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(Hansard)

Speaker: Honourable P.J. McNicholas

Tuesday

26 April 1988

The House met at 3:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER (McNicholas):
Order, please!

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS:
Just before Statements by Ministers I would like to, on behalf of members of the House, pass on my congratulations to one of the members of the House who, over this past weekend, was presented with an honorary life membership by the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 29 in Burin, the first honorary life membership that that Branch has given. I understand it was given for the respect that they have for the member and for the work that he has done. This goes very nicely with the recent honour given him by the Kinsmen Association, that of a life membership as well. I refer, of course, to the member for Burin - Placentia West (Mr. Tobin).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. TULK:
Mr. Speaker, of course we would like to join in congratulating our colleague in the legislature on that honour that was bestowed on him by the people of Burin, and by the people of Newfoundland, and by the Kinsmen Club.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. K. AYLWARD:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was hoping to direct my question to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Blanchard), but he does not appear to be in the House today. Therefore, I would like to direct my question to the hon. the Premier.

With reference to reports about pollution levels at the fluorospar mine at St. Lawrence, would the Premier tell the House why the appropriate ventilation systems have not been put in place and why the followup has not been done in the past year by the Minister of Labour's department?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker, I will get the information on the matter for the hon. member, hopefully today, and pass it along to the House. I do not think, though, that that some of the things in his question are valid, but I will have it checked out. I did hear the Minister of Labour make some statements on it this morning which tended to contradict the story that was carried over the weekend, but I will get the appropriate information for the hon. member.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Stephenville.

MR. K. AYLWARD:

While I appreciate that the Premier is going to undertake to get the information, would he also undertake to explain why officials of the Department of Labour have stated in correspondence that the work was not done and the checks were not made, yet assurances were given to the people of St. Lawrence and to the Town Council? Could he tell us how those statements could come together and tell us why this situation has been allowed to happen, to occur?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, I will get the relevant information for the hon. member.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for St. Barbe.

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Premier. We noticed recently a new pamphlet, that has hit the streets in Newfoundland, I assume, called Cucumber Recipes from Newfoundland Enviroponics, with a foreword written by the Premier, who is, in his own right, an author.

I would like to ask the Premier who paid for this particular publication? Was it paid for by public money? If so, how much

money did it cost?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I do not have it off the top of my head, but I will get it for the hon. member.

MR. FUREY:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary.

MR. FENWICK:

The Premier says in his foreword 'This recipe book is designed to reverse the lack of consumption and to help tap the market that is as yet undeveloped here,'... in Newfoundland. I would like to ask the Premier how does that statement in his foreword jibe with his statements of a year and a half ago that markets were already secured, particularly domestic markets, where there is a high demand for these cucumbers?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what is happening.

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. DECKER:

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. the Premier as well. It refers to his latest publication, which I congratulate him on, of course. If this cook book is a smashing success, I say to the

Premier, and does indeed bring the Newfoundland consumption of cucumbers up to the Canadian average, Newfoundlanders will then be consuming exactly two-sevenths of the proposed production of the Sprung greenhouse leaving only five-sevenths to be marketed. Will the Premier tell this House whether or not he will then publish another cook book in order to bring the Newfoundland consumption up to three and one half times the Canadian average so that the total production could be consumed here in Newfoundland?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

All ideas will be given consideration, including the hon. member's.

MR. DECKER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary.

MR. DECKER:

The Premier will know that this cook book clearly states that only Newfoundland cucumbers should be used in the recipes, and I refer him to page 6, the recipe which really caught my attention.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. DECKER:

Page 6 is the recipe which caught my attention, Mr. Speaker. It refers to 'Yum Yum Pickles,' 'Really Yummy,' six quarts of sliced Newfoundland pickles.' I ask the would the Premier advise what would be the consequences if someone were to use imported cucumbers, either by mistake or, more likely, because imported

cucumbers are an awful lot cheaper?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, a disaster.

MR. DECKER:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary.

MR. DECKER:

The hon. the Premier, who himself is a published author, should know that works of fiction generally carry a statement saying, 'this is a work of fiction.'

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. DECKER:

Page 10 indicates that his is a humorous piece of work: "If my Hubby called and said, 'Dearie, company for dinner,' I would be proud to whip this up." Does the Premier intend for this publication to be treated as a serious work or have the Newfoundland people just paid for a Newfoundland joke book?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, 'All the world's a stage,/ And all the men and women merely players:/ They have their exits and their entrances;/ And one man in his time plays many parts.'

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how to continue on after that introduction.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Minister of Labour but, in his absence, it will be for the Premier, who, I believe, is also cognizant of the problem.

It has to do with the problem that individuals who are accessing their files with the Workers' Compensation Commission and the problems they have with the bills that they have to pay in order to duplicate the files in order to access them. We have been told by the Workers' Compensation Commission that individuals needing the files, either for arbitration cases or for appeals, have to pay twenty-five cents a page and, in some instances, have been forced to pay as much as \$80 in order to get their files. I understand that both the Premier and other members of Cabinet have been aware of that.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. FENWICK:

My question to the Premier is this: Is there a correction being made to this policy so that individuals who need their Workers' Compensation files can access them without having to pay as much as \$80 in order to get them?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I will have to get the information for the hon. member.

MR. FENWICK:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Menihek.

MR. FENWICK:

Mr. Speaker, I have here a bill sent by the Workers' Compensation Commission of Newfoundland and Labrador to an individual asking for \$29.25 in order to access their file, and I will be glad to give the Premier a copy of it.

My question to the Premier is this: Since this is an added burden for individuals who wish to either appeal decisions being made by the commission and it is also an added burden to individuals who need the files, in some instances, in order to go to arbitration to get their jobs back when they have been fired or have been dismissed due to medical reasons, will the Premier stand up and give us a commitment now to change the policy so that these individuals do not have to pay these bills under the Freedom of Information legislation in order to access their files?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I will check that out for the hon. member and get back to him.

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 Public Works (Dr. Twomey). In the report of the exceptions to the Public Tendering Act, March 1 to March 31, automobiles were purchased for the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Labour, and they used the section of the act, 3.2 (b), which reads, "Where the estimated cost of work or acquisition is equal to or less than \$30,000 and it appears to the head of the government funded body that in view of the nature of the work or acquisition it is not advisable to invite public tenders": How does the minister justify the purchase of these automobiles under this section of other act? Because until this time automobiles were purchased by public tender. So what was the basis for not inviting public tender to cover those purchases?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Public Works.

DR. TWOMEY:

Thank you.

During the estimates on last Thursday, I believe you asked that question. I told you I did not have the details at that particular time and I further informed you that I would get the details. I have asked for these details and I will table them in the House as promised.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, a supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GILBERT:

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Peach), in response to a written question from my colleague for St. Barbe (Mr.

Furey), stated that his vehicle was purchased after telephone quotations to three dealerships and then he finally accepted one in stock from one of the dealers. Now it would seem to me -

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

MR. GILBERT:

- Mr. Speaker, that the process used here is the same as buying a vehicle. Now my question is: In view of this would the minister not admit that The Public Tendering Act has been violated?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

No, no!

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Public Works and Services.

DR. TWOMEY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

After I have seen the report I will table it in the House, in detail, as I had promised you on last Thursday.

MR. GILBERT:

A final supplementary.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary.

MR. GILBERT:

I do not think the minister understood the question. This is concerning another purchase made by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing.

But, anyhow, to go onto my final supplementary, as the minister is aware 580 government bodies are suppose to report exception to The

Public Tendering Act. In 1987, only twenty-one reported. Newfoundland and Labrador Housing did not report the purchase of the minister's car.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. GILBERT:
My question is: What action is the minister going to take to ensure that all exceptions to The Public Tendering Act are reported?

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

DR. TWOMEY:
All the departments of government, all the agencies of government which have in any way made exceptions to The Public Tendering Act and they inform me, their names are written in the booklet that I published in this House, I believe, last week. These are the only ones that I know have taken exception to the act.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. GILBERT:
I hope the people of Newfoundland rest easy tonight.

MR. EFFORD:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. EFFORD:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the hon. the President of Treasury Board (Mr. Simms). It is in relation to the Task Force on Employment Equity which was

passed over to the President of Treasury Board in January, 1987. Now one of the greatest problems with the disabled and the handicapped in the Province is the opportunity of finding jobs, especially within the civil service of this government. Now I would like to ask the President of Treasury Board, since receiving that in January, 1987, could he give us some idea of what steps have been taken on the recommendations placed in this report to place the disabled and handicapped into the civil service of this government?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. SIMMS:
Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all the report was not placed in my hands in January of 1987. I did not become President of Treasury Board until January of 1988, so that is one correction.

But to answer his question specifically, we have a division within Treasury Board itself which deals with the entire Employment Equity Programme. Employment Equity applies to opportunities not only for disabled but for women and other groups in society, and that is a programme, I guess, that has been I suppose uppermost in the minds of members of this government since the Affirmative Action Programme was put in place and the Task Force gave its report.

Specifically with respect to the disabled, I believe my predecessor (Mr. Windsor), if I am not mistaken -

MR. WINDSOR:
I launched a major programme last year.

MR. SIMMS:

- yes, late last year, the latter part of 1987, announced at a public press conference some of the steps that would be taken to offer better job opportunities, and so on, for the disabled.

I would suggest to the hon. member, if he wishes, I will get him a copy of that press statement and maybe he would have a better understanding of what the government has decided to do.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Port de Grave.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker the answer given by the President of Treasury Board is just as shameful as the work he has been doing on this Task Force. I directed my question to the President of Treasury Board, but I did not say that he had received the report. I said that the Treasury Board had had this copy since last January, not the President of Treasury Board himself. It is just shameful.

I would ask the minister, since he had taken over in January, in the upcoming year, with the budget that is presently before the Estimates Committee to be approved, how many handicapped people will be hired on within the civil service in the upcoming year?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the President of Treasury Board.

MR. SIMMS:

Mr. Speaker, I hate to disagree with my hon. friend, who is such a nice fellow, but I am certain that

the preamble to his question said what have you done about this since you had this in your hands since January of 1987. That is what he said. Now he says that he did not say it. Anyway, that is a minor point -

MR. EFFORD:

A very minor point.

MR. SIMMS:

- but the hon. member decided to use it in his preamble on the supplementaries, so it cannot be that minor.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the policy that has been in place is that each department of government would make efforts to try to improve, to enhance the opportunities for the disabled in the public service. And the departments themselves are expected to try to implement this policy as soon as they can. The policy was announced only late last year, as I said, a few months ago, but I would be happy to get a copy of the policy as outlined by my predecessor at a public press conference and let him read through it so that he will understand how the policy and programme is to be implemented.

MR. EFFORD:

A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary.

MR. EFFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I know we can go on technicalities, but the minister is a member of the Cabinet of his government, so he should know some of the answers. And let me say to the minister, the President of Treasury Board, that there are going to be fifteen handicapped people trained this year.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. EFFORD:
While the President of Treasury Board does not know how many, I know how many.

I will direct my final supplementary to the Minister of Public Works (Dr. Twomey). On pages 46, 47, and 48 there is a total of eighteen recommendations put forth in this Task Force report and several of them, numbered 14, 15, 16, and 17, are in relation to the Department of Public Works providing accessibility to government buildings in and around the Province, and to Confederation Building, so that the handicapped people can avail themselves and at least get into the buildings. I would ask the Minister of Public Works have any of these recommendations - 14, 15, 16 or 17 - been implemented since this Task Force report was received in January of 1987.

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

DR. TWOMEY:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It has been the desire and the wish of the Department of Public Works and Services and government to make any new buildings, number one, accessible for disabled people. And during the past few years, it is my understanding, that they have made other buildings readily accessible to those who are disabled.

Rome was never built in a day. And I wish that we could wave the magic wand and say 'Open, Sesame' and everything would be

available. But I can tell you there is a will and a desire to met these commitments.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BAKER:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the hon. the Premier and it concerns the sale of Terra Nova Tel. As the Premier knows, there has been great concern expressed that the town of Gander would suffer from yet another very serious loss of employment, and the Premier has, in the past while, guaranteed that there would be no affect on the town of Gander from the sale and that there would be protection in the process as it unfolds. My question to the Premier is this: The bids have now been called for; about a week ago they were called for. What input has the Premier had into the process so far in the formulation of these bid documents and what protection is offered the town of Gander concerning job losses in these bid documents?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker, I have not read the bid documents yet, but I think they are on their way to us now. As the hon. member may be aware, I have indicated to the federal government, a long time ago now, and in the last several weeks, the position of the Government of Newfoundland as it relates to the sale of Terra Nova Tel. The position is clearly, one, that the headquarters remain in Gander and, two, that the existing employees

not be affected and be re-employed with the new company, whoever wins the bid. I have made that clear in writing to the federal government, so that is the input that I have had.

I have talked to our federal representative in the Cabinet of the Government of Canada about it and written him on it. I have also met with representatives from the Council of Gander and I have also met with the employee groups that have been formed, and I am still waiting to hear back from those groups. I met with the employee committee several weeks ago and indicated to them that I wanted to continue to work with them and the council in ensuring that those two principles were maintained in any award to any other company. They have not gotten back to me since that time. I expect to hear from them shortly.

So the input that we have had, Mr. Speaker, up until now is to insist with the federal government that the headquarters remain in Gander and that the existing employees be protected in any sale.

MR. BAKER:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A supplementary, the hon. the member for Gander.

MR. BAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Premier knows, I have informed him on behalf of the people of Gander that the protection offered should be in terms of job loss in the town, and the Premier understands that.

I would suggest to the Premier

that he has failed in the first half of this because the bid documents do not contain protections in terms of a large number of job losses for the town of Gander. Considering the fact that he has failed in that first part of the process and there is another part that still remains, how is the Premier going to influence the rest of this process then, to ensure that he can keep his promise to the people of Gander?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, I do not have any power over this, as the hon. member knows. It was early on the process that the hon. member and others in Gander had insisted that we had certain constitutional and legal means that we could use to influence the federal government. That is not so. I had communicated that to the council of Gander and to the hon. member for Gander. I think I set up a meeting for the hon. member for Gander. I guess the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Wells) also turned up at that meeting, at which our legal people, our officials, explained the situation as it related to legal and constitutional matters, so I can make no promise to the people of Gander. What I said to the employees committee and to the town council was that I was prepared, this government was prepared to work with them to keep the pressure on CN and the federal government to ensure that as bids come in they would be partisan towards bids which had in them protection for the headquarters being in Gander and protection for all the employees. I will continue to do that, and the

government will continue to do that, to try and protect the existing employees and protect the headquarters in Gander. I will continue to do it with whomever I can.

