, himself, is intimately aware of the kind of problem that we are talking about here.

So I would suggest to the minister that he reconsider the problem and look at a different kind of solution for it. If he feels that it is not necessary for people in their middle years, I think it is clearly necessary for the young and the elderly, and on that basis should be restored to them.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for St. Barbe.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Education (Mr. Hearn).

On April 9, Mr. Speaker, the minister placed a half page advertisement in The Evening Telegram, an advertisement that congratulated Trepassey on the opening of their stadium and cost somewhere in the vicinity of \$700 to \$800. Can the minister tell us whether the Department of Education or any other government department paid for this advertisement?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, I will certainly have to check into that. The ad was placed by somebody else rather than myself and I will certainly find out for the gentleman. But, when we place things in relation to district advertising we pay for it ourselves.

MR. FUREY:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. FUREY:

Could the minister tell us why he saw fit to spend \$700 on this ad, when the minister responsible for Recreation (John Butt) took out the same ad, on the same day, in

the same paper at a cost of \$300, and the Premier took out the same ad for a quarter of a page on the same day, about the same subject for another \$300, for a total possible cost of nearly \$1300 to the treasury?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, the stadium in Trepassey has been on to go for quite some time. It was started about twelve years ago, but it did not get very far until a couple of years ago when we get involved ourselves, and I suppose in all modesty I can take a fair amount of credit for getting the thing into operation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. HEARN:

I might also mention that the people of Trepassey, as well as the rest of the people in St. Mary's - The Capes are extremely supportive, as can be seen by the polls from the last election, and if I have to spend that kind of money to congratulate them on an effort I am willing to do so. I am the member for the area, not the Minister of Culture or the Premier.

MR. FUREY:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what I was wondering. Because the ad clearly says: 'Message from the M.H.A. for St. Mary's - The Capes', I am wondering if that was paid for by the Department of

Education.

That \$700, Mr. Speaker, could have been used at St. Genevieve School in the Northern part of my district where children in kindergarten have no clean drinking water.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question! Question!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. FUREY:

I want to ask the minister, if this ad was paid for by the Department of Education, will the minister give a commitment now that he will reimburse the department so that money can be spent in a department he says himself is strapped for funds.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, any ad that I have ever placed as a member for an area, not from the department, has always been paid for by me. When I get the details on the matter, I will certainly make sure that any ad, as I say not only this one but any ad that I place, once we get the bill, I pay it. Whether it be plaques for schools - I can submit bills, ads in newspapers, newsletters, whatever, if they are done as the M.H.A. for the district on a political level then it is our responsibility to pay for it.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the hon. the Minister of Education.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. DECKER:

I find I am having an awful job making myself heard over the roar of those members opposite. I do wish there were some way they could be controlled, but that does not seem possible.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. DECKER:

My question is for the hon. Minister of Education. In his attack on educators over the weekend, the minister said that he was conducting an investigation to ascertain whether or not Liberal-minded people in the NTA are using their positions to influence government policy. Now, will the minister elaborate on this inquisition? Will he tell us when the investigation will be finished or whether or not this investigation would be more appropriately called a witch-hunt?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member tables the information that he just quoted verbally, I will give him an answer to the question, because I said no such thing.

MR. DECKER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, I will table a newspaper clipping, and refer the minister to the last two paragraphs.

My supplementary, Mr. Speaker: The minister threatened educators who do not support the Tory Party. "If they want to play political games, he says, I can play political games too." Will the minister tell the House what he intends to do after he finds Liberals in the NTA? Because let me assure him he will find Liberals in the NTA, like all other professional associations which are full of Liberals and full of former Tories.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:

Mr. Speaker, I might add to that too that within the Newfoundland Teachers' Association or any other organization you will also find a lot of Tories. You will also find a lot of Liberals and NDP people who are very good, close, personal friends of mine, including a couple of the names that were mentioned in the statement - very, very close personal friends. The wording that the member used about conducting an investigation or inquisition, those words are not there, not even in the paper. Not only did I not say them, they are not even in the print. It says, 'he is trying to ascertain' - this is not a quote, it was just written there by the person who did the interview - 'whether Liberal-minded people in the NTA "would use their own personal aspirations." 'What people do within an organization is entirely up to them. In relation to playing political games, this is a game of politics, that is the game

we are in, and if anybody wants to play politics with me, or with my department, or with the government, I will play politics with them, certainly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:
A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary.

MR. DECKER:
I have news for the minister if he thinks that the education of this Province is a political game. I would hate to see what he would do to his enemies the way he is treating his friends. Surely, the minister must realize by now that his threats, his scare tactics, his unfounded accusations, are totally inappropriate for any minister, let alone the Minister of Education. I ask the minister, after having time to reflect on his irresponsible actions, will the minister now, finally, stand up and apologize to the NTA for the anguish that his unreasonable attack must have caused those educators?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Education.

MR. HEARN:
Mr. Speaker, how infantile! How infantile!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. HEARN:
I have here, and I can table, the item from The Sunday Express, and nowhere in this have I said anything to insult the teachers of this Province. In fact, I have travelled from one end of the

Province to the other talking to what teachers are there, all of whom are good friends of mine, and they know exactly where I stand in relation to my relations with them, my respect for them being one of them and, also, my respect for the education system of the Province. In relation to playing politics with the system, one of the things I have always said and reiterate now is that one department in government where we do not play politics in relation to our building of schools or our allocation of grants is the Department of Education, and as long as I am there that is the way we will keep it. I certainly would not like to see it fall into the hands of people who would try, on the backs of teachers and the education system, to gain some cheap political points. Of course, they are well known out in education circles for what they have contributed in the past and what their aspirations are for what they will contribute in the future, and that is exactly nothing.

MR. FENWICK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FENWICK:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Health (Dr. Collins) and it has to do with the Royal Commission on Nursing recommendation that has asked for tuition fees to be imposed on nurses being trained at the hospitals in the Province that do the training for nurses in the diploma programme. It is our understanding that this is now being entertained by the government. Could the minister

give us some indication of whether or not this proposal, that of charging tuition fees for nurses in hospital nursing schools, whether that is in the works or not?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is referring to some actions that may be taken on the part of management people in the hospital nursing schools. I do not have any indication that they are making any change at this time. If there any plans underway in the hospital nursing schools, I will inquire about them and bring back some information.

MR. FENWICK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. member for Menhik.

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker, given that the minister's Committee on the Nursing Work Force has already brought in an interim report indicating that it is very difficult to recruit high school students into the nursing profession. What I would like him to do now is stand up in his place and say that it is not the government's intention to bring in tuition fees and extra costs for nurses going into the diploma programmes and, furthermore, to indicate that there will be some way to encourage more young people to go into the nursing profession so that we can do something about the tremendous shortage of nurses that we have in this province.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, the exact reason for mounting such a study, which is being conducted by the Nurses' Association, the Newfoundland Nurses' Union, the Newfoundland Hospital and Nursing Home Association and the Department of Health - those four agencies - is to define any problems we have in nurse recruitment, nurse retention and similar matters of that order.

And I received a very preliminary, interim report saying they have done some studies in those areas. They expect to complete the full report by, say, mid or late Summer. We will await their results with great interest and I am sure we will take their recommendations into serious consideration.

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary.

MR. FENWICK:

As the Minister knows, because he has given us a copy of the report and I assume has read it, one of the problems on the nursing shortage is the fact that less and less high schools are looking at nursing as an attractive alternative.

Could the Minister explain to us, if it is difficult to recruit young men and women into nursing now when there is no tuition being charge, how the imposition of a tuition fee will help in order to recruit people into this profession which is desperately looking for new recruits?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Health.

DR. COLLINS:

Mr. Speaker, I understand from what the member says that he wants us to bring in a fee for the training of nurses. He seems to be concentrating in that area. He seems to be pushing that point. I am not sure that I agree with the member on that. If he wants to send me a brief saying here is why I want the nurses in training to be charged a fee, I wish he would do it.

Because I am open to any suggestions, but I will not take into consideration foolish suggestions. So, if I determine that the member's wish to have a fee charged for nurses in training, if I find that it is a foolish suggestion, I will not act upon it. Now, if he can bring forward cogent reasons why we should act upon it, I will give the NDP party full credit for it, and he need not have any fear about that.

In regard to what the interim report says, there are quite a number of factors that relate to nurse recruitment these days. As far as I recall, they did not put any emphasis, if any emphasis at all, on the cost of nursing training. They put emphasis on the attractions of other forms of employment in this day and age for high school graduates. There are many areas now where male and female high school graduates can get into that formerly were not available to them and so they tended to go into the nursing profession. That is no longer the case now. That is an area where the Nurses' Union, the Nurses' Association, the Newfoundland Hospital Association, and the Department of Health have concerns

and we are investigating the validity of those concerns and what to do about them.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) in relation to the Fall fishery of last year. This was brought to my attention when I just read over some parts of the budgets from last year and this year.

My first question to the minister is: Was the minister aware that a member of his government was involved in marketing when he announced the subsidy last year? If he was not aware that a member of his own government was involved in marketing, when did he become aware of it and did he agree that this was a proper procedure for him to be involved with?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I assume the hon. gentleman is talking about the special \$1 million mackerel/herring assistance programme that we announced to create jobs for fishermen and for fish plant workers last year. Let me tell the hon. gentleman that not one copper of that money went from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador or the Department of Fisheries to a member of this House of Assembly by cheque or any other means. We paid the subsidy directly to

licensed fish processors in Newfoundland, not marketing companies, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, my question was not how the money was paid. My question very clearly was: Was the minister aware at the time that the programme was put in place, was instituted, by his department, where the fishermen did not get a great deal, about five cents a pound, that a member of his own government was involved in the marketing of this product?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, it does not matter whether the minister was aware or whether the minister was not aware. The fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that the programme was publicly announced, the funding was paid directly to the Quinlans and to the Freddy Woodmans and to the FPIs and the National Seas of Newfoundland and Labrador, not to any marketing company. It does not matter, Mr. Speaker, whether I was aware or not aware.

MR. EFFORD:

A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary, the hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

It certainly does matter to the people of this Province, Mr. Speaker, if he was aware or not. He is the minister responsible. You subsidized the programme and you should be aware.

I would ask the minister: First part of the final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Why was \$750,000 approved by the budget for marketing in his department? And the second part: Did not officials of your department, at the same time this was going on, completely go against the fact that an MHA was involved and told you so and told the Premier?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I announced a mackerel assistance programme in the Fall of 1987, and we paid it under the same guidelines as it was paid in 1988. There was no member of this House of Assembly involved in 1987.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

In 1986.

MR. RIDEOUT:

In 1986, excuse me.

We had the programme two years in a row. The guidelines that were in place in 1987 were the same guidelines that were in place for 1986. We paid the subsidy directly to Newfoundland licenced processors. We did not pay anything to any marketing company or to any individuals.

The latter part of the scurrilous attack coming from the hon. gentleman here today - I mean, get up and say what you want to say; if you have a charge to lay, lay

it - I have no advice from any official in the Department of Fisheries, nor does the Premier as far as I know, telling me that there was anything wrong with this particular programme. Absolutely none! Put up or shut up!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please! Order, please!

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

It is impossible to conduct question time if there is a continuous interruption.

The hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. WELLS:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the hon. the Premier. I would like to ask him if the government had been conducting further negotiations with the Government of Canada with respect to the railway since he last reported to the House on the matter? And has the government now reached agreement in principle on the closure of the railway over

a period of time in Newfoundland in exchange for an agreed upon lump sum payment or lump sum undertaking in terms of construction of highways?

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
No, Mr. Speaker, we have not.

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. WELLS:
Mr. Speaker, will the Premier assure the House that any agreement that is reached will include provision for the continuation of the obligation of the federal government to provide for the Newfoundland portion of the national transportation system on a constitutional basis?

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to get into the details of talks that are going on between ourselves and the federal government at this time.

MR. TULK:
The answer is no.

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. GILBERT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a question for the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Doyle) and it is in relation to the proposal call that is out on the air ambulance services. I wonder can the Minister of Transportation explain to this House what is the rationale for considering private enterprise to provide this service? Did the minister have a study done, or was there another reason? Will the minister now let us know the facts, whatever they are?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

What is the question?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker, I did not quite get the question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker, I did not quite get the gist of the hon. member's question. I will have to ask him to repeat the question again, because I did not hear it.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. GILBERT:

It was quite simple, I say to the minister.

What was the purpose of going to tender for the air ambulance service? It was operated for

twenty years by the government. I understand the Department of Health are comfortable with it. So what is the reason now that you have gone to call a tender for private enterprise for that service?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker, over the last year or so government has been evaluating a number of aircraft that could be employed and used for the government air ambulance service. The reason why, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at that is that the current air ambulance, the King Air that we have in service, is getting quite old, and it is quite difficult to get parts for it. I have been told by officials within the department that within the next couple of months it will be necessary to replace both engines in the King Air. It is not a proper air ambulance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. DOYLE:

It is not a proper air ambulance service that we have in place right now, a new aircraft is possibly necessary, so we have evaluated, in consultation with the Department of Health, a number of aircraft. We have been looking at aircraft in various parts of the United States and trying to get the best possible price we can, so that is one thing. We have looked at the possibility as well of refurbishing the current King Air ambulance that we have in operation, and we have a price for

that. I think it is somewhere around \$750,000 and a \$1 million to refurbish that aircraft. To get a new aircraft will cost in the vicinity of about \$1.6 or \$1.7 million.

Now what we have thrown into the mix as well, Mr. Speaker, before we make any decision as to whether or not a new aircraft will be bought as an air ambulance, is to look at the possibility of having private enterprise supply that type of service to government.

And, in keeping with that, just recently, about a week and a half or two weeks ago, we placed an ad in the various newspapers calling for proposals from private aircraft dealers to give us prices on what they could provide that service for.

So when we get all these three things put together, Mr. Speaker, we will compare and make a decision.

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A supplementary, the hon. the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker, the proposal calls for the service to operate from Torbay Airport, and it only gives eighteen days, I think, for a tender to get back. So it is limiting the tender to the people who now operate at Torbay Airport. So I wonder would the minister table the names of the companies who can bid on this proposal? Because a former Minister of Public Works told me a proposal is where you go out and ask certain people to tender, rather than a public tender which

is open to everyone. So you are limiting right now the tender and you are only giving eighteen days. Would you tell us who the companies are and why?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

MR. DOYLE:
Mr. Speaker, it is not limited to one company or two companies or three companies. Any company in Newfoundland and Labrador, and, indeed, Canada, who would like to give a proposal to government, we would be very, very happy to receive it. In that way, Mr. Speaker, we are assured of getting the best possible prices. And, as I indicated to the hon. gentleman, there is nothing devious in this. It is a public thing. If anybody would like to have the names of the various companies who will be putting proposals or tenders into government, I would be only too pleased to make it all available to hon. gentlemen opposite and to the media.

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary.

MR. GILBERT:
In view of the fact that you say St. John's Airport, there are only certain companies that have space at St. John's Airport now, so it is limited to the ones that are "in the space required" and a time frame. So now, why would the minister consider Gander, which is actually better prepared to be able to service the people of Newfoundland? The air ambulance service is not used on the Avalon Peninsula, so why could you not use Gander and give better service

to the people of Newfoundland for whom you are supposedly providing this? So why could you not ask the Gander Airport to be the service center?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

MR. DOYLE:

Mr. Speaker, I do not know quite how to answer the hon. gentleman's question, because I really do not know what he is getting at. There is nothing unusual or devious about this proposal or this tender call. It is an effort by government to get the best possible prices from any company which wishes to bid on the service. And that service is provided Province-wide, not just to St. John's or Gander or the Burin Peninsula or the West Coast of Newfoundland. It is a Province-wide service and there is nothing unusual about the proposal call that we have made, Mr. Speaker. It is just an effort to provide a vital service in the best possible, efficient manner that we can.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, my question goes to the hon. the Premier. Mr. Speaker, in light of the incident that occurred last week that resulted in a St. Pierre trawler being arrested, including four or five politicians from that island, and given the record of the Government of Canada and their generosity when it comes to giving away Newfoundland resources to

maintain a certain image, does the Premier not consider it important now that at the next round of meetings between Canada and France, when talking about the boundary dispute, to have representatives at that meeting to make sure that Newfoundland's interest is well protected?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

I find the question rather amusing, really. I appreciate it coming from the member for Twillingate, as a member, as a person, but in his preamble he talked about not wanting to give away any fish to anybody. His own leader has said - I have it here in my notes somewhere - that he was prepared to give away some fish to the French in order to get an agreement, which I do not think the member for Twillingate goes along with at all. But that is what the hon. the Leader of the Opposition said.

Obviously, we are in touch on a daily basis.

I have a lot of information on the Leader of the Opposition by the way. This is back when he calls St. John's a parasitic city, and when he stopped the hospital workers from going on strike, and all this kind of stuff. But that has nothing to do with fisheries, so I am out of order, Mr. Speaker.

All I can say to the hon. member for Twillingate, to try to really deal with his question, is that we have made it quite clear to the federal government over the last several months -

Here it is. The Liberal Leader said an allocation of a limited

quantity of Northern cod in order to get a settlement of the dispute may well be a small price to pay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame! Shame!

PREMIER PECKFORD:

So, I am sure the member for Twillingate does not share that, giving away non-surplus fish - non-surplus - when we have plants closed down, or only going at 50 percent capacity.

I can assure the hon. member, I can assure him that we are doing all we can to influence the federal government as it relates to the talks. Now, remember, these talks coming up this week - it is a very good question - are not talks dealing with the negotiations about fish. They are talks to see whether you can get talks going. We are trying to work out whether in fact there is any basis for resuming negotiations. These are not negotiations so there is no fish put on the table, like the Leader of the Opposition wants, or anything else put on the table.

It is an attempt to see whether Canada and France can get back to the table to negotiate. These are not negotiating sessions per se dealing with the boundary and the fish. These are talks to see whether you can form a basis for going back to negotiations. We will then be involved in those negotiations as we were before, but obviously we cannot be there if in fact more and more Northern cod is going to be given away.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

There is just time for a short

question and answer.

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Premier that the member for Twillingate fully endorses the comments made by our Leader.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Resign!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, may I have silence?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of common sense. If we have to give 3,000 tons of fish in order to save 20,000 tons, then I think that is a very good suggestion and I support it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. W. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, the question I put to the Premier, and I put it to him again: Obviously there will be a new round of talks, there will be a basis formed for further negotiation between the two countries. Now, then, will the Premier undertake to ensure that there will be representatives of Newfoundland at that meeting, of Newfoundland, and will he not instruct his representatives to

pick up their marbles and run home if everything does not go exactly the way they want it to go? Will he give that assurance, that we will be represented at those meetings?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Two points, Mr. Speaker. I am absolutely astounded that the member for Twillingate, representing a district which depends so largely upon 2J+3KL, and does not have enough fish - we have had a disaster in the inshore fishery for two or three years in a row - is prepared to give up some of that non-surplus fish to get a deal with the French. Number two, the second point, whether we go back to the table in the negotiations will depend upon the meetings that are being held and the criteria under which Canada agrees to go back to the table. We cannot say until we know what are the parameters of the negotiations. That is what those talks are about now. We will assess that at the time we know under what conditions the negotiations are starting.

MR. SPEAKER:

The time for Oral Questions has elapsed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I did not want to interrupt the

question time, but today there was more interruptions than usual. There was one particular member -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

There was one particular member on the back row on the government side who persistently interrupted in spite of my calling for order almost constantly. I do not know how many times. On the next occasion that happens I am certainly going to name any member who does that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MORGAN:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

On a point of order, the hon. the member for Bonavista South.

MR. MORGAN:

Mr. Speaker, I do not know which member you are referring to in the backbench. I am not known to be shy in speaking up whether in debate or otherwise, but today, Mr. Speaker, I apologize for any outburst. It is because I was smeared today in this House by members of the Opposition, attempting to smear my name as a member of this House of Assembly after seventeen years in here. That is the reason today, Mr. Speaker, my patience was a bit questioned, otherwise, I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. MORGAN:

Smear tactics.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

There is no point of order.

I would like at this stage to introduce and welcome to the galleries Major Betty Gilbert from Come By Chance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

Presenting Reports by
Standing and Special Committees

MR. BLANCHARD:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Labour.

MR. BLANCHARD:
Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the annual report of the Workers' Compensation Commission for the year 1987.

I would also like to table the report of matters transacted under The Labour Relations Act during the year 1987, which also includes the report of the Labour Relations Board for the same year, Mr. Speaker.

Answers to Questions
for which Notice has been Given

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, I have a response to a question asked by the member for

Fogo (Mr. Tulk). He wanted to know whether the vehicle currently driven was purchased by the department or leased by the department. In either case, did it go to tender? Answer: The vehicle was an 1985 Impala and it was purchased through the public tendering process. Secondly, a list of companies who tendered on the vehicle and the amount of their bids are here. There are only two. One did not meet the specs. The other one was awarded the tender.

AN HON. MEMBER:
What company got it?

MR. SIMMS:
Hickman Motors.

Petitions

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here from 577 citizens of Ramea.

"The petition of the undersigned residents of Canada who now avail themselves of their ancient and undoubted right thus to present a grievance common to your petitioners in the certain assurance that your Honourable House will therefore provide a remedy.

"Humbly Sheweth:

"That Whereas the Burgeo Road has received no upgrading or paving in the past two years, and;

"Whereas the Burgeo Road is the longest" -

MR. DOYLE:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. DOYLE:

Quite possibly I am going to have to respond to that petition. I do not know if the microphones are working, but I cannot hear a word up here where I am.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Burgeo - bay d'Espoir.

MR. GILBERT:

The petition reads: "That whereas the Burgeo Road has received no upgrading or paving in the past three years, and,

"Whereas, the Burgeo Road is the longest continuous gravel road in Newfoundland, and

"Whereas the towns of Burgeo and Ramea are contributing greatly to the economy of this Province through their primary industry, and

"Whereas the cost of living and carrying on enterprise in our towns is significantly higher due to the inadequacy of the present road system.

"Therefore: We, the undersigned, petition the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to begin a program immediately to upgrade and pave the Burgeo Road. We are disgusted with the political games being played and wish only to have our transportation problems alleviated. This will result in improvements in the economy of our area through increased tourism,

more high quality fish products being prepared here, and an increase in the service sector. All of which will increase employment levels and generate even more tax dollars.

"We ask only to be treated fairly and with respect and with dignity."

Now, that is a familiar cry.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

I may not have gotten exactly what the hon. member said, but am I correct in taking it that this petition is to the government and not to the House, or did I miss something?

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, you missed the prayer of the petition which said, "with the certain assurance that your hon. House." It was to the hon. House.

MR. SPEAKER:

That is in order then.

MR. GILBERT:

In the 'THEREFORE' they asked the Government of Newfoundland.

MR. SPEAKER:

All right.

MR. GILBERT:

Very good.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, it is a familiar cry from all over Newfoundland that people are asked to be treated fairly, with respect, and with dignity, and to have their roads attended to on a priority basis, rather than for political purposes.

It has been pointed out time and time again in this House that the

provincial government's share of the road paving budget in Newfoundland, the \$40 million a year, has been used on a political basis.

The rationale comes from the fact that this year in the Auditor General's Report the Auditor General pointed out that the list was made up, went to the minister, and somehow, then, it lost the reason why it went in there. The priorities went in, but we do not know what came out. It was done in veiled and dark secrecy.

The thing we have asked the government in the last three years since I have been a member is to bring the priority list that is submitted by the civil servants in the department to the minister for him to make his decision, to the House. Bring this list to the House, then let the government, if they want, pick out the ones that they want to have for their priorities. But at least bring the priority list to this House and then let it be picked out. Let us debate it here in the House. So if the government feels that the bottom name on the civil servant's list should go to the top, all right, let them stand up in the House and justify why they made that decision, instead of now where it is done as a deep, dark secret, under the veil of secrecy.

The minister will deny there are any political ramifications in the funding of the provincial roads and the \$40 million he is spending every year, but the way to get away from it, Mr. Speaker, is for the minister to follow the procedure that we have asked him to do in the last three years. It would do away with this secrecy, and the thought that it is done on a partisan basis.

The people of Burgeo and Ramea, as you know, are some of the highest paid workers in the Province. I think the medium income in Burgeo is about 128 per cent of the average. So they are contributing to the economy of Newfoundland on a fine scale. They are paying their taxes and they are paying a higher cost of living and more for goods that are brought in there, because of the fact that the road is in such a terrible condition.

Every time I mention it in the House when the Premier is here he talks about the fact that there has been \$13.9 million spent on the Burgeo fish plant to keep it going. I wonder is this the reason that he decided that he wanted to cut off service to Burgeo because of the fact he spent \$13.9 million. This seems to be what he is doing. 'We spent this, even though it is paid back, we did spend it to keep this plant going to employ those people who make money and pay taxes.' Now, he is saying, 'We are going to cut off their service because he did it.'

I do not hear him say it when he talks about the St. Lawrence fish plant, the Baie Verte mines, and the other fish plants in the Province that the government has put money into, I do not hear him say 'We have done this so we are not going to do anything else.' It seems that Burgeo has been singled out by the Premier as the one place they put in \$13 million and they are now going to cut off services.

I think it is time for the Premier to come up with a better argument as to why there has not been any funding for the Burgeo road. As I said in the last petition that I presented from Burgeo, those

people did not want the government to take all the \$40 million in the provincial budget but there has not been any money spent on the road in three years. They want a portion of the \$40 million that is spent annually by the Department of Transportation. They want a portion of it put into the road. If we took the figure 5 per cent it would be \$2 million and \$2 million would pave somewhere in the vicinity of four kilometres of road a year. That would mean that over the last three years we would have twelve or fourteen kilometres of road paved and it would help the people of Burgeo cut out the suffering of having to travel on that road.

I am sure the minister is aware because he had a meeting with them last night and they outlined to him pretty clearly what they feel is the problem with the Burgeo road and what they would like to see happen. They did not ask that it be done immediately, they did not ask that all the provincial funds be taken and put into it this year, but they asked that a start be made and they also asked that the upgrading and maintenance during the Summer be increased so that they are able to drive over it in safety. Because of the fact that it is the longest continuous dirt road, there are very serious dust problems in the Summer time and there is a safety factor involved. For this reason they are asking if the minister would consider some sort of a chemical treatment on this road.

In view of the fact that it is not going to be paved this year, they know, but to cut down on the hazards of driving on this road, they are asking for three things actually this year: That a start be made on the paving of the road,

that the unpaved portion be graded and maintained in a better fashion than it was last year, and that there be some sort of chemical treatment used to see if they can cut down some of the dust problems to make this road a little safer for the people to drive on.