MR. BAKER:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:
A final supplementary.

MR. BAKER:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier knows that the process involves a hands-off approach on the part of CN. As I pointed out he has failed in the first part of it to convince CN to have suitable protection in the bid documents. Now, the final process involves Canada Capital, a company that is supposed to, at arm's length, arrange for the sale of Terra Nova Tel. Would the Premier inform the House as to who owns Canada Capital and whether there is any possibility of input into the Canada Capital board of directors, or ownership, in terms of their choice of the successful bid?

MR. SPEAKER:
The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Mr. Speaker, I have not failed in anything. I asked the employee committee group, when I met with them, to get together with the council, to come together as one committee, and then communicate back to the Government of Newfoundland so we could together, as one whole, put pressure on whomever we could to ensure that those two points were satisfied. I have not heard back from the committee. They had indicated they were going to get back to me, but that is weeks and weeks ago.

MR. BAKER:
It does not exist.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
It does not exist. Well, it existed at that time because they requested a meeting with me in Gander. I had a meeting with them in Hotel Gander. I suggested to them a course of action that I thought would be most appropriate, for everybody to pull with the same oar, because if we are going to be split up and the council go one way, the employee group go another, and Government of Newfoundland go another, then that would jeopardize the process. If we all went with the one voice then I think we would have a lot more success. That has not been done. The committee has not followed through on that, as far as I know, in the sense that they have not gotten back to me, which I think is unfortunate.

As far as who owns Capital Canada, or Canada Capital, or whatever, I do not know who owns Capital Canada. I do not know whether we can have any influence upon them or not, but I am prepared to communicate to whomsoever, to make sure that they understand the Government of Newfoundland's position, and hopefully that will also be the position of the Council of Gander and the employees of Gander. I am prepared to, you know, make representation to whomsoever to try to make sure that these factors are taken into consideration and are a part of any award.

MR. LUSH:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Brett).

In view of the tremendously critical and severe financial position in which many municipalities find themselves, making it practically impossible for these municipalities to provide basic public services to their citizens - I refer to water, and/or sewer, and roads - can the minister indicate, particularly since he is new to the Department, whether he has any new plans, new initiatives, new measures which will help municipalities in this fiscal year, or in the near future, to overcome this problem and be able to supply their citizens with these basic public services?

Because if we keep at the present level of funding, \$25 millions for water and sewer and roads, it is going to take the people of this province twenty to thirty years to have acceptable standards of these public services.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. BRETT:

The first thing, Mr. Speaker, is to advise the hon. member that the amount is not \$25 million but closer to \$70 million a year that we are spending in water and sewer and, either intentionally or otherwise that figure never seems to get mentioned. But actually it is \$25 million in new projects and then in excess of \$40 million to pay debt charges for the Councils he talks about.

There are no particularly new measures from a financial point of

view. We have good programmes in place now. I suspect the hon. member is talking about some reports that were carried in the press over the weekend. Perhaps I could mention that being frustrated as we are, everybody on this side of the House, with the fact that it is so costly to the Province to bring water and sewer services to many of our outlying areas that we have to service, I would like to look at new ways and means for some cheaper means of disposing of sewage and providing water.

The average cost of providing water and sewer in other parts of Canada is somewhere between \$2,000 and \$3,000 per unit. In Newfoundland we spend something like \$23,000 per unit. The hon. member is right when he says that at that cost it would take years and years, so I have been suggesting and playing around with the idea of looking at less expensive systems.

For example, in the Province of P.E.I., the total entire Province is serviced with deep wells and septic tanks, sixty-seven per cent of New Brunswick is serviced in the same manner, and forty-something per cent in Nova Scotia, but only twenty-nine per cent in Newfoundland. So perhaps, Mr. Speaker, we can do some research in that direction and if it can work in other provinces then there is the possibility that it could work here as well.

MR. LUSH:

A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. LUSH:

I remind the minister that though his department might be spending \$75 millions for water and sewer and road projects, that only the \$25 million will allow for improvements to existing systems and new systems. Now, Mr. Speaker, in view of this, I wonder is the minister contemplating changing the method of funding, that is, whereby this House of Assembly approves blindly \$25 million for capital funding which is then approved by the Cabinet, which over the last few years has not had a good track record in terms of distributing the funds on the basis of fairness and balance?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Not true.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, it has been pork-barrelling. So I wonder whether or not the minister intends to change that system this year, that system of block funding, so that municipalities of this Province can expect fairness, justice and balance when the minister announces those projects?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. BRETT:

Mr. Speaker, last year it was suggested that recommendations be made to Cabinet from a body that was sort of independent of Cabinet, and that was done. There is a Capital Projects Committee in place. That Committee met periodically over the last four or five months and did, in fact, make recommendations to the department. And it is along these lines that the government will subsequently decide where the Capital Works money will be spent.

And I would suggest to the hon. member that after some checking I discovered that we are the only Province in Canada that has that kind of a committee in place.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

A final supplementary.

MR. LUSH:

Mr. Speaker, I have no hesitation at all, if that body was the body that recommended the capital projects last year for municipalities, it should be disbanded immediately.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wonder, again in view of the financial situation, and in view of the great need for water and sewer projects in rural Newfoundland in particular, can the minister indicate what time he plans to let the councils, and this House particularly know just precisely what communities, what municipalities in the Province will receive capital funding, and when?

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. BRETT:

Mr. Speaker, within the next two or three weeks.

MR. SPEAKER:

Order, please!

The time for Oral Questions has elapsed.

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 would like to table an answer in response to a question asked Tuesday, March 15 by my friend the member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk).

'How many people work on the minister's staff? How many were appointed by Order-In-Council, their title, their salary, job descriptions, where they advertised, and so on?'

I do not know if he wants me to read them out loud. I will send them over to him, I guess. Do you want me to read them out loud? Okay.

I have four people on my staff - two secretaries, a special assistant and a press secretary - all of those listed in (a) of course were appointed by Order-In-Council because they are Order-In-Council appointments. I might point out that two of the secretaries held permanent positions in the public service prior to their Order-In-Council appointment. Two secretaries are on the pay level 12 salary scale; the special assistant on special assistant 02 salary scale; press secretary is on special assistant 01 salary scale. Copies of their job descriptions are attached, and no they were not advertised in the same manner as the Leader of the Opposition appoints his staff or whoever.

MR. SPEAKER:
Are there any further answers to questions?

Petitions

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. GILBERT:
Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from 595 citizens of Burgeo. The petition is getting to be familiar.

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 Honorable House will therefore provide a remedy.

Humbly Sheweth:

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 dignity.

Mr. Speaker, as I said when I started this petition, this getting to be a familiar cry, not only from the people of Burgeo, but from people from all over the Province. In particular, in the Burgeo, Ramea, Grey River and Francois area, this is a familiar cry.

Before I go any further in my remarks, I have here a copy of a letter which was sent to the hon. Minister of Transportation (Mr. Doyle) by a town councillor from Ramea, Stanley McDonald, and I think it sums up the feelings of the people of that area. I would just like to read it into the records of the House to have it there because I think it is important. It says: "Dear Sir: "April 13 I drove over what is supposed to be a road from Burgeo to the Trans Canada Highway. In my opinion it can hardly be called a road and I can assure you that I did not drive over it because I wanted to, but because it was the only way to get from Burgeo to the Trans Canada Highway by car.

"I could not help but wonder what it would be like for someone with broken bones or some kind of sickness having to travel this

road by ambulance. What kind of torture would they have to go through?

"Not only is this road causing hardship for the people of Francois, Grey River, Ramea and Burgeo, but the economy of this Province is suffering as well. Some tractor-trailer owners will not send their vehicles on the Burgeo Road for fear of damages.

"Other people, like the sea cadets from St. George's and surrounding areas, who planned to visit Ramea and cancelled because they were afraid to travel on the Burgeo Road.

"For people in this day and age to be subject to these conditions is not only a disgrace to Newfoundland but to the country to which they belong.

"This letter is not to condemn or point a finger at anybody but only to ask you, along with your government, to do everything possible to upgrade and pave the Burgeo Highway. This road is equally important to the four communities of Grey River, Francois, Ramea and Burgeo."

Mr. Speaker, I think that sums it up better, maybe, than anyone in this House could because that is from someone who has to live with those conditions on a day-to-day basis. That is the feeling of the people that live in that area. They are not demanding. They are asking in an honourable, decent way, to have the problem which they have lived with over the last ten years addressed.

Their concern would be what can be done about it. They have told the minister in a face-to-face meeting. It is interesting that,

at the same time, I got a letter from the Premier, dated April 18 in response to a telegram which I sent to him on March 29.

He says, "I am writing in reply to your telex of March 29 in which you indicate that the Burgeo Road is in poor condition. I would assure you the government is well aware of the problems with the Burgeo Road which are especially pronounced during this time of year. As you have been advised in the past, the only possible way the Burgeo Road can be completed would be through a cost-shared agreement with the federal government." It goes on about the ongoing negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, that is what I find to be serious about this. First when I talked to the Premier about the Burgeo Road, he talked about the commitment he had to Burgeo because he put \$13 million into the fish plant, which was paid back, I might add.

Now he is talking about the fact that he has got to have a cost-shared agreement between the federal and provincial governments.

The only thing that we are asking, Mr. Speaker - and the people of Burgeo are asking this question - is: Why can the provincial government not take a percentage of the \$40 million which is spent on highway upgrading and paving in Newfoundland every year? Why can they not take it and spend -

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. GILBERT:
In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, again

the people of Burgeo, Ramea and Francois are asking for fairness and are asking to have their road paved.

MR. FUREY:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. FUREY:
Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in my place today to support my colleague from Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir. It is significant, Mr. Speaker, that this hon. member, since he became the member for this area, has brought a number of petitions to this Legislature, in a sense, pleading with the government to recognize some sense of fairness and some sense of reason to establish some dignity for these people down there.

The hon. the member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan) can laugh all he likes, but the truth of the matter is that a lot of these people who have to use this particular road are hurting.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague from Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir as one of the finest and hardest working members in this Legislature, and a member who is very dedicated to seeing the resolution to a very difficult problem for a great many families in this area. He is to be commended and thanked by everybody in this Legislature.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:
Mr. Speaker, when you think about it and you ask yourself whether or not there is any decency or fairness with respect to this

government, you have to put in perspective what the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir is asking for. I think he said to put this road in proper shape so that the normal day-to-day commerce can occur without broken trucks and busted axles and flat tires and damaged people would require some \$20 million. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is just one Sprung greenhouse. That is all that is. That is all he is asking for, the equivalent of one Sprung greenhouse.

If you look at the amount of public money put into this by way of direct cash investment, equity -

PREMIER PECKFORD:
Loan guarantees.

MR. FUREY:
Loan guarantees.

PREMIER PECKFORD:
We do not build roads under -

MR. FUREY:
Ah! The Premier is alive today. Nice to see the Premier alive and well today. He must have had one of those recipes, maybe cucumber and tomato soup.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Oh, oh!

MR. FUREY:
Mr. Speaker, what we are saying, and perhaps the Premier will respond to this petition and deal with the substance of it, that this particular road is the longest, continuous gravel road in Newfoundland; that it has had, Mr. Speaker, no upgrading, no maintenance, no paving and no public monies put into it in the last three years, which is shameful in itself; that it does have a primary industry down on

the South Coast called a fish plant - perhaps they will remember that on that side, fish plant - and the quality of fish is directly related to how you transport it. If you do not have quality fish, Mr. Speaker, you have to blame it on the roads.

Anybody who saw public television and saw those most disgraceful scenes on CBC which showed the truck going down and you lose all of the vehicle except the cap - everything was out of sight going down in a pothole - Mr. Speaker, it is disgraceful.

What does the minister say to our continuous requests by the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir? He brings in and tables a list of \$15 million worth of projects or twenty-six projects. Mr. Speaker, let anyone on that side rise in their place today and say that that is not a crystal clear example of pork barrelling, twenty-two of twenty-six projected ended up in Tory districts. Fairness? Dignity? Sensibility? Being honest with the taxpayers' dollars?

Of course not, Mr. Speaker. How can we buy another election? Can we roll out the paving machine and buy back other places or hold - that is the real statement - some of the seats we currently have?

Mr. Speaker, it is in black and white, twenty-six projects, some \$15 million worth of expenditure from the Public Treasury, 22 projects of the 26 in Tory districts, and they have the gall to rise and say they are being fair, being honest and treating people with dignity.

The member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan) laughed a couple of weeks

ago when people were in the gallery who were hurt, physically hurt by travelling the road from Bartlett's Harbour, Mr. Speaker, and he laughed because a man had his face punched into a windshield because he went off the road.

It is not a laughing matter, Mr. Speaker, last year on that same road when a man broke his neck because he hit a piece of ballast he did not see. That is not a laughing matter when human lives are at stake.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

MR. FUREY:
Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, it is incumbent upon this government to accept the prayer of that petition so ably presented by the member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir (Mr. Gilbert) who came to this House honourably and honestly and pleaded the case for so many families who are so desperately seeking help from this government, Mr. Speaker. We ask them to respond with dignity to the prayer for those people and their lives.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. DOYLE:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DOYLE:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is the same petition that I have already responded to on a couple of different occasions. So my remarks will be brief.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the

hon. gentleman a number of weeks ago and to the committee that I met in Deer Lake from Burgeo, it is government's intention to have the Burgeo Road completed when the funding becomes available. That is what we have to wait for, Mr. Speaker, for the funding to become available. As I indicated to the committee also, this government will keep pushing for a greater level of federal involvement in capital funding so that these very large projects, like the Burgeo Road, can be completed.

Mr. Speaker, there has to be a level of federal involvement in order for the Department of Transportation to undertake a \$32 million project like the Burgeo Road. That is what it will cost, \$32 million to complete that road. We are talking about one hundred kilometers of road. Fifty kilometers are already paved. In 1985-86 under a DIRE programme this government, Mr. Speaker, recommended that the Burgeo Road be included.

The hon. gentleman keeps asking why no further work has been undertaken on the Burgeo Road in a three year period? The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that we have had a no agreement on secondary roads since that time. But when we did have the agreement the Burgeo Road was part of it. And I will repeat, fifty kilometers of road got paved at that time.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the Burgeo Road has always been included in the department's listing to the federal government on projects that we would like to have undertaken here in the Province. As a matter of fact, I am informed that even as far back as 1979, the Department of Transportation sent

a list to the federal government totalling approximately \$470 million and the Burgeo Road was very high on the priority list at that time. It is because of the efforts of this government, Mr. Speaker, that a great deal of work has already been undertaken on the Burgeo Road.

But again I will repeat, it has to be clearly understood that the Department of Transportation cannot undertake a \$32 million project out of the \$40 million capital programme that we have. It has to be a cost sharing thing.

Mr. Speaker, again, we will make every effort to secure further funding for a number of projects that we want to have undertaken around the Province, not the least of which is the Burgeo Road.

Orders of the Day

MR. SIMMS:

Motion One, Mr. Speaker, the Budget debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

Motion one, the debate was adjourned by the hon. member for Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. GILBERT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I did adjourn the debate. I talked then rather briefly, I had a few minutes at the end, about the Minister of Fisheries and press secretaries.

As I look at the budget and the picture on the cover, I am reminded of what my colleague from Gander said in some of his remarks to the Minister of Finance. He said he found the budget to be a little bit deceitful. That was the word he used, maybe even sneaky.

When I look at this picture here of Sprung greenhouse and all its lights, as my colleague from St. Barbe pointed out, they have already spent \$22,500,000 in taxpayers money on that. I was thinking another \$10 million and we could have paved the Burgeo road and the people of Newfoundland would have gotten some return for this money because those people produce products at fish plants in both Burgeo and Ramea. Over a period of three or four years they could produce the revenue to pay back the Government of Newfoundland for the investment we would be putting into the Burgeo road right now.

So, when we have a situation where you see a budget that starts off with a picture of a sink-hole for taxpayers' dollars, I am inclined to agree with my colleague from Gander that there is something sneaky about this budget, especially when you see the \$22 million that was spent on Sprung was spent without a feasibility study. We heard that when provincial civil servants looked at the project, they assured members of Cabinet and the government that they should turn it down, it was not a viable operation. Five provinces in Canada turned it down and the federal government. Yet we have a situation where the Newfoundland government highlights this on the cover of their budget.

When I think of this, I think of an article that was written by the Premier in his book, *The Past and the Present*: "Industry after industry was attracted to Newfoundland to absorb subsidies and public funds, and ultimately to fail.

"It was if as by some magic the normal laws of economics could be reversed and totally inappropriate industry would be able to flourish here."

Mr. Speaker, that seems to me to be the story with the Sprung greenhouse, and to the same extent, with the budget that was presented a few days ago and we are debating here in the House now. We say a decrease in the deficit in this budget and we heard the Minister of Finance -- he was quoted in the media -- saying that really he did not know what caused it. Revenue from sales taxes was higher than expected and consumer spending was up, causing a drop in last year's deficit.

We know that there was an increase in sales tax, that is for sure. But we have some doubt that the Minister did not know that there was going to be a drop in the deficit because the sale of FPI last year put some revenue into the Newfoundland government, the windfall profits. Maybe the \$7 million that was paid back by the National Sea in Burgeo did something to it.

The final way that they decreased the deficit, which they claimed the Auditor-General agreed with, were through adjustments to the sinking fund.

When I see the way this budget started off and hear my colleague for Gander (Mr. Baker) express

fears about it, I am reminded of an old expression my mother used to use: "Figures do not lie but liars can figure." I wonder if that is the case and what is going to be offered next year?

We heard the press say that this budget we just saw was maybe an election budget, so what are we going to be faced with next year? This is why, I think, there is some room for reasonable doubt about the intent of this budget that was put forward.

When I look at the announcements that were made in this, we can take Social Services. It was nice to hear and, I am sure, the people who are recipients of social service were glad to know that there is going to be an increase of 4 per cent, but then, I have some doubts about that when I hear the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Tobin) stand here in this House and say that now his department is starting to tighten up on the funding that was available in Social Services and take actions that should have been taken long ago.

So, I wonder if you are going to give it on the one hand and take it back on the other? That is the thing I am worried about in that.

Then, the other thing that I am concerned about, Mr. Speaker, is the unemployed single person in Newfoundland who is living at home. The only reason he is unemployed is because this government has failed, it has not been able to provide him with employment. Normally he is living in an area where there is high unemployment. We can cite the Bay d'Espoir area of my district, the St. Albans, Milltown area, where 90 per cent of the people there

are on unemployment or looking for work. There are 120 steady jobs in that whole area, from St. Albans to Morrisville. Yet this young man or this young woman goes into Social Services and because his father is living on the lowest form of unemployment that is available, he just comes under the guidelines that are put forward by the Minister of Social Services. This means that this young man or this person cannot qualify for any form of social assistance. We know, and it was one of the platforms of the Liberal government and one of the things we have said, that this form of social services to the young unemployed in this Province is not good enough and some effort should be made to take care of those people who are unfortunate enough to be put in that position.

We are not talking about the people that are out to beat the system, as we hear the minister talk about sometimes, but about the people who have a genuine need for social assistance. Single, able-bodied people living at home, if their parents are on a subsistence allowance, albeit, unemployment or welfare, they do not qualify. Now, this to me is wrong, and that is another reason why I would say that this budget is a little deceitful. It is not addressing the problems of the people that need the help.

The next thing we can talk about, if we wanted to, is education. There has been enough said about the disparity in education in Newfoundland, especially the \$300 difference between the urban schools in St. John's and the schools in Burgeo. To me this is another example of a little bit of sneakiness in this budget. We have heard a lot of capital

projects announced for the various post-secondary educational institutes. The surprising thing about that is that most of those capital announcements have been made before. The one for the simulator at the Marine Institute and the survival centre, all those announcements have been made before.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Three times.

MR. GILBERT:

Yes. So, again we take up some space in the budget to do it.

Another thing I was interested in is where the minister, in his budget, talked about 50 new teaching categories that were going to be put in, 50 new positions that were going to go in the specialist category.

I have a feeling that those teaching positions are not new teaching positions as was indicated by the Finance Minister. I would say they are possibly replacing teachers who are gone because of a drop in enrollment and because the system has changed. So again I would say, if I was going to take the lead put forward by the Finance critic, yes, there is something not quite right with this. Sneaky might be the word. I would say that is another example that we have.

In other words, the problems in education we have pointed out time and time again over the last three years are still there. The disparity is still there. The lack of funds is still there. The child that has to go to school in rural Newfoundland is still \$300 worse off in the classroom than the child that goes to school in

the urban areas of Newfoundland. I do not think this is a fair and just society, and I think that this government, by putting forward this budget, are not performing. They have shown that they have lost their will to govern.

Transportation: That is an interesting one, Mr. Speaker. We hear every day, when it comes up in the House, when members from this side present petitions from residents of their districts who feel they are not being treated fairly by this government and that paving and upgrading of roads in this Province are done on a political basis rather than a priority basis. Now, this to me, Mr. Speaker, is a very serious concern.

The minister can say, 'No, it is not,' yet, when the Auditor General's report comes in it says there is no policy procedure or guideline for the \$40 million that the provincial government annually puts into highway upgrading in Newfoundland. So that to me would guarantee what we are saying, that there is no policy for this and it is a political, pork barrelling process that is used for paving roads in Newfoundland. They are using taxpayers dollars to try and achieve political gain. We do not think that is going to work and I am sure the people of Newfoundland have had enough of it.

We hear now of secret negotiations. Finally, after the House opened, we asked questions and we find there are secret negotiations ongoing about the selling of the CN for a lump sum of money, \$813 million. Now, we have maintained - there should be no doubt about it - that there should not be any lump sum of

money taken in exchange for CN. We should never accept it. The federal government should maintain the transportation system and should maintain the roads in Newfoundland. If, for some cheap political reason, they are going to take a lump sum of money, again, we in Newfoundland are going to be the ones who are going to have to pay the bill.

An example would be CN Marine. When we took over the interprovincial ferries, it was not costing the Newfoundland Government anything, according to them. It was supposed to be a great deal. Now, eight years later, it is costing the Newfoundland government \$10 million a year. This is \$10 million that is coming out of the tax base of Newfoundland and could have gone into something else.

In other words, the federal government have shifted the responsibility from themselves to the provincial government and, thus, to the taxpayer of Newfoundland. That is not very smart on this government's part, but again they have lost their will to govern.

When we come to the Department of Health, we have seen examples of studies that have been done and all that, but whatever studies have been done, the one thing they cannot get out of - the last study I saw shows little black dots everywhere there is a senior citizens' home on this Island. I can assure the minister that there are no black dots signifying senior citizens' homes from Grand Bank to Port aux Basques.

The last study done was commissioned by an outfit somewhere on the mainland.

Anyway, they came in and did a study in Newfoundland and it showed again. They have Central Newfoundland now divided into a, b, c, d. In c, that is the district that I am talking about, they say there are possibly thirty beds needed. I would assure the minister and those people who came in from Toronto and did that study that if they were to come with me through the district or go with the member for Fortune - Hermitage (Mr. Simmons) through his district or even the member for LaPoile (Mr. Mitchell) to go through his district, they would find are more than thirty people waiting to get in senior citizens' homes.

They are going to start a new concept down there, I understand, they are going to have social workers who can go and call on a daily basis. It would be some easy to hop in a car some day and go from Milletown to McCallum. It would be a nice drive, if you were living in Toronto and did not know how to get there. But when you are talking about a system that is going to work in Newfoundland, there is a little difference in what they are talking about right now.

The other thing in the budget we heard about that was there and it gives me to believe that my colleague for Gander (Mr. Baker) was right - a little bit of sneakiness was in it - there was no talk of the increase in the semi-private rooms that came into the system. I feel that this is the thing that the people of Newfoundland now see and it is happening.

We have heard members over there when they get up and talk - as I heard the House Leader (Mr. Simms) say - it is a wide and

free-ranging debate, this budget debate. They talk about all sorts of things, not much of it relating to the problems that I have just talked about.

We could go municipal affairs, which is another one that we just heard the minister talk about today. There is a group that recommends where this \$25 million is spent. As my colleague for Bonavista North (Mr. Lush) says, if that group recommended them, fire them. They did not do a very good job. Ask the people of Newfoundland out there, they will tell you. They would tell you to fire them. So I say to him again, it is a project of funding Tory districts and trying to buy votes again, but it is not going to work.

If we were going to get down to talk about some items in the budget that I think could be possibly done away with, one them is in the current estimates. They are saying there is \$4,758,300 for the operation of the minister's offices. That is their salaries, their transportation and their entertainment. That is up from \$4,168,000 last year.

One of the things I did when I had a look at this budget I decided that every year we come in and we go through this process of going through the Estimates Committees and we approve budgets. Two items that I went through and I found was uniform when I went through those estimates for the last three years, as I did it, Mr. Speaker, was that we can budget Transportation, that is the travel that the ministers do, and we budget Purchased Services. Purchased Service is covering entertaining and advertising. I have asked the question in all the Estimates Committees so far, and

they tell me that the advertising is minimal, and the amount we spent is actually in entertaining.

Then I went and found out that also in this budget, under Executive Council, there is a thing called the Protocol section. Under the Protocol section in Purchased Services, that is where I discovered, Mr. Speaker, that is where the booze is bought. That is when Peter Lougheed comes down and they have a cocktail party over in the Arts and Culture Centre or wherever, that is where it is paid for. So I said I wonder how that is behaved in the last three years?

So I went back and I got it. We budgeted under Protocol in 1985-1986, Purchased Services, \$355,000. But when the estimates came in and the actual adjusted figure at the end of the year, they spent \$380,000 that year. That is a lot of entertainment. Then I went to the next year, in 1986 - 1987, I had a look at it, and I said now, maybe they had something special on that year. So, they only budgeted in the estimate \$230,000. But, lo and behold, \$384,000 what was actually spent on entertaining that year. They must have a couple of parties over to the Arts and Culture Center that year.

Then I said, maybe now things will get better this year. So, for 1987 - 1988, I went and I had a look and they budgeted \$250,000. That is what we approved in the budget last year when we sat in the Estimates Committees and went through that.

Do you know what was spent on booze in that department last year? We spent \$465,000 and almost doubled what was approved

in the estimate. The Revised figure came in that way. This seems to me to be a little strange.

Then I had a look at the Premier, and I said maybe the Premier is setting the example here. So I looked in his office and I went back to 1985 - 1986. I found in that year we estimated that he was going to spend a \$100,000 in travel. He was very good, he only spent \$76,100 that year. In Purchased Services he estimated he was going to spend \$7,500 that year. He was having a good year. He only spent \$4,500.

But I am telling you now, I had a look at 1986 - 1987. In 1986 - 1987, we estimated he was going to be cut the cloth to fit the garment, so we went to \$80,000. That is what we approved in the estimates in the budget. He spent \$93,500, and then for his entertainment, besides the protocol account, and all that, he estimated he was going to spend \$7,500. He is coming up in the world, I will tell you. He has now spent \$9,600 entertaining in 1986 - 1987. I said it seems the Premier must have had a bad year, or a good year, or whatever the case might be. So, then I asked what happened in 1987 - 1988. Well, he estimated that he was going to spend \$80,000 in travel again, and he spent \$98,000. He is back to where he figured he was going to be in 1985. He finally got back there but he is coming back. He spent \$98,000. In other words, he the estimate we passed was again a farce.

Now, when we come to purchase services, the entertainment. He said he was going to spend \$7,500 and he spent \$15,500 last year. So, the trend has been established

by the Premier.

Now there are a couple of more I think we should have a look at. I will not have time to finish them all, but I am going to table this in the House so everybody can have a look at it.