As I close I say to the minister that the people are very concerned and would like to have the minister address the three things I have outlined.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, it is true I rise in my place as the member for Fortune - Hermitage but I cannot forget that in a former time I used to represent the good people of Ramea, nearly 600 of whom have signed that petition. I used to represent the good people of Burgeo whose population depends on this road, the people of Grand Bruit, the people of Grey River, and to a lesser degree in terms of dependence on the road, the people of Francois. Those 5,000 to 6,000 people, Mr. Speaker, thanks to the sensativity of a great federal Liberal government were able to be connected to the Province's road system at a cost of \$35 million, a road that was the latest in terms of engineering and construction techniques and a road that, when it was completed, was a first class highway.

Thanks to the neglect of the Department of Transportation and the failure to budget even minimal maintenance funds to look after the upkeep of this road, a road

that the federal government has put \$35 million into to build, this government cannot find enough money to maintain. That, Mr. Speaker, is a good part of the reason why the road is in such desperate shape today.

Mr. Speaker, I take pride in standing and supporting my colleague from Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir, who Mr. Speaker, is doing a first class job keeping this issue before the public and before the administration. He has my full support and the full support of every member in the official Opposition.

This is a cause which, Mr. Speaker needs to be addressed. What is happening here is a crying shame, that those 5,000 to 6,000 people should not benefit more than they do from the largess they contribute to the public treasury.

Mr. Speaker, why is it in this day and age, in 1988, that the people of Ramea and the people of Burgeo and Grand Bruit and Grey River and Francois, yes and the people of the communities in Fortune - Hermitage who are in need of road upgrading and Seal Cove and Hermitage and Pool's Cove and Belleoram, and I say for the benefit of the gentleman from St. John's North who knows these places like the palm of his hand, and the people of Belleoram and St. Jacques, and English Harbour West and Mose Ambrose and Boxey, and Coomb's Cove, and Wreck Cove -

MR. J. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

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

MR. J. CARTER:

The member for Fortune-Hermitage is trying to imply ever so subtly that I am not aware of any part of Newfoundland outside of the Overpass.

Now, this is not correct and I would further add that his protestations of support for this particular petition are extremely transparent because I have yet to see any member of the Opposition come over and speak to the Minister of Transportation privately and say, 'How about it. Is there something you can do?' All you hear is windbagery.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:

And, Mr. Speaker, Coomb's Cove and Wreck Cove and English Harbour East and Grand Le Pierre, Harbour Mille and Little Harbour East, those communities, together with the ones in Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir, why is it that those people have to go through such great lengths, including I may say for the benefit of the member for St. John's North, including I may say for his benefit, meetings in Deer Lake last night between the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir and the minister, who is very generous with his time for delegations from those districts. I have had five delegations before him. I am lobbying my Leader these days to see if he will make an exception to his dictum that people from that side of the House cannot cross to this side of the House because I say to him, if there is one exception over there Leader, it is the gentleman who is the Minister of Transportation.

As Mr. Smallwood used to say, there is a man with his heart in the right place. If he could only convenience the heads of the other people at the table of the needs of the road needs in Fortune - Hermitage, the needs of the Burgeo Road, the subject of this particular petition, then we would be eternally grateful to him.

I do want, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, to remove the slur that the gentleman from St. John's North placed on the Minister of Transportation. The Minister of Transportation, contrary to the implication by the member for St. John's North, has been very forthcoming. He has met with no fewer than five delegations from Fortune - Hermitage. He has another such delegation on his schedule for later this month, April 29, I believe.

MR. J. CARTER:
Another point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. J. CARTER:
The suggestion has been made that I was criticizing the minister. I was criticizing the members opposite for not coming across and seeing this most accommodating minister at any time and quietly petitioning him, instead of getting up on a lot of windbaggery.

MR. SPEAKER:
There is no point of order.

The hon. the member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, we are flattered when we get criticism from the

gentleman from St. John's North. That assures us that we are doing the right things in the right way.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I just wanted to draw the attention of the House to the fact that it is perhaps time for a return to not only a government here but another stripe of government in Ottawa, so that we can put together the roads agreements that have served this Province so well, the roads agreements, the lack of which we are now hurting very much because of.

Mr. Speaker, do you recall those days when we had an offshore agreement?

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, just to conclude, an offshore agreement that is going to be the envy of everybody when they see an offshore agreement being cooked up by this administration for electoral purposes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DOYLE:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

MR. DOYLE:
Mr. Speaker, I am pleased, as usual, to have a few words on this petition, and to support the good people of Burgeo in their efforts to have this road upgraded and

paved. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce to the hon. gentleman, and to everyone here in the House of Assembly, and to all of Newfoundland, that it is government's intention to pave the Burgeo road. I indicated that to the committee last night, Mr. Speaker, when I met with them in Deer Lake.

It has to be understood, Mr. Speaker, that this is quite a costly and expensive undertaking that both levels of government are going to have to be involved in. We are talking about an expenditure here of approximately \$31 or \$32 million, which is quite a sizeable amount, which does not really allow for my department alone to undertake that type of a project out of a \$40 million capital programme. Again, to finish the Burgeo road, and there seems to be some conflicting reports going around on what it would cost to complete that road, I have heard, even as recently as a couple of days ago, that people are saying it would cost no more than \$5 or \$6 million to complete it. That is not true, Mr. Speaker. It will cost - and these are engineering estimates I am quoting - in the neighborhood of \$32 million to complete that road.

As I said a moment ago, it will take federal government involvement. Already, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Newfoundland and the federal government have spent about \$30 million on that road, ever since 1970. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the Committee last night, every time that we have ever sent a list to Ottawa looking for federal involvement on a number of projects in Newfoundland, the Burgeo road has always been very, very high on the priority list.

That is the reason, Mr. Speaker, that the road has progressed as far as it has, because this government was interested enough to include the Burgeo road every single time, every opportunity that we had to get federal funding and to become involved in any cost-sharing agreement. That will continue, Mr. Speaker.

We are trying as hard as we can to get a secondary roads agreement with the federal government. Again, the Burgeo road is included as a project that we, as a provincial government, would like to have undertaken. Again, I repeat that we have spent approximately \$32 million on that road ever since 1970, the most recent work having been undertaken in 1983 - 1984 when government cost-shared 75/25 with the federal government on an expenditure of \$6.5 million for the fifty kilometers of pavement that we have on the Burgeo road right now.

Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated on a number of different occasions, nothing would please me and the department more than to see the Burgeo road completed. But we cannot, and again I repeat, we cannot undertake that type of an expenditure of \$32 million out of a \$40 million capital programme. But we will continue to make every effort to get an agreement with the federal government and to have the Burgeo road included.

Mr. Speaker, also the committee that I dealt with last night mentioned the problems of maintenance on that road. We had to indicate to them, as I do to the House today, and to your Honour, that each year my Department spends approximately \$1.7 million in maintenance on the

Burgeo road. It is a very long stretch of road, 150 kilometers, and it does require extensive sums of money each year for maintenance.

Also, the hon. member mentioned chemical treatment of the gravel road a moment ago. We do chemically treat the road, Mr. Speaker, but it is only in the built up areas. We do not do it for the 150 kilometers. It has to be understood that in order to treat one kilometer of gravel road, you are talking about \$2,500 per kilometer of calcium chloride. So, we would be up in the neighbourhood of around \$250,000 - \$300,000 to fully treat that road with calcium chloride. This is why we concentrate on the built up areas.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I support the petition. I support the people of Burgeo and their efforts to get that road paved. If government was not interested in having that work undertaken, we would not to date have cost shared \$30 million of an expenditure on that road and we would not be contacting the federal government each time asking that the Burgeo road be included in any listing on a secondary roads agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to make those few comments.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for the Strait of Belle Isle.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from 623 residents from Quirpon, Hay Cove, L'Anse-au-Meadows, Noddy Bay, Straitsview, Raleigh, Ship Cove, St. Anthony Bight, Great

Brehat and Boat Harbour.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is a model for all members of the House. I would like to read the opening phrase to your Honour:

"To the Honourable House of Assembly in Parliament Assembled. The Petition of the undersigned residents of Quirpon," etc. Mr. Speaker, if hon. members are having problems with petitions, I would suggest they follow this outline from now on and there will be no more need to bring in petitions which are not properly prepared.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is extremely civilized and civil, addressed to the House, expressing concern. They are not asking for pavement, so the hon. Minister of Transportation can relax. They are not asking for pavement. They are not even asking that the roads be upgraded, and everybody knows that they should be asking that the roads be upgraded because they have the worst roads in the Province.

Mr. Speaker, what they are asking for is that the House direct to the Department of Transportation to put more snow clearing equipment on that road, more dependable equipment, and also, -

MR. DOYLE:

Could you repeat those communities again, please?

MR. DECKER:

I can do better than that, I can send the list across to the hon. Minister, if you would like to take it across to him.

What they are asking for is better snow clearing equipment, better maintained snow clearing equipment

and extra staff. I noticed when I talked about snow clearing that the Minister almost went into a gale of laughter. I am not sure if he is laughing at the petition. I do not think that he was. Maybe there is some other matter which occurred to him.

But, it would not surprise me if the Minister did laugh at a request for snow clearing equipment at this time of the year. It is now practically the last of April and there is not a blade of snow around St. John's anywhere. I could see the Minister, in a narrow world that he lives in, wondering if there is anywhere in the Province of Newfoundland when snow clearing would be an issue at this time of the year.

Let me tell the minister that even though this is late in April, snow clearing is still an issue on the Great Northern Peninsula. This backs up the point that I have made so many times to the minister and to this House, that when we talk about snow clearing in Newfoundland, we have to treat that region of the Province, which is North of a line, say from Plum Point across to Roddickton, as being unique.

MR. DAWE:
We do.

MR. DECKER:
That area, Mr. Speaker, has the heaviest snowfall in Newfoundland.

The former minister, who was so conscientious when he was there, says, 'We do treat it as being unique.' What a bunch of foolishness if ever I heard it in my life, Mr. Speaker. How can he say that they treat it as being unique? The only unique road that

the former minister knew about was the Round Pond road, Mr. Speaker, not the Noddy Bay road. If the hon. member were treating that as being unique, he would put three snow clearing shifts on that area between the middle of November and the last of April. Now, that would be treating it as being unique.

The residents are not even asking that three snow-clearing shifts be put on. They would be satisfied if two shifts were put on. I tell the minister that there is no way that he or any other minister can ever do justice to that particular part of Newfoundland unless he is prepared to put two full snow-clearing shifts on during the Winter months, between the middle of November and the last of April.

I do not think it is even realistic to expect the minister to do it now, this time of the year. But I would ask the minister to start the process so that next Fall, if he happens to be there or, as most likely, we are over there, if the process is started, then we can continue on.

I would also suggest to the minister -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. DECKER:
Mr. Speaker, time is so short. Can I have leave to finish up?

MR. SIMMS:
We will give the hon. member thirty seconds to clue up.

MR. DECKER:
Thank you, that is great.

I want to say to the hon. the Minister of Transportation, if he is looking for some money, I want to draw to his attention this impending deal whereby he is going to sell the railway. I am assuming that he is going to get \$1.5 billion or maybe \$2 billion. For sure it is not going to be less than \$1.5 billion, if he is going to get justice for it. I would say that it is going to be \$1.5 billion.

That should allow him to free up some money so that he can treat special areas of the Province, like the Great Northern Peninsula, the Northern tip, as being unique and give them the justice and the service that they require.

I will wait now, Mr. Speaker, for the hon. the Minister of Transportation to get up and support this petition. Do not apologize. Do not try to explain. But support the petition and say, 'yes,' he is going to put the extra equipment on.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the hon. the Government House Leader for giving me leave to pursue the matter a little further.

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker, I take some -

MR. J. CARTER:
A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. J. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker, I am rising in this House to address Your Honour, but really my remarks on this point of order are to the Leader of the Opposition, because the business of the House is rapidly being brought to a standstill by excessive petitions. There is no reason why there can not be a quiet approach to the minister, perhaps even the reading of the occasional petition. This House is supposed to have some function, but its function is rapidly being eroded just by demagoguery. I would appeal to the Leader of the Opposition, who seems to have a very tight control on his caucus, to remedy the situation. I really think it is important.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

There is no point of order. There is no limit on petitions, according to our Standing Orders.

The hon. the member for Twillingate.

MR. W. CARTER:
I find it regrettable that a member of this House, in this case the member for St. John's North (Mr. J. Carter), would treat so lightly, Mr. Speaker, the petition that was submitted to this House through their duly elected member, signed by 625 people living in that part of our Province, and he thinks that this is a futile exercise. Mr. Speaker, this is the people's House. What other avenue is opened to the people other than to have a petition presented to it through their member?

Mr. Speaker, I support this petition, Sir, and I do it with a great deal of pride because some

of the roads listed here, the road to Raleigh, and the road to St. Anthony Bight, Great Brehat, Boat Harbour, I have some personal knowledge of those roads. In fact, it was during my tenure as the member for that district that two or three of these roads were constructed.

It is rather regrettable, Mr. Speaker, twenty some years later these people are now finding it necessary to petition the government through their member to have an effective snow clearing programme instituted to take care of these roads. Roads that were built there by a former Liberal Government, we now find that the present PC Government are unable to even maintain, even keep the snow cleared off roads that were built at the time by a Liberal Government.

Mr. Speaker, the people of that area, I know quite a few of them, I know them quite well, are fine, decent hard working people. They are people who have found it extremely difficult over the years to keep body and soul together. It is not easy living in a remote part of our Province on the Great Northern Peninsula. In fact, one of these communities is probably on the very tip of the Great Northern Peninsula. It is not easy to make a livelihood in that area.