Development and Tourism is a good one. In 1985 - 1986, the estimate for running that office for Transportation was going to be \$30,000. They spent \$78,000 that year, and the estimate for Purchased Services again, entertainment, that is booze I guess, or whatever, was \$3,700. They only spent \$24,000 that year. The next year 1986 - 1987, things are starting to perk up in the Development and Tourism Department. He estimated that he was only going to spend \$60,000. That was double what he estimated the year before. But, when it came in, the Revised figure came in at \$135,000 spent in travel that year. He is coming up, but he had estimated that he was going to spend \$3,900 on entertainment. He will laugh at that, he spent \$32,000 on that that year. Last year he was going to do the same as he did in 1986 - 1987. So, in 1987 - 1988 he estimated that he was going to spend, in his department on travel, \$60,000, the same as the year before. So I must say he was little more frugal last year. He only spent \$119,500 last year.

MR. TULK:

That is on travel?

MR. GILBERT:

That is on travel, yes.

Then we passed an estimate that he was going to spend \$3,900 for entertainment again. Last year the Minister of Tourism and

Development spent \$23,000 on entertainment in his department.

The point I am trying to make Mr. Speaker, is we can be here in this House and we can sit at the Estimates Committees and we can pass the estimates, we can debate it, and then the ministers themselves, the people who are supposed to be leading this government and leading the way, if they are not going to follow the budgets that are passed here in this House, what is the point of this exercise of being here? This is where the problem is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. GILBERT:

That is where we have the problem.

Just to give another example, seeing as the Minister of Transportation is here - it is an interesting one - in 1985 - 1986 he estimated that he was going to spend \$30,000 in transportation and when the Revised one came in, he spent \$55,000. Then his Purchased Services, his entertainment, the estimate was \$3,700, \$5,000. The year 1986 - 1987 was an interesting year for him. He estimated he was going to spend \$40,000 in travel. He spent \$120,000. Then in Purchased Services, his entertainment, he estimated \$3,900 and spent \$10,900.

Then, if you want to go to 1987 - 1988, \$60,000 for transportation and he spent \$80,000; estimated \$3,900 for entertainment and spent \$8,000. So this is the situation I am talking about.

When we stand here and we talk about the problems that are experienced in Newfoundland, I could talk about the unemployment

in Burgeo - Bay d'Espoir and I could talk about a road in McCallum that is not fit to take a wheelbarrel over. They have got to take buckets of oil up to the school, they cannot wheel it up.

Then, when I see the waste that is going on in the ministers' offices, and they are the people who are providing the government and providing the guidance and establishing the guidelines for the people of Newfoundland, and I see that five years ago that was a study done on the road in McCallum and \$139,000 would have put a decent road in. Since that time I have reminded the department and the minister every month pretty near saying, 'What are you going to do?' Now it is to the point that the road is washed out. The study is still done, and yet, in this year's budget, all they could put in it was \$50,000 for all the roads covered under the local roads districts in the South Coast of Newfoundland and on the Coast of Labrador.

Yet they could increase the ministers' offices, the twenty-one or twenty-two of them, whatever, for those ministers to operate those offices to \$600,000 this year, and they still have the same \$50,000 that they have had in the last three years to provide local roads to communities like McCallum, communities that are providing something to the economy of Newfoundland.

For the interest of the Speaker, the community of McCallum caught 3 million pounds of fish last year. That was shipped to Hermitage. The fish plant in Hermitage worked for four months, and employed 100 men on the fish that was caught in McCallum. Yet we find now that the government could increase the

spending of the ministers by \$600,000 and they could not find anything only \$50,000 to cover about fifteen communities in Newfoundland to enable them to have decent roads.

Mr. Speaker, we could go on and we could talk about the unemployment in St. Alban's. It is too bad the Minister of Forestry (Mr. Aylward) is not here because three years ago there were 150 forestry workers employed as part-time workers by the Provincial Department of Forestry under a Federal-Provincial Agreement that expired three years ago, it was a 90-10 agreement. I heard the then Minister of Forestry, our now House Leader, stand up and say that he gone up and had tea with the new Minister of Forestry and he had a real good deal. It was only going to be now, I think, it is 60-40 now, and it is a real good deal.

As a result of that real good deal, Mr. Speaker, the last figures I heard from the Minister of Forestry show there are fourteen people going to get jobs out of this 150 down in Bay d'Espoir. Fourteen of them are going to get a job for four weeks this year.

Three years ago, Mr. Speaker, 150 of them were working for fifteen, eighteen or twenty weeks, albeit, it was not good enough, but it was an awful lot better going for welfare, what those people are going to have to do this year.

Yet, we see the ministers and the government over there, increasing the spending in their own departments by \$600,000 and yet they cannot find \$300,000 of that which would have put 150 men to work in Bay d'Espoir long enough

to get their unemployment. That is better than what they are doing now.

This what I am saying, Mr. Speaker: We have a government that has lost its purpose and its will for being there. Every area of Newfoundland can look at something that can be done with the waste that this government has undertaken. It is waste. It is not a plan for spending or guidance, it is straight waste.

The only thing over there that those members wanted to talk about in the budget debate is the salary that is being paid to the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, there have been no secrets made about the salary that is being paid to the Leader of the Opposition. It is paid by the Liberal Party.

We heard the Minister of Education get up on Friday and say, 'As long as we know that it is paid by the Party.' There is no doubt about it. The Leader himself has said it was paid by the party. The President of the Party got up and said, 'Yes, it is paid by the Party,' by the thousands of people in Newfoundland who contribute to the Liberal Party. They are glad to be able to contribute to the Liberal Party, because, Mr. Speaker, they want to be rid of the yoke that they have carried around for the last seventeen years by those members over there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. GILBERT:
Believe me, it is a unfair burden that has been put on the people of Newfoundland by a government and a bunch of people who does not care. The only thing they are

concerned about is filling their own pockets. If they were concerned about the budget, they would be up debating some of the issues that are here instead of some of the foolishness they are getting on with.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. GILBERT:
I have not heard a sensible word come out of anyone over there this year when we talk about the budget, they are talking about -

MR. PATTERSON:
A point of order.

MR. SPEAKER (Greening):
A point of order, the hon. the member for Placentia.

MR. PATTERSON:
I would like to take issue with a remark made there. He says that the salary is paid by the federal Liberals. Norm Whalen who sits on the Board said it is not, and there seems to be coined in there some sort of a tax deal where people are getting a write off for paying the salary of the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPEAKER:
There is no point of order.

MR. RUSSELL:
Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:
A point of order, the hon. the Minister of Environment and Lands.

MR. RUSSELL:
Sometimes, I think, hon. members get carried away in the heat of the debate. I think I head the hon. member say that the only concern we had over hear was filling our own pockets, or words

to that effect.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. RUSSELL:

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make it perfectly clear that this is one minister who is not filling his own pockets. I think that is casting a great insinuation on the members of this side of the House. I think the hon. member should withdraw that comment.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, if I offended the hon. member, I will say he is not trying to fill his own pockets. I have no problem with that. I will withdraw it.

MR. SPEAKER:

Are you speaking to that point of order?

MR. GILBERT:

No, I am just saying there is no point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

The hon. member's time is up.

MR. GILBERT:

Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is this a new point of order?

MR. GILBERT:

Yes, a new point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for Burgeo -

Bay d'Espoir.

MR. GILBERT:

I would like to say to the hon. member that if he thought that I was referring to him when I said the only thing they are interested in is filling their pockets, I would certainly withdraw that comment and say that they are not concerned about the people of Newfoundland.

MR. SPEAKER:

There is no point of order.

The hon. the member for Bellevue.

MR. CALLAN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to have a few words on the budget debate today. The first thing I want to do, actually, is talk about my district, the district of Bellevue, and how the budget that was presented a month or so ago will help the people in the district of Bellevue, who I am so proud to represent here in the House of Assembly, the people who sent me here on four different occasions and who, I am sure, will send me here on another occasion, and perhaps another one after that and still others.

Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly run through my district and talk about what I see as a bright future for some of the towns in the district of Bellevue, and let me start on the end which borders Trinity - Bay de Verde, the towns of Dildo and South Dildo. Just over the weekend, actually, I had the privilege to announce a \$3,000 grant for the upgrading and repairing of the slipway in the fishing town of Dildo.

As you drive up the Trinity shore,

Mr. Speaker, the Carino plant, a Norwegian plant which has been there for a long number of years - it was closed down for a couple of years because of the downturn in the sealing industry in this Province and the protestors, Greenpeace and all of these people - this year found new life, Mr. Speaker, and, for the first time ever, since the Norwegians came and set up the Carino plant in South Dildo, this year they are availing of government assistance as they venture into new fields of endeavor at that seal pelt plant.

It is no longer just a seal pelt plant. In addition to processing the seal pelts there, which has been carried on, as I said, for about twenty-five years by about twenty-five people from the local area, this year Carino has expanded its operation into the manufacture of fertilizer and also the manufacture of food from seal carcasses for other industries, Mr. Speaker, which are springing up on the Trinity Shore, and I refer to the fox industry and the mink industry.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, helping to drive the pothead whales into Chapel Arm as a young man, where we would kill them and harvest the meat. Of course the meat from the pothead whales was processed, again in South Dildo, and used for meal for the mink industry, which was a big industry in the Blaketown/Whitbourne/Trinity area, in fact, all down the Trinity Shore, down through Dildo, and so on, a few years back. These sort of things, Mr. Speaker, are coming back and that, I am sure, will auger well for the people who live in that particular section of my district.

Mr. Speaker, right next door to

the Carino seal pelt plant in South Dildo is a new, modern FPI plant. Now, the FPI plant in South Dildo did not fare too well under restructuring. As a matter of fact, for the past several years all that has been happening at that plant is two or three weeks - probably five or six at the most - for sixty or seventy fish plant workers there was the processing of caplin. Of course, the caplin scull only last for about two or three weeks in this Province, as everybody is aware.

Mr. Speaker, about a month before I crossed the Legislature to join the Progressive Conservative Party and the Government of this Province, I wrote a letter to the President of FPI, Mr. Vic Young, asking him again, as I have done partically every year for the last several years, 'What are the prospects for the FPI plant in South Dildo this year?' And I reminded the President, Mr. Vic Young, that while the Burin plant was undergoing renovations and refurbishing, the secondary processing that used to be done at Burin was transferred to South Dildo. There was a work force there. The managers were very impressed with the work force from the local area, and they were also impressed with the new, modern facility at South Dildo.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it was almost the very day that I decided to cross the Legislature and join the Progressive Conservative Party that I received a response from Mr. Young, who told me that the future looked very bright for the FPI plant in South Dildo, and he talked about his recent trip to Japan, where, of course, they went looking for additional markets for the sale of secondary processed fish from this

Province. So, Mr. Speaker, I am confident that this year will see a start to a refurbished FPI plant in South Dildo. I can see the processing of caplin going on there in a month or so, and then I can see, of course, the other processing that goes on there, herring, mackerel and squid, when the squid come in. But as I said, I can see secondary processing going on there.

As I go in through Withbourne and Markland, I can stand here in my place today and say, Mr. Speaker, that Whitbourne, the first inland town in all of Newfoundland to be settled -

AN HON. MEMBER:

The home of the Premier.

MR. CALLAN:

- the home of the Premier, which gives it a distinction in itself - I can say without elaborating that the future is also bright for the town of Whitbourne. As everybody is aware, of course, it is inland, and the railway track runs right through the centre of the town. But if and when an agreement is signed which will see the disintegration of the railway, in five or ten years, in spite of that I can see the town of Whitbourne surviving and prospering in the future.

Markland: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of farming done in the town of Markland. A winery is being established at what used to be the old cottage hospital at Markland. That old building is now being used for office space and so on, and it is also being used to start up a winery by some local residents.

AN HON. MEMBER:

A what?

MR. CALLAN:

A winery.

It was only yesterday that I was talking to the gentleman, as I was sitting in my office on the fifth floor. Not many other M.H.As. were in their offices yesterday I am sure, because it was a provincial holiday. But I was in my office yesterday, because I am so busy since I crossed the Legislature, returning phone calls and so on. It also gave me a chance to phone Bill Rowe on Open Line to tell him about the visit myself and the Minister of Labour made to the Come By Chance refinery on Friday afternoon, and, of course, the visit myself and the Minister of Environment and Lands (Mr. Russell), who sits in front of me here, made a month or three weeks ago, and I also spoke about the clinic.

But let me wander down through the district, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. CALLAN:

I got back unscathed.

Mr. Speaker, if I can speak on the refinery. I am pulling for that refinery, and I do not believe there is anybody in this Province who is not pulling for the successful operation -

AN HON. MEMBER:

Is it safe?

MR. CALLAN:

The member to asks he if that facility is safe. I cannot answer that.

MR. MITCHELL:

He would like to see it closed.

MR. CALLAN:

I do not know how safe it is.

MR. MITCHELL:

He does not want to see any progress.

MR. CALLAN:

You know, we have had three accidents there. We have seen three accidents at the refinery and, I daresay, we will see others. Right now the refinery is producing at 40 per cent. As they bring it up to 60 per cent, up to 80 per cent and up to 100 per cent, or the remaining 60 per cent, I can see other things happening at the refinery.

I mean, the labour leaders, and so on, do not come right out and say it, but they sort of suggest that the reason there are accidents there is because there is no union there. That is not true! As Mr. Ken Brown said last Thursday in his address to Rotary or whatever it was, he is quite pleased and impressed with the work force at the Come By Chance refinery. Many of the people who work at that refinery, Mr. Speaker, now live in Swift Current. That is where they lived twelve years ago, when they went away to Fort McMurray when the refinery closed. They are from Arnold's Cove, Come By Chance, Sunnyside and all over. They are from North Harbour, Garden Cove, Hillview, and Hatchet Cove. They were the people who worked at the refinery twelve years ago and, of course, they are back there now. They went to Alberta and, of course, they came back, and they are skilled workers; they are skilled because they kept working in their trade in the oil industry out West. Of course, there are other good, skilled workers who did not leave the Province at all, who did not

go to Alberta, but who stayed home and still maintained their skills because they were welders and they were pipefitters, and so on, and they kept their skills alive.

MR. LONG:

Do they have (inaudible)?

MR. CALLAN:

Mr. Speaker, I will not be interrogated by the member for St. John's East. I do not want to use up all of my time on that particular topic.

As I go down through the remainder of my district, Mr. Speaker, go down through Chapel Arm - of course, I have left Whitbourne and Dildo and that area now, and I am going down through, as one would drive through the district of Bellevue - off the TCH there, there is a proposal in place to set up in Chapel Arm a tannery which will transform fish skins into leather. That idea is actively being pursued in Chapel Arm by some local people. I can see that coming to fruition as well. Of course, a lot of people in Chapel Arm, as in Norman's Cove and Long Cove, where I live, work at ERCO Industries, across the Trans Canada Highway; Albright & Wilson they call it now. It used to be ERCO Industries, the phosphorus plant. So the unemployment rate is not very high anyway in Chapel Arm/Norman's Cove/Long Cove, because they are fishing towns to a degree, especially Norman's Cove and Long Cove.

Long Cove, by the way, Mr. Speaker, has probably one of the finest harbours in Newfoundland, it is manmade. I take credit for working and seeing that the channel was cut through from the ocean to Long Cove Pond, and that,

Mr. Speaker, makes it one of the safest and one of the best harbours in Newfoundland, where I grew up, just across the pond in Long Cove.

Quinlan Brothers, Mr. Speaker, are out there now. They are building a big building there in Long Cove. They see a future for the fishery in Long Cove, even though it is at the bottom of Trinity Bay, and it is difficult for a cod fish or any other kind of fish to get up the bottom of Trinity Bay, because there are so many gill nets and other kinds of traps as you come up the mouth of the bay, at Perlican and those places, and they swim up to Chapel Arm, Dildo, Norman's Cove, Long Cove, Chance Cove, Bellevue and Thornlea.

Mr. Speaker, Quinlan Brothers, who are putting that building there to process fish, see a future in the fishery. And, of course, the people who are putting the tannery in Chapel Arm also have an interest in the fishery, in that they are transforming fish skins into leather. They have looked at the markets in other parts of the world where these tanneries exist and the market is there, and with the help of government, ACOA, and grants or loans from other divisions of government, I am sure that will take off, Mr. Speaker.

Thornlea, Chance Cove, and Bellevue, as I said, are another three towns as you drive along the Old Cabot Highway. These towns are mostly fishing towns, but, again, some people work at the refinery from these towns, and other people work at Albright & Wilson, in Long Harbour, the phosphorus plant. So you have a mix, Mr. Speaker, of fishermen and skilled workers who work in the oil industry at Come By Chance, or

the phosphorus industry at Long Harbour. Of course, other people work with Terra Nova Tel, or they work with CN and so on. So there is a mix.

Arnold's Cove, as you head down the Trans Canada Highway and you leave Chance Cove, is one of the finest little towns in this whole Province. I said this in Arnold's Cove to a bunch of people. When I spoke down there last Fall at a Fireman's Ball, I told them that Arnold's Cove is one of the finest towns in Newfoundland. This year they are requesting \$95,000 from government for water; they want to do some repairs to the dam which supplies the town of Arnold's Cove. That dam is located across the Trans Canada Highway from Arnold's Cove; as you drive down the Trans Canada, past Jack's Pond Park and so on, you see the dam that feeds Arnold's Cove.

AN HON. MEMBER:

How much!

MR. CALLAN:

\$95,000. I cannot say whether they will get it, but I think they will. I feel pretty confident that they will get their \$95,000, sure! It is one of the finest little towns in the Province.

National Sea is in Arnold's Cove. Mr. Speaker, the thing about Arnold's Cove is that these Social Services programmes, set up in some towns so that people on social assistance can get some employment, are non-existent in Arnold's Cove. There is nobody in Arnold's Cove on social assistance, and that has been the case for years and years and years.

MR. TOBIN:

A good member! A good member!

MR. CALLAN:

Exactly.

Come By Chance I talked about, and I talked about upgrading or trying to get a twenty-four hour clinic at Come By Chance for a couple of reasons. The local people need it, but with an operating refinery at Come By Chance and with the prospects, Mr. Speaker - down in my new office on the 5th. floor I have behind my chair a picture of a floating concrete platform, which I brought back from Stavanger or Burgin, wherever it was, when we visited Norway a couple of years ago, and to see one of these things being constructed, as we saw it in Norway a couple of years ago, is fantastic, two and three thousand jobs just on one concrete platform, and that is going to be happening at Adams Head, in Come By Chance, in the very near future. Of course, it will be the golden triangle we have talked about. Come By Chance/Argentia will have a work force, at Marystown there will be a work force, and the three work forces will be producing components that will all come together at Bread and Cheese Islands, there in Placentia Bay, where, of course, there is a great depth of water. That is why the refinery was put there. That is why the \$20 million wharf which feeds the refinery was put there.

So, Mr. Speaker, for all of these reasons I am convinced that there will be a twenty-four hour clinic at Come By Chance. And the activity in that area of my district -

MR. TULK:

You changing to multiple choice questions now, after losing what?

MR. CALLAN:

Mr. Speaker, the reason that the Come By Chance clinic will be upgraded to a twenty-four hour clinic is obvious to anybody now. There was no operating refinery there when she closed. Of course, with the downfall and the downturn in the price of oil a couple of years ago, there were no prospects for concrete platforms. But there is an operating refinery there now.

Mr. Speaker, do you realize that a couple of weeks ago they were producing \$1 million worth of gas in one day at that refinery. Trucks are coming from Deer Lake, buying propane from that facility at Come By Chance - Superior, I think they call it. Butane is also being produced at Come By Chance, but there is no sale for butane, so what they are doing with their butane on site is using it to fuel their huge furnaces which, of course, are cracking the crude into different fuels, jet fuel, propane and so on.

So, the future is bright for Arnold's Cove. It has always been bright for Arnold's Cove, especially since National Sea put that new plant there several years ago, and for the whole area, and that even goes down into Southwest Arm.

I have not talked about pavement and water and sewer projects that I expect to get for my district, Mr. Speaker. It is premature. But I am confident that I will get my share. And not because I crossed the floor. That has nothing to do with it. I got it last year. Hon. members have heard me here in this Legislature talk about the pavement that went to my district last year. I do not expect to get any this year. To be quite honest, I do not

expect to get any, because what did we get last year? We got \$250,000 for road upgrading in Hillview, where there is a twelve mile stretch of dirt road. From the Trans Canada to Hillview down to St. Jones Within, there is not one inch of pavement, but I expect there will be some pavement laid there, Mr. Speaker. I expect so, but I do not know. I am hoping there will be. Of course, down in Hodge's Cove/Little Heart's Ease, they have been getting two and there miles of pavement, four and five kilometers, in each of the last four or five years, so, it is only reasonable to assume that there will be another \$500,000 or so spent on paving the road through Little Heart's Ease, and a little bit beyond, perhaps, this Summer.

Markland, Mr. Speaker, got a couple of miles of pavement last year. They will get some upgrading this year. I am sure they will. They are not ready for further paving, so they will probably get some upgrading this year, and that is all they are looking for.

And the people who live in Thornlea, Bellevue and Long Cove, and so on, who use that old Cabot Highway stretch that I talked about last week or the week before, no doubt there will be some money spent there, as well; there was \$250,000 spent there last year to reroute the road around Collier's Bay Hill. Collier's Bay Hill, of course, is where the barite mine opened several years ago. A fair amount of barite came out of that mine, but it was not a really successful venture because there was not as much barite there as was anticipated.

Barite, as every body knows, is used for two purposes: Pharmaceutically barite is used as a dye for testing artery blockages and so on, but this barite, which was brought from Collier's Bay Hill, was used, which is what barite is used for in large amounts, in the drilling of wells offshore, in our case, and it is very, very heavy. I have a piece on my desk, downstairs, and the first Liberal member who comes in will find out how heavy it is. No. Just joking, actually. It is very heavy and it is used, of course, to cool and lubricate the drill bits.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think I have gone through my district. There are a lot of little things going on in the district of Bellevue that I will not have time to get into now, because I want to make some other comments, Mr. Speaker, while I have a moment.

I am getting a lot of notes here. I do not know if they are coming from the Speaker. I am afraid to read them before I have finished.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make several other comments. I want to refer to some comments made by the newest member of the legislature, before he came into the legislature actually.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. CALLAN:
Before he came into the legislature, the member for Waterford - Kenmount was commenting on me crossing the legislature floor a couple of days before polling day and he said this, the member for Waterford - Kenmount, who was a city councillor. 'Mr. Callan,' he

said, 'claimed the Premier did not approach him or offer him anything to leave the Liberal party and joined the PCs. However,' Mr. Gullage said, 'I would not believe that for a moment.' Imagine! Imagine! A person who had never met me, did not believe that what I was saying was truthful. Why not? Why did the present member for Waterford - Kenmount more or less call me a liar? In essence, that is what he was doing. 'I would not believe for a moment what the member for Bellevue said.'

Mr. Speaker, what I said is absolutely correct and honest. There were no offers, and it had nothing to do with the by-election. It had nothing to do with it, absolutely nothing to do with it. I arrived at a decision to leave the Liberal party on the morning of March 7, 1988. I could have waited a month. I could have sat as an independent member. They do not ask me now, but when people used to ask me how could I leave the Liberal party and join the PC party I would say, 'Well, you are asking two questions, you know. You have it as one, but there are two questions, separate and distinct.

First, ask me why I had to quit the Liberal party and, after I have taken a couple of hours to explain that to you, because there are that many reasons to go with it, then I will answer your second question about why I joined the PC party. I could have waited a month. I could have sat as an independent, or I could have waited to see what approaches the NDP would have made to get me as a third member with them, or I could have sat there and waited to see what would have been offered from any angle. But, Mr. Speaker, I did it all in one fell swoop and,

of course, I am happy and glad. The only person I believe I gave an inkling to that I may be leaving the Liberal Party - I did it on Monday morning, and I am pretty sure it was on Saturday night, after I left the infamous meetings at the Holiday Inn; I got home on Saturday night; I think that was the night. I do not think it was Sunday. I think it was on Saturday night that I phoned my mother and I told her, 'Do not be surprised if you see something in the news.' I did not tell her what I was up to.

And all my mother said, and she did not realize what she said when she said it actually, and neither did I, but she said, 'My son, whatever makes you happy, then you go and do that. Now, as I said, she did not realize what she was saying and neither did I. I could see the happiness, sure, in getting away from the Leader of the Liberal Party - I could see the happiness in that - but what I did not anticipate, Mr. Speaker, was the happiness I gained from joining the PC Party, the government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. CALLAN:

As I said, they are two different worlds; the camaraderie, the friendship, everything that exist here. I was saying to my colleague from Trinity North in his office last week, when I met with him to talk about water and sewer funding for my district, I have not yet gotten over this feeling of wondering whether he is trying to trick me. I said, I was so used to it. You always had to be thinking negative thoughts. And how can I trick this person? How can I connive and brown-nose

and everything else? It is only now, Mr. Speaker, after about two months, that I am finally getting away from this. When the Leader of the Opposition spoke in Arnold's Cove, he said that I had failed substantially. Now, Mr. Speaker, if anybody failed substantially, it was the Leader of the Opposition. It was he who failed substantially, failed to understand where people were coming from and why. He failed in a dozen ways, and I do not have time to get into them now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

By leave! By leave!

MR. CALLAN:

One of the pieces of advice given to the Leader of the Opposition was do not seek a seat in the Legislature, do as Frank Moores did in 1971, or whenever it was. Do not come into the Legislature. You already have people there to look after the Legislature, you travel the Province and make yourself known. But, no, he did not take anybody's advice, Mr. Speaker, he stuck with his own advice and rather than take a chance on getting defeated in Waterford - Kenmount - we all knew that Gerry Ottenheimer would be appointed to the Senate in several months and he could have waited around - he said, no and he tried to talk people into resigning their seats so that he could have a safe Liberal district to run in.

Now, there is a story in that which I have not told anybody, Mr. Speaker. As I said the other day, there are some interesting stories to be told about that and if I have to tell them, I will. I will tell them one of these days.

MR. WARREN:

When you write your memoirs.

MR. CALLAN:

Actually, what I am doing here now is writing my memoirs, and it is a great way; you get things on tape and printed and so on, and students who read these things in five or ten years hence will learn some things, especially how the Leader of the Opposition failed, Mr. Speaker, in accepting that salary and, to this day, not telling the people in Newfoundland where it is coming from and so on. But he was bought, as the member for Placentia said the other day when he quoted Rudyard Kipling, I think, he was bought.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. CALLAN:

He was bought, unfortunately. I do not know the Leader of the Opposition very well. He is not an easy man to get to know. I do not know him very well but I would say, if I were to venture a guess, that silently he curses the day that every he said yes when he was approached by a couple of caucus members and said, 'Look, we need you, we need you worse than anything in the world because our big plan failed. The big plan we had failed. We were told by Brian Tobin in Ottawa, 'You clear the decks for us back in Newfoundland, get rid of Leo Barry and I will come back and lead the Liberal Party to victory'. Now, that is what happened, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Oh, oh!

MR. CALLAN:

So, of course, when the member for Mount Scio - Bell Island (Mr. Barry) decided, 'Well, I am not going to take this lying down, I am not going to roll over and pay dead, I am going to run for it,'

then, of course, Mr. Tobin came to the Province, He was over in Holiday Inn attending meetings that were none of his business, but that is not unusual for him. He commented on me crossing the floor and he was the only federal member who did it. It was none of his business but he sticks his nose in sometimes like that, quite a lot, as a matter of fact.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time is up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
By leave! By leave!

MR. CALLAN:
By leave?

No leave granted by the Leader of the Opposition. I will continue another day, Mr. Speaker.

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. W. CARTER:
Mr. Speaker, having listened to the hon. member for Bellevue (Mr. Callan) I thought maybe I was in an old fashion Southern revival meeting there for a moment.

I do want to congratulate the new Minister of Finance (Mr. Windsor), on his speech. It was well read and I might say well written. In fact, I suppose, the best way I can describe the speech is a good public relations document.

I think our critic, the hon.

member for Gander (Mr. Baker), pretty well summed it up when he said, 'The speech was deceptive.' In fact, the cover of the budget speech itself was very deceptive because what it shows here are eight of the components in the Sprung greenhouse complex all lit up and appearing to be rearing to go. We all know, of course, that when the Calgary Winter Games started there was quite a fuss over the fact that the lights in the Sprung greenhouse complex would be turned on, I believe, for ten or fifteen minutes in order to get some pictures and Newfoundland's way of celebrating the commencement of the Winter Games. That was the time when obviously this picture was taken because I do not believe we have seen lights on in all eight of the pods, I believe they call them, since the Winter Games were initiated back in February or March sometime.