I think the very least we can do for these people who, over the years have made very worthwhile contributions to the economy of our Province, fishermen and the people who have brought in new dollars, I think the very least that we can do for them is to make provision for snow clearing off roads that have not cost this government anything. In fact,

they were built long before this government came to power.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the member for the district, my good friend from the Straits (Mr. Decker) for having presented this petition. Of course, we all know this is only one of many petitions that he has presented in the past couple of sessions calling upon the government to accept their responsibilities to the people that he has the honour to represent in this House, the people from places like St. Anthony Bight and Raleigh and Straitsview and Noddy Bay and L'Anse au Meadows. These are people who through their member are asking the government to do for them what is now being taken for granted, I suppose, by most Newfoundlanders and certainly by most Canadians, and that is to have proper snow clearing facilities provided.

I think the minister, Mr. Speaker, will have to make allowance for the fact that he is not dealing here with a community in Key West, Florida or St. Petersburg. He is dealing with the Great Northern Peninsula where even at this time of year, when most parts of our Province are enjoying a snow-free landscape, people in these communities are still forced to contend with considerable amounts of snow.

Therefore, it is a unique situation. The petition itself I think is unique in that they are not asking for pavement or costly reconstruction or construction jobs. They are merely asking that proper snow clearing equipment be provided.

Mr. Speaker, I can only convey to the people concerned, through

their member and through the news media, I hope, that certainly members on this side and their member were very sympathetic to their problem and to their needs. I know that the member for the district will continue to fight until the minister's opposite agree to accept their responsibility and to do it in a way that will be satisfactory to the 623 people whose names appear on this petition.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. DOYLE:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Minister of Transportation.

MR. DOYLE:
Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand to have a few words on this petition as well and to indicate to the hon. gentleman that I am very much aware of the problems associated with snow clearing on the tip of the Northern Peninsula.

Mr. Speaker, it is a little bit unbelievable when a member stands in his place and tries to make politics out of the snow clearing efforts of my department. I certainly do not mind when an hon. member comes in with a petition asking for a gravel road to be paved and makes a little bit of politics on that particular issue but, Mr. Speaker, when a member tries to make political points on snow clearing, it is a little bit much really.

Aside from that, Mr. Speaker, I am very much aware of the problems associated with snow clearing on the Northern Peninsula. I am in

daily touch, as a matter of fact, with the depot in Deer Lake every single day to get an updating on what the conditions are on the Northern Peninsula. It is a very, very difficult area for my department to service in the Wintertime because you are generally operating, as I have said before, in back to back snow storms and very high wind conditions.

We are very well aware, as a department, of the efforts of the various depots in the area and of the Deer Lake depot as well in responding to the problems of snow clearing.

That is why we do treat that particular area of the Province as a very special area when it comes to snow clearing and the assigning of snow clearing equipment. That is why we have approximately thirty personnel operating in that area, and that is why as recently as two or three weeks ago we had thirty-one pieces of equipment on the tip of the Northern Peninsula trying to battle back to back snow storms and trying to battle very, very windy conditions, approximately thirty personnel and thirty-one pieces of snow clearing equipment.

Mr. Speaker, I have had occasion to talk to some of the operators who are working in that particular area and you find that they will give you reports like you clear twenty feet of road and you look back and the twenty feet that you have cleared is snowed in again. I cannot see, Mr. Speaker, how that problem could be solved by assigning more equipment. We already have eight snow blowers in the area, a number of ploughs, graders, flyers, and what have you. I believe sincerely from the

people who are working in that area and operate the depot, I believe them very sincerely when they tell me you can have 150 or 200 pieces of equipment there and it would make absolutely no difference to the operation right now. It has nothing to do with the fact that we do not have a two or three shift system on.

Our people, when it is necessary, will work overtime, but there is no point in having people out on the road trying to clear snow when the wind is fifty or sixty kilometers an hour in the middle of a snow storm. You have to take the equipment off the road and wait until conditions prevail that will allow the orderly clearing of snow.

We have run into some very, very tough problems on the tip of the Peninsula. That is why we are treating it as a special area. That is why we do have the numbers of people in that area that we probably do not have in any other area of the Province, twenty-nine or thirty people and thirty-one pieces of equipment operating on the tip of the Peninsula. I think that should indicate to the hon. gentleman that we do treat it as a special area.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is all very fine to say that the work is not being done, but again I would say to hon. gentlemen, I am in daily touch with that particular area. I know every single moment what is going on on the tip of the Northern Peninsula in snow clearing. I know when we have to take our snowplow operators and snowblower operators off the road that it has to be done.

We do not particularly enjoy having schools closed for two or

three days at a time. That is not something we want to do, Mr. Speaker. So I am pleased to say that we are making a very good effort.

I want to compliment the people who operate the snowplows and the snowblowers in that particular area and say that they do have a very difficult problem that we are trying to respond to continually.

Orders of the Day

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, Motion 1, the Budget debate, adjourned by the Minister of Social Services, I believe, the last day.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Social Services.

MR. TOBIN:

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

There are a couple of issues in this year's budget I would like to mention, Mr. Speaker, as they reflect on my own district. One is funding which has been allocated for the opening of probably the most modern health facility in the Province. In Burin we have a new sixty-five bed facility, Mr. Speaker, with the best of professionals, in terms of specialists that we have been trying to recruit. They have all been put in place, Mr. Speaker, under the recruitment programme started by the hospital committee, and we are now well on our way toward having one of the best medical facilities in this Province. Obviously, I cherish that, Mr. Speaker.

As well, the support given to the

Marystown Shipyard, in my district, by this administration is something that is indeed deeply appreciated by the people of the entire Burin Peninsula. I would suspect that in the past few years we have had hundreds of millions of dollars worth of new construction created there by this administration and, as well, Mr. Speaker, we are now involved in the construction of FPI trawlers, which are subsidized very heavily by both the Province and the federal government. For that, I am very grateful to the administration.

Mr. Speaker, we can go on and list some very positive things which affect my district, as it relates to the budget. In the area of fisheries there is the new secondary processing plant at Burin and the refit plant at Burin. It is an excellent plant, Mr. Speaker, a plant that real good production is coming from. It is the plant which the FPI people have been very successful with in exploring and securing markets in the countries of China and Japan.

Mr. Speaker, I say all of that, of course, realizing that the Leader of the Liberal Party in this Province has come out and, I guess, in a backhanded way, smacked every fisherman and fisherperson in this Province as it relates to his stand on the fishing industry.

All one has to do is read the recent copy of Maclean's magazine in which it is stated that the Premier of New Brunswick, Mr. Frank McKenna, is totally opposed to the Meech Lake Accord, and the reason he gave is that Newfoundland would have more say, because our Premier had been

successful in putting Newfoundland's case by the other premiers in Canada, and having that included for the next round of constitutional discussions.

The Premier of Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker, is opposed to Newfoundland having more say over its fishery. Gordon Cummings, President of National Sea, was quoted in the same article as being opposed to Newfoundland, and to our Premier. Everything is there about Premier Peckford being able to get this on the table, and everybody is totally disgusted in that part of Canada because our Premier has been successful in getting this involved in the next round of constitutional discussions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what happens when the Premier and his Minister of Fisheries go to discuss at the Constitutional Conference the fishing industry as it relates to this Province, and from which there will be money derived in terms of all sorts of programmes. The Premier will sit down at that table and he will make his case. I have had the opportunity of being with the Premier at several First Ministers' Conferences and Premiers' Conferences and, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that I was indeed very proud to be a member of his government. Because the leadership of the Premier at these conferences is second to none. He is absolutely second to none! I can tell a story, Mr. Speaker, when the opportunity presents itself, about what David Peterson, the Premier of Ontario, once said about the Premier of Newfoundland being such a great statesman and how he conducts himself. I can tell that.

Mr. Speaker, what happens when the

Premier sits down at that table to discuss Newfoundland having more jurisdiction over its fisheries? We know that the new Liberal Premier of New Brunswick is opposed to Newfoundland having more say over the fisheries, and we know that Nova Scotia is having second thoughts about their support of that. But where does the Premier place himself when the Prime Minister of Canada and the other Premiers look at him and say, 'Well, Brian, boy, you do not come here representing Newfoundland. The Liberal Party in Newfoundland and the Liberal Leader in Newfoundland say that your government is out to lunch because you want more say or more jurisdiction over the fisheries.'

The Liberal Leader, Mr. Speaker, in this House should forget the fact that he is one of these untouchable lawyers and should face the reality of Newfoundlanders and realize that this is a fishing Province, Mr. Speaker. People in my constituency depend very heavily on the fisheries and I doubt if they take very lightly the fact that the Leader of the Liberal Party is opposed to Newfoundland having any more say or jurisdiction over the fisheries.

I would also think, Mr. Speaker, when unanimity is not shown on such a vital issue as this, when the Premier presents his case with regard to the fisheries, when they know that there is another political party in this Province that is adamantly opposed to Newfoundland having more say and jurisdiction over the fisheries, they are going to have a cause.

I mean, Frank McKenna, a fine fellow, by the way, who comes to Marystown occasionally for his

holidays in the Summertime, a good fellow - as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I know of a situation, not too long ago, where Premier McKenna said, 'Boy, we have to watch what Peckford is up to on the fisheries.' That happened, Mr. Speaker, just a few weeks ago, in conversation with another good friend of mine. But the fact of the matter is, the Leader of the Liberal Party in Newfoundland has given ammunition to these individuals, has provided them with an avenue to say that Newfoundlanders do not support what you are saying. To me, Mr. Speaker, that is shameful.

As well, I was surprised to see the member for Twillingate stand up in this House this afternoon - I must say, Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed - to lend his support to that. I was not surprised that he defied his leader and did not come into this House with the scurry and the vicious vendetta tactics, the worse kind of tactics. I was not surprised that the member for Twillingate did not get involved in that, Mr. Speaker.

I can say right now, there is no doubt in my mind that the conduct we saw displayed in this House this afternoon by the members opposite, particularly the member for Port de Grave and the member for St. Barbe, was instigated by the Leader of the Liberal Party. There is no doubt about that. This pious, holier-than-thou individual is the most superficial individual who probably ever stood in this House; he is as transparent as this water glass. That type of attack we witnessed this afternoon, that personal attack on the integrity of people such as the Minister of Education, is totally uncalled for and shows the people of Newfoundland and

Labrador the leadership of the Liberal Party.

MR. MITCHELL:

There is no leadership. They had to buy their leadership to begin with, so what do you expect? You only get what you pay for.

MR. TOBIN:

Well, I guess, what the hon. member said is certainly food for thought. It is a very valid point.

But I want to say that I was not surprised when the member for Twillingate did not get involved in that at, I am sure, the request of his Leader. I have no difficulty, Mr. Speaker, and I do not think anyone in this House has any difficulty, with the fact that the member for Port de Grave got involved in it. The Member for Port de Grave is probably one of the most shallow members in this House, and one of the most shallow members to ever sit in this House.

But I can say that this type of conduct, which is engineered and designed and promoted by the Leader of the Liberal Party, will not sit well - will not sit well - with the people of Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, I have to go back to the attack the Leader made on me this weekend. I would like to, but I will not, tell about a call I had this morning from -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Tell us about it! Tell us about it!

MR. TOBIN:

No, I will not. I have already told you about it. I have already told you about a call I had this morning related to my comments yesterday on the Leader of the Opposition. When he wants to talk

about conduct in this House, why cannot the Leader of the Opposition tell the people of Newfoundland and Labrador who is paying him money.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. TOBIN:

Why should that be a secret? Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier in Nova Scotia resigned from cabinet a few days ago because some people paid off his debts, as I understand it. Now, what is the difference between that and accepting money from the business community to pay your salary? I would assume that with your salary you make payments, or whatever you do with. I know I have a lot to make with my salary. I have a lot of payments to make, I can assure you of that.

MR. SIMMS:

His salary is three times as large as (inaudible) members over there.

MR. TOBIN:

That is right! That is right! Now, Mr. Speaker, what is the difference? Why should the Deputy Premier in Nova have to resign because someone paid off his bank debts, or whatever it was, when the Leader of the Opposition here can accept tens of thousands of dollars a year from business people in this Province? Can someone tell me the difference?

Now, Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about conduct in this House, he had better clean up his own act first. He had better clean up his own act first, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. PATTERSON:

A paymaster is in the gallery today.

MR. TOBIN:

That is where we are coming from, Mr. Speaker. I believe that is the level to which the Leader of the Opposition has dragged this House of Assembly since he came in here.

What does the member for Waterford - Kenmount say, Mr. Speaker? Does the member for Waterford - Kenmount agree with his Leader that St. John's is a parasitic city? Does the member for Waterford - Kenmount agree with that or does he not? When is he going to stand up, Mr. Speaker, and disassociate himself from those comments from the Leader of the Opposition?

Is he going to? We have it here in black and white. Does the member for Waterford - Kenmount - that is a good question - support his Leader in saying that St. John's is a parasitic city?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Paradise.

MR. TOBIN:

Paradise. Well, he may have meant that when he moved from Corner Brook.

Does the member for Waterford - Kenmount have the courage to address the issue of how his leader feels about this city to his constituents and to the people of St. John's? Does the member for Waterford - Kenmount have the courage to address that? Does he believe that? I doubt it very much. I have to say that I honestly believe the member for Waterford - Kenmount is a very genuine, decent individual. I

really believe that, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:

I do not know how he became a Liberal.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, I call it as I see it. I call it as I see it, the same as I did with the member for Bonavista North, Mr. Speaker, and some of these people. And I have no difficulty in saying that. I think, to a large extent, the member for Twillingate showed some decency today by doing what I am sure was refusing a demand from his leader to get involved in the aspersions and the dirt, all of this we witnessed here today, and I commend the member for Twillingate for that.

Now, the member for Mt. Scio - Bell Island stood in this legislature in front, or by, or side-by-side all his colleagues on Friday and said that the Liberal party is frozen in time. Well, it is not pre-1980, it is pre-1970.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Mt. Scio - Bell Island was saying that right now the Liberal party was back in the Smallwood years. By the way, Mr. Smallwood did a fairly good job for Newfoundland when he brought us into Confederation. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that I was born a Canadian, unlike most of the people. I guess, the member for St. Barbe can probably say it, and the member from Stephenville.

AN HON. MEMBER:

And St. John's North.

MR. TULK:

I was born a Canadian.

MR. TOBIN:

The member from Fogo says he was

born a Canadian.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

I was born a Canadian.

MR. TOBIN:

No, you were not born a Canadian.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

No, I was born a Kilbrider.

MR. TOBIN:

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be able to say that I was born a Canadian, and I really mean that. And I am sure that the member for St. Barbe is proud of it, and the member for Stephenville. Some of us younger people are extremely proud to be able to say that.

But what the member for Mt. Scio - Bell Island was saying is that the Liberal party is indeed frozen in time, back where they used to be. That is coming from the immediate past Leader of the Liberal party; I think there have been nine since the Premier became Premier of Newfoundland - nine in seven years. When he makes that kind of statement, what does that say to the people of Newfoundland as it relates to the official Opposition? I think it says that the Leader of the Liberal party has set that party back by that period of time.

The other thing he said, Mr. Speaker, is that he is now supporting the Meech Lake Accord; he is going to stand on principle and support the Meech Lake Accord. What happens to all the rest of the members who, prior to Mr. Wells accepting the Leadership of the Liberal party, supported the Meech Lake Accord? Where is their principle? Do they have the same principle and the same beliefs as the member for Mt. Scio - Bell Island? Do they, Mr.

Speaker? Can Liberal policy and the philosophy of the Liberal party change so drastically as it relates to the Meech Lake Accord? Because leaders change the whole policy changes. Is that, Mr. Speaker, were the Liberal party is coming from? Is that the principle, Mr. Speaker, that the member for Mt. Scio - Bell Island refers to?

Now, Mr. Speaker, we can go on on a whole pile of issues as it relates to this. We can go on and we can say that we on this side of the House are not at all satisfied with the level of decorum and the manipulative manner in which the Leader of the Opposition has placed this Assembly.

The Leader of the Opposition should remember that we are a group of politicians, all fifty-two of us, and that we are in a Chamber called the House of Assembly. We are not in a Court of Law. We do not practice law, Mr. Speaker, we practice politics. I practice politics, and I am sure every member over there practices politics.

MR. GILBERT:

I do not practice politics.

MR. R. AYLWARD:

They need a lot of practice over there.

MR. TOBIN:

You do not practice politics. Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir does not practice politics. That does not surprise me a whole lot. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, we all know about the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir, when he came in here and complained about the railway, yet he had a business that would not

even use it, the same as most businessmen, by the way, not just the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir; most business people in Newfoundland did not use it, and that is why it is in the condition it is in.

Mr. Speaker, I guess my two minutes are cluing up. I just want to say, as it relates to the budget, that I am very happy with the amount of progress that has been made.

In terms of the new hospital for the Burin Peninsula, I am sure that the member for Fortune - Hermitage is very satisfied to see the new hospital is going to open in Salt Pond this year, as the Board of Directors is made up of representation from his constituency as well and, I might say, making some very valuable input. We are satisfied with that. But it is a long way from the policies of the Liberal government, when the Leader was in here in the dying days of the Smallwood administration, when one of the former, former leaders of the Liberal Party, Mr. Roberts, went to the Burin Peninsula and announced their strategy for health care on the Burin Peninsula, which was to build a hospital in Clarendville and put an improved ambulance service on the Burin Peninsula.

Now, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, has the gumption to talk about the lack of health care in this Province when that is the way he was going to treat the people of the Burin Peninsula.

I am looking forward, Mr. Speaker, as I said, to continuous support for the Marystown Shipyard, I am looking forward to continuous support for the fisheries, and I

am looking forward to continuous support for the recreational and capital grants in my district, where I have seen some very significant improvements. I am looking forward to some very significant road improvements in my district, Mr. Speaker. I know that in the past two years we have been able to pave communities like Brookside, Boat Harbour, Baine Harbour, Rushoon, Parkers Cove, Red Harbour, Spanish Room, John the Bay, Marystown, Burin, Epworth and Winterland. We have been able to pave these communities, Mr. Speaker, and spent a considerable amount of funds.

As a matter of fact, right now in my district work has already started on a project which the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Dawe) started when he was Minister of Transportation, the Creston causeway, a very valuable road connection, Mr. Speaker. The contract was awarded - they are now back working at it again this year and I am looking forward to the completion of that.

AN HON. MEMBER:

How did you get all that?

MR. TOBIN:

I am a good member. That is how I got it. I am looking forward, Mr. Speaker, to the continuation of capital works in terms of water and sewer to add on to the many millions, Mr. Speaker, that have been spent in my district since I got elected. I am looking forward to that continuing as well. I know that in several areas we have done exceptionally well, and I recognize that. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has been exceptionally good to the district of Burin - Placentia West. We can look at the many millions, Mr. Speaker, I would say the hundreds

of millions, that have come into Burin - Placentia West since I was elected and I am extremely proud of that and grateful to the government for that kind of support.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that that type of support will indeed continue. I am looking forward, through the Minister of Transportation, because of the several meetings that I have had, to continued support, and through the meetings I still have ongoing with the Minister of Fisheries, continued support as it relates to my district. I look forward to the continuation of the support I have received from the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth. So all in all we have done exceptionally well in the district of Burin - Placentia West. The government has been extremely good to us. I am grateful for that and I want to say that I encourage all members of the Legislature, particularly members on the other side, to visit my district to look at the prosperity that we have since I was elected. In terms of development -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible)

MR. TOBIN:
Yes, it is a very good part of the Province. There is a lot of work taking place down there right now. The FPI trawlers have the shipyard going extremely well.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time is up.

MR. TOBIN:
I will clue up, Mr. Speaker, if I may, by saying that if any Newfoundland Liberal brass thought

of supporting former Cabinet minister Clyde Wells as leader of the provincial party, they suffered a setback last night. Former Premier, Joey Smallwood, told a Liberal gathering that he would leave the party.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:
Mr. Speaker, I hold in my hands a copy of the 1988 budget where some \$2.9 billion is going to be spent in 1988 on the economy in Newfoundland. We just heard a minister of that Cabinet, to whom we have to approve this budget, stand to his feet for thirty minutes and make absolutely no reference whatsoever to what is contained in this book.

Make no wonder, Mr. Speaker, the economy of Newfoundland, the people of this Province, the health care, the education system, the Department of Municipal Affairs, the Department of Transportation, and every other department is in the deplorable condition that it is in today. When you have the mentality of who has just spoken about for the last thirty minutes, how can we have anything else but desperation?

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a couple of references, at the very outset, to some of the comments the Minister of Social Services made. The Minister of Social Services clearly said that he is proud of the Premier and the work he has done. I would say to the Minister of Social Services that after listening to that speech, the Premier would not say that he

is proud of him. I would say that is the reason the Premier is not sitting in his seat.

I will give one compliment to the Minister of Social Services, he is a very conscientious minister. Let me give you an example of how dedicated he is to the social service recipients of Newfoundland, and especially of his district. He was so conscientious in the last election that he hand delivered cheques from the Department of Social Services to his constituents.

MR. TULK:

That was very good of him.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. EFFORD:

Now, there is a Minister of Social Services who is really conscientious about his people. There is a man who is really concerned, to take the cheques and go around and deliver them door to door. There are not too many people in this Province who would do that, believe me. I compliment the minister for doing so.

Mr. Speaker, just recently, before the House of Assembly opened, I was asked by the Leader of the Opposition to shadow an extra department post over last year. One of them was Social Services last year, but this year I was asked to shadow Health.

Mr. Speaker, I must say from the outset, day one -

MR. BAIRD:

You would not shadow a groundhog.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, from day one it was not a very difficult job to do

when we get the type of ministers as we have witnessed here this afternoon in Question Period, like the Minister of Social Services standing to his feet and going on with that sort of display, instead of making references to the people in need in this Province.

Let me give you one example of what the Minister of Social Services could have made reference to in his department. He said when he became Minister of Social Services he had a background as a social worker. We accept that. We know that. We had thought, as all people in this Province, that despite the desperate situation the Department of Social Services was into, he would bring some new ideas and new energy to the department. We listened to him in the news media, but since day one when he took over the Department of Social Services we have not seen any change whatsoever, absolutely no change as far as bettering the lives of people. We have seen a change, yes, cutbacks, decreases and further strains put on our people in the Province.

Let me give you an example in what the minister says. A resident of the member for Harbour Grace's district phoned me Sunday. He was travelling back and forth to Carbonear Hospital where he was receiving fourteen dollars. He is now cut back to five dollars to go from Spaniard's Bay to Carbonear. He has no vehicle. He has to hire a taxi. We are talking about eighteen miles. That is one cutback.

MR. FUREY:

How about a limousine?

MR. EFFORD:

That is a cutback. I asked the minister in Question Period there

last week if there was a policy in his department that they had just recently adopted not to pay any more light bills that were in arrears to Newfoundland Light and Power pending the court case. I never saw a minister in my life come out of his Chair and go running around like that to all of his officials saying, 'Is that right? Is that right?' That is exactly what the minister did.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

I asked the minister if he was aware?

MR. TULK:

He did not know.

MR. EFFORD:

The situation is, it is not written in the books. The word was passed down by word of mouth. No question, no misunderstanding of that. The minister does not adopt any policies that are not in writing. He has no control over his department. He has no idea of what is going on in his department. He does not know about the manager in Harbour Grace. He does not know the manager in Twillingate or some other rural area. He has no idea whatsoever.

MR. TOBIN:

Be careful now.

MR. EFFORD:

No problems with being careful.

Here is a situation: We have a widow, take any example, use any person in this Province who needs to live, who needs a decent amount of money to buy groceries. She is not asking for a luxurious travel estimates like the minister had

last year with over \$50,000 travelling around the Province and travelling around the country, and \$57,000 for minister's assistants travelling around the world.

MR. TULK:

Parliamentary assistants.

MR. EFFORD:

Parliamentary assistants, \$57,000.

AN HON. MEMBER:

What? Go on with you.

MR. EFFORD:

The member for Carbonear (Mr. Peach) had one particular trip, goes to New Brunswick, takes his family with him and spends \$2,200 of taxpayers money.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame! Shame!

MR. EFFORD:

Shame!

MR. TOBIN:

(Inaudible) on record.

MR. EFFORD:

It is on record and we have the copies of the bills. No problem producing it.

And yet a widow in this Province -

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

AN HON. MEMBER:

I never had a widow.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. EFFORD:

-- will go to the Department of Social Services -- let me tell you

about it! Let me give you one example, one woman, who went to the Department of Social Services for a decent income, she was only allowed \$250. She was asked to have some funnels replaced on her stove and a financial adviser from the department told her, 'No, we cannot, we have cutbacks. We are not allowed to spend the money.' That is the kind of example.

Mr. Speaker, we have a situation down here in the Boys' Home in Pleasantville. Let us talk about a caring minister. Let us talk about a minister who has not adopted any policies. We have a situation down here in the Boys' Home in Pleasantville where it is absolutely disgraceful where any human being would have to live under these conditions.

You can throw all the sneers, you can make all of the accusations, you can do what you like, but it is absolutely disgraceful in this day and age. It would not happen in the twelfth century let alone the twenty-first century. It is absolutely unbelievable that they have to live in conditions where the snow is blowing in on the bed, where they have to go to bed with no heat, where you can stand inside and see daylight shining not through the windows but through the cracks around the windows outside. We bring it before the minister's attention and what does he say? 'We are looking at the situation.'

We can talk about salaries. Now, of course, now the minister -

MR. DINN:

You will not repeat anything you say inside the House outside so it must be untrue.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member for Pleasantville (Mr. Dinn) would pay more attention and realize the trains are running over him by what I am saying, we will get on with some messages here in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I think it is time for the Premier to take a solid look. Number one, we have twenty-three Cabinet positions. Is that correct?

AN HON. MEMBER:

Twenty-two and a half.

MR. EFFORD:

Twenty-two and a half. We will call it twenty-two Cabinet positions. Just think - let us talk dollars and cents - about the amount of money that is spent in salaries, in office furniture, in press secretaries, in parliamentary assistants, in just the minister's offices.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER (Greening):

Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, forget about the salaries that are sent out to the people, the civil servants, just the people around the minister's office alone. We are talking millions and millions of dollars.

MR. TULK:

Order, Mr. Speaker?

MR. EFFORD:

Forget about the travel, the hundreds of thousands of dollars that those ministers and their

assistants spend in travel each year. Forget about the money they spend on cars and just the money on office furniture. When we expect poor people in this Province to suffer the way they suffering, we see this amount of expenditure.

Here come the highlights: We have twenty-two and a half Cabinet positions. In the Department of Social Service you are talking some \$60 million expenditure in salaries. Just think about this, \$60 million plus expenditure salaries. The same in the Department of Public Works. On top of spending that amount of money, the government has now advertised in Newfoundland and in The Globe and Mail across Canada and in Ontario to bring in a group of consultants to tell the minister and his officials how to implement policy and how to run his department. Just imagine!