Mr. Speaker, like I said, the minister's speech was a well written and a well read document. Now, I should point out to him, and to the House, that the people in my district and in most other communities in which I have travelled over the past few weeks are at a loss to understand where all of this new found prosperity is. They have not seen it. The people in Twillingate district, where today you have, I suppose, record unemployment, I do not know the figure, but based on the calls I get and the people I see when I visit my district, I would venture to say that at this point in time in Twillingate district we probably have unemployment well in excess of 75 per cent, I would think, or probably even greater than that.

I had occasion last year to

circulate a small questionnaire in a small community in my district. I will name the community, Mr. Speaker. It was Bridgeport, a long established community in Twillingate District on New World Island. In Bridgeport there are, I believe, around 200 and some odd voters. I found out in the course of my questionnaire and the returns I got back that in the past three years, I believe it is, about 15 percent of the residents of Bridgeport have left that community, most of whom are now settled in parts of Ontario and some of course, are no doubt settled in the capital city.

At about the same time I spoke with the town clerk of Twillingate. Twillingate, of course, is one of the oldest and longest established communities on the Northeast Coast. At one time it was called the capital of the Northeast Coast, and I suppose in many respects it still is.

In the first four or five months of last year, the town clerk of Twillingate informed me that up to that time, I believe it was July month, that there were thirty-two families who had moved out of Twillingate for parts unknown.

Mr. Speaker, that to me does not indicate the kind of prosperity, or good times, or reason to be happy that the minister alluded to in his budget. In fact, people in rural Newfoundland today, especially on the - I can speak with some knowledge of the Northeast Coast where I travel the most, I guess, where my district is located - people in those communities have very little reason to be belated or to be happy. In fact, quite the opposite is true. They have every reason not to be happy.

I visited a community last summer, Tizzard's Harbour, another small fishing community on New World Island and on the wharf that day I met and talked to some people there. There were four young men who were talking about the excitement that they were anticipating the next morning. I gathered from their conversation they were doing something rather exciting the next day and I inquired. I was told by these four big, strapping young men, would do justice to any community in any part of Newfoundland or Canada, that these four young men were leaving the next day. Two were going to Halifax and two were going to Toronto to work. I have since inquired and I have been told that these four young men remained up there. I am not aware that they have come back.

MR. TULK:

There are thousands.

MR. W. CARTER:

Now these are only four, but there are thousands of cases where young Newfoundlanders, the cream of our youth, the very best that we have, have been forced, compelled, through no fault of their own, to leave the Province in search of employment in other parts of Canada. That does not utter too well for the future of this Province.

So, therefore, I go back to what I said a moment ago, that the people in my district and other places that I visited are at a loss to understand where this new found prosperity is to which the minister referred to in the course of his budget speech.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to spend a little time talking about my district before I conclude, but

let me first of all have a few words about the fishery. The fishery, of course, is very important to the Twillingate District, as it is important to the entire Province.

I might start of by saying that in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker, in the resource sector in the fisheries we see a total projected expenditure on current and capital account of 1.4 percent in the fishery. That is a resource on which I believe a lot depends in this Province, the future, social and economic development of our Province. But yet, this government only sees fit to provide 1.4 percent of its total expenditure on both capital and current account on that very important resource.

In fact, in the entire resource sector, taking out Transportation, although I suppose Transportation legitimately is a resource and should be included, but not in the same context as one would look at Forestry, Fisheries, Mines and Energy and Tourism, for example. So deleting Transportation from the government's total estimated expenditure on capital and current account in the resource sector, we are talking slightly in excess of 8 per cent. In a Province that has so many resources underdeveloped and on which so much depends, in this year, 1988 - 1989, the government will be spending slightly more than 8 per cent on the development of those resources.

Mr. Speaker, that, in my view, does not indicate too much interest on the part of the government or too strong a commitment on the part of this government towards the development of our resources. Of course, I

get back to what I said a moment ago, that I think the fact that there is only 1.4 per cent budgeted this year for fisheries speaks for itself.

Mr. Speaker, while I am on the fishery I should make reference to the minister's recently announced restructuring programme, this much talked about, long-awaited restructuring programme that so many of our fishermen have been waiting for.

To use an old cliché, Mr. Speaker, in my view the minister's announcement was too little, too late. Certainly the real problems we have in the fishery were not addressed.

I am not under estimating the importance of writing off interest or, at least crediting up interest to the principal amount and thereby reducing it. I am not downgrading the importance of that exercise. But, Mr. Speaker, I submit to you, Sir, that the minister only addressed one very small problem.

Of course, in Committee this morning my colleague from Port de Grave and I were questioning the Minister of Fisheries on that restructuring programme and, I must confess, the minister said certain things that have caused me some concern.

One, of course, has to do with what will be the attitude of the Department of National Revenue on this so-called interest write-off, or, as the minister would prefer to put it, reduction in principal equal to the interest that accumulated over that five-year period.

I was surprised to find out this

morning, and I am sure my colleague from Port de Grave will share my concern, that there has been no formal representation made to the Department of National Revenue as to what, if any effect, this write-off will have on the fishermen concerned.

MR. LUSH:

Did he say he had that checked out?

MR. W. CARTER:

No. That is the understanding that I have and that is why I am surprised. I am sure I heard the minister say when he was announcing that programme that that matter had been checked out, because it is a very serious matter. It is a very, very serious matter.

Here you have roughly 3,200 fishermen, and that is the minister's own count, who are now going to have interest on their loans written down or written off, an amount at least equal to the interest over that four-and-a-half, five-year period, applied to their principal. Now, I am curious to know how the Department of National Revenue will view that exercise in years to come.

Now, the minister this morning admitted that there has been no formal representation made to the federal authorities as to what their position will be on that exercise. He said he did contact certain tax experts. Well, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that these tax experts do not devise federal government policy when it comes to income tax.

I have the fear now that at some point in time down the road a lot of these fishermen who are now the recipients of this restructuring

will be getting notices from the tax man inquiring as to what has happened to their loans and reminding them that they are going to have to pay up.

My colleague and I this morning impressed upon the minister the importance of getting now, before it is too late - and he admitted, by the way, it is still not too late - some kind of an understanding. I do not think there is anything wrong with going to the officials at the Department of National Revenue and setting out for them the minister's restructuring programme and getting from those officials some idea, hopefully in writing, as to how that will be viewed by the National Revenue Department in years to come. I would suggest to the minister that just talking to a few tax experts is not good enough and it might very well come back to haunt, in a very real way, a lot of the fishermen who will be benefitting from that interest write-off.

Mr. Speaker, I say again that the real problems that are facing at least 75 per cent of today's inshore fishermen were not addressed by the minister's restructuring programme. I am talking about the 75 per cent of our inshore fishermen who use boats of twenty-five feet and under. That is roughly the percentage. Statistics will tell us that, I believe, 73.5 per cent of all Newfoundland inshore fishermen today use boats of less than twenty-five feet in length. Now, the ones that I have talked to, and I have talked to quite a few in recent weeks, indicate to me that that restructuring programme will have little or no affect whatever on them.

Mr. Speaker, what the minister should have done, the problem that the minister should have addressed, the one that would have been very beneficial for that 75 per cent that I am talking about and, to a large extent, to all inshore fishermen, would be the establishment of a working capital fund, a fund that would provide working capital for the fishermen when they need it. Today in Newfoundland what you have is a large number of inshore fishermen who every Spring have to replenish their gear or have to repair their boats, buy new engines, maybe, or repair existing engines. There are 101 things that a fisherman must do in the Spring of the year to get ready for the fishing season.

What happens now? Most of them do not have the necessary money in reserve to underwrite the cost of these improvements. That is a fact of life. We might as well accept it.

Another fact of life, Mr. Speaker, is that bank managers today are not too accommodating. In fact, they are not accommodating at all when it comes to providing working capital for small, independent inshore fishermen. Most of our bank managers appear to have adopted the 'big is beautiful' philosophy. If you go in with a foreign accent, maybe, and a beard and some kind of a highfalutin' scheme, they will talk to you. But when it comes to an ordinary fisherman going in without profit and loss statements or proper projections of profit and loss and so on, then I find that these bank managers are not at all accommodating.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the fishermen concerned have another

option. Usually what happens, of course, is that that person will go to the village merchant or to the owner of the village fish plant and he will strike a deal with that person to get the necessary money to enable him to start fishing again when the season starts. Now, what does the fisherman do when he goes to the merchant or the fish plant owner? More than likely he has got to give that person an understanding that, first of all, he will buy his gear from that merchant who supplies the interim working capital, or, if it is a fish plant, he has got to give an undertaking that he will sell his fish or the results of his work to that plant.

By the way, I do not want to appear ungrateful. A lot of these small merchants and fish plant owners are providing a very worthwhile service, and I give them credit for it and I commend them for it. At least they are willing to do that which the chartered banks, who are in that business, refuse to do. I give them full marks.

I have a fish plant owner in my district, Beothuk Fisheries, that is a credit to the Northeast Coast. But, Mr. Speaker, it is the principle that is entirely wrong. When a fisherman literally identifies himself to that merchant or that fish plant, the opportunity is there where that fisherman can be taken advantage of, if the fish plant owner or the merchant so wishes. By raising his necessary working capital that way, of course, he forfeits his independence when it comes to purchasing the gear he needs, and what is even more important, he forfeits his independence when it comes to selling his product.

That is not a very healthy situation to be in.

I think that the minister could have performed a very great service, I believe, had he set out some kind of a revolving fund. Now, I do not know how much it would have taken, maybe \$5 million, maybe \$2 million, maybe \$10 million, but I think it could have been a fixed amount, it could have been a revolving fund where fishermen could go there at the beginning of the year, borrow their required working capital of \$2,000, \$1,500, \$3,000, \$5,000 and charge them an interest rate. I do not think fishermen expect something for nothing, charge them maybe a prime rate, plus one or something, and work out an arrangement where that loan will be repaid during the current fishing season.

Then next year, of course, if the fishermen is in good standing and all things being equal, they can go back to that fund and start all over again. Now, that in my view, would have been a very worthwhile exercise for the minister to undertake, but he missed the boat, Mr. Speaker.

He was too interested in the short term glory of being able to announce that \$18 million would be written off and that it would be to the benefit of the fishermen. Now, there, too, Mr. Speaker, is a deception, because \$18 million did not go into the pockets of our fishermen.

By the minister's own admission he stated, \$8 million of that \$18 million were used to write off bad debts, uncollectable debts. Now, there is nothing unusual about banks and institutions, all kinds of financial or lending

institutions have occasion in some point in time to write off bad debts. In fact, I suppose, most businesses do the same thing.

So, the fact that the Loan Board had accumulated bad debts of approximately \$8 million is not that unusual, undesirable, yes, but not really unusual. So the fact that \$8 million were spent by the minister to write off those bad debts, then again, is of no consequence so far as today's fishermen are concerned because most of those debts were accumulated by the people who have since left the fishery. I suspect in many cases, they have gone to their great reward and these, by the minister's own admission, were uncollectable debts, and I should add, have been the subject now of considerable concern on the part of the Auditor-General over the years.

I think the Auditor-General has been suggesting that these debts be written off. Well, that is \$8 million. Then the \$10 million, of course, is being used by the minister's department to write off interest on loans that are five and a half year's old on which there has been one payment made.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think I want to be in the minister's shoes to have to try to administer that programme. I can tell him now, that as well intentioned as he is, I have no hesitation in saying that I think the minister probably meant well, but the fact remains that it is going to cause one heck of a lot of problems and bad feeling. We have heard it already. I recall the day that the minister made his announcement driving back from my district in Twillingate. I turned on Fishermen's Broadcast and I

believe there were ten people who phoned in in a phone-in type programme, and I believe nine of them had a negative attitude toward the programme. So, it is going to be a difficult one to administer and it is going to be a difficult one to explain.

Mr. Speaker, while we are on the subject of the fishery, this is a timely topic. In recent days Newfoundlanders have again been treated to the headlines in the papers and television stories about this new group that has entered now midst. What do they call themselves? The international Wildlife Federation, this is a very radical group. The minister described them as being the lunatic fringe. These people, from all accounts, would make Greenpeace look like a bunch of Sunday School teachers.

Apparently this new coalition or federation or whatever they call themselves, - to quote the minister - 'is a lunatic fringe.' It is a very, very lunatic type of approach they have to what they are trying to do. We saw them on television last week. I am not a person who gets worked up too easy. It takes a while to bring my blood pressure up and to arouse me in that respect. But I must say, when I saw that gentleman being interviewed on television Friday night by CBC, and some of the comments he made, it did not set too well. I think the gentleman brazenly as you want to have it, blatantly sitting in a Province where you have such unemployment and where the seal fishery at this point in time means so much to so many people.

He said, 'I do not care what it does to those people. I could not care less that it might take bread

and better off their tables.' He said, 'that is not my concern. My concern is for the welfare of the animal and to collect money for the people who are supporting or are involved in our federation.' That is what he said.

Let us not forget one thing, that that gentleman visited this Province on a permit that was issued by the Federal Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Siddon). I am aware of the outcome of the appeal in the high court. I am aware of the fact that our recent stand of prohibiting protestors from going to the ice, at least in the court's view, contravenes the Charter of Rights. I find it difficult to understand their reasoning, but it is not for me, I suppose, to question. Certainly, in light of that court ruling, it is obvious the Minister of Fisheries in Ottawa has no choice but to issue permits to those types who want to come in here and disrupt our way of life. As distasteful as it is, I suppose that is the reality of it.

The fact remains that in order for these people to function and to be able to go to the ice, one of the conditions requires that there be a fishery officer accompany them. Well, I am sure if the Minister of Fisheries wanted to he could make it difficult to spring loose a fishery officer that would -

MR. TULK:
(Inaudible) salmon river.