We are already spending \$60 million dollars plus on salaries to run the department, millions of dollars on administration, millions on the minister's own office, and we are going to bring a group of people in from Ontario to tell us how to run the Department of Social Services. Now, can you just imagine? Just think about this scenario.

Can you just imagine a consulting firm on Bay Street with a business income - forget about the personal income - of millions of dollars that is going to come down to the Province of Newfoundland and tell Mrs. Jones and Mr. Smith how to live in this Province and that he should live on less than \$500 a month? Can you imagine the situation that our people in this Province are going to be placed in?

It is going to cost in the vicinity - and I am only estimating. I do not know what the tender is. I have asked the minister and he will not return an answer - of \$250,000 to \$300,000 to pay a consulting group to come into this Province to tell the Minister of Social Services how to run his department, a minister, Mr. Speaker, whom we had great confidence in -

MR. PEACH:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. PEACH:

Mr. Speaker, just to correct the record, the member for Port de Grave a few minutes ago, while I was walking out and coming back in again, misinformed the House with information that he was relating to parliamentary secretaries. He was referring to myself when I was a parliamentary secretary to social policy. I want to just correct the record, Mr. Speaker, without taking up the member's valuable time.

In my term, as parliamentary secretary to the Social Policy Committee, I submitted all of the information that was available that was requested by the members opposite. It was all scrutinized and they came to the conclusion that there was some twenty-nine dollars that they were not satisfied with. In that, and the member has no documentation to show otherwise, although he said it, I did, Mr. Speaker, travel in my role as parliamentary secretary to New Brunswick for the Summer Games, as the gentleman had said. However, my wife or anyone else who went with me did not cost this

government any money. I went in my job as parliamentary secretary accompanying the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Youth on an invitation to attend the Summer Games.

It is not correct for the member to stand in his place and say that I or my family spent any taxpayers' money of this Province representing the Province in or out of the Province.

MR. SPEAKER:

There is no point of order.

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, just to make one little quick reference. I said very clearly that the minister travelled as a parliamentary secretary to New Brunswick, he spent \$2,200 dollars and on the same trip he took his family. I did not say his family spent any money.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, could I have protection?

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please! Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, number one, there is a much cheaper way of going to New Brunswick than taking a vehicle and driving. Taxpayers' money, \$2,200 to go to New Brunswick, when you could go to Vancouver and back for much less than \$2,200. Be very careful about what the member for Carbonear, the Minister of

Housing is making statements about, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let us get back to the budget. Let us get back to the kind of waste - we have the same reference in the Department of Public Works. We have a department with multi-millions of dollars being spent in administration fees to properly run that department. That is what people get paid salaries for. No question about it. We have no argument with any person within the department getting a fair and decent salary to do his job properly. That is what this budget is approved for. That is what we pass the estimates for when we go over the salaries.

But the same thing, Mr. Speaker, that has taken place in the Department of Social Services is taking place in the Department of Public Works. For a consulting firm to have to come into this Province, either within the Province or outside the Province, to tell an administration how to run the department, that is disgraceful.

If we could take that amount of money that is going to pay to that consulting firm and divide it up, number one, to the needy people in this Province and people who are living far, far below the poverty line, \$8,000 and \$9,000, or, let us use the Department of Health. Let us use the Health Sciences. Just recently this week we heard about the problems in the intensive care unit of the Health Sciences, eleven beds, twelve patients waited ten to twelve days to go into the operating room for bypasses. If we took that \$250,000 and spent it in the ICU in the Health Sciences we would get a great deal more benefit out

of it than what is taking place in the department of Social Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, this government is like any other business in this Province or in Canada. It is a large business with a very large amount of money incoming and a very large amount equally outgoing. You have to know where your priorities are. You cannot spend it on whims. You cannot spend it with the capabilities of ministers such as the Minister of Social Services who explained for himself that certainly he is not capable, after the speech he gave for thirty minutes. You cannot spend it on incompetence. That is what is taking place in this administration. That is why the people of this Province are placed in the situation they are in today. That is exactly it, the incompetence of this administration.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, the good part about it is that we have no longer any need to convince the people of this Province that is what is taking place. Every individual in this Province you can speak to from the beginning of the week until the end knows full well the type of administration and the lack of competence in this body of people. They are ready.

I have heard the members and the ministers opposite make accusations, 'Ah, you are going to lose your seat the next time, you are not going to win your seat the next time.'

I say to each and every minister, call the election, issue the rite, we will see who will win the government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. EFFORD:

Tell your Premier to call or issue the rite, issue it today, issue it tomorrow morning, we will see. We have not got to convince the people. In fact, I will make it easy for you. I will sit home in my house, I will not even go out and campaign and I will beat anybody from that side who would come out and take me on.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. EFFORD:

That is how sure the people of Port de Grave are. They know full well that this party is the alternative to the mess that is on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the situation in the Department of Health, some \$661 million is budgeted this year to run the health needs of this Province. One of the first things that comes out of the budget is we get the Minister of Finance (Mr. Windsor) and the Minister of Health (Dr. Collins) issuing statements that they are going to cutback on eye services, the optometrists from one year to once every two years to save the people of the Province \$500,000. Just imagine! Out of all the things around this Province we are going to cut back on the services that people need to get their eye examinations from once every year to once every two years to save \$500,000.

I do not mind saving money. I am

a former business person and I think it is good economics to save money where you possibly can. But, any businessman with any brain whatsoever, should realize that you must get your priorities straight.

Now, do we save it on the backs of the sick, on the backs of the blind, on the backs of social services, or do we save it on what is on the cover of this disgusting book? Is that where we save the money?

I suggest to the President of Council (Mr. Simms), the Deputy Premier for a short time, that if we had took some of the \$20 million plus that is being wasted on this and put into the needs of the people, we would not be placed in the situation today that a Minister of Finance and a Minister of Health would have to implement a programme that is going to effect the optometrists of this Province and the ophthalmologists of this Province and the basic people of this Province, the senior citizens and the children who need their eye examination. It is going to put a strain on those people.

But the politics of it is we, as a party, have not got to go out and tell those people about the mistake made. They know. They read. They listen to the television. They know the mistake is made, and it is another nail driven in the coffin of the Tory Government. Make no mistake about it, they are quite capable of driving nails themselves. We do not have to do it. That is one of the good parts about being able to sit in this Opposition group and see the mistakes day after day implemented by these people.

Mr. Speaker, let us go to the Department of Fisheries. Very few ministers on the opposite side - we not talking personal, we are talking ministers - very few ministers I have a great deal of respect for, but the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Rideout) I have a great deal of respect for. I believe that the Minister of Fisheries is a concerned individual. I have no doubt that he really does have the concerns of the fishermen of this Province at heart, no question about it. Mr. Speaker, the very serious problem is that the Minister of Fisheries cannot get what is in his heart up in his head. He cannot get the two of them working together. This is the problem. Because anybody to implement a programme last week, a restructuring programme to save the inshore fishermen such as the Minister of Fisheries did, Mr. Speaker, is a total disgrace to the inshore fishermen of this Province.

Make no mistake about it, what was implemented is an absolute disgrace. There is no way, Mr. Speaker, that it is going to help anybody out in this Province and the situation that there are into. There is a prime example, the \$60 million, -

AN HON. MEMBER:
(Inaudible.)

MR. EFFORD:
My fisheries licence, would you like to see it?

The \$60 million that was implemented, what is that going to do for the inshore fishermen? It is not enough to touch the slightest problem that occurred with the inshore fishermen and the offshore fishermen in this

Province.

The problem with the offshore fishermen, yes, it is financial. No question about it. But, it is more effected by the rules and regulations that are set up by a bunch of people in Ottawa that would not know, I said many times, a codfish from a caplin, or from a sculpin, or from a squid. They do not know the difference. That is who is making the rules. That is the situation this fisheries is being placed in.

Now, how would you change the rules? Number one, we have a problem with our inshore fishermen. Our inshore fishermen now are into a boat less than thirty-five feet, less than thirty-five feet. We know the fish is not coming inshore, no argument. It is not the Minister of Fisheries' fault, it is not his department's fault. So what do we have to do? We have to go where the fish is able to be caught, where the fish are swimming. You cannot do that in a boat thirty-five feet long.

The rules and regulations have got to be changed. They got to be changed.

MR. PEACH:

(Inaudible) fifty-nine feet, eleven inches.

MR. EFFORD:

The member for Carbonear knows all about it, fifty-nine feet eleven inches, no, it is sixty-four feet, eleven and a half inches - another disgusting regulation, but nevertheless, we won that one as we are going to win everything we put forward.

But here is the situation: The Minister knows full well, and I am

surprised that he has not made some announcement. We have not heard that he has been up in Ottawa at meetings, he probably has been. But we have not seen any signs of any improvement. We have to get the people out to where the fish are.

In order to do that, you have to, number one, change the regulations on boat building.

Number two, the licencing set up by this department and by the federal department is a total disgrace to any form of fishery. There is absolutely no way that the inshore fishermen versus the offshore fishermen, or versus the trawlermen can work the way this licencing is set up.

It was supposed to be restricted. If the guidelines were followed the way they were set up in the beginning, possibly they would have worked, but there is so much inconsistency in the department. What is taking place has just caused complete madness. You can take a fishing licence now and you say you are only supposed to have a crab licence. You are only supposed to have an otter trawl licence. You are only supposed to have a cod licence. There is licences being sold around this Province for twenty-five thousand dollars and fifty-thousand dollars, minimum, twenty-five thousand dollars - fifty thousand dollars, a person is selling a licence for.

You can go out and buy a licence until recently. I think they have implemented some sort of programme now to put a freeze on it, to take a further look at it and to re-adjust it. That it only one of the minor problems within the fishery.

If you would take the old, overall fishery structure and open it up like it is in the United States, at least people would have a fair chance of getting a licence. But who can come up with twenty-five thousand dollars - thirty thousand dollars to buy a crab licence, or to buy otter trawl licence? That is what is taking place in this Province. How can a fisherman, who owes a debt to the Loan Board of twenty thousand dollars, twenty-five thousand dollars, thirty thousand dollars plus, come up with money to buy a licence when he has not even got a boat to fish in? He cannot even get out of debt.

The restructuring programme was supposed to do that. That is what everybody thought. All the restructuring programme has done is to tell the fishermen of this Province who have been paying their debts, who have been paying their interest, who have been paying their principal, to stop paying because once you stop paying, we will bail you out. That is all that it has done. It is going to cause problems in the department. Make no mistake about it, the Minister of Fisheries is going to regret the day - and I suspect he has already gotten a lot of complaints on it - that that programme was implemented by his department. There was not enough study done into the affect it is going to have on the fishermen. Already fishermen on the wharves are saying, 'Why should I pay my loan? I have been hard working. I have done without food. My wife has done without clothes. I have done without a car. I have done without a pickup truck. What have I done it for?' Now, the fellow who has not paid his bills is going to get helped out. I, who paid my bills, do not

get anything. So that is telling me to go out and not pay. That is what it is doing, it is telling me not to pay. That is not a sensible programme. That is not a programme that is going to effectively cure the inshore fishermen of this Province.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Your buddy is back.

MR. EFFORD:

I am glad to see the hon. the Minister of Health back.

Mr. Speaker, let us take another area. Let us take our roads. We have budgeted, again we cannot talk thousands, it is hundreds of millions of dollars in this budget to pay salaries, administration programme again, to do the roads of this Province. We all agree on one thing, it is not enough. Nobody from this side is going to argue that you should get enough money to cure the problem. We are not foolish to expect that there is a plum tree out in the backyard you can go out and pick \$1,000 off. It does not come out of thin air. You have to earn money. You have to implement programmes to turn the economy around where we can get more taxes and get people back to work instead of on those ten-week programmes where there is nothing coming in and everything going out. You have to implement jobs. You have to implement security. You have to build up confidence in the investors that are willing to come into this Province and spend money in order to make money. Money must be created. Make no mistake about it. You must give the people a reason to spend money, to come into the Province and invest.

We have - I stand to be corrected - \$60 million to be spent on

highroads this year. Now, while that is not enough, if the money was spent on a fair and equitable basis, at least some of the roads that need to be done could be done better. But what is happening?

The member for Trinity - Bay de Verde, while he is standing in the doorway, knows full well what I am about to say. He knows full well about his own construction firm and who gains the benefits. The hon. member will have to come in and sit down to speak.

What we are witnessing, Mr. Speaker, is favoritism being shown in a political forum. It is not done, number one, on a priority, and it is not done on a fair and equitable basis.

I will give you an example. The Minister of Consumer Affairs, I think he is now, the member for Harbour Grace, last year in an adjoining road between two towns by the main highway going to Harbour Grace and going to Upper Island Cove, there is a small road called the Thicket Road. There are some six houses on that road. There was some \$750,000 spent to pave that road. Was that a priority? Was that on a need basis? Some \$700,000 spent on that road. The member for Carbonear now is going back because he knows what is coming next. Some \$1.5 million spent in his district last year, Mr. Speaker, on driveways, on lanes -

MR. YOUNG:

A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the member for Harbour Grace.

MR. YOUNG:

There again, Mr. Speaker, I think

the hon. member is making statements that he would not repeat outside the House. I am sure he can repeat what he just said. The \$700,000 that was spent in the Harbour Grace district, Mr. Speaker, was not spent on the Thicket Road. The tender for the Thicket Road, I think, was - I am not quite sure - in the vicinity of a little over \$100,000. But the \$700,000 that was spent on the Thicket Road was spent to repave Tilton Barrons. Now if the hon. gentleman does not know the difference between Tilton Barrons and Thicket Road, I think he should go back to his district.