MR. J. CARTER:
That is right, if they have fishery officers to spare, as my colleague for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) says, there are better places to employ them than babysitting a group of scoundrels who come in here to deprive Newfoundlanders of

their bread and butter. I have no sympathy of them. I have nothing but contempt, Mr. Speaker, for these types.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. W. CARTER:

We saw it with Greenpeace. I can tell you now that I had my belly full of this type. As most members will recall, back in the late 1970s the then Premier commissioned a committee to go to the various cities in Europe and North America to at least get across, hopefully, to the press and to the people, Newfoundland's side of the story. I had the privilege of leading the delegation that visited most of the major cities in Canada and in the United States. We had press conferences in New York, Detroit, Boston, Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa. When I look back and realize the abuse that we took from some of these people, most of whom had absolutely no interest whatever in conservation, they were merely interested in their own pocketbooks, Mr. Speaker, and we all know what happened.

We got a black eye from that exercise. Newfoundlanders were made to look like a bunch of barbarians when, in fact, it is not fair because most people that I know and most sealers I know are not barbarians. Most of these people would go out of their way to avoid stepping on a insect almost. They certainly are not barbarians or people who would go out and, without regard for life or conservation, destroy anything, but we all know what happened.

My time is running out. I have two minutes left. This morning in committee I recommended to the

minister that there is only one way we can possibly get the seal fishery back. There is only one way. They have given up now on the business of the hunt not being done in a humane fashion, although I noticed on CBC, I believe it was, we saw one picture which they are using in P.E.I. where they are stuffing a little baby seal with big black eyes looking at the photographer - it is a cartoon actually - stuffing this little creature down in a meat mincer. Underneath the mincer there were three or four foxes waiting to eat the meat when it came down from the other end, a completely false impression, because what they fail to say in that advertisement is that we are not hunting baby seals any longer. White coats are not the subject of the hunt, so they cannot attack us for that, for killing the so-called baby seals.

What they are doing now, of course, is they are concentrating on the waste of the meat. They are saying now that it is not right to kill a seal and to feed that meat to fox or other animals.

Maybe the time has come for us to bite the bullet, to recognize one very fundamental fact, and that is unless we can find ways and means of utilizing the entire seal, not just the skins and the blubber, but the entire seal, the meats, unless and until we find a way of processing the entire seal, then we are going to continue to have this problem. What I suggested to the minister this morning, and I hope he takes my suggestion seriously, is that he should start now the process of investigating the possibility of establishing processing operations around the Province.

For example, in Twillingate last week there was one fisherman alone who came in and dumped 400 seal carcasses.

MR. SPEAKER:
Order, please!

The hon. member's time is up.

MR. W. CARTER:
May I have a moment to conclude?

AN HON. MEMBER:
By leave.

MR. W. CARTER:
He dumped 400 seal carcasses and that is what is going to cause trouble, Mr. Speaker.

If we can find a way of processing that meat and maybe sending it to the Third World where people are starving, maybe instead of having our national government sending out money to these Third World countries, as they frequently do, most of which, I suspect, ends up everywhere where it should not, why would we not talk to the federal government with a view to having them maybe purchase this seal meat to be shipped into the Third World to feed the starving?

How can Greenpeace or this new outfit possibly picket a processing plant on Twillingate Island, in La Scie, Dildo or Fogo that is in the business of processing meat for the hungry. How can they possibly? How can they successfully picket that kind of an operation? I believe that we had to do that. If we could do that, then I think we could almost guarantee that the sealing industry, maybe not as we knew it, I do not think we will ever see a large offshore hunt again, but certainly I think the potential is there for a very viable landsman

type seal fishery and I think we can almost guarantee it if we can find a way of processing the meat that would be so important to many thousands, indeed hundreds of thousands, probably millions of people who are starving.

Since I started to speak this afternoon, I suppose there have been many, many thousands of people in the third world die of starvation. It is difficult to accept when, at the same time, we are throwing away that very, very important and high-protein food.

Mr. Speaker, my time has gone by before I had a chance to deal at length with some of the problems in my district, but hopefully we will have another time to do that.

AN HON. MEMBER:
Ask for leave.

MR. W. CARTER:
No. I think it would take too long. It would be an imposition to get leave that would allow me to go through my district and to point out some of the injustices that have been perpetrated by the present government, certainly in terms of water a sewer, the need for better upgraded and paved roads, and hospital facilities, for example. We have a hospital in Twillingate, I am told, that is desperately in need of funding. We have a crying need in my district for senior citizen facilities. Twillingate/New World Island do not have a facility to care for the aged and for the infirm, not one single bed, not one single room in Twillingate District. I understand they are taking a number of beds from the Twillingate Hospital. In fact, I believe that 30 percent of the beds in the Twillingate Hospital are now being used for that

purpose. But that is an expensive way of doing it and certainly not the most desirable way.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. member's time has elapsed.

MR. W. CARTER:

I shall take my seat, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much for extending to me this extra time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

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

MR. PARSONS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a pleasure for me to participate in budget number two. Last year, when I came into the House, I was relieved, to say the least, when the hon. Dr. John brought in his budget. I had heard so much gloom and doom, how we were going down the drain, and how things were going to happen adversely as far as Newfoundland was concerned, as I heard the gentleman presenting his budget a year ago, I found it hard to believe that there were so many good things in that budget - the creation of jobs, more money spent in every aspect of our environment, more money spent as far as education was concerned - and I thought to myself, you know, Newfoundlanders are always like that; even though there was no great need of it, he had to excel, he had to make Newfoundland and Labrador a better place in which to live.

And, Mr. Speaker, I found myself thinking about when I grew up down in Flat Rock. We were never sick or anything, but I can always

remember looking back. And I am sure there are members here perhaps not as old as I am but almost -

MR. TULK:

How old are you?

MR. PARSONS:

I will not tell you.

I can remember that little blue bottle that everyone had to go and partake of; it was called Doyle's Cod Liver Oil. I do not know why it came to my mind as Dr. John was doing his budget bit, but I sort of had to grin to myself because along with old adage of the bottle, there was also a bit of verse. I am certainly not going to sing it, because you will all leave. Anyway, the verse went like this: 'Oh, doctor! Oh, doctor! Oh, Dear Dr. John! Your cod liver oil is so pure and so strong.' And, was it not suitable? Purity in its essence and with strength for Newfoundland and Labrador.

But now, Mr. Speaker, I am in my second year.

AN HON. MEMBER:

More!

MR. PARSONS:

Take it easy now. If you want more, afterwards I will come out and I will sing you a ditty. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, this year I said, 'What about the budget?' Again, I was hearing so much from the opposite side of the House, reading excerpts from newspapers, every one of them over there, that if I were a young man and I was looking to the future in Newfoundland, I would have packed my bags and gotten out, because they were all saying, We are going down the drain. We do not have

anything. Everything has failed.

Then I listened to the new Minister of Finance bring in his budget. I suppose it was hard to find prose or verse, or whatever, from where I stood and from where Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in general stood, as far as the potential, to praise the high standing caliber of that budget that he brought in. I thought about everything, about the way to express it, the way to define it in something nice, something poetic or whatever, and I had a job until I read a little article about the Leader of the Opposition was addressing some part of rural Newfoundland and he said something to the effect that the budget was rosy, and then it came to me.

MR. WELLS:

I said it was rosy?

MR. PARSONS:

Yes, you did. You said it down in Burin, I believe. You said the budget was rosy. So, I tried to come up with a single ditty to describe it. The only one I could come up with is, as an old Irish tenor used to say, 'How sweet the rose in this garden grows, / How pure is the lilly in the morning.' How better could one describe that budget? Again, excelling to greater heights than even the one I sat here for previously.

Mr. Speaker, does that budget not smell of roses? No tax increase for the poor people of Newfoundland and Labrador with the exception of the few cents on liquor, which we all sort of looked forward to in anticipation, really. We were all wondering how much it was going to go up, not if it was going to go up. It was a foregone conclusion, Mr. Speaker.

Then I saw the hon. the member for Gander, who is a very fine gentleman, take the budget speech and criticize it. But, I say to the hon. member for Gander, how sweet it is! Mr. Speaker, it had to be sweet, because the hon. member for Gander took in excess of an hour, I think, really he talked at length, but for me to be able to say one thing that he said in a positive way, I cannot do it.

Mr. Speaker, he is a very fine person and a very fine orator, and when I saw the contents of his speech, it amazed me.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Me?

MR. PARSONS:

No, not you. The member for Gander.

I remember one time, Mr. Speaker, several years ago, we were doing a presentation outside St. John's, and when we arrived there we had this great carton we used to carry, the tools of the trade. Anyway, we had changed vehicles before we went to the hall and we had forgotten it. So my friend said, 'We are going to have to go back and get it. We cannot do the presentation without it.' I said, 'Yes', and it took me about three-quarters of an hour.

The only thing we had in that wagon was a tin, like a juice tin or whatever, which was sealed. I said, 'What are you going to talk about in the interim?' He said, 'Do not worry about it. Give me that tin you have there' I left, picked up the articles that we needed, and arrived back in the hall and here he was still speaking on that can and he had not reached the label, he was just in the process of explaining where

in Africa the tin was mined. I said to him, 'Here is what you need to put on your display, and what is in that can, anyway?' He said, 'Hot air.' And that is about the only way I can describe the comments from the hon. member for Gander (Mr. Baker). If there was ever a person reaching out, clinging to straws, it was the member for Gander.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He is really a dangerous little fellow.

MR. PARSONS:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I believe that the gun is on the other side when you look at the speeches that were made as it pertained to the budget. They are floundering. I believe they can be associated to a ship without a skipper. Because, for the life of me, Mr. Speaker, when a person gets up and talks about the deficit reduction and nothing in a positive vein, nothing, and everything is wrong; the interest rates had to do with it, this had to do with it, you know, and I can go along with criticism as long as it is constructive, but, Mr. Speaker, when a person gets up and starts criticizing just for the sake of criticizing when there is nothing to criticize, then I think that person should be out of order.

And the next day, I think, or the day after that, we had the Leader of the Opposition saying that the French in St. Pierre and Miquelon should be protected. You know, Mr. Speaker, I believe, if we give them enough rope, they are not going to hang themselves, they are hanging themselves. It is present, Mr. Speaker. Just imagine, on the heels of the intrusion of the French into our waters to take away the fish from

the people all along the Northeast Coast, to take away the fish from the people of Flatrock, St. John's, Torbay, Bauline, Pouch Cove, Portugal Cove, areas that are not in my district at all, the Leader of the Opposition came out in the news media - it is on record, at least - and said that he believes the French should be given cod from our Northern stocks.

AN HON. MEMBER:

He did not.

MR. PARSONS:

Yes, he did. He said two things: They should be given some fish, and we have enough jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, I believe those statements should be sent to every nook and cranny in Newfoundland, every place, and explained, because each member over there has gotten up in his place and said that he supports that leader when their leader has said, one, 'We do not need any more jurisdiction,' and, two, 'We will trade away some of the fish of the Northern cod stocks, in 2J+3KL, just to appease the French.'

MR. J. CARTER:

Poor, silly fool.

MR. PARSONS:

Well, Mr. Speaker, I represent the people in St. John's East Extern and I am not sure, looking at the loss of income through the reduction in their fish catches, if I can go back and say to them, Yes, I believe the Leader of the Opposition had something in it. He had something going for him. Mr. Speaker, he did not. And the man should get up and explain to Newfoundlanders that he was wrong.

Apologize to the people and explain that he was wrong in the

statements he made.

When we talked about the jurisdiction as far as the fishery is concerned, Mr. Speaker, it was said they are looking for legislative authority over the whole fishery. That is not true, Mr. Speaker. It is a partnership we are looking for, a partnership. We are not naive enough on this side of the House to think that we can go out and do the surveillance job that is necessary. We know we cannot do it. That is the central government's job. It was, is, and always will be.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. PARSONS:

When you talk about the international aspect of the fishery, as far as negotiations are concerned, we would like to have an input. Sure we would.

We are not going to tell the Government of Canada what the TAC should be, but we feel we should have an input in it, we feel we should have something to say about it because it affects each and every Newfoundlander and Labradorian. Shared jurisdiction is what we are talking about. Shared jurisdiction!

We want to be able to tell someone in Ottawa that instead of a 34 foot 1 inch boat, we would like to have something to say there, we think that that is not right, perhaps there should be changes in that. Right now we do not have the authority to do that.

We are saying, too, as far as our salmon is concerned, not only in the inland waters but in the Atlantic as well, that we should

have something to do with what dictates the times that fishermen are allowed to fish for salmon, the start of the season, Mr. Speaker.

We feel that we are justified in asking, and we feel that now we would have the mechanism, we would have the power of the clout to bring that about if we had the support of hon. members Opposite. I cannot see the member for Fogo, I cannot see that man for the life of me, Mr. Speaker, who represents one of the finest districts in Newfoundland, with the exception of my own -

AN HON. MEMBER:

It is second best.

MR. PARSONS:

It is second best.

AN HON. MEMBER:

(Inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:

No, St. John's East Extern, believe it or not. They do not get no recognition, but as far as groundfish is concerned, they are one of the top areas in the country. That is right.

But when I see the hon. the member for Fogo not standing up for his district, and saying that we should not have some share of the jurisdiction, I can see - he is a pretty good fellow, you know,

AN HON. MEMBER:

Yes.

MR. PARSONS:

yes, he is. I have been on committee hearings with him and everything, and he is not a bad fellow. But, Mr. Speaker, for the life of me I cannot understand his rationale. I cannot see the

leader being so obsessed and in party to him that now he is obsessed with it. I just do not see it, I cannot see it! That is the same position we always had - shared jurisdiction and input into the TAC. When I was a member of NIFA, and I still am, we made representations to the federal government and that was one of our main resolutions, to have some share in jurisdiction.

We will go away from the fisheries for a few moments and we will talk about economics conditions. Everytime the Leader of the Opposition appears in an outpost in Newfoundland he says there is nothing doing, there are no jobs. We are going down the drain. But, look at the budget! Look at what it says here. 'Last year, in the private sector initiative, we created \$5 million worth of investment money. In essence, with a 50 per cent cost-shared programme, that was \$10 million into our economy. This year, with statistics proving us right, we will have 3,000 new jobs and \$15 million in the economy.

Mr. Speaker, there is also a provision in there for students from eighteen to twenty-five years, and certainly that is an improvement. Those are the people that we want to see get some of the jobs at least, some of the jobs that this government is coming up with.

There is also in this, Mr. Speaker, \$1 million for a graduate employment programme. This is a wage subsidized programme as well that will pay up to \$8,000 for any fifty-two week period to help the people from university. I know all the hon. members here will agree with me, that sometimes is fairly hard for a young man or a

young woman to come out of university and get himself established in the work force. So, what this programme will do is give a number of those people, at least 125 graduates, the opportunity to get into the work force, to apply themselves to the work force. Mr. Speaker, that is certainly not a minus. It has to be a plus. The Minister of Finance should be commended on such a fine programme within his budget.

Mr. Speaker, I was thinking, too, the other day, and I picked this up from The Evening Telegram, that there is so much adversely said about our mines. Granted, we are not perfectionists as far as mining is concerned.

AN HON. MEMBER:
You are not?!

MR. PARSONS:
No, we are not. We are not perfectionists, on this side, in anything.

AN HON. MEMBER:
You can say that again.

MR. PARSONS:
That is right. There was only one perfectionist in this world, and look at what they did to him.

Mr. Speaker, I was looking in the back of The Evening Telegram, way over in the back - I said, 'If this was some Liberal propaganda, you would see it on the front page of The Evening Telegram - and it said, "Baie Verte Asbestos hires forty extra people to bring its total to 375 in the work force, and the future looks bright." Now, granted there was a little shutdown for a period of time, but that was not unexpected; it had to do with the runoffs or whatever

there. It also said, "No shutdown for the Iron Ore Company of Canada this year, or Wabush." So, things cannot be going that badly. There is nothing that I can see in that that says anything derogative as it pertains to this budget. On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, it is a plus.

Mr. Speaker, I was delighted with my friend and colleague for Humber Valley, who gave an overview of many aspects of the area which he represents, and, like my colleague, I must mention the needs and the great things that have happened in St. John's East Extern. Great things have happened down there, Mr. Speaker. It took a long time, because I grew up in the age of liberalism.

MR. TULK:
(Inaudible).

MR. PARSONS:
Indeed I did.

MR. TULK:
You were healthy.

MR. PARSONS:
I am telling you! I was healthy because we manufactured through what we did ourselves. There was no help from government, I can guarantee you that.

MR. TULK:
I know that.

MR. PARSONS:
You can say that, Mister.

Let me tell you something about it. Every now and then over there the hon. member for Bonavista North, who again is a fine gentleman, comes up with 'pork barrelling'.

'Pork barreling,' when I came in

here first, confused me. I said, 'Well, glory be to goodness!' I looked over and looked at the map and all the areas and thought about the pork barreling part of it. Well, I said, 'Boys oh boys, as far as pork barreling is concerned, I should be up here every day with thirty minutes to go on pork barreling.'

Let me tell you something: They talk about pork barreling and services. Well, boy, come out and see, either one of you or the whole bunch of you at the same time. I will hire a bus. I do not know if I have an old bus down there. I could put you on a flat-bed. Come out and we will take you through the district.

Airport Heights, within the confines of St. John's, and the hon. member for Waterford - Kenmount (Mr. Gullage) will understand what I am going to say, has no water and sewerage. They have not got it. I went into Cedar Drive last year, and, Mr. Speaker, it was scandalous, unbelievable! That is within the confines of St. John's. That is not out anywhere. That is right here.

Someone asked the Minister of Education (Mr. Hearn) the other day, 'Where is out there?' Out there is right here, next to the Confederation Building or not very far away from it.

When we go to Outer Cove, Logy Bay and Middle Cove, again in close proximity to the capital city, there is no water, no sewerage.

Torbay is one of the fastest growing towns in the Province, Mr. Speaker, and it is only 30 per cent serviced.

Flatrock, nil, not one house serviced in the community of 1,000 people. Shoe Cove, nil; Pouch Cove 60 per cent serviced; Bauline, nil, only a waterline running down over the hill that services a few of the houses in the small town. Then you hear about pork barreling.

Well, if the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Brett) got up this morning in his place and said, 'In St. John's East Extern, we are going to do just 50 per cent of their needs.' There is no mistake at all about which side of the fence they have been on since Confederation. But I am telling you that there are the services they have.

I listened to the member for the Strait of Belle Isle (Mr. Decker) the other day.

MR. TULK:
How much is serviced?

MR. PARSONS:
Flatrock, nil. There is only 60 per cent of Pouch Cove and 30 per cent of Torbay and the rest is not serviced at all, so we are saying perhaps 10 per cent.

MR. TULK:
Go down to Fogo and look at 10.

MR. PARSONS:
I bet you it is 10 per cent serviced.

MR. TULK:
That is right.

MR. PARSONS:
Well, alright, we are on an equal basis. You are talking about a PC government in here and everybody over there is talking about pork barreling and I am asking you where the pork barreling is taking

place. Is it with St. John's East Extern? Not, a bit, Mr. Speaker, but I hope that this government takes this position quite clearly this time. I hope that they will listen to your's truly. I hope they will say, 'Yes, he is right.'

How am I going to go back to the people down there and say, 'We cannot just get the money.' We are on the right side of government but over there all they talk about is pork barreling.

The pork barrel was a great thing and was one of the mainstays of our economy years ago. Everyone had a pork barrel in their House and that is the only way I could associate with the hon. member's remarks.

Mr. Speaker, about roads, we are going to have a part of the Indian Meal Line paved in Torbay this year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. PARSONS:
Why should it not be?

I have almost, on a per capita basis, or on a mile per capita basis, as much dirt roads as anyone else. Now, I am not talking about your main highway, I am not talking about your Burgeo highway. I am talking about the main thoroughfare from St. John's. We are all pretty closely net down here. I am not talking about a big highway. I am talking about the roads within the community.

I want to conclude my few remarks, Mr. Speaker, by just touching on one thing that is upper most in my mind. The Opposition has sort of

chastised this government about its employment practices, unemployment and employment, and I say to the hon. House it is a false, false acquisition.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. PARSONS:
Newfoundland is characterized by seasonal employment and that is never taken to the forefront and never explained in a righteous manner. We were always involved. That is why our forefathers came here, for the processing and catching of fish, Mr. Speaker, and that is never taken into consideration.

We have seasonal people in forestry, and in all other aspects of our economic environment, such as construction work. It is all done in that context.

Mr. Speaker, the seasonal jobs of today are just as important as they were 100 years ago. I am not saying Statistics Canada is wrong but what I am saying they are taking into consideration only the middle of the month and they are not presenting a true picture as far as our economy is concerned. Our economy cannot have an association with the economies of Montreal or Toronto. We are speaking about a different situation altogether. We are talking about annual averages, Mr. Speaker, and I could go on and on. What we are talking about is a lesser work week and we are talking about 35.3 weeks of employment on a stretch basis in Newfoundland, and 44.5 in Ontario. It is a different situation altogether, Mr. Speaker, and we still have a large number of people who work in seasonal jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I hope at some later date I can express myself perhaps at much greater length as far as the unemployment issue is concerned.

I close with this, Mr. Speaker: All the Opposition side speaks about, including the Leader of the Opposition, is gloom and doom. Unemployment, Mr. Speaker, is usually associated with hardship. Mr. Speaker, you cannot associate the hardship created in Newfoundland by unemployment with anywhere else in the urban parts of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, if people in Newfoundland are out of work tomorrow, they will not be on a bread line. They do have other ways and means. They grow their own food and they have their own commodities. You cannot draw a conclusion or any criteria from the urban areas of Canada and from Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, with that in mind I say that what the Minister of Finance said, when he said that there was about 8.5 percent unemployed, he was right on, Mr. Speaker. He was right on! That is the true unemployment rate in Newfoundland, given that 94.5 percent of all Newfoundlanders that sought a job in 1987 did find a job, Mr. Speaker. They found a job! Ninety-four point five percent found a job!

With that, Mr. Speaker, I finish my part of the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:
Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the member for St. Barbe.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear, hear!

MR. FUREY:

Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMMS:

Would the hon. member care to adjourn the debate?

MR. FUREY:

Sure. Mr. Speaker, I adjourn the debate.

MR. SPEAKER:

The debate is adjourned by the hon. the member for St. Barbe.

The hon. the President of the Council.

MR. SIMMS:

I thank the hon. member. It will not come out of his time or anything like that. He will still have a full thirty minutes.

The hon. the Premier has a response to a question put today, I think, from the member for Stephenville, and he indicated he might like to try to provide the information. So, if members would give leave, the hon. Premier would be happy to supply the answer, as he has it.

MR. TULK:

By leave.

MR. SPEAKER:

The hon. the Premier.

PREMIER PECKFORD:

Mr. Speaker, if members agree, it will just take me a second.

On the St. Lawrence situation that was mentioned in Question Period, the answer, as best I can give it and as quickly as I can give it,

is that the Department of Labour are monitoring the situation in St. Lawrence on a regular basis. Three and four days a week they are there to do the monitoring, the mining hygenists and so on.

In addition to the regular monitoring being done by the company, in addition to the regular monitoring being done by the department, the department has also engaged the Canada Center of Minerals and Energy Technology who are doing a comprehensive review of ventilation, radon, ground water, and mining activity. That report will be in our hands in May.

So there is regular monitoring by the company, regular monitoring by the department, and a special study being done to ensure that all of this monitoring is good and accurate by the Canada Center of Minerals and Energy Technology, which is a division of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources in Ottawa. They have had their people down, and, in co-ordination with our hygenists, have completed a study and we will have that study in a few weeks. But everything is within parameters that are set by the department, which are some of the highest in Canada, and everything seems to be in order.

As it relates to Labrador City, the same thing is true. Monitoring is going ahead. One of the problems is that a hygenist did resign and the department is out looking for another hygenists. They are not easy to come by. That is the only reason why there is not a hygenist there on a full-time basis right now because they are trying to find one to locate in Labrador, but the union and everybody else is happy

with the situation in Labrador City because they are involved in a committee with the management to have a monitor on all of this from time to time.

So, as I understand it, everything is according to Hoyle and everything is being done. There is regular monitoring down there for the people of St. Lawrence and for the workers.

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. SIMMS:
Mr. Speaker, can we agree to stop the clock for a minute?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:
Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER:
Stop the clock.

MR. SIMMS:
I want to give hon. members an update again on the Estimates Committees and the House for the rest of this week.

I understand in the Estimates Committee tonight, the Government Services Committee are going to be dealing with Consumer Affairs Department. Tomorrow night, I understand the Social Services Estimates Committee will be dealing with the Department of Justice from 7:30 to 9:30 approximately, and then begin the Estimates of the Department of Education at about 9:30 to 10:30, as I understand it. Then Thursday, as was announced the other day, Municipal Affairs in the morning and Development and Tourism in the evening for the

time being.

With respect to the business of the House, tomorrow we know is Private Members' Day. I indicated Thursday will be legislation and that will continue. On Friday we will be reverting back to Meech Lake. The hon. the member for Fogo (Mr. Tulk) will be pleased to hear that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I move that the House adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, at 3:00 o'clock and that this House do now adjourn.

On motion, the House at its rising adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, April 27, at 3:00 p.m.

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Answers to Questions

tabled

April 26, 1988

QUESTIONS FROM THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, March 15, 1988

Question No. 76

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

- a) How many people currently work on the Minister's Staff?
- b) How many of these persons were appointed by Order-in-Council?
- c) List each title and salary applied to that title.
- d) Table a job description for each Order-in-Council appointment.
- e) Were any of these jobs advertised in order to give the unemployed the chance of applying?

Answer

- a) Four - 2 Secretaries;
Special Assistant;
Press Secretary.
- b) All those listed in (a). The two secretaries held permanent positions in the Public Service prior to their Order-in-Council appointments to their present positions.
- c) 2 Secretaries to Honourable Minister
Salary: HL 12 Salary Level

Special Assistant to Honourable Minister
Salary SA 02 Salary Level

Press Secretary to Honourable Minister
Salary: SA 01 Salary Level.
- d) Please see attached.
- e) No.

PRESS SECRETARY

The Press Secretary is a special assistant to the Minister, responsible for public relations and media liaison and a member of the Minister's staff.

Some of the duties include: research and writing of speeches, writing of news releases, monitoring the media for stories relevant to the Department and the Minister, ministerial advertising, arranging and conducting news conferences.

The Press Secretary arranges media requests for interviews with the Minister or other departmental officials and fully briefs the Minister and Senior Officials on all direct contacts made by the media with the Department.

Any information emanating from the department for public consumption is co-ordinated through the Press Secretary's office, ultimately flowing through the Minister's office as well as the appropriate senior management personnel.

1988 03 25

SECRETARY TO MINISTER

DEFINITION OF WORK

This is secretarial work of an administrative nature involving responsibility for facilitating general ministerial duties and details for a minister.

Employees of this class serve as secretaries to ministers, performing responsible and complex secretarial work in carrying out important delegated detail duties involving general ministerial responsibilities. Duties require the confidential processing of correspondence and other work details, and sensitivity to the nature of the minister's position. Incumbents must use independent judgement in resolving varied problems which do not involve major deviation from established policy or procedure. Responsibility for the conduct of varied public contacts is a major component of the job. The evaluation of work results is made through discussions with the superior.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF WORK

As secretary to a minister, takes and transcribes dictation and prepares correspondence, memoranda, and similar papers.

Prepares correspondence for superior's signature.

Conducts correspondence and answers inquiries from constituents and other members of the public, adjusting complaints or supplying information explaining government policies and departmental procedures; receives, interviews, and directs office visitors; interprets regulations according to defined standards, and applies rules to a variety of work situations.

Acts as a secretarial intermediary for the superior, maintaining frequent contacts for the minister with public and private officials, professional persons, and members of the public.

Makes appointments and arranges minister's schedule; determines suitable times for meetings; completes travel arrangements.

Performs related work as required.

DESIRABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Extensive secretarial experience of a progressively responsible nature; graduation from high school including or supplemented by courses in business practices including stenography and typewriting; or any equivalent combination of experience and training.

SPECIAL ASSISTANT

The Special Assistant performs a variety of administrative, research and public relations work in support of the Minister.

The Special Assistant works directly for the Minister and performs various duties related to departmental and constituency matters.

Some of the duties performed include representing the Minister at various functions, researching and responding to verbal and written enquiries, and preparing correspondence for the Minister's signature.

The Special Assistant also co-ordinates constituency matters, liaises with senior government officials and is responsible for the operation of the Minister's Office during the absence of the Minister.

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