MR. SPEAKER:

To that point of order, it is a difference of opinion between two hon. members.

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

I thank the hon. member for that, because I did not know the exact figure. It was no good of me asking the question in the House because he would not give me the exact figure. The only way I knew to get it out of him was to do that, and I thank the minister very much for that information, because that is clearly my point.

The road going across is just a byroad. It has no significance. It is a road with only a couple of houses on it, and there are much more needed roads in this Province, in his own district, but especially in districts like the district of Port de Grave, like the district of St. Barbe, and the district of Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. YOUNG:

Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

A point of order, the hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. YOUNG:

There again, Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is misleading the House. The Thicket Road, although it has four or five homes on it, it serves the community of Upper Island Cove, Bishops Cove and Bryans Cove for the people to go to the Carbonear hospital. If the hon. gentleman is worrying about that, I mean, if you cannot get money to pave your roads, it is just too bad.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, that is no point of order. That is disgusting.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

The hon. member's time is up.

MR. EFFORD:

Just in conclusion, just one second.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. EFFORD:

Are we saying that the people of Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir do not have to go to hospital? That the people of St. Barbe and the people from the Strait of Belle Isle do not have to go to hospital?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As a result of the will of the people I have been in this House thirteen years and I have seen a lot of hon. ladies and gentlemen come and go over that thirteen year period. I guess a lot of us have who have been here that long.

The hon. gentleman, I hope, at least will listen. He has not got the courage to stay. I have seen a lot of hon. ladies and gentlemen come and go. I have seen some members who operated in this particular Legislature, as well I suppose as in others, by various rules of decency and common humanity that you would not care to discuss. I have seen a lot of hypocrisy from a lot of people in the time that I have been here, some of it, obviously, all politically motivated and no doubt there are times when I have dipped into it myself and probably times that I am not proud of.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is something happening with the particular gentleman who took his seat that has become too much of a trend for hon. ladies and gentlemen, too much of a trend, Mr. Speaker, for the righteousness of the hon. gentleman who leads the party opposite when he comes and talks to us about court room decorum, civility and treating your colleagues in a decent respectful manner.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that has to be practiced or it is not going to be practiced. We have seen, today, just today, at least four hon. gentlemen, some are ministers and some are not, scurrilously, venomously, very dirtily attacked, personally attacked. The hon.

gentleman for Carbonear (Mr. Peach) - you see, Mr. Speaker, politics and the people is perception. You can be very, very choosy with your words here in the House, but the perception if it gets to that press gallery, and it is reported, becomes a reality in Mings Bight tonight.

The hon. gentleman for Carbonear was accused, not directly, but from a perception manner, of taking his wife and family at taxpayer's expense to somewhere in New Brunswick. If it is going to be reported, that is what will be reported and perception becomes reality.

The hon. gentleman for Trinity - Bay de Verde (Mr. Reid) was accused, because he is a member of the government, of somehow or another benefiting from his private business affairs, his construction company.

The hon. the Minister of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Young), the member for Harbour Grace, was accused of doing something with road money.

The hon. gentleman for Bonavista South (Mr. Morgan) was accused of being greased from the public purse for some company that he has. He was not named, Mr. Speaker, but we all know who he was talking about.

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

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

MR. EFFORD:
To clarify what the minister is saying, he is misleading the House, Mr. Speaker, because I very clearly asked the Minister of

Fisheries if he was aware of any MHA. At no time in this House of Assembly did I indicate any name or make any reference to any MHA.

MR. SPEAKER:
There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker, to continue on, the hon. the Minister of Education (Mr. Hearn) the member for St. Mary's - The day today, the perception, if there is a report on it tonight, bet 9.9 chances out of 10 it will be that he used public funds to advertise in a newspaper to bring greetings to his constituents.

That will be the reality and the hon. gentlemen, who got on with all of that except in the case of the Minister of Education and the gentleman for St. Barbe, but the other hon. gentleman who tried to twist to get everything else with the other people that I mentioned, lacked the intestinal fortitude, Mr. Speaker, and the courage, when he was called to a scrum by the press gallery, to say I cannot say anybody's name, I might get in trouble.

MR. BUTT:
That is right.

MR. TOBIN:
That is right. That is what you stated then.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Now, Mr. Speaker that is what we are dealing with here on a daily basis.

Let us examine a few more areas of hypocrisy from the hon. gentlemen. They put questions on the Order Paper in the next day

or so I hope I will have the answers to some of the questions that related to my department - asking, for example, do you have an executive assistant or a press secretary? Was that person hired by public competition?

When the gentleman for Twillingate was a minister, did he hire his executive assistant by public competition? When the gentleman for Fortune - Hermitage was a minister in the federal Cabinet, did he hire his executive assistant by public competition? When the gentleman for St. Barbe worked as an executive assistant to a member of Parliament, was he hired by public competition?

AN HON. MEMBER:
Were you, Chuck?

MR. RIDEOUT:
I am going to answer the question, Mr. Speaker. Do not worry, I will answer the question.

MR. HODDER:
What about the Leader of the Opposition when he was a minister?

MR. RIDEOUT:
The Leader of the Opposition? I do not know if they had executive assistants in those days. But what about his present executive assistant, or principal secretary or whatever the title is, was that person hired by public competition? Are the executive assistants to ministers in Ottawa, Queen's Park in Toronto, Victoria, are all those political staffers, as they are referred to on the Ottawa scene, hired by public competition, Mr. Speaker?

Again, you see, Mr. Speaker, the perception that they want to get out there to make the reality.

MR. HODDER:
Exactly.

MR. RIDEOUT:
We will not live by those rules - we will not live by those rules - is really what they are saying, but we want you to.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Oh, yes.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Now it so happens, Mr. Speaker, and they will see the answer in the next few days, some of those people who happen to work for me, and I am sure other ministers too, did find their way originally into the system through the Public Service route. For example, my press secretary was a Public Relations Specialist, a member of the bargaining unit and hired through public competition several years ago. I happened to notice how good the person was and asked them if they would like to give up that security and come to work on my political staff? I am sure there are others who have done the same thing. But what I talking about, Mr. Speaker, is the hypocrisy and the double standard. The hon. the Leader of the Opposition does not have to live by those rules, but everybody over here does.

MR. TOBIN:
That is what he said.

MR. RIDEOUT:
That is the kind of innuendo -

AN HON. MEMBER:
It is called double speak.

MR. RIDEOUT:
It is called double speak.

That is the kind of innuendo and scurrilous attacks that the hon.

gentleman for Port de Grave, in particular, Mr. Speaker - he is certainly far more of an abuser and a perpetrator of that kind of an approach than any other hon. gentleman over there. He has consistently been performing in that particular fashion since he entered this House. He gets up today, he did not mention any names, and asks about a programme in the Department of Fisheries. Now, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman thinks that I am stunned enough as a minister of the Crown here to get deliberately, with my eyes open, in a situation where there is going to be one cent of public money go to a colleague over here, I can tell you now he is going to be looking for a long time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:
He is going to be looking for a long time. While nobody is perfect and I do not claim to be, I have not survived thirteen years and have learned nothing. I mean, there have been Steve Nearys in this House before and there is another one up there now.

AN HON. MEMBER:
That is right.

MR. RIDEOUT:
He is worse in many respects, Mr. Speaker.

He asked me a question today about the herring/mackerel programme.

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

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

A point of order, the hon. the

member for Fortune - Hermitage.

MR. SIMMONS:
Mr. Speaker, I do not particularly want to interrupt the minister, because he is making a speech that needs to be made in this House, and it is interesting to note that many of the people who need to hear it are actually listening to him. But, surely, he would want to be consistent himself, and he would not want to attack the reputation of a man who served this House well for many years and is not here today to defend himself. I am sure he will want to retract the implication-

MR. REID:
You do not want him attacked because he is your favorite kind.

MR. SIMMONS:
This is what the minister was talking about earlier, I am sure.

Mr. Speaker, the minister will want to retract the aspersions he just cast on a former member of this House, a former Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Steve Neary.

MR. SPEAKER:
To that point of order the hon. the President of the Council.

MR. SIMMS:
This is the ultimate, this is the ultimate we have seen here today in hypocrisy, or hypocritical actions if you wish, to be more parliamentary.

The hon. member who just raised that point of order knows full well that when a members of this House are on their feet speaking, they can refer to anybody they wish outside the House. It has happened frequently, more frequently with members of the Opposition who often refer to

people outside this House and this legislature, and I understand he may have even done it himself in an Estimates Committee hearing this morning.

So, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member clearly, clearly was looking for another item to raise on a point of order, I gather, but, more importantly, all he was trying to do was eat up the time of the Minister of Fisheries who is making one excellent speech here today. And it is not for us, Mr. Speaker, this speech is for members opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

There is no point of order.

The hon. the Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Mr. Speaker, I am almost inclined but not convinced to say I rest my case. I am almost, but I am not going to rest my case. Because what I was just accused of doing, and I accept my guilt and my responsibility, is what certain hon. gentlemen over there are doing every single day. So, I am almost inclined to rest my case.

Let me go back to the very sneaky question, asked today by the hon. gentleman to whom I am mostly delivering my remarks this afternoon, about the particular mackerel/herring assistance programme. Now, I did not get any questions on the 1986 programme, because, I suppose, the hon. gentleman knew that one particular gentleman, who happens to be in the back benches here, did not have that company in 1986. So there was no question about where the money went in 1986. But I

believe that a certain gentleman over here formed a company in 1987 and is doing business exporting 4 or 5 million pounds of fish, or marketing 4 or 5 million pounds of fish, in several countries all over the world, providing a great service, as I understand it, to certain parts of the business community, developing new markets and so on.

In 1987, I brought in the mackerel/herring assistance programme to provide an opportunity for fishermen who did not have enough income, particularly some of them, to get unemployment insurance, and, at the same time, to help underdeveloped parts of the world which could not afford to buy good protein food at regular prices.

We paid the money, Mr. Speaker, to licenced processors in Newfoundland and Labrador. Licenced processors, like White Bay Ocean Products Limited, we paid them \$7,626.50 on 245.69 metric tonnes of frozen mackerel. That is who we paid the money to, Mr. Speaker.

Aqua Foods Limited we paid \$621; Quinlan Brothers so much more; Southport Fisheries so much more; Trinity Bay Fisheries Limited so much more; Great Harbour Deep Sea Foods - thank God there was one in their from my district - they got \$666 because they sold 21.47 metric tonnes of frozen mackerel; Earle Brothers Fisheries Limited; P. Janes and Sons Limited - all the figures are after them. Anybody can have it if they want it, Mr. Speaker - Beothic Fish Producers Limited; Clarendville Ocean Products Limited, Shurlwood Seafoods Limited, Daley Brothers Limited, Woodman Sea Products Limited, Quinlan Brothers again,

because they have several plants around the Province, Gorman Fisheries, Beothic Fisheries, Clarenville Ocean Products, Quinlan Brothers, Blue Water Fisheries, out in Twillingate, I believe, Woodmans, Argosy, Aquatic Seafoods, and Bay Bull Sea Products, for a total of seven hundred and some-odd thousand dollars, Mr. Speaker. That is who we paid the money to.

Now, if any of those companies got Bay Shore or FPI or National Sea or anybody to market their product for them and they have some kind of a business arrangement where they get a commission or whatever they get, it is none of my business.

MR. MORGAN:

Or Morgan International.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Or Morgan International. It is none of my business, Mr. Speaker. I think, on this one, the hon. gentleman got a scare when he was called upstairs, and I think the media will probably report it correctly.

MR. MORGAN:

He would not comment outside, afraid of legal action.

MR. RIDEOUT:

Exactly. I think the media will probably report it correctly. But the odds are nine out of ten that the report in Bing's Bight tonight on some media form or other will be, 'Tom Rideout, Government of Newfoundland, had a programme to get some money into Jim Morgan's pocket,' and perception, Mr. Speaker, becomes reality. That is where perception becomes reality.

The hon. gentleman is a businessman. Does he get paid at

all for anything that might be sold out of his business to government, any government? I mean, we can carry on with this and two can play this game, and we can all go down together, Mr. Speaker, as we all deserve to. There are five separate individuals on this side of the House today who had a hatchet job done on them by the hon. gentleman from Port de Grave - five people! This is supposed to be the new horizon, the new leadership, the new Nirvana! The saviour allows this to go on, Mr. Speaker. He has to allow it to go on.

Mr. Speaker, let me mention a couple of other items particularly, again coming from the hon. gentleman for Port de Grave. He mentioned the Debt Restructuring Programme that I announced a few days ago. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the calls to the department and the calls to the Fisheries Loan Board, and the fishermen that I have rubbed shoulders with over the last couple of weeks up in Labrador, and over in the Bonne Bay area over the last five or six days, are very, very positive and supportive of that particular programme. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, there is not going to be 100 per cent satisfaction. I did not propose that I am anything other than human. You are not going to bring in a programme that is going to have a 100 per cent approval rating. You are not going to bring in a programme that is not going to leave somebody disappointed. You are not going to bring in a perfect programme, because we are human beings, we are not perfect people. But we try to address the problem.

Who identified the problem? Mr. Speaker, the Royal Commission on

the Inshore Fishery said you have to restructure the debt of inshore fishermen. The Kirby Task Force said you ought to restructure the debt of inshore fishermen. The House Royal Commission Report, our own Royal Commission, said you should restructure the debt of the longliner fishermen. To that I said, no way. If we are going to do it, we are going to do it for everybody, not just the longliner fleet. Richard Cashin and the Fishermen's Union, every time I met with them, and that has been hundreds of times over the last two or three years, said, 'You have got to do something about the debt load of inshore fishermen.'

So, we put together a committee, Mr. Speaker, from Fisheries, Finance and the Loan Board and gave them the Terms of Reference and said, 'Go to it.' The particular formula, Mr. Speaker, that I announced and that this government approved a week or so ago, was the formula - and I hope that this is clearly understood and heard, Mr. Speaker - approved by Mr. Cashin and his Inshore Council.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:
So do not be so sanctimonious as to get on the airwaves and say, 'We were looking for more. I suppose half a loaf is better than no loaf. And that is all he could get through Cabinet', and all that kind of stuff.

What went to Cabinet, Mr. Speaker, was approved, and one fishermen's union at least, in this Province, knew the contents of that formula before it went to Cabinet, because I made a public commitment to consult with them. The formula

itself was given to them in May. They finally replied to it in July, after they had it all that time, and took it before their whole Inshore Council. So do not go playing sanctimonious games of that sort with me, Mr. Speaker.

Another factor that should be kept in mind when you get attacks like you get from the hon. gentlemen for Port de Grave, is it is not going to do anything for anybody. It is not going to help out anybody. The people I feel the worst for, Mr. Speaker, are the people who have paid off. Because obviously, how do you provide an incentive there. But let me tell the hon. gentleman some facts, if he is interested in facts. I know he is more interested in other things, like innuendo, but if he is interested in facts, let me tell him a few things.

MR. TULK:
Would the hon. minister permit a question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
No, no. Sit down! This is not Question Period.

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

MR. TULK:
I want to ask the hon. gentleman if I understood him right when he said that Mr. Cashin approved that restructuring programme put together by the Minister before it went to Cabinet and then afterwards disagreed with it somewhat publicly by saying half a loaf was better than none at all?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. Minister of Fisheries.

MR. RIDEOUT:
Mr. Speaker, what I said was that

Mr. Cashin and the FFAW were aware of the formula before it was approved. Now, to be fair to them, in terms of the federal guaranteed loans, they were pushing from day one for us to do something about that, and my answer to that was, 'You go talk to the federal government, and I will see what I can do with our portfolio.' But the formula that we are using, taking the interest, reducing it over a five-and-a-half year period - and, of course, Cabinet in its wisdom decided to make it a little bit better and we added ten percent on for those who paid. That was not in the original formula at all. So, he agreed with that, yes.

Let me tell the hon. gentlemen for Port de Grave, Mr. Speaker, a few facts when he is talking about this is not going to help anybody. Let me tell him a few facts. If you look at the fleet structure in Newfoundland and Labrador and look at the investment owned in that fleet, in other words, you look at the debt that a particular category of vessels is carrying versus what the owner has into it or owns, you know that in the under twenty-five foot category, 90 per cent of the vessels are owned by the owners.

MR. EFFORD:

Under twenty-five?

MR. RIDEOUT:

Listen now. This is your problem, hon. sir. This is your problem. You will not listen while somebody is telling you something, and that is what gets you in trouble.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

Less than twenty-five feet, 90 per

cent.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible) school teacher.

MR. RIDEOUT:

There are a lot of school teachers in this House and I am proud of it. Mr. Speaker, twenty-five feet to thirty five feet, if hon. gentlemen would care to know, it is 80 per cent. Thirty-five feet to forty-five feet, it is 55 percent. Forty-five feet to fifty-five feet, it is 35 per cent. And fifty-five feet to sixty-five feet, it is 38 per cent. The overall, the total fleet sector, is 65 per cent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is not going to help anybody. This is not going to help. There is \$18 million less of debt going to be carried on the books of the Fisheries Loan Board of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador at the end of this exercise than there is carried today, fishermen's debts, so that is going to help somebody. You cannot get up and scurrilously say it is going into my pocket. I own a nineteen foot boat, but I own her, Mr. Speaker. I bought her. I did not have to get a loan, thank God. So, it is not helping me. It is not helping anybody over here, and I do not suppose it is helping anybody over there. It has got to be helping somebody, Mr. Speaker.

I mean, if you are going to attack the programme, that does not bother me. There are deficiencies in this programme, and I fully admit that there are. I would like to be able to perhaps write it all off. Somebody over there said we should do that. What kind of signal does that send?

Mr. Speaker, let me tell the hon. gentleman that when we participated in the restructuring of the debt of the offshore companies in Newfoundland and Labrador, the government of this Province, through cash and equity, converting some of our loan guarantees into equity, and so on, that we had in place previously, the government of this Province invested \$66 million into that restructuring exercise, \$66 million of the people's money. When FPI was privatized, we got back \$48 million of that. In other words, how much did we write off, Mr. Speaker? We wrote off about 20 per cent. We wrote off about 20 per cent, the taxpayers of this Province did, of the debt of that restructured company. How much debt are we writing off here, Mr. Speaker, for individuals? We are writing off somewhere between 23 per cent and 30 per cent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

It is unnaturally close, is it not, Mr. Speaker? It is kind of unnaturally close, that the exercise after detailed analysis came out to be that way.

Mr. Speaker, the other concern we had to face in this particular matter is that obviously over that period of time, the last five and a half years that we are referring to, fishermen at some time or other, maybe every year, maybe some years, I do not know, but in some cases it would be every year, filed income tax returns and I was not about, Mr. Speaker, to bring in a programme that was going to be beneficial to Revenue Canada. That is not what I am getting paid for. We had to be careful, Mr. Speaker, in this particular

exercise that the method chosen to help out the fishermen to reduce their debt burden was a method that would benefit them and not benefit the taxman. We had to go to tax experts, for example, and say if a guy wrote off part of his boat or part of his gear over the last several years, which he is entitled to do, is there any impact on this scenario? Or is there any impact on that scenario? Or if we go this route, is there a negative impact?

These are all the complexities, Mr. Speaker, that we had to deal with in coming up with what I think, and I have done it two or three times over the last week and I intend to continue doing it, is a programme that I am prepared to go from any part of Newfoundland and Labrador to the other explaining the details and preaching the merits of. It is better today than it was yesterday because we are doing it. It is not perfect today, just as yesterday was not perfect because we are doing it, but it is better.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

There will be \$18 million less debt on the books. Fishermen will be able to restructure that new debt, that new principal over a longer period of time, with less of a payment and hopefully be able to handle it. And we built in a factor, Mr. Speaker, that rewarded those who, in many cases, might have left bread off their table to pay their debt, by giving them a 10 per cent added bonus. So if a guy paid every year, even though he might not have been able to afford to pay, he gets a little bit extra, he gets rewarded. The payment principal gets rewarded.

I fully admit, Mr. Speaker, it is not perfect. But it is something we did not have yesterday. It is something that we did not have last year. And somebody, and there are 3,600 somebodies, Mr. Speaker, who are going to be better off as a result of this programme -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

- and they are scattered in every community from here to Nain, all around Newfoundland and Labrador.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

So, Mr. Speaker, some of the positions that the Opposition are taking on fisheries matters these days.

I mean, how could the Opposition, for example, in the case of Meech Lake, how could all those members who are over there today, with the exception of one who happens to be the leader, stand and thump and clap and pound their desks a year or so ago when their then leader said Meech Lake was good stuff? How could they stand here last week when the new leader got up and tore it apart? Where is the principle, Mr. Speaker? Is there any principle anymore? If Meech Lake was good under the old leader, it is the same Meech Lake Accord today. How can you change so quickly?

Mr. Speaker, I understand I only have a minute left. To clue up, I noticed in The Evening Telegram, I believe it was 5 April, 1988 - the first thing I check in The Evening Telegram is this, From The Files: 25 Years Ago, 30 Years

Ago, 40 Years Ago stuff. Maybe it is the historian in me coming out - this little article that I really had to laugh at, Mr. Speaker. This was 15 Years Ago. On 5 April, 1973 this was said, "If any Newfoundland Liberal brass had thought of supporting former Cabinet Minister Clyde Wells as leader of the provincial party they suffered a setback last night. Former Premier, Joey Smallwood, told a Liberal gathering that he would leave the party if Mr. Wells were to become its leader."

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. RIDEOUT:

"It was a night for reminiscing in the dining room of Hotel Newfoundland, where Joey Smallwood and his associates formed the Confederation Association a quarter of a century ago, as the St John's Laurier Club put on a reception and dinner in Mr. Smallwood's honour".

Mr. Speaker, to conclude, it was only four or five years ago that I remember another leader saying, 'I would rather preside over the destruction of the Liberal Party than the coronation of Clyde Wells.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The hon. the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. GILBERT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the Minister of Fisheries, a former member of our party, as he was speaking over there today. I was sort of interested, and it was not a bad speech. As a matter of fact, I sort of, for a time there, thought that he might be making his leadership speech, trying to establish his position or something.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. GILBERT:

The interesting thing about the member's speech was the conclusion. We on this side have, from time to time, felt that members opposite were locked in history. We hear them talk about the Churchill Falls agreement, and now I understand why. The Minister of Fisheries said the first thing he reads in the paper is From The Files, 15 Years Ago, 25 Years ago, 30 Years Ago.

That, I can understand, is where their policy is coming from.

This is what we have been saying over here. They are really attuned with the situation in Newfoundland today. So obviously the policy that they are going on is a typical Tory policy and one that is locked in history. Now, it is confirmed here today, you see. It is confirmed because the minister said the first thing he reads in the paper is from the history files. He is not too interested in the current problems that we have in Newfoundland or the situation that turns up in the press from time to time.

Some of it, I would submit to him, he need not read, but there is a lot of it there that is topical and maybe could help him a bit in

drafting some of the policies that he, as a minister, is responsible for. But when we see the place where he goes to get his information is the files from fifteen years ago or twenty-five years ago or fifty years ago, now we can understand where the policy for this government is coming from.

He started off and he was going to take the high road and he questioned our right to ask them questions about press secretaries and executive assistants. Mr. Speaker, I would submit that this is the right of the Opposition to ask those questions, because he pointed out something else from his history studies. He said when the Leader of the Opposition was a Cabinet Minister, maybe they did not have executive assistants and maybe they did not have press secretaries, but we notice that they have grown sort of like mushrooms with this government, like cucumbers. Every year there seems to be more and more creep into the salary estimates in the various departments. Every time you go through it, there are a few more that have sneaked in.

So we asked the question because we feel that the government has to have a responsibility to the people of Newfoundland for the way they spend money in the operation of their offices. We feel that this should be spent in a prudent way.

Along those lines, we feel that this growth in the executive assistants and press secretaries is worthy of question. So we tell the minister, yes, we would like to know the answers, how many of them there are, and the fact that they are political appointments. I think the people of Newfoundland should know that and they should

know how many they have grown in the last nine years.

It is like the Minister of Housing. I asked him in the Estimates Committee some time ago if he had one. I forget now. He either had an executive assistant, but in the column called Salary Adjustment there was a large amount like \$48,000 or something like that. I asked him what that was. He was going to give those two people he had on staff some rather dramatic raises. He told me, no that really was not so. That was there to cover the hiring of a press secretary. I asked him was it absolutely necessary. He said, 'Well, everybody has one. So if everybody has one, I suppose now we have to have it.' But again the taxpayer of Newfoundland is paying for this thing.

You have one, I am sure.

AN HON. MEMBER:

You need one.

MR. GILBERT:

I need one, I am sure. I am sure that they needed them in England in the day of Guy Fawkes. They needed parliamentary secretaries and they needed special assistants then, as they need them now. But, if they are going to be utilized and if there is a need, they seem to have grown too fast. The minister when he got up, seemed to have rabbit's ears, maybe he was a little sensitive to the fact that we asked him questions about the executive assistants and press secretaries. That is our right and it was done to point out the growth, as I said, the growth in this sector of the minister's offices. So this is where we feel that it is our right and the member, as I said, made a fine speech, but I think he was a

little wrong when he started off that way.

I think I will now adjourn the debate and carry on the next day.

MR. SPEAKER:

The debate has been adjourned by the hon. the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. SIMMS:

Yes, in an effort to keep members up to date continuously and provide lots of notice, just in case anybody forgot, tonight Government Services will deal with the Department of Labour Estimates at 7:30. No meeting tomorrow morning, of course. Tomorrow night the Social Estimates Committee will deal with the Estimates of the Department of Environment and Lands. Then on Thursday, there is one slight change here now for Thursday which we did announce yesterday, but we will carry it on as a result of co-operation of the Committees. Thursday morning will remain the same. The Government Services Committee will deal with Public Works Estimates. But Thursday night, I understand the Resource Estimates Committee will want to conclude or continue to conclude or whatever the Estimates of the Department of Forestry which they started, I guess, it was today. I do not know how long that will be, an hour or an hour and a half or whatever. So presumably around 8:30 or 9:00 they hope to get into the Estimates of the Department of Fisheries. So that is Thursday night.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House 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.

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Answers to Questions

tabled

April 19, 1988

Tabled by Hon. ^{President}~~Minister~~
of The Council, 19 Apr. '88

Question No: 98

Mr. Tulk (Fogo) - To ask the Honourable the President of Treasury Board to lay upon the Table of the House the following information:

- (a) Is the vehicle the Minister currently driving purchased by the Department or leased by the Department? In either case, did it go to tender?
- (b) Provide a list of companies who tendered on the vehicles and the amount of their bids.

Answer

- (a) The vehicle (1985 Impala) was purchased through the Public Tendering Process.
- (b) Hickman Motors - \$13,199.80
Royal Garage - \$11,367.65*

* This bid did not meet specifications as per Fleet Management requirements- Department of Transportation.

